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God Treats Us All as Family

Belief in God, the scriptures advise us, assures us of the following:

- We are loved by our Creator.
- Nothing we do can diminish that love.
- God will be with us for all of our lives.
- God is omnipotent, omnipresent, all knowing, and all powerful.

What does this have to do with salesmanship? Let's explore what the traditional view of selling is all about. Typically, people who sell view it as a way to manipulate others. To get them to buy things from you. To score, as if in a contest.

You know the drill all too well (as do your prospects): A salesperson develops a pitch, targets and woos the mark; if all goes well, the mark takes the bait, the salesperson celebrates and moves on to the next mark. This is a crude view of the process, perhaps, but painfully close to the way the cheese-in-the-mousetrap scenario is supposed to unfold according to the gospel of classic salesmanship. The question is: Does this represent a genuine relationship between the seller and the buyer? No way! Save for a few precious exceptions, it amounts to us vs. them combat? slick, superficial, plastic, and often based on a form of deception. The salesperson pretends to care about the prospect/customer but, in fact, only cares about bagging his prey. The better the salesperson, the less transparent this is, but it still IS!

The time has come to rethink the entire process.

To do so, we have to dial back for a moment. We must view *selling* as a way of *building and maintaining faith in one another*. That is more than semantics; it is a novel philosophy. And as surprising as it may be, developing and incorporating a new philosophy is a key component of the transition from selling in the standard Willy Loman manner to *selling* in a format that resembles and learns from The Master.

Our philosophy begins with the recognition that we are all God's children. We have faith in Him because we are members of the family of God. Think of how important and powerful this is: If we are doubters, God doesn't treat us as prospects or, if we are believers, as customers. Instead, we are all members of the family of God, believers and disbelievers alike.

Everyone who *sells* anything must pause and reflect on this, not for its religious significance (although it is based on religious roots) but because it has profound and pragmatic implications for the world of business. The wise salesperson will learn from The Master and relate to customers and prospects as virtual family members as opposed to strangers, targets, or marks to be sold!

Traditional selling is infused with a mythology, a Holy Grail of sorts, that is pure nonsense. Worse than that, it is a route to mediocrity at best, and more likely a route to failure.

It is time to reinvent the traditional view of selling. Now!

Think of the conventional wisdom about selling as The Myths of Willy Loman:

Myth: A good salesperson has the gift of gab.

Reality: Gab? Does anyone want gab? How fast do you run from that? A good salesperson acquires the gift of identifying what customers and prospects really want and finds a way to satisfy that. His talk is not of gab, but of substance and demonstrable value.

Myth: The salesperson is the hunter and the prospect is the prey.

Reality: What a shortsighted way to view the process of building and nurturing lifelong relationships. A hunt or a battle? That's not selling: It is war and great salespeople never, ever want to engage in war with their customers. Those who do may make their quotas, but they will never earn the trust, respect, and loyalty that drives exceptional relationships and, in turn, extraordinary careers. The real winners align themselves with their customers as opposed to pitting themselves against them.

Myth: Selling is just another component of the business process.

Reality: Every successful enterprise has the key building blocks of (a) product/service development, (b) distribution, and (c) sales. All are vital, but sales is in a class by itself. When practiced by The Master's standards, sales is the connection that fuses an enterprise to people, helps to shape the company's offerings to meet customers' evolving needs, and nurtures its growth over time.

There is no lifeblood in a business that manufactures blankets, packages and ships them to Wal-Mart, but has no real contact with consumers. And no future. Yes, management may pocket the checks, but others will start talking to consumers, understanding that they now want blankets with designer names imprinted on them, and advising Wal-Mart that they need to shift their strategy and their suppliers. Disciplined and flexible as it is, Wal-Mart will make this shift. It does so every day and salespeople make it happen.

Specifically, those salespeople who act as professionals, as advisors, and as drivers of change and growth.

Which brings us to a key question: What is a customer? The traditional view of a *customer* is someone the business serves or sells to. The time has come to reinvent this perspective and adopt a 360-degree model that is simple in its focus and powerful in its impact.

The 360-Degree Customer Experience

The customer is someone we build our business around.

To the extent that they are no longer *customers*. They are members of the family.

Building your business around members of the family, instead of the standard transactional view of serving customers, requires that you make the following transitions in your viewpoint and your actions:

Traditional Way		Master's Way
Meet Customer Expectations	vs	Exceed Their Expectations
Satisfy Customers	vs	Thrill Them
Give Customers Everything They Expect	vs	Surprise Them with Gestures of Thoughtfulness
Give Customers Access to Products/Services	vs	Wrap Them in a Cocoon of Care
Be Satisfied if Customers Like Your Product/Service/Company	vs	Make Certain They Fall in Love with Your Product/Service/Company
Close a Sale	vs	Offer Customers a Lifetime of Unique Experiences and Values
Be Willing to Take Customers' Next Orders	vs	Commit to Them

As you can see, especially when compared to traditional *selling*, the 360-Degree family member experience is:

- Personal.
- Proactive.
- Perpetual.
- Protective.

Nothing is more powerful than this.

WHY MOST SALESPEOPLE CAN'T SELL

1. They have nothing interesting to say.
2. They cannot present their products and services in a compelling fashion—in other words, as more than just products and services.
3. They believe they have done their job if they get prospects to *like* what they are offering. The fact is, they have to *fall in love* with it.
4. They fail to develop a Power offer that makes what they are selling impossible to refuse.
5. They don't bother to **read** the prospect. They're too preoccupied with the commissions they **WON'T** earn precisely because all of the focus is on themselves.