

# The Essence of Selling By Giving<sup>SM</sup>

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## Introduction

In our society, it often seems like we have to pick either money or meaning, success or fulfillment, profit or purpose – particularly when it comes to our career. Many of us have come to believe that business means war, that selling means taking, and that if we're to make money it means we have to check our hearts at the door. And it's true that many people practice business that way. However, the most successful salespeople – by far – are the ones who serve instead of sell. And in the long run, the most successful businesses are the ones founded on a total commitment to providing exceptional value.



Selling By Giving<sup>SM</sup> is a set of principles and practices that allow us to do business in ways that create both fulfillment and success. It empowers us to bring our whole selves to work – it empowers us to be spiritual, loving and joyful, while also being profitable and successful. It teaches us how to use our core desires for growth and giving to create both money and meaning. It shows us how we can build our businesses on love and service – and in doing so, learn to love being in business.

## The 12 Core Principles of Selling By Giving

Selling By Giving is based on a set of 12 core principles.

1. The fundamental currency of business is not money – it's trust.
2. Our highest and deepest need is not for money – it's for meaning.
3. Meaning comes from growth and giving – from two of the highest forms of love.
4. People are increasingly seeking both money and meaning from business. Where money once was a scarce commodity, today we live in a country where people *drive* to their protests. Increasingly, the most sought after commodity is shifting from **money** to **meaning** – and many people want both.
5. Love and business are based on fundamentally different value systems – love and giving vs. money and fairness. This deep seated conflict has caused most organizations to pick either profits or purpose as their primary goal (i.e. for-profit vs. non-profit organizations). In fact, in many businesses, profits have become the only metric that matters.
6. Because of this, Selling By Taking has become the most common way of doing sales. In response, we've developed deep, fear based associations that sales means taking, and we've built powerful defenses to being sold.

7. Selling By Taking is not wrong. So long as business is played fairly, and is governed by an adequate set of regulations, the magic secret of capitalism is that it transmutes selfishness into service. Competition for customers means that even Selling By Taking ultimately involves competing over who can provide the most value. However, it does come with a number of challenges. In addition to the fears and defenses it creates, Selling By Taking isn't fulfilling, it harms the planet, it's painful to practice, and it's becoming increasingly ineffective.
8. Business doesn't have to be this way. Many people yearn to engage in conscious business – they just don't yet know how. And while people dislike being sold, they love being served.
9. In conscious business, sales and marketing is where the rubber really meets the road. This is where the core values conflicts between love and business most have to be addressed, in order to embrace both money and meaning. One way to do this is by mastering the practices of Selling By Giving.
10. When practiced wisely and authentically, Selling By Giving is both more meaningful and more successful than Selling By Taking.
11. There are two primary aspects to a Selling By Giving relationship: the level of **trust** that exceptional value will be provided, and the level of **commitment** to doing so. The primary way that clients demonstrate their commitment is by investing their time and money. And the primary mistakes in sales are asking for commitment before sufficient trust has been established – or not asking at all.
12. In many cases, the fastest and easiest way to create enough trust to make a sale is by **giving away tastes of your exceptional value**. Remarkably, when practiced according to its 3 Keys and 6 Essential Elements, Selling By Giving allows us to give our way to both business success, spiritual growth and personal fulfillment.

## The 3 Keys to Selling By Giving

I define spirituality as the process of finding meaning and fulfillment through growth and giving. In other words, it's the practice and experience of love. So how do we create a conscious business that brings together the conflicting value systems underlying spirituality and business? There are three keys that allow us to do so.

1. **Provide Exceptional Value.** Selling By Giving starts by adopting a **total commitment to providing exceptional value**. This is the magic element that allows us to unify spirituality and business. It translates the ethic of **giving** into the context of business. And it provides a safety net that frees us from having to be perfect. We all have aspects of ourselves that yearn to give and aspects that yearn to take. Even when we feel like engaging in Selling By Taking, our commitment to providing exceptional value ensures

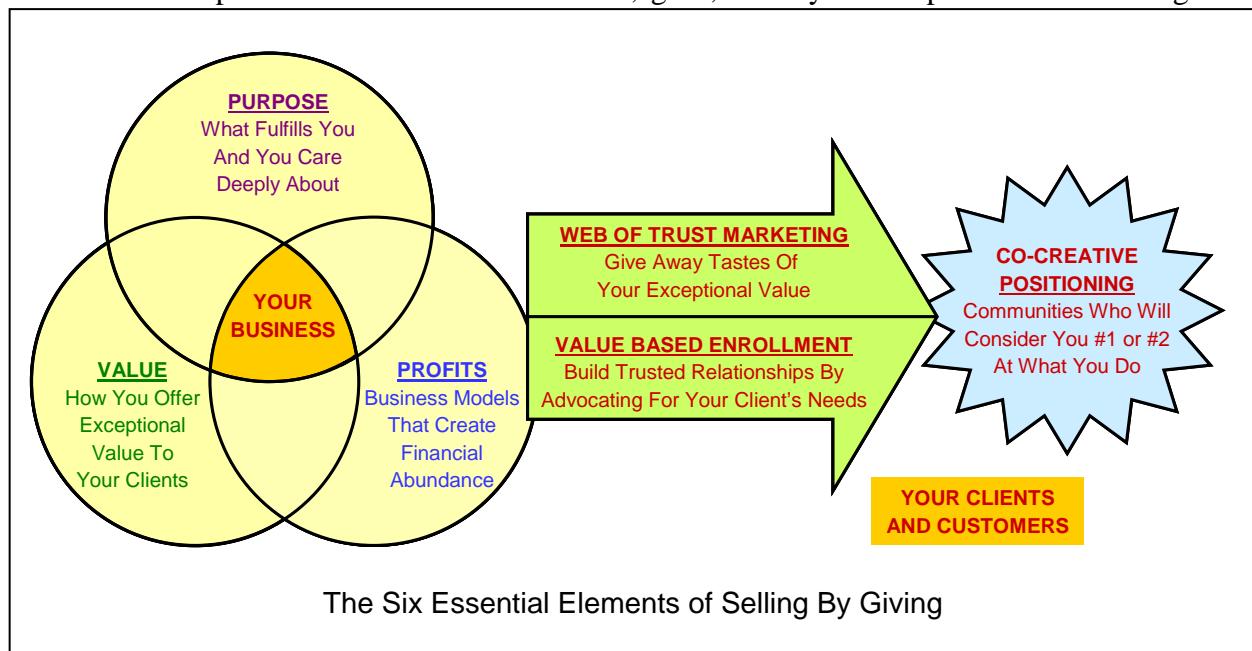
that each sale is a gift. This creates self-trust and allows us to strive for excellence instead of perfection.

2. **Practice a Learning Orientation to Life.** The next step is to embrace the inner conflicts that conscious business brings up, and use our negative emotions as opportunities for learning, upliftment and growth. This step translates the ethic of **growth** into the context of business. It involves taking **100% personal responsibility** for our emotions, and mastering Five Core Practices: **acceptance, loving self-discipline, self-awareness, healing, and self-forgiveness.** Doing so turns business practice into spiritual practice, management into authentic leadership, and boring jobs into a meaningful career.
3. **Only Connect.** Selling is based on building relationships. Selling By Taking does so by **speaking at** people, while Selling By Giving builds relationships by **connecting with** them. This step translates the ethic of **loving relationships** into the context of business. It involves focusing more on listening than on talking, and by communicating in ways that are **authentic, transparent and client-focused.**

## The 6 Essential Elements of Selling By Giving

The 3 Keys of Selling By Giving create the space to integrate spirituality with business. Then to complete the process, there are 6 Essential Elements that a Selling By Giving based business must master. Together, these provide a set of core leverage points for creating a conscious business – they define the 10% of your efforts that will determine 90% of your results.

1. **Purpose.** There are three root sources of motivation: avoiding pain, seeking pleasure, and the power of love. Procrastination, guilt, anxiety and depression are not signs of



weakness or unworthiness – they’re the natural result of trying to use pain to jolt ourselves towards success. This happens when our motivation is based on “I fear,” “I need” and “I should.” Dependence on negative motivators is both the root cause and primary result of Selling By Taking. And it’s an epidemic. Remarkably, most of us have become addicted to negative motivators – we’ve become addicted to pain. This pattern is so prevalent we no longer even call it pain – we call it stress. In contrast, the power of love is based on the simultaneous practice of acceptance and loving self-discipline, and is sourced out of our deeply wired desires for growth and giving. In other words, Selling By Giving is based on love: loving our work, loving our clients, loving what we sell, and loving our selves. Now, this doesn’t happen by deciding that “*I should be loving,*” for the power of love is based not on “I should” but on “I choose.” It happens by connecting with what we most want (i.e. self-awareness), by developing habits of making self-honoring choices (i.e. loving self-discipline), and by adopting a Learning Orientation to Life (i.e. through acceptance, loving self-discipline, self-awareness, healing and self-forgiveness).

2. **Value.** A commitment to providing exceptional value allows us to bring together purpose and profit. One way to provide exceptional value, particularly for people in the helping professions, is by developing a loving presence. For managers, it can involve developing their capacities for authentic leadership. For small businesses, it can involve building deep, personalized relationships that larger companies have a hard time matching. For social entrepreneurs, it can involve donating to charitable causes, so that each purchase allows the customer to give a gift and be of service. In all cases, it requires doing something different, so you can move out of commoditized, cost-based pricing and into value-based pricing. It requires getting regular, honest feedback from your customers about the level of value they feel they’re receiving. And for all but the largest companies, it involves the principle that less is more – that the more tightly we define a market niche, the more value we can offer each person in it that we’re seeking to serve.
3. **Profits.** While naked greed doesn’t work as the foundation of a conscious business, neither does naked giving. When we refuse to charge what our products and services are worth, or when we adopt unprofitable business models, we can be completely on purpose – and completely broke. Just as food and water are essential for a person’s survival, income and profits are essential for a company’s survival. And healthy profits require more than just exceptional value – they also require a profitable business model. There are many more ways to structure a business that will cause it to lose money, than there are structures that will cause it to make money. Put another way, a business model is like a car engine. There are many pieces that must work together for an engine to function. The same holds true for a business model. And we can set as many positive intentions as we like, but if the engine doesn’t work, the car’s not going to take us where we want to go.

4. **Web of Trust Marketing.** Traditional marketing is becoming increasingly ineffective, particularly for small businesses and people who are self-employed. Because of the combination of advertising overload and our association of sales as taking, we've developed tremendous defenses to anything that smells of sales. The new holy grail of marketing is “viral marketing” or “word of mouth marketing” – but how do you make this happen? We do it by **giving away tastes of exceptional value to our web of trust**. Instead of creating each relationship from scratch, we harness existing, trust based networks. These networks are wide open, because they are based on love and giving rather than profit and taking. At the same time, they are exquisitely sensitive to Selling By Taking – taking energy acts like acid on these webs. On the other hand, magic often happens when we offer tastes of exceptional value to a web of trust; clearly communicate who and how we serve; act with authenticity, transparency and client-focus; and make it easy for people to pass these gifts on to their friends.
5. **Value Based Enrollment.** While both marketing and sales involve communication, marketing is primarily a **filtering** process, while sales is primarily a **relationship building** process. Marketing is about finding people who might be a fit for our exceptional value – and equally important, quickly eliminating those who are not. Once we've connected with people we could potentially serve, value based enrollment involves nurturing the two primary aspects to a Selling By Giving relationship: the level of **trust** that exceptional value will be provided, and the level of **commitment** to doing so. The easiest way to develop this trust is usually by giving the client a direct experience of your exceptional value. Then the primary ways that clients demonstrate their commitment is by investing their time and money. And the primary mistakes in sales are either asking for commitment before sufficient trust has been established – or not asking at all. So, the ideal enrollment process involves a series of stair-steps, where the flat piece of each step involves creating trust, the upwards piece involves creating commitment, and the trust-building steps are larger than the commitment-requesting ones. If the commitment request is too large, it moves from being a stepping stone to a wall. And if it's too small, the business won't generate the profits it needs to survive. So value based enrollment is based on a trust-commit, trust-commit process. Each step builds a relationship based on a shared goal – the intention to create exceptional value for the client, in ways that also create healthy profits for the business.
6. **Co-Creative Positioning.** Perhaps the most common challenge with communication is our tendency to be self-focused rather than other-focused: our tendency to **speak at** our audience rather than **connect with** them. Similarly, when faced with the question “*what do you do?*” we tend to answer in terms of our solutions and capabilities (what we think about) rather than in terms of the needs we serve (what our clients think about). Ultimately, customers care about what it is they want (i.e. the benefits they're seeking) rather than what it is we provide (i.e. the features we offer). And less is more: the more



we focus our market niche, the more value we can provide to each person in that niche. So how do we find our niche? We look for underserved needs. We take action. We listen for feedback. And we look for patterns. We practice answering the four key questions that define our positioning. “**Why do I serve?**” “**Who do I serve?**” “**What need do I serve?**” And “**How do I provide exceptional value?**” We course-correct. We let our positioning find us as much as we find it. And we look for communities where we can realistically become known as being #1 or #2 at what we do. A community is a group that’s tightly connected by word of mouth referrals. And when we become known within a community as one of the top two solutions that provides exceptional value in regards to a particular need, word of mouth tends to hit critical mass, the phone starts ringing, and our Selling By Giving practice takes on a life of its own.

## **About the Author**

*Brian serves as a coach, author, speaker and facilitator. By the age of 30, he had received a Ph.D. in C.S. from U.C. Berkeley, raised \$20 million for two startups, become an internationally known speaker and academic, made and lost millions – and burnt out twice. This was followed by six years of deep inner work and a M.A. in Spiritual Psychology from the University of Santa Monica, and he now focuses on the integration of spirituality, psychology and business. Today, Brian delights in doing business in a different, more loving, more purpose filled way – and in helping others do the same. He specializes in supporting entrepreneurs and executives as they build companies that create both money and meaning. He writes the [conscious business column](#) for the Huffington Post; is the author of both [Selling By Giving](#) and the soon to be published [Love Beyond Belief](#); and has appeared on programs as diverse as the NBC show [Starting Over](#) and the MIT CIO Symposium.*

## **For More Information**

*If you would like to learn more about Selling By Giving, please feel free to visit:*

[www.sellingbygiving.net](http://www.sellingbygiving.net)

*Are you a coach, counselor, healer or other type of service professional? If so, we’d love to give you a \$100 practice building kit as an example of Selling By Giving.*

[www.consciousbusinessnow.com](http://www.consciousbusinessnow.com)

*Are you interested in businesses that provide both money and meaning? That focus on more than just the single bottom line? If so, welcome. Come join the conscious business movement.*

[www.corecoaching.org](http://www.corecoaching.org)

*Are you an entrepreneur or executive, looking to take your business or social enterprise to the next level? Core Coaching provides coaching, speaking and training services that help businesses radically increase both the amount of money and meaning they create.*