

To Sell is Human

Daniel Pink—2012.

Introduction

- In Chapter 6, I discuss “clarity”—the capacity to make sense of murky situations. It’s long been held that top salespeople—whether in traditional sales or non-sales selling—are deft at problem solving. Here I will show that what matters more today is finding. One of the most effective ways of moving others is to uncover challenges they may not know they have. Here you’ll also learn about the craft of curation—along with some shrewd ways to frame your curatorial choices.

Part One: Rebirth of a Salesman

1. We’re All in Sales Now

- Americans love complaining about bloated governments—but America’s sales force outnumbers the entire federal workforce by more than 5 to 1. The U.S. private sector employs three times as many salespeople as all fifty state governments combined employ.
- Working with Qualtrics, a fast growing research and data analytics company, I commissioned a survey to try to uncover how much time and energy people are devoting to moving others, including what we can think of as non-sales selling.
- People are now spending about 40 percent of their time at work engaged in non-sales selling—persuading, influencing. And convincing others in ways that don’t involve anyone making a purchase. Across a range of professions, we are devoting roughly twenty-four minutes of every hour to moving others.
- People consider this aspect of their work crucial to their Professional success—even in excess of the considerable amount of time they devote to it.’

2. Entrepreneurship, Elasticity and Ed-Med

- In chapter 7, you will learn something called the “Pixar Pitch” Built on the work of Hollywood’s famed animation studio, the technique involves offering a short summary of the point you’re trying to make, rendered in the narrative structure of a Pixar film.
- Brooklyn Brine embodies the first of three reasons why more of us find ourselves in sales: the rise of small entrepreneurs.
- What people actually do inside tiny operations is often fundamental different from what they do within massive ones.
- Given these numbers, “Instead of rolling our eyes at self-conscious Brooklyn hipsters pickling everything in sight, we might look to them as guides to the future of the ... economy,” says New York Times Magazine columnist Adam Davidson. Harvard University’s Lawrence Katz, perhaps the top labor economist of his generation, agrees. He projects that middle-class employment of the future won’t be employees of large organizations, but self-sufficient “artisans.”
- N. In just three years, Kickstarter surpassed the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts as the largest backer of arts projects in the United States.

- Enter the second reason we're all in sales now: Elasticity—the new breadth of skills demanded by established companies
- Take, for instance, how the relationship between Atlassian and its customers begins. In most enterprise software companies, a company salesperson visits potential customers prospecting for new business. Not at Atlassian. Here potential customers typically initiate the relationship themselves by downloading a trial version of one of the company's products. Some of them then call Atlassian's support staff with questions. But the employees who offer support, unlike a traditional sales force, don't tempt callers with fast-expiring discounts or badger them to make a long-term commitment. Instead, they simply help people understand the software, knowing buyers to make a purchase. The same goes for engineers. Their job, of course, is to build great software—but that demands more than just slinging code.
- **To help** its engineers develop such elasticity, the company doesn't offer sales training or march recruits through an elaborate sales process. It simply requires every new hire to read two books. One is a nonfiction account of the September 11 attacks, so they're better attuned to what happens when governments can't make sense of information; the other is a British drama instructor's guide to improvisational acting, so they understand the importance of nimble minds and limber skills.
- A decade of intense competition has forced most organizations to transform from segmented to flat (or at least, flatter). They do the same, if not greater, amounts of work than before—but they do it with fewer people who are doing more, and more varied, things.
- Timothy Shriver Jr. is an executive at The Future Project, a nonprofit that connects secondary school students with interesting projects to adults who can coach them. His work reaches across different areas—marketing, digital media, strategy, branding, and partnerships.
- While jobs in the manufacturing sector have been declining for forty years, as recently as the late 1990s the United States still employed more people in that sector than in professional and business services. About ten years ago, however, professional and business services took the lead. But their ascendance proved short lived, because rising like a rocket was another sector, education and health services—or what I call Ed-Med. Ed-Med—which includes everyone from community college instructors to proprietors of test prep companies and from genetic counselors to registered nurses—is now, by far, the largest job sector in the U.S. economy, as well as a fast-growing sector in the rest of the world. In the United States, Ed-Med has generated significantly more new jobs in the last decade than all other sectors combined. And over the next decade, forecaster's project, health care jobs alone will grow at double the rate of any other sector.
- . Ferlazzo makes a distinction between “irritation” and “agitation.” Irritation, he says, is “challenging people to do something that we want them to do.” By contrast, “agitation is challenging them to do something that they want to do.” What he has discovered throughout his career is that “irritation doesn't work.”
- It's about leading with my ears instead of my mouth, ' Ferlazzo says. I “It means trying to elicit from people what their goals are for themselves and having the flexibility to frame what we do in that context
- For example, in his ninth-grade class last year, after finishing a unit on natural disasters, Ferlazzo asked his students to write an essay about the natural disaster they considered the very worst. One of his students—Ferlazzo calls him “John”—refused. This wasn't the first time he had done so, either. John had struggled throughout school and had written very little. But he still hoped

eventually to graduate. Ferlazzo told John that he wanted him to graduate, too, but ^ that graduation was unlikely if he couldn't write an essay. "I then told him that I knew from previous conversations that he was on the football team and liked football," Ferlazzo said. "I asked him what his favorite football team was. He looked a little taken aback since it seemed off topic—it looked like he had been expecting a lecture. 'The Raiders,' he replied. Okay, then, what was his least favorite team? 'The Giants. So Ferlazzo asked him to write an essay showing why the Raiders were superior to the Giants. John stayed on task, said Ferlazzo, asked "thoughtful and practical questions," and turned in a "decent essay." Then John asked to write another essay—this one about basketball—to make up for previous essays he hadn't bothered to do. Ferlazzo said yes. John delivered another pretty good piece of written work. Later that week, in a parent-teacher conference with all of his teachers, John's mother cried when I showed her the two essays. She said he'd never written one before" during his previous nine years of schooling. Ferlazzo says he "used agitation to challenge him on the idea of graduating from high school and I used my ears knowing that he was interested in football." Ferlazzo's aim wasn't to force John to write about natural disasters but to help him develop writing skills. He convinced John to give up resources—ego and effort—and that will helped John move himself.

- We go in and tell you what to do." But she has found, and both experience and evidence confirm, that this approach has its limit. "We need to take a step back and bring [patients] on board," she told me. "People usually know themselves way better than I do." So now, in order to move people to move themselves, she tells them, "I need your expertise." Patients heal faster and better when they're part of the moving process.

3. From Cavea Emptor to Caveat Venditor

- His book, *How to Sell Anything to Anybody*—whose cover claims "2 million copies in print!"—reveals the secrets, which he also shares with live audiences around the world. "I guarantee you that my system will work for you, if you understand and follow it," he promises.
- The centerpiece is "Girard's Rule of 250"—that each of us has 250 people in our lives we know well enough to invite to a wedding or a funeral. If you reach one person, and get her to like you and buy from you, she will connect you to others in her! 250-person circle. Some of those people will do the same. And so on and so on in ever-widening cascades of influence. Girard advises us to "fill the seats on the Ferris wheel" with as many prospects as we can, to let them off the Ferris wheel for a while after they buy, and then to turn them into your "birddogs" by paying them \$50 for every new sale they subsequently send you. "A Chevrolet sold by Joe Girard is not just a car," he writes. "It is a whole relationship between me and the customer and his family and friends and the people he works with.
- We bring them in and we put them in a one-week training course that's not just about sales. We talk about customer service and social media." Most of all, what makes someone effective on this shifted terrain is different from the smooth-talking, backslapping, pocket picking stereotype of the past. Darvish says the qualities she looks for most are persistence—and something for which a word never appeared in either of the word clouds: empathy. "You can't train someone to care," she told me. To her the ideal salespeople are those who ask themselves, "What decision would I make if that were my own mom sitting there trying to get service or buy a car?" It sounds noble. And maybe it is. But today, it's how you sell cars.
- Who service shop offers free detailing to the teacher of the month at a neighborhood school.

- The company launched in 1993 hoping to reinvent the way Americans bought used cars. Two decades later, CarMax is a Fortune 500 company that sells more than four hundred thousand vehicles each year and collects annual revenue of more than billion.^{^o} From the start, it tried to undo the conventions that gave rise to that first word cloud. For instance, it established a set price for each car—no haggling necessary. That reduces a customer’s fear of being out bargained by a more informed seller. Also, CarMax salespeople—most of them decked in blue polo shirts with a company logo rather than a suit and tie—earn their pay entirely through commissions. But those commissions aren’t based on the price of the car. Selling a budget car earns the same commission as selling an expensive one. That mitigates the fear that a pushy salesman will press you to buy a vehicle that’s good for his wallet rather than yours. Finally, CarMax practically disgorges information. Since any customer on her own can find a report on the vehicles condition or history, CarMax gives that to customers for free. It offers warranties, certifications, and guarantees to address the quality concerns that Akerlof identified back in 1967.
- But the sharpest example is in plain view when you walk into the store. Each salesperson sits at a small desk—him on one side, the customer on the other. Each desk also has a computer. In most settings, the seller would look at the computer screen and the buyer at the computer’s backside. But here the computer is positioned not in front of either party, but off to the side with its screen facing outward so both buyer and seller can see it at the same time. It’s the literal picture of information symmetry. No haggling. Transparent commissions. Informed customers. Once again, it all sounds so enlightened. And maybe it is. But that’s not why this new approach exists.

Part Two: How to Be

4. Attunement

- Remapped conditions require revamped navigation. So here in Part Two, I introduce the new ABCs of moving others:
 - A—Attunement
 - B—Buoyancy
 - C—Clarity
- Power, Empathy, and Chameleons
 - Take a moment right now—and if there’s someone in the room with you, politely request thirty seconds of his or her time. Then ask that person to do the following: “First, with your dominant hand, snap as quickly as you can, use the forefinger of your dominant hand to draw a capital E on your forehead.” Seriously, go ahead and do this. I’ll wait. (If you’re alone, slip this exercise in your back pocket and pull it out at your next opportunity.)
 - Now look at the way your counterpart drew his or her E. Which photograph on the previous page does it look like? The difference might seem innocuous, but the letter on your counterpart’s forehead offers a window into his mind. If the E resembles the one on the left, the person drew it so he could read it himself. If it looks like the one on the right, he drew the E so you could read it. Since the mid-1980s, social psychologists have used this technique—call it the E Test—to measure what they dub ‘perspective-taking.’ When confronted with an unusual or complex situation involving other people, how do we make sense of what’s going on? Do we examine it from only our own point of view? Or do we

have “the capability to step outside [our] own experience and imagine the emotions, perceptions, and motivations of another?”

- Perspective-taking is at the heart of our first essential quality in moving others today. Attunement is the ability to bring one’s actions and outlook into harmony with other people and with the context you’re in.
- As a result, the ability to move people now depends on power’s inverse: understanding another person’s perspective, getting inside his head, and seeing the world through his eyes.
- But feeling too deeply isn’t necessarily the answer either—because you might submerge your own interests. Perspective-taking seems to enable the proper calibration between the two poles, allowing us to adjust and attune ourselves in ways that leave both sides better off. Empathy can help build enduring relationships and defuse conflicts. In medical settings, according to one prominent physician, it is “associated with fewer medical errors, better patient outcomes, more satisfied patients . . . fewer malpractice claims and happier doctors.” And empathy is valuable and virtuous in its own right. But when it comes to moving others, perspective-taking is the more effective of these fraternal twins. As the researchers say, ultimately it’s “more beneficial to get inside their heads than to have them inside one’s own heart.”
- So we must rely less on GPS-style directions—and more on our intuitive sense of where we are. In the world of waiters and waitresses, this sort of attunement is called “having eyes” or “reading a table.”
- In the world of moving others, I call this ability “social cartography.” It’s the capacity to size up a situation and, in one’s mind, draw a map of how people are related
- Successful negotiators recommend that you should mimic the mannerisms of your negotiation partner to get a better deal. For example, when the other person rubs his/her face, you should, too. If he/she leans back or leans forward in the chair, you should, too. However, they say it is very important that you mimic subtly enough that the other person does not notice what you are doing, otherwise this technique completely backfires. Also, do not direct too much of your attention to the mimicking so you don’t lose focus on the outcome of the negotiation. Thus, you should find a happy medium of consistent but subtle mimicking that does not disrupt your focus.” (Emphasis in the original.)
- ‘Strategic mimicry’ proved to be effective. The participants told to mimic—again, with just five minutes of notice and preparation—did it surprisingly well and to great effect. In the gas station scenario, “negotiators who mimicked their opponents’ mannerisms were more likely to create a deal that benefited both parties.” In the recruiting scenario, the mimickers fared better than the non-mimickers—and did so without adversely affecting the other side. The researchers titled their paper, “Chameleons Bake Bigger Pies and Take Bigger Pieces
- Our brains evolved at a time when most of the people around us were those we were related to and therefore could trust. But “as the size of groups increased, it required more sophisticated understandings and interactions with people,”
- People therefore looked to cues in the environment to determine whom they could trust. T. “One of those cues is the unconscious awareness of whether we are in synch with other people, and a way to do that is to match their behavioral patterns with our own
- Other research demonstrates mimicry’s effectiveness. For example, a Dutch study found that waitresses who repeated diners’ orders word for word earned 70 percent more tips than those who

paraphrased orders—and that customers with servers who mimicked were more satisfied with their dining experience.

- When customers approached the salespeople for help, nearly 79 percent bought from mimickers compared with about 62 percent from non-mimickers.
- And much as perspective-taking and empathy are fraternal twins mimicry has a first cousin: touching. The research here, much of it by French social psychologist Nicolas Gueguen, is similarly plentiful. For instance, several studies have shown that when restaurant servers touch patrons lightly on the arm or shoulder, f diners leave larger tips. One of Gueguen’s studies found that women in nightclubs were more likely to dance with men who lightly touched their forearm for a second or two when making the request
- . Martin surprised me by repeatedly using a word one rarely hears in this context: “humility.” “The most common thread in the people who are really good at this is humility,” she told me. “They take the attitude of Tm sitting in the small chair so you can sit in the big chair.” That’s perspective taking through reducing power, the first rule of attunement.
- The notion that extraverts are the finest salespeople is so obvious that we’ve overlooked one teensy flaw. There’s almost no evidence that it’s actually true.
- **Perhaps not surprisingly**, introverted sales reps didn’t perform as well as extraverted ones, earning an average of \$120 per hour in revenue compared with \$125 per hour for their more outgoing colleagues. But neither did nearly as well as a third group: the ambiverts. Ambi-whats? These are people who are neither overly extraverted nor wildly introverted. Go back to that 1-to-7 introversion-extraversion scale. Ambiverts sit roughly in the center. They’re not 1s or 2s, but they’re not 6s or 7s. In Grant’s study, these Goldilocks personalities—not too hot, not too cold—earned an average of nearly \$155 per hour, easily besting their counterparts. In fact, the salespeople who had the highest average revenue—\$208 per hour—had extraversion scores of 4.0, smack at the midpoint.
- “These findings call into question the longstanding belief that the most productive salespeople are extraverted,” Grant writes. Instead, being too extraverted can actually impair performance, as other research has begun to confirm. For example, two recent Harvard Business Review studies of sales professionals found that top performers are less gregarious than below-average ones and that the most sociable salespeople are often the poorest performers of all.^^ According to a large study of European and American customers, the “most destructive” behavior of salespeople wasn’t being ill-informed. It was an excess of assertiveness and zeal that led to (contacting customers too frequently. Extraverts, in other words, often stumble over themselves. They can talk too much and listen too little.

SAMPLE CASE

Attunement

- Everything good in life—a cool business, a great romance, a powerful social movement—begins with a conversation.
- But what’s the best way to start a conversation—especially with someone you don’t know well? How can you quickly put the person at ease, invite an interaction, and build rapport?
- For guidance, look to Jim Collins, author of the classic *Good to Great* and other groundbreaking business books. He says his favorite opening question is: Where are you from?

- So how can you teach yourself to be a bit more like that benevolent lizard and begin to master the techniques of strategic mimicry?
- The three key steps are Watch, Wait, and Wane:
 - 1. Watch. Observe what the other person is doing. How is he sitting? Are his legs crossed? His arms? Does he lean back? Tilt to one side? Tap his toe? Twirl his pen? How does he speak? Fast? Slow? Does he favor particular expressions?
 - 2. Wait. Once you've observed, don't spring immediately into action. Let the situation breathe. If he leans back, count to fifteen, then consider leaning back, too. If he makes an important point, repeat back the main idea verbatim—but a bit later in the conversation. Don't do this too many times, though. It's not a contest in which you're piling up points per mimic.
 - 3. Wane. After you've mimicked a little, try to be less conscious of what you're doing. Remember: This is something that humans (including you) do naturally, so at some point, it will begin to feel effortless. It's like driving a car. When you first learn. You have to be conscious and deliberate. But once you've acquired some experience, you can proceed by instinct.
- Amazon, like most organizations, has lots of meetings. But at the important ones, alongside the chairs in which his executives, marketing mavens, and software jockeys take their places, Bezos includes one more chair that remains empty. It's there to remind those assembled who's really the most important person in the room: the customer.
- Seeing it encourages meeting attendees to take the perspective of that invisible but essential person. What's going through her mind? What are her desires and concerns? What would she think of the ideas were putting forward?
- Take a moment to find out. Visit this link—<http://www.danpink.com/assessment>
- She calls it “Conversation with a Time Traveler.” It doesn't require any props or equipment, just a little imagination and a lot of work. Here's how it goes:
 - Gather a few people and ask them to think of items that somebody from three hundred years ago would not recognize. A traffic light, maybe. A carry-out pizza. An airport screening machine. Then divide into groups of two. Each pair selects an item. One person plays the role of someone from the early 1700s. The other has to explain the item.
 - This is more difficult than it sounds. That person from three hundred years ago has a perspective wildly different from our own. For instance, to explain, say, a Big Mac bought from a drive through window requires understanding a variety of underlying concepts: owning an automobile, consuming what three hundred years ago was a preposterous amount of meat, trusting someone you've likely never met and will never see again, and so on.
 - “This exercise immediately challenges your assumptions about the understandability of your message,” Salit says. “You are forced to care about the worldview of the other person.” That's something we all should be doing a lot more of in the present.
- 1. Discussion Map
 - In your next meeting, cut through the clutter of comments with a map that can help reveal the group's social cartography. Draw a diagram of where each person in the meeting is sitting. When the session begins, note who speaks first by marking an X next to that person's name. Then each time someone speaks, add an X next to that name. If someone

directs her comments to a particular person rather than to the whole group, draw a line from the speaker to the recipient. When the meeting is done you'll get a visual representation of who's talking the most, who's sitting out, and who's the target of people's criticisms or blandishments. You can even do this for those increasingly ubiquitous conference calls. (In fact, it's easier because nobody can see you!) On page 93 is an example, which shows that the person with the initials JW talked the most that many of the comments were directed at AB, and that SL and KC barely participated.

- Play “Mirror, mirror.”
 - How attuned are you to slight alterations in appearances or situations? This team exercise, a favorite of change management consultants, can help you answer those questions and begin to improve. Gather your group and tell them to do the following:
 1. Find a partner and stand face-to-face with that person for thirty seconds.
 2. Then turn around so that you're both back-to-back with your partner.
 3. Once turned around, each person changes one aspect of his or her appearance—for example, remove earrings, add eyeglasses, and untuck your shirt. (Important: Don't tell people what you're going to ask them to do until they're back-to-back.) Wait sixty seconds.
 4. Turn back around and see if you or your partner can tell what has changed. Repeat this twice more with the same person, each time altering something new about your appearance.
 - When you're done, debrief with a short discussion. Which changes did people notice? Which eluded detection? How much of doing this well depended on being observant and attuned from the outset? How might this experience change your next encounter with a colleague, client, or student?
- Find uncommon commonalities.
 - The research of Arizona State University social psychologist Robert Cialdini, some of which I'll discuss in Chapter 6, shows that we're more likely to be persuaded by those whom we like. And one reason we like people is that they remind us of . . . us. Finding similarities can help you attune yourself to others and_ help them attune themselves to you. Here's an exercise that works well in teams and yields some insights individuals can later deploy on their own.
 - Assemble a group of three or four people and pose this question: What do we have in common, either with another person or with everyone? Go beyond the surface. For example, does everybody have a younger brother? Have most people visited a Disney property in the last year.” Are some people soccer fanatics or opera buffs or amateur cheese makers?
 - Set a timer for five minutes and see how many commonalities you can come up with. You might be surprised. Searching for similarities—Hey, I've got a dachshund, too!—may seem trivial. We dismiss such things as “small talk.” But that's a mistake. Similarity—the genuine, not the manufactured, variety—is a key form of human connection. People are more likely to move together when they share common ground.

5. Buoyancy

- How to stay afloat amid that ocean of rejection is the second essential quality in moving others. I call this quality “buoyancy.” Hall exemplifies it. Recent social science explains it. And if you understand buoyancy’s three components—which apply before, during, and after any effort to move others—you can use it effectively in your own life.
- The hardest part of selling, Norman Hall says, occurs before his well-polished shoes even touch the streets of San Francisco. “Just getting myself out of the house and facing people” is the stiffest challenge, he says. “It’s that big, unknown faceless person I have to face for the first time.”
- However, the person whose example you should be following takes a different tack. His name is Bob the Builder. And if you haven’t been around preschool children in the last fifteen years, let me offer a quick dossier. Bob is an overall-clad, hard-hat-sporting, stop-motion-animated guy who runs a construction company. His TV program, which began in England in 1999, now entertains kids in forty-five countries. Bob is always finding himself in sticky situations that seem inevitably to call for traditional sales or non-sales selling. Like all of us, Bob talks to himself. But Bob’s self talk is neither positive nor declarative. Instead, to move himself and his team, he asks a question: Can we fix it?
- **Yes, positive** self-talk is generally more effective than negative self-talk. But the most effective self-talk of all doesn’t merely shift emotions. It shifts linguistic categories. It moves from making statements to asking questions.
- They separated the participants into two groups, each of which was treated identically except for the one minute before they tackled their assignments. The researchers instructed the first group to ask themselves whether they would solve the puzzles—and the second group to tell themselves that they would solve the puzzles. On average, the self-questioning group solved nearly 50 percent more Puzzles than the self-affirming group.
- In the next experiment,” the researchers presented a new group of participants with another round of anagrams, but they added a twist of trickery: “We told participants that we were interested in people’s handwriting practices. With this pretense, participants were given a sheet of paper to write down 20 times one of the following words: Will I, I will, I, or Will
- The outcome was similar. People who’d written Will I solved nearly twice as many anagrams as those who’d written / will, Will, or /. In subsequent experiments, the basic pattern held. Those who approached a task with Bob-the-Builder-style questioning self-talk outperformed those who employed the more conventional juice myself up declaration self talk
- The reasons are twofold. First, the interrogative, by its very form, elicits answers—and within those answers are strategies for actually carrying out the task. Imagine, for instance, that you’re readying yourself for an important meeting in which you must pitch an idea and marshal support for it. You could tell yourself, “I’m the best. This is going to be a breeze,” and that might give you a short-term emotional boost. But if you instead ask, “Can I make a great pitch?” the research has found that you provide yourself something that reaches deeper and lasts longer. You might respond to yourself, “Well, yes, I can make a great pitch. In fact, I’ve probably pitched ideas at meetings two dozen times in my life.” You might remind yourself of your preparation. “Sure, I can do this. I know this material inside out and I’ve got it some great examples to persuade the people who might be skeptical

- The second reason is related. Interrogative self-talk, the researchers say, “may inspire thoughts about autonomous or intrinsically motivated reasons to pursue a goal.” As ample research has demonstrated, people are more likely to act, and to perform well, when the motivations come from intrinsic choices rather than from extrinsic pressures. Declarative self-talk risks bypassing one’s motivations. Questioning self-talk elicits the reasons for doing something and reminds people that many of those reasons come from within.
- And if you watch his ambiversion in action and listen carefully to what he says and how he interacts of other people, he also demonstrates the second component of buoyancy: positivity.
- -Consider, for instance, a difficult negotiation in which each side is trying to sell the other on its position. The conventional view holds that negotiators shouldn’t necessarily be nasty and brutish but that they should remain tough-minded and poker-faced.
- ^ A few years ago, a team of behavioral scientists led by Shirli Kopelman of the University of Michigan tested this proposition by simulating a series of negotiations. In one experiment, they presented their participants, executives who were pursuing MBAs, 1 with the following scenario. You’re planning a wedding. Several weeks ago, you made provisional arrangements with a catering company that had provided a good-faith estimate of \$14,000 for its services. Now you are about to meet the caterer’s business manager, who’s come bearing bad news. Because of market fluctuations, the estimate has increased to \$16,995. What’s more, the caterer has another client ready to take the date if you don’t sign the contract. Unbeknownst to the participants, they’d been divided into three groups. And while the “business manager” (a specially trained actor) gave each of the three groups precisely the same explanation for the changed price, and offered identical terms and conditions for the catering, she varied her emotional approach. To one group, she displayed positive emotions. She “spoke with a friendly tone, smiled often, nodded her head in agreement, and appeared cordial and inviting.” To another, she “spoke antagonistically, appeared intimidating, and was insistent.” To the final group, she “used an even and monotonic voice, displayed little emotion, and spoke in a pragmatic manner.”
- The business manager’s affect had a significant effect. Those who’d heard the positive-inflected pitch were twice as likely to accept the deal as those who’d heard the negative one—even though the terms were identical. In a subsequent similar experiment, in which negotiators were able to make counteroffers, those who’d dealt with the negative person made far less generous counteroffers than those dealing with someone positive on the other side of the table.
- **Negative emotions**, she says, evolved to narrow people’s vision and propel their behavior toward survival in the moment {I’m frightened, so I’ll flee. I’m angry, so I’ll fight). By contrast. “Positive emotions do the opposite: They broaden people’s ideas about possible actions, opening our awareness to a wider range of thoughts and ... making us more receptive and more creative,”
- Other studies show that positive emotions can expand our behavioral repertoires •~and heighten intuition and creativity, all of which enhance our effectiveness. What’s more, as we saw in Kopelman’s study, emotions can be contagious. That is, the effects of positivity during a sales encounter infect the buyer, making him less adversarial, more 3pen to possibility, and perhaps willing to reach an agreement in which both parties benefit. And when both sides leave the table satisfied, that can establish a sustained relationship and smooth the way for subsequent transactions.
- For instance, Cory Scherer and Brad Sagarin of Northern Illinois University have found that inserting a mild profanity like ‘damn’ into a speech increases the persuasiveness of the speech

and listeners' perception of the speaker's intensity. "I believe in these products," Hall told me. "I know damn well that when you buy one of these brushes you're going to have it for years."

- "Fredrickson sees the healthy positivity ratios of Hall and others as a calibration between two competing pulls: levity and gravity. "Levity is that unseen force that lifts you skyward, whereas gravity is the opposing force that pulls you earthward. Unchecked levity leaves you flighty, ungrounded, and unreal. Unchecked gravity leaves you collapsed in a heap of misery," she writes. "Yet when properly combined, these two opposing forces leave you buoyant"
- In human beings, Seligman observed, learned helplessness was usually a function of people's "explanatory style"—their habit of explaining negative events to themselves. Think of explanatory style as a form of self-talk that occurs after (rather than before) an experience. People who give up easily, who become helpless even in situations where they actually can do something, explain bad events as permanent, pervasive, and personal. They believe that negative conditions will endure a long time, that the causes are universal rather than specific to the circumstances, and that they're the ones to blame. So if their boss veils at them, they interpreted as "My boss is always mean" or "All bosses are jerks" or "I'm incompetent at my job" rather than "My boss is having an awful day and I just happened to be in the line of fire when he lost it." A pessimistic explanatory style—the habit of believing that "it's my fault, it's going to last forever, and it's going to undermine everything I do"—is debilitating, Seligman found. It can diminish performance, trigger depression, and "turn setbacks into disasters."
- Seligman and Schulman gave all the agents the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ)
- The results were unequivocal. "Agents who scored in the optimistic half of explanatory style sold 37% more insurance than agents scoring in the pessimistic half Agents in the top decile sold 88% more insurance than those in the bottom decile," they discovered.
- Next, in response to Metropolitan Life's concern that about half of its sales agents quit their jobs in the first year, Seligman and Schulman studied a different group—more than one hundred newly hired salespeople. Before these agents started their jobs, the researchers gave them the ASQ. Then they charted their progress. Agents who scored in the pessimistic half of the ASQ ended up I' quitting at twice the rate of those in the optimistic half Agents in the most pessimistic quarter were three times as likely to quit as those in the most optimistic 25 percent
- In other words, the salespeople with an optimistic explanatory style—who saw rejections as temporary rather than permanent, specific rather than universal, and external rather than personal— sold more insurance and survived in their jobs much longer. What's more, explanatory style predicted performance with about the same accuracy as the most widely used insurance industry assessment for hiring agents. Optimism, it turns out, isn't a hollow sentiment. It's a catalyst that can stir persistence, steady us during challenges, and stoke the confidence that we can influence our surroundings.

SAMPLE CASE

Buoyancy

- Next time you're getting ready to persuade others, reconsider how you prepare. Instead of pumping yourself up with declarations and affirmations, take a page from Bob the Builder and pose a question] instead.
- Ask yourself "Can I move these people?"

- As **social scientists have** discovered interrogative self-talk is often more valuable than the declarative kind. But don't simply leave the question hanging in the air like a lost balloon. Answer it—directly and in writing. List five specific reasons why the answer to your question is yes. These reasons will remind you of the J strategies that you'll need to be effective on the task, providing a sturdier and more substantive grounding than mere affirmation
- **It's the golden mean of** well-being, the magic formula for flourishing, the secret numerical code of the satisfied: 3 to 1. What can you do to ensure your balance between positive and negative emotions reaches that elusive ratio? One way to begin is to visit Barbara Fredrickson's website (<http://positivityratio.com/>). Take her "Positivity Self Test"—a twenty-question assessment you can complete in two or three minutes that will yield your current positivity ratio.
- The more you explain bad events as temporary, specific, and external, the more likely you are to persist even in the face of adversity.
- **For more information**, visit Seligman's website (<http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>), and take his Optimism Test to get a sense of your current style. And check out his classic book. *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and your life*
- Once the rejection is in writing, its consequences can seem far less dire. More important, by articulating the reasons for turning you down the letter might reveal soft spots in what you're presenting, which you can then work to strengthen.

6. Clarity

- But for this group, researchers used a computer software package that ages faces to create an avatar that showed what the participant would look like at age seventy. This group gazed at the seventy-year-old version of themselves for about a minute and then had the same brief conversation with the re-f searcher's avatar. Afterward, the experimenters gave both groups a money allocation task. Imagine, they told the participants, that you've just received an unexpected \$1,000. How would you allocate the money among the following four options?
 - "Use it to buy something nice for someone special."
 - "Invest it in a retirement fund."
 - "Plan a fun and extravagant occasion."
 - "Put it in a checking account."
- Those who saw images of their current It selves (call them the "Me Now" group) directed an average of \$80 into the retirement account. Those who saw images of their future selves (the "Me Later" group) allocated more than twice that amount—\$172.
- This conceptual shift demonstrates the third quality necessary in moving others today: clarity—the capacity to help others see their situations in fresh and more revealing ways and to identify problems they didn't realize they had.
- The services of others are far more valuable when I'm mistaken, confused, or completely clueless about my true problem. In those situations, the ability to move others hinges less on problem solving than on problem finding.
- In the mid-1960s, two soon-to-be-legendary University of Chicago social scientists—Jacob Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi— began studying the elusive subject of creativity. For one of his first investigations, in 1964, Csikszentmihalyi went to the nearby School of the Art Institute

of Chicago and recruited about three dozen fourth-year art students for an experiment. He brought them into a studio that had two large tables. On one table were twenty-seven objects, exotic and mundane, that the school often used in its drawing classes. Csikszentmihalyi asked the students to select one or more objects from the first table, arrange a still life on the second table, and produce a drawing of the result. The young artists approached their task in two distinct ways. Some examined relatively few objects, outlined their idea swiftly, and moved quickly to draw their still life. Others took their time. They handled more objects. Turned them this way and that, rearranged them several times, and needed much longer to complete the drawing. As Csikszentmihalyi saw it, the first group was trying to solve a problem: How can I produce a good drawing? The second was trying to find a problem: What good drawing can I produce?

- Then Csikszentmihalyi conducted a mini art show of the student creations and asked a panel of art experts to evaluate the works. (These experts didn't know what Csikszentmihalyi was studying, nor did they know the source of the art.) When he tabulated the ratings, Csikszentmihalyi discovered that the experts deemed the problem finders' works far more creative than the problem solvers'. S'. In 1970, Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels tracked down these same artists, now out of school and working for a living, to see how they were faring. About half the students had left the art world altogether. The other half was working, and often succeeding, as professional artists. The composition of that second group? Nearly all were problem finders back in their school days. When Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels followed up again in the early 1980s, they discovered that the problem finders "were 18 years later significantly more successful—by the standards of the artistic community—than their peers" who had approached their still life drawings as more craftsman like problem solvers. "The quality of the problem that is found is a forerunner of the quality of the solution that is attained . . ." Getzels concluded. "It is in fact the discovery and creation of problems rather than any superior knowledge, technical skill, or craftsmanship that often sets the creative person apart from others in his field."
- In subsequent research, they and other scholars found that people most disposed to creative breakthroughs in art, science, or any endeavor tend to be problem finders. These people sort through vast amounts of information and inputs, often from multiple disciplines; experiment with a variety of different approaches; are willing to switch directions in the course of a project; and often take longer than their counterparts to complete their work.
- For instance, suppose I'm in the market for a new vacuum cleaner. Ten or fifteen years ago, I'd have had to go into a store, talk to a salesman who was much better informed than I ever could be, and then rely on him to provide the product I needed at a price that was fair. Today, I can solve the vacuum cleaner problem myself I can go online and check out specs and ratings of various models. Can post a question on my Facebook page and seek recommendations from my friends and my "friends." Once I've settled on a few possibilities, I can compare prices with a few keystrokes. And I can order my choice from the vendor offering the best deal. I don't need a salesman at all. Unless I've gotten my problem wrong. After all, my ultimate aim isn't to acquire a vacuum cleaner. It's to have clean floors. Maybe my real problem is that the screens on my windows aren't sufficient to keep out dust, and replacing them with better screens will keep my entire house cleaner when the windows are open. Maybe my problem is that my carpet collects dirt too easily, and a new carpet will obviate the need for me to always be vacuuming. Maybe I shouldn't buy a vacuum cleaner but instead join a neighborhood cooperative that shares home appliances. Maybe there's an inexpensive cleaning service with its own equipment that serves my

area. Someone who can help me achieve my main goal—clean floors—in a smarter, cheaper way is someone I'll listen to and perhaps even buy from. If I know my problem, I can likely solve it. If I don't know my problem, I might need some help finding it.

- Take, for example, Ralph Chauvin, vice president of sales at Perfetti Van Melle, the Italian company that makes Memos mints, AirHead fruit chews, and other delicacies. His sales force sells products to retailers who then stock their shelves and hope customers will buy. In the past few years he says he's seen a shift. Retailers are less interested in figuring out how many rolls of Mentos to order than in learning how to improve all facets of their operation. "They're looking for unbiased business partners," Chauvin told me. And that changes which salespeople are most highly prized. It isn't necessarily the "closers," those who can offer an immediate solution and secure the signature on the contract, he says. It's those "who can brainstorm with the retailers, who uncover new opportunities for them, and who realize that it doesn't matter if they close at that moment." Using a mix of number crunching and their own knowledge and expertise, the Perfetti salespeople tell retailers "what assortment of candy is the best for them to make the most money." That could mean offering five flavors of Mentos rather than seven. And it almost always means including products from competitors. In a sense, Chauvin says, his best salespeople think of their jobs not so much as selling candy but as selling insights about the confectionery business.
- And a few years ago, the Conference Board, the well-regarded U.S. business group, gave 155 public school superintendents and eighty-nine private employers a list of cognitive capacities and asked their respondents to rate these capacities according to which are most important in today's workforce. The superintendents ranked "problem solving" number one. But the employers ranked it number eight, their top-ranked ability: "problem identification."
- Today, they must be skilled at curating it—sorting through the massive troves of data and presenting to others the most relevant and clarifying pieces. Second, in the past, the best salespeople were skilled at answering questions (in part because they had information their prospects lacked). Today, they must be good at asking questions—uncovering possibilities, surfacing latent issues, and finding unexpected problems. And one question in particular sits at the top of the list.
- One afternoon, Reeves and a colleague were having lunch in Central Park. On the way back to their Madison Avenue office. They encountered a man sitting in the park, begging for money. He had a cup for donations and beside it was a sign, handwritten on cardboard, that read: I AM blind. Unfortunately for the man, the cup contained only a few coins. His attempts to move others to donate money were coming up short. Reeves thought he knew why. He told his colleague something to the effect of "I bet I can dramatically increase the amount of money that guy is raising simply by adding four words to his sign." Reeves's skeptical friend took him up on the wager. Reeves then introduced himself to the beleaguered man, explained that he knew something about advertising, and offered to change the sign ever so slightly to increase donations. The man agreed. Reeves took a marker and added his four words, and he and his friend stepped back to watch.
- **Almost immediately, a few** people dropped coins into the man's cup. Other people soon stopped, talked to the man, and plucked dollar bills from their wallets. Before long, the cup was running over with cash, and the once sad-looking blind man, feeling his bounty, beamed.
 - What four words did Reeves add?
 - It is springtime and

- The sign now read
 - It is springtime and I am blind.
- **Reeves won his bet. And** we learned a lesson. Clarity depends on contrast. In this case, the begging man's sign moved people in the park to empathize with him by starkly comparing their reality with his. Robert Cialdini, the Arizona State University scholar and one of the most important social scientists of the last generation. Calls this "the contrast principle." ^^ We often understand something better when we see it in comparison with something else than when we see it in isolation. In his work over the past three decades, Cialdini has recast how both academics and practitioners understand the dynamics of influencing others. And one of his core insights is that contrast operates within, and often amplifies, every aspect of persuasion. That's why the most essential question you can ask is this: compared to what?
- Everybody loves choices. Yet ample research has shown that too much of a good thing can mutate into a bad thing. In one well-known study, Sheena Iyengar of Columbia University and Mark Lepper of Stanford set up booths at an upscale grocery store in Menlo Park, California, and offered shoppers the chance to taste and subsequently purchase different flavors of jam. The first booth offered twenty-four varieties. A week later, Iyengar and Lepper set up another booth with only six varieties. Not surprisingly, more customers stopped at the booth with the vast selection than at the one with fewer choices.
- But when researchers examined what customers actually purchased, the results were so "striking" that "they appeared to challenge a fundamental assumption underlying classic psychological theories of human motivation and economic theories of rational choice." Of the consumers who visited the booth with twenty-four varieties, only 3 percent bought jam. At the booth with a more limited selection, 30 percent made a purchase. In other words. Reducing consumers' options from twenty-four choices to six resulted in a tenfold increase in sales.
- Several researchers have shown that people derive much greater satisfaction from purchasing experiences than they do from purchasing goods.
- For instance, we adapt quickly to material changes. That spectacular new BMW that so delighted us three weeks ago is now just how we get to work. But that hike on Canada's West Coast Trail lingers in our mind—and as time goes by, we tend to forget the small-level annoyances (ticks) and remember the higher-level joys (amazing sunsets). Experiences also gives us something to talk about and stories to tell,
- As a result, framing a sale in experiential terms is more likely to lead to satisfied customers and repeat business. So if you're selling a car, go easy on emphasizing the rich Corinthian leather the seats. Instead, point out what the car will allow the buyer to memories
- For one group, they called it the "Wall Street Game"; for the other, the "Community Game." Did a maneuver as innocuous as changing the label achieve results as significant as altering behavior? Absolutely, in the Wall Street Game, 33 percent of participants cooperated "and went free.
- Something similar happened back in 1975 in three fifth-grade classrooms in the Chicago Public Schools. There a trio of Northwestern University researchers randomly assigned classrooms to three groups. Over a week, students in one group were told by Teachers, janitors, and others that they were extremely neat—in fact, they had one of the neatest classrooms in their school. Children in the second group were simply used to be neat—told to pick up their trash, tidy their desks, and keep the classroom clean. The third group was the control. When investigators later measured the litter in the classrooms, and compared it with litter levels before the experiment

began, the results were unmistakable. The neatest group by far was the first—the one that had been labeled “neat.” Merely assigning that positive label—helping the students frame themselves in comparison with others—elevated their behavior.

- The blemished frame. Can a negative ever be a positive when it comes to moving others? That’s what three marketing professors investigated in a 2012 study. In one set of experiments, they presented information about a pair of hiking boots as if the study participants were shopping for them online. To half the group, researchers listed all the great things about the boots—orthopedic soles, waterproof material, a five-year warranty, and more. To the other half, they included the same list of positives, but followed it with a negative—these boots, unfortunately, came in only two colors. Remarkably, in many cases the people who’d gotten that small dose of negative information were more likely to purchase the boots than those who’d received the exclusively positive information. The researchers dubbed this phenomenon the “blemishing effect”—where “adding a minor negative detail in an otherwise positive description of a target can give that description a more positive impact.”
- Second, the negative information must follow the positive information, not the reverse. Once again, the comparison creates clarity ‘The core logic is that when individuals encounter weak negative information after already having received positive information, the weak negative information ironically highlights or increases the salience of the positive information.’
- Our initial, and very sensible, instinct is that we ought to use an achievement I frame—and emphasize the deals we’ve done, the divisions we’ve turned around, the awards we’ve accumulated. But in a fascinating and wide-ranging 2012 paper, Zakary Tormala and Jayson Jia of Stanford University and Michael Norton of the Harvard Business School suggest a different approach. What we really should do, they say, is emphasize our potential For example; these researchers put participants in the role of a National Basketball Association general manager tasked with awarding contracts to players. Some participants had to offer a contract to a player with five years of experience who had produced some impressive stats. Others had to offer a contract to a rookie who was projected to produce those same statistics during his first five seasons of play. Participants, on average, gave the veteran player with solid numbers a salary of over four million dollars for his sixth year. But they said that for the rookie’s sixth season, they’d expect to pay him more than five million dollars. Likewise, the researchers tested two different Facebook ads for the same comedian. Half the ads said the comedian, Kevin Shea, “could be the next big thing.’ The other half said, “He is the next big thing.” The first ad generated far more click-through and likes than the second. The somewhat peculiar upshot of the research, the scholars write, is that “the potential to be good at something can be preferred over actually being good at that very same thing,
- Once you’ve found the problem and the proper frame, you have one more step. You need to give people an off-ramp. A study about a college food drive illustrates this point. Students were asked to nominate two groups of peers—those “least likely” to contribute to a food drive and those “most likely” to do so. Then researchers divided each group in half. They sent half of the least likely group and half of the most likely group a letter. Addressed to each of the students by name, asking them to donate a specific type of food and including a map showing where they could drop it off A few days later, researchers gave these students a reminder phone call. The other half of each group—again, half of the least likely group and half of the most likely—received a different letter. Researchers addressed it “Dear student” rather than to a specific person. The letter didn’t

ask for a particular kind of food and didn't include a map. These students didn't receive a reminder phone call, either.

- What mattered more—the disposition of the students or the content of the letters? Among the students in the least likely group who received the less detailed letter, a whopping 0 percent contributed to the 'food drive. But their counterparts, who were more disposed to giving but who'd received the same letter, didn't exactly wow researchers with their benevolence. Only 8 percent of them made a food donation. However, the letter that gave students details on how to act had a huge effect. Twenty-five percent of students deemed least likely to contribute actually made a contribution when they received the letter with a concrete appeal, a map, and a location for donating. What moved them wasn't only the request itself, but that the requesters had provided them an off-ramp for getting to their destination. A specific request accompanied by a clear way to get it done ended up with the least likely group donating food at three times the rate of the most likely who hadn't been given a clear path of action **The lesson: Clarity** on how to think without clarity on how to act can leave people unmoved

SAMPLE CASE : Clarity

- Michael Pantalon is a research scientist at the Yale School of Medicine and a leading authority on "motivational interviewing." This technique, which originated in therapy and counseling but has since spread to other realms, seeks to spark behavior change not by coercing people, promising them rewards, or threatening them with punishments, but by tapping their inner drives. And the most effective tools for excavating people's buried drives are questions.
- However, for the purposes of moving others, all questions are not created equal, Pantalon says. "I've learned that rational questions are ineffective for motivating resistant people. Instead I've found that irrational questions actually motivate people better," he has written.
- So suppose your daughter is hemming and hawing, delaying and denying, and generally resisting studying for a big end-of-the year algebra test. Using Pantalon's approach, you wouldn't say.
 - "Young lady, you must study," or "Please, please, please study for the test." Instead, you'd ask her two questions.
 - Question 1. "On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning 'not the least bit ready' and 10 meaning 'totally ready,' how ready are you to study?"
 - Question 2. "Why didn't you pick a lower number?"
- Writes in his book *Instant Influence*. Asking why the number isn't lower is the catalyst. Most people who resist doing or believing something don't have a binary, off-on, yes-no position. So don't ask a binary, off-on, yes-no question. If your prospect has even a faint desire to move, Pantalon says, asking her to locate herself on that 1-to-10 scale can expose an apparent "No" as an actual "Maybe." Even more important, as your daughter explains her reasons for being a 4 rather than a 3, she begins announcing her own reasons for studying. She moves from defending her current behavior to articulating why, at some level, she wants to behave differently. And that, says Pantalon, allows her to clarify her personal, positive. And intrinsic motives for studying, which increases the chances she actually will.
 - So, on a scale of 1 to 10, how ready are you to try Pantalon's two-question technique? And why isn't your number lower?

Try a jolt of the unfamiliar.

- Clarity, we've learned, depends on comparison. 1. But many times we become so rutted in our own ways that we scarcely notice what we're doing or why we're doing it—which can impair our ability to bring clarity to others. Sometimes, as Tufts University psychologist Sam Sommers says, “it takes the jolt of the unfamiliar to remind you just how blind you are to your regular surroundings.” So give yourself one of the following:
 - Mini Jolt: Sit on the opposite end of the conference table at your next meeting. Travel home from work using a different route from normal. Instead of ordering what you usually do at your favorite restaurant, choose the eleventh item on the menu.
 - Half Jolt: Spend a day immersed in an environment not typically your own. If you're a schoolteacher, hang out at a friend's law office. If you're an accountant, take an afternoon and spend it with a lifeguard or park ranger.
 - Full Jolt: Travel to another country, with a culture different from your own. You'll likely return jolted—and clarified.
- In the new world of sales, being able to ask the right questions is more valuable than producing the right answers. Unfortunately, our schools often have the opposite emphasis. They teach us how to answer, but not how to ask. The folks at the Right Question Institute are trying to correct that imbalance. They've come up with a method that educators can use to help students learn to ask better questions—and that can assist even those of us who graduated back in the twentieth century. Before your next sales call, or maybe in advance of that awkward upcoming meeting with your ex-spouse or annoying boss, give RQI's step-by-step Question Formulation Technique a try.
- Go through your list of questions and categorize each one as either “closed-ended” (questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no,” or just one word) or “open-ended (questions that require an explanation
- Several books discuss some of the themes in this chapter—from framing arguments to finding problems to curating information. These are five of my favorites.
 - Influence: Science and Practice by Robert Cialdini
 - Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.
 - Switch by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.
 - Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think by Brian Wansink.
 - Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness by Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein.
- When you want to figure out what kind of problem someone has, ask a “Why?” question. Then, in response to the answer, ask another “Why?” And again and again, for a total of five whys.
- He said that in an attempt to understand the law—or, for that matter, just about anything—the key was to focus on what he termed the “one percent.” Don't get lost in the crabgrass of details, he urged us. Instead, think about the essence of what you're exploring—the one percent that gives life to the other ninety-nine. Understanding that one percent, and being able to explain it to others, is the hallmark of strong minds and good attorneys.

- Ask yourself “What’s the one percent?” If you can answer that question, and convey it to others, they’re likely to be moved.

Part Three: What to do

7. Pitch

- In the fall of 1853, an American craftsman named Elisha Otis, who had found a solution to one of the era’s toughest engineering problems, went looking for a grand stage to demonstrate his invention. At the time, many American buildings had elevators. But the mechanics of how these crude contraptions worked—a combination of ropes, pulleys, and hope—hadn’t changed much since the days of Archimedes. A thick cable pulled a platform up and down a shaft, which often worked well—unless the cable snapped, at which point the platform would crash to the ground and destroy the elevator’s contents. Otis had figured out a way around this defect. He attached a wagon spring to the platform and installed ratchet bars inside the shaft so that if the rope ever did snap, the wagon spring safety brake would activate automatically and prevent the elevator from plummeting. It was an invention with huge potential in saving money and lives, but Otis faced a skeptical and fearful public.
- So he rented out the main exhibit hall of what was then New York City’s largest convention center. On the floor of the hall he constructed an open elevator platform and a shaft in which the platform could rise and descend. One afternoon, he gathered convention-goers for a demonstration. He climbed onto the platform and directed an assistant to hoist the elevator to its top height. About three stories off the ground. Then, as he stood and gazed down at the crowd, Otis took an ax and slashed the rope that was suspending the elevator in midair. The audience gasped. The platform fell. But in seconds, the safety brake engaged and halted the elevator’s descent. Still alive and standing, Otis looked out at the shaken crowd and said, “All safe, gentlemen. All safe.”
- The moment marked two firsts. It was the first demonstration of an elevator safe enough to carry people. (Otis, you might have guessed by now, went on to found the Otis Elevator Company.) And more important for our purposes, it was a simple, succinct, and effective way to convey a complex message in an effort to move others—the world’s first elevator pitch.
- Their central finding was that the success of a pitch depends as much on the catcher as on the pitcher. In particular, Elsbach and Kramer discovered that beneath this elaborate ritual were two processes.
- But for pitchers, landing in the creative category wasn’t enough. Because a second process was at work. In the most successful pitches, the pitcher didn’t push her idea on the catcher until she extracted a yes. Instead, she invited in her counterpart as a collaborator. The more I the executives—often derided by their supposedly more artistic counterparts as “suits”—^were able to contribute, the better the idea often became, and the more likely it was to be green-lighted. The most valuable sessions were those in which the catcher “becomes so fully engaged by a pitcher that the process resembles a mutual collaboration,” the researchers found.
- The lesson here is critical: The purpose of a pitch isn’t necessarily to move others immediately to adopt your idea. The purpose is to offer something so compelling that it begins a conversation. Brings the other person in as a participant, and eventually arrives at an outcome that appeals to

both of you. In a world where buyers have ample information and an array of choices, the pitch is often the first word, but it's rarely the last.

1. The one-word pitch

- The ultimate pitch for an era of short attention spans begins with a single word—and doesn't go any further. The one-word pitch derives in part from Maurice Saatchi, who, with his brother Charles, founded the advertising agencies Saatchi & Saatchi and M&C Saatchi. For several years, Saatchi has been touting what he calls "one-word equity." He argues that a world populated with "digital natives"—those under age thirty who scarcely remember life without the Internet—has intensified the battle for attention in ways no one has fully comprehended. Attention spans aren't merely shrinking, he says. They're nearly disappearing. And the only way to be heard is to push brevity to its breaking point. "In this model, companies compete for global ownership of one word in the public mind," Saatchi writes. The companies' aim, and the aim of this type of pitch, is "to define the one characteristic they most want associated with their brand around the world, and then own it. That is one-word equity."
- When anybody thinks of you, they utter that word. When anybody utters that word, they think of you. If this aspiration seems fanciful, consider how far some companies have moved in this direction. Ask yourself: What technology company do you think of when you hear the word "search"? What credit card company comes to mind when you hear the word "priceless"? If you answered Google for the former and MasterCard for the latter, you've made Saatchi's case.
- "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"
- 2. The question pitch
- And when people summon their own reasons for believing something, they endorse the belief more strongly and become more likely to act on it. So given your knowledge of the underlying social psychology, the next time you've got a strong case to make to a prospective employer, new sales prospect, or undecided friend, do you think you should skip making a statement and instead ask a question.
- 3. The rhyming pitch
- Participants were attributing accuracy to the rhyming versions unconsciously.
- What's going on? Rhymes boost what linguists and cognitive scientists call "processing fluency," the ease with which our minds slice, dice, and make sense of stimuli. Rhymes taste great and go / down easily and we equate that smoothness with accuracy. In this way, rhyme can enhance reason.
- If you're one of a series of freelancers invited to make a presentation before a big potential client, including a rhyme can enhance the processing fluency of your listeners, allowing your message to stick in their minds when they compare you and your competitors. Remember: pitches that rhyme are more sublime.
- **No surprise there.** But they were also likely "to open messages when they had moderate levels of uncertainty about the contents, i.e. they were 'curious' what the messages were about
- **Along with utility** and curiosity is a third principle: specificity. Indeed, Brian Clark, founder of the popular Copy-blogger copywriting website, recommends that subject lines should be "ultra specific Thus a mushy subject line like Improve your golf swing achieves less than one offering 4 tips to improve your golf swing this afternoon.

- Tapping the principles of utility, curiosity, and specificity, if I were to send you an e-mail pitch about the preceding five paragraphs, I might use this subject line if I suspected your inbox was jammed: 3 simple but proven ways to get your e-mail opened. But if I thought you had a lighter e-mail load, and you already knew me well, I might use: Some weird things I just learned about e-mail.
- 5. The Twitter Pitch
- Each year the Tippie College of Business at the University of Iowa Receives more than three hundred applications for roughly seventy spots in the coming year’s MBA program. Applicants submit their university grades, scores on the standardized business school admission test, letters of recommendation, and several essays. But in 2011, Tippie added a contest to its process, one intended to test the pitching prowess of the future business leaders it would be educating. The school asked a fairly standard essay question: “What makes you an exceptional Tippie full-time M.B.A. candidate and future M.B.A. hire?” But it told applicants to respond in the form of a tweet—a micro-message of 140 or fewer characters.
- Meet the Twitter pitch, which uses Twitter as a platform and its character count as a limit on loquaciousness. One of the pioneers of this form is Stowe Boyd, a programmer, designer, and investor. In 2008 Boyd was heading to a conference and planning to meet with some start-up companies. To avoid getting buried beneath a sandstorm of eager entrepreneurs, he required any start-up seeking a meeting to send him its pitch via Twitter. This approach, said one commentator, is “quick, painless, and to-the-point. It cuts through the PR babble and forces companies to summarize what they do in 140 characters or less.” As Twitter insinuates itself more deeply into our lives, Boyd’s “twitpitch” has become another important tool in everyone’s persuasion kit.
- The types of tweets with the lowest ratings fell into three categories: Complaints (“My plane is late. Again.”); Me Now (“I’m about to order a tuna sandwich”); and Presence Maintenance (“Good morning, everyone!”). But three of the categories rated. The highest provide some insight on pitching via this new medium. For instance, readers assigned the highest ratings to tweets that asked questions of followers, confirming once again the power of the interrogative to engage and persuade.
- 6, The Pixar pitch
- Emma Coats, a former story artist at the studio, has cracked the Pixar code—and, in the process, created a template for an irresistible new kind of pitch. Coats has argued that every Pixar film shares the same narrative DNA, a deep structure of storytelling that involves six sequential sentences:
 - Once upon a time _ _____ Every day, _ _____. One day _____ Because of that, _____ Because of that, _____ until finally _____
 - Take, for example, the plot of Finding Nemo:
 - Once upon a time there was a widowed fish named Marlin who was extremely protective of his only son. Nemo. Every day. Marlin warned Nemo of the ocean’s dangers and implored him not to swim far away. One day in an act of defiance. Nemo ignores his father’s warnings and swims into the open water. Because of that, he is captured by a diver and ends up as a pet in the fish tank of a dentist in Sydney. Because of that. Marlin sets off on a journey to recover

Nemo, enlisting the help of other sea creatures along the way. Until finally Marlin and Nemo find each other, reunite, and learn that love depends on trust.

- Imagine you're a nonprofit organization that's created a home HIV test and you're looking for funders. Your Pixar pitch could go something like this:
 - Once upon a time there was a health crisis haunting many parts of Africa. Every day, thousands of people would die of AIDS and HIV-related illness, often because they didn't know they carried the virus. One day we developed an inexpensive home HIV kit that allowed people to test themselves with a simple saliva swab. Because of that, more people got tested. Because of that, those with the infection sought treatment and took measures to avoid infecting others. Until finally this menacing disease slowed its spread and more people lived longer lives.
- Your Twitter pitch could include an online link to an artist's rendering of the bridge along with a list of its benefits and entice people to click it with: See what tomorrow's Beeston and Arborville can look like & why we need to create that future.
- If you're sending information to your fellow Beeston citizens, your subject line pitch could be: 3 reasons why Beeston families support a new bridge
- - Your rhyming pitch? Opportunities are wide on the other side.
- Your question pitch could help people think through their own experiences; should it be such a pain to get to Arborville?
- And your one-word pitch could explain the reason for your efforts (not to mention an indispensable lesson of this chapter): Connect.

SAMPLE CASE: Pitch

Practice your six pitches.

- There are three ways to learn and perfect the six pitches: Practice, practice, practice. Here's a place to begin. (You can also find extra copies of this practice sheet at <http://www.danpink.com/pitch>.)
- 1. The One-Word Pitch
 - Pro tip: Write a fifty-word pitch. Reduce it to twenty-five words. Then to six words. One of those remaining half-dozen is almost certainly your one-word pitch.
- 2. The Question Pitch
 - Pro tip: Use this if your arguments are strong. If they're weak, make a statement. Or better yet, find some new arguments.
- 3. The Rhyming Pitch
 - Pro tip: Don't rack your brain for rhymes. Go online and find a rhyming dictionary. I'm partial to Rhyme Zone (<http://www.rhymezone.com>).
- 4. The Subject Line Pitch
 - Pro tip: Review the subject lines of the last twenty e-mail messages you've sent. Note how many of them appeal to either utility or curiosity. If that number is less than ten, rewrite each one that fails the test.
- 5. The Twitter Pitch

- Pro tip: Even though Twitter allows 140 characters. Limit your pitch to 120 characters so that others can pass it on. Remember: The best pitches are short, sweet, and easy to retweet.
- 6. The Pixar Pitch
 - Pro tip: Read all twenty-two of former Pixar story artist Emma Coats's story rules: <http://bit.ly/jlVWrG>
- Answer three key questions.
 - As you prepare your pitch, whichever variety you choose, clarify your purpose and strategy by making sure you can answer these three questions:
 - After someone hears your pitch...
 - 1. What do you want them to know?
 - 2. What do you want them to feel?
 - 3. What do you want them to do?
- Go first if you're the incumbent, last if you're the challenger.
- Granular numbers are more credible than coarse numbers.

8. Improvise

- 'Like the thirteen executives here with me—they hail from large companies like Bank of America and from digital start-ups with oddly spelled names—I've come to study with a master. Her name is Cathy Salit.
- She runs a company called Performance of a Lifetime
- The second innovator was Keith Johnstone, a Brit who worked for years at London's Royal Court Theatre. As he grew weary of conventional theater he, too, began devising his own set of looser. Less traditional performance techniques. And in 1979 he wrote what many consider the seminal work in the field, *Improv: Improvisation and the Theatre*. (The founders of Palantir, a company I mentioned in Chapter 2, ask all employees to read *Improv* before starting their jobs.)
- in those circumstances and many others, you'll do better if you follow three essential rules of improvisational theater: (1) Hear offers. (2) Say "Yes and." (3) Make your partner look good.
- And to master this aspect of improvisation, we must rethink our understanding of what it is to listen and what constitutes an offer.
- For all the listening we do each day—by some estimates, it occupies one-fourth of our waking hours—it's remarkable how profoundly we neglect this skill. As the American philosopher. Mortimer Adler wrote thirty years ago:
 - Is anyone anywhere taught how to listen? How utterly amazing is the general assumption that the ability to listen well is a natural gift for which no training is required. How extraordinary is the fact that no effort is made anywhere in the whole educational process to help individuals learn how to listen well.
- Little wonder, then, that so few of us, in fact, do listen well.
- That's why Salit's training emphasizes slowing down and shutting up as the route to listening well. We learn this in another exercise, called "Amazing Silence," where I'm paired with a top V television executive about ten years my senior. The rules: One person has to reveal to the other something important to him. The other person, who must make eye contact the entire time, then responds—but he must wait fifteen seconds before uttering a word.

- The executive opens his heart more than I expect. He tells me that after thirty-two years of demanding work, he's questioning whether what he's doing now is what he should be doing forever and whether it's time to leave the jackal-eat-jackal savannah of New York media. His eyes water a bit as he speaks, which makes me even more uncomfortable than I was doing the vertical bebop I with the high-heeled cosmetics vice president.
- When he's finished, I have to respond. But not yet. I begin counting down the seconds in my head. Fifteen. Fourteen. Thirteen. No breaking eye contact. Twelve. Eleven. This is agonizing. Ten. When will the madness end?
- It does end. But those fifteen seconds feel preposterously long and, as in the earlier exercise, disturbingly intimate. And that's what Salit wants. Listening without some degree of intimacy isn't | really listening. It's passive and transactional rather than active and engaged. Genuine listening is a bit like driving on a rain-slicked highway. Speed kills. If you want to get to your destination, you're better off decelerating and occasionally hitting the brake. The ultimate idea, she says, uncorking a small bottle of Zen in the cramped conference room when the session is over, is to "listen without listening for anything."
- In 1981 he coauthored *Getting to Yes*, the most influential book ever written about negotiation.

SAMPLE CASE Improvise

- This is a group activity that you can use to make a memorable point. Along with yourself, you'll need at least two more people as participants. Have everyone assemble themselves into pairs. Then ask each pair to "hook the fingers of your right hands and raise your thumbs." Then, give the sole instruction: "Now get your partner's thumb down." Remain silent and allow the pairs to finish the task. Most participants will assume that your instructions mean for them to thumb-wrestle. However, there are many other ways that they could get their partner's thumb down. They could ask nicely. They could unhook their own fingers and put their own thumb down. And so on.
- The lesson here is that too often our starting point is competition—a win-lose, zero-sum approach rather than the win-win, positive-sum approach of improvisation. In most circumstances that involve moving others, we have several ways to accomplish a task, most of which can make our partners look good in the process.

9. Serve

- Others featured text accompanied by "explicit and gruesome images of severed body parts." But all urged passengers to take action—to implore their driver to slow down, to complain loudly when he attempted breakneck maneuvers, and to browbeat him until he operated the matatu more like mild-mannered Dr. Jekyll than maniacal Mr. Hyde. The researchers dubbed their strategy "heckle and chide."
- Over the next year, the team found that passengers riding in matatus bearing stickers were three times as likely to heckle drivers as those in the stickerless matatus. But did the efforts of these loudmouthed passengers move the drivers or affect the safety of their journeys?
- To find out, the researchers examined a database of claims from the insurance companies that covered the matatus. The results: Total insurance claims for the vehicles with stickers fell by nearly two-thirds from the year before. Claims for serious accidents (those involving injury or

death) fell by more than 50 percent. And based on follow-up interviews the researchers conducted with drivers, it was clear that the passengers' vocal persuasion efforts were the reason. In other words, adding a few stickers to the minibuses saved more money and spared more lives than just about any other effort

- Instead, it's a broader, deeper, and more transcendent definition of service—improving others' lives and, in turn, improving the world.
- Make it personal and make it purposeful.
- When the radiologists sat at their computers and called up one of these patients' CT scans to make an assessment, the patient's photograph automatically appeared next to the image. After they'd made their assessments, the radiologists completed a questionnaire. All of them reported feeling "more empathy to the patients after seeing the photograph" and being more meticulous in the way they examined the scan. But the real power of Turner's idea revealed itself three months later.
- One of the skills that separate outstanding radiologists from average ones is their ability to identify what are called "incidental findings," abnormalities on a scan that the physician wasn't looking for and that aren't related to the ailment for which the patient is being treated. For example, suppose I suspect that I've broken my arm and I go to the hospital for an X-ray. The doctor's main job is to see if my ulna is fractured. But if she also spots an unrelated cyst near my elbow, that's an "incidental finding." Turner selected eighty-one of the photo-accompanied scans in which his radiologists had found incidental findings and presented them again to the same group of radiologists three months later—only this time without the picture of the patient. (Because radiologists read so many images each day, and because they were blind to what Turner was studying, they didn't know they'd already seen these particular scans.)
- The outcome was startling. Turner discovered that "80% of the incidental findings were not reported when the photograph was omitted from the file." Even though the physicians were looking at precisely the same image they had scrutinized ninety days earlier, this time they were far less meticulous and far less accurate. "Our study emphasizes approaching the patient as a human being and not as an anonymous case study," Turner told ScienceDaily.
- Turner's study shows—and because of his work, photographs are 'now being added to Pap smear specimens, blood tests, and other diagnostics—injecting the personal into the professional can boost performance and increase quality of care.
- He's selling fresh antipasti, linguine alle vongole, and certified Neapolitan pizza to hungry families. But with this sign, he's transforming his offering from distant and abstract—Washington, D.C., is not short on places that serve pizza and pasta—to concrete and personal. And he's going it in an especially audacious way. For Farruggio, service isn't about delivering a calzone in twenty-nine minutes. For him, service is about literally being at the call of his customers.
- The researchers weighed the bags of soap and gel at the beginning of the two-week period and weighed them again at the end to see how much the employees actually used. And when they tabulated the results, they found that the most effective sign, by far. Was the second one. "The amount of hand-hygiene product used from dispensers with the patient-consequences sign was significantly greater than the amount used from dispensers with the personal-consequences sign, or the control sign," Grant and Hofmann wrote.

- But Grant and Hofmann reveal something equally crucial: “Our findings suggest that health and safety messages should focus not on the self, but rather on the target group that is perceived as most vulnerable.”
- About half of the people in the second and third groups—the “self-interested” and control groups—recycled their papers. But in the “self-transcending” first group, nearly 90 percent chose to recycle. Merely discussing purpose in one realm (car-sharing) moved people to behave differently in a second realm (recycling).
- For two consecutive nights, one group read stories from people who’d previously worked in the call center, explaining that the job had taught them useful sales skills (perhaps attunement, buoyancy, and clarity). This was the “personal benefit group.” Another—the “purpose group”—read stories from university alumni who’d received scholarships funded by the money this call center had raised describing how those scholarships had helped them. The third collection of callers was the control group, who read stories that had nothing to do with either personal benefit or purpose. After the reading exercise, the workers hit the phones, admonished not to mention the stories they’d just read to the people they were trying to persuade to donate money.
- A few weeks later, Grant looked at their sales numbers. The “personal benefit” and control groups secured about the same number of pledges and raised about the same amount of money as they had in the period before the story-reading exercise. But the people in the purpose group kicked into overdrive. They more than doubled “the number of weekly pledges that they earned and the amount of weekly donation money that they raised.”
- The time is ripe for the sales version of Greenleaf’s philosophy. Call it servant selling. It begins with the idea that those who move others aren’t manipulators but servants. They serve first and sell later. And the test—which, like Greenleaf’s, is the best and the ‘most difficult to administer—is this: If the person you’re selling to agrees to buy, will his or her life improve? When your interaction over, will the world be a better place than when you began?

SAMPLE CASE: Serve

- **Anytime you’re** tempted to upsell someone else, stop what you’re doing and up-serve instead. Don’t try to increase what they can do for you. Elevate what you can do for them.
- One way to do better is with what I call “emotionally intelligent signage.” Most signs typically have two functions:
- Achieves those same ends by enlisting the principles of “make personal” and “make it purposeful.”
- My Cortisol level dropped. The line turned out not to be nearly as long as I feared. And I spent my short wait in a better mood. By empathizing with line-waiters—making it personal—the sign transformed the experience of being in that space.
- For an example of the second variety of emotionally intelligent signs, I simply visited a neighborhood near my own in Washington, D.C. On one busy corner is a small church that sits on an enormous lawn. Many people in the area walk their dogs. And the combination of lots of dogs and a giant expanse of grass can lead to an obvious (and odorous) problem. To avert that problem, that is, to move dog-walkers to change their behavior, the church could have posted a sign that merely announced its rules. Something like this, for instance, which I’ve doctored a bit from the original:

- However, the church took a different approach and posted the following sign instead:
 - Children play here. Pick up after your dog.
- By reminding people of the reason for the rule and trying to trigger empathy on the part of those dog-walkers—making it purposeful—the sign-makers increased the likelihood that people would behave as the sign directed.
- Now your assignment: Take one of the signs you now use or see in your workplace or community and recast it so it's more emotionally intelligent. By making it personal, or making it purposeful, you'll make it better.
- By removing the cloak of anonymity and replacing it with this form of personal connection, you're more likely to genuinely serve, which over the long haul will redound to everyone's benefit.
- Always ask—and answer—these two questions.
- **Finally, at every** opportunity you have to move someone—from traditional sales, like convincing a prospect to buy a new computer system, to non-sales selling, like persuading your daughter to do her homework—be sure you can answer the two questions at the core of genuine service.
 - 1. If the person you're selling to agrees to buy, will his or her life improve?
 - 2. When your interaction is over, will the world be a better place than when you began?