

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# GENERATING IDEAL CLIENTS WITH A SERVING MINDSET

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*Selling is serving, helping others find solutions, impacting lives positively with passion and integrity.*

—Farshad Asl

People often ask me, “Does having a serving mindset really work?”

I can definitively say yes. However, there are a few conditions—you have to generally want to help other people, have a desire to make a significant meaningful impact in their business, and lastly, enjoy connecting with other people. If you can say with integrity that you’re about all of those things, then this will work. If you don’t care about that stuff, I guarantee this won’t work.

Shifting into a mindset of serving rather than selling can be a significant advantage and asset in consultative sales. When experts, consultants, and alike adopt a serving mindset, they prioritize understanding their customers’ needs, challenges, and goals. Rather than focusing solely on closing deals, they seek to build relationships based on trust, empathy, and genuine care.

Think about the last time you interacted with a sales person where they spent more time telling you what you want instead of allowing you to tell them what you want. Frustrating, right? You see, we all have a deep desire to be heard and understood, and we live in a world where people just try to scream louder or scream more to be heard and understood. When you take a serving approach to consultative sales and allow someone to be genuinely heard and understood, you stick out. The experience you give someone is differentiated, and they make an assessment that their life is better off with you in it than without you.

This approach gives you the ability to listen and understand, so you can tailor your solutions to address specific pain points and offer the most relevant products or services. Consultative sales is quickly turning into a relevance game more than anything now. So, you have to co-create offers with prospects that are target at their specific pain points to create relevance with them. There is a lot of competition in the marketplace, so you have to stick out in as many ways as you can.

Instead of pushing products or services onto customers, you act as trusted advisor, offering guidance and expertise to help clients make informed decisions. This approach fosters long-term partnerships and customer loyalty, as clients feel valued and supported throughout their journeys.

This level of attentiveness and customization creates a distinct competitive advantage, as customers appreciate the individualized attention and are more likely to choose a provider that genuinely understands their needs.

So, the questions are—how do you get into this mindset and how do you operate this way? I'll explain (1) how you experience it, (2) how the buyer experiences it, and

then talk about (3) how to get it done. This way you know the orientation and how to approach it, so you can start doing it for yourself today.

## **1—How You Experience It**

### **It Takes the Pressure off You**

Many people I have met, have so much sales hesitancy it keeps them from the success they deserve. They need to bring on clients but hate the things needed to accomplish it. It's like torture, but sales doesn't have to be that way. It can be enjoyable for anyone.

A serving approach to sales feels more natural because the orientation of serving others is a natural state for all of us. We're built to do that. Exploring how to help someone versus selling to them just makes you look at the situation differently. Getting a "sale" is way more stressful than figuring out how to help someone. It's a mindset that just feels different. There isn't a tug of war between you and the buyer, as you are both working toward the same goal.

### **You Learn How to Get Out of Your Own Way**

Selling through serving gets exciting and exhilarating for a lot of people because you start learning what's possible for yourself. We all can be our own worst enemy, and the stories we tell ourselves around selling somebody a product or service has a lot of negative undertones. Things like: "They are going to judge you," "They're going to think you don't really want to help them and just want to sell them something," or "You're just trying to take advantage of them, so you can make money." These stories get in the way of mindsets that produce results for you.

Serving is a mindset that allows you to have stories that are productive, positive, open to possibility, and that allow you to operate from a space of feeling authentic. One of the biggest challenges people in sales situations have is that they have negative stories that generate anxiousness, nervousness, and uncertainty. These all get reduced greatly or removed in a serving approach to sales.

### **You Become Fully Present with Someone and Not All Inside Your Head**

The service approach allows you to feel like you are more in control of your actions and the situation because you're calm, collected, and present. Salespeople feel like they "fail" when sales meetings and prospect situations get out of control. When you are not operating from a space of fear and anxiety, you don't miss things you should have seen or heard, you ask questions or make statements that are very appropriate and on-point, and you maneuver through situations with ease and confidence.

Most importantly, you also start learning how you can make a meaningful impact with the business or business owner. Many of my clients have told me that this gives them more purpose and fulfillment in their craft and chosen expertise.

## **2—How the Buyer Experiences It**

### **You Fulfill a Basic Human Need**

First off, this approach gives the buyer an experience that they have been longing for but are convinced doesn't exist. You fulfill the buyer's need to feel heard and understood. It's something that is engrained in all of us—we want other people to "get

us” because that is deeply lacking in the world we live in because we are so divided and separated.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs describes that we all have a desire for “belonging.” We want to feel that we are a part of something. So, giving buyers the opportunity to be heard and understood creates a sense of community—aka, a sense of belonging. Buyers want to feel that they can address their issues and concerns with you as part of a team. When you are part of the team doing this, buyers don’t feel like you are an adversary “selling” them something. They feel that you are both “sitting on the same side of the table,” working together. They then make an assessment that their life is better off with you in it than without you.

### **They Don’t Feel Like They Are Being Sold Something**

No one wants to be sold, but everyone wants to buy. By default, buyers immediately assess that you are going to “sell” them. With the serving mindset they quickly realize you’re not trying to sell them something. It becomes, in neuro-linguistic programming terms, a pattern interrupt. They expect your behavior to be a certain pattern and when that pattern doesn’t show up, they can’t respond like they usually do. This in and of itself allows them to view you differently. What it practically does is it creates a safe space for them to be transparent and truthful. All of which is helpful to you and them in the sales process. Traditional sales tactics make buyers closed off and only tell you half-truths because they feel it’s a “me versus you” orientation because they are being sold something and not getting help.

## **They Realize That Your Agenda Is Actually Their Agenda**

Control is a dynamic that is being jockeyed for in sales conversations. Buyers and sellers both want it. Buyers are constantly trying to stay on their agenda as a tactic to not be sold something that isn't a fit or a need of theirs. Consciously and subconsciously, they are worried that if they get off their agenda, they will lose control and waste time in a meeting with you. So, following their agenda allows them to open up and reveal more. They realize they don't have to play the games that they usually play in defense of trying to stay on their agenda.

## **3—How to Get into the Mindset and Do It**

Detach from the outcome. First and foremost, I'm not saying, don't care about the outcome or don't prep for the outcome. What I am saying is, don't hold on to the outcome that you want so deeply that it gets in your way. The biggest challenge people have is wanting the outcome to happen so much that they can't be present in the moment. To serve someone you have to be fully present and paying attention, as well as listening to figure out how you can serve them, and if you can at all, at that.

Get really clear on your ideal client. For this you have to know who it is and who it isn't that you serve. Full clarity is knowing both sides of the coin. Because when you don't know both sides, what happens is we try to take someone that kind of looks like an ideal client, and then we convince ourselves that they are. When you know who your ideal client is, you know how to listen for the problems that they have, in the specific ways that they have them. This way you really are clear about what's really going on with them. Buyers want you to really understand not only what problems they have but

how those problems affect them. This gives you so much insight into their world that it allows them to assess that you are there to help and not just to sell.

“No” has to be an option. What I mean by this is that you both—seller and buyer—have to have “no” as a valid option in regards to working together. You must be able to walk into meetings, knowing that you can and may decline moving to the next step with as much power as the buyer has to do that. Without that you can’t be fully present and listen to someone when all you’re trying to do is get that person to say yes.

The paradox that this creates is the fact that the more meetings you enter with “no” as an option, the more sales meetings you are going to have. Prospects, clients, and referral resources will introduce you to other prospects because they know that you are someone that’s a low-risk introduction. They understand that you are just going to come in and understand their situation and not move forward unless it’s a good fit. People will be more than happy to introduce you and say things like, “No matter what, Bryan will just help you figure out what the right solution is and it may or may not be him.” The levels of trust that you obtain entering conversations under this pretense and orientation are levels that many professionals in a sales situation dream of.

Embrace curiosity. This by far has been one of the most practical and effective ways to serve people and acquire raving fans as clients. It keeps you from many of the bad sales behaviors that buyers loathe. It also helps you get a deep understanding of the situation that the buyers are in. Remember earlier how I stated people have a basic need to be heard and understood? Curiosity is the main key to unlocking that experience for a buyer. I’ve also noticed that with a perspective of curiosity, you tend to not worry about what to say because it makes you more present. You tend to always

know what to ask that would reveal important information that helps you and the buyer connect on being the right fit for each other.

Learn how to listen on a deep level. Many people say they are good listeners, but all they do is stop talking without actually listening. Combining listening and curiosity creates a superpower of being able to build a client base of raving fans. Deep levels of listening allow for a differentiated experience for your buyer. When you have the ability to not only get surface-level information, it allows you to get the meaning behind it, and something magical happens. Buyers tell you exactly what to offer to them and how to offer it to them. It's always there to be uncovered. The challenge is most salespeople stop when they get surface-level info because they found a buyer's pain or concern. When you listen at a deep level, you start realizing that the pain or concern is just the starting point of where you have to go. When you dive into the meaning of that pain or concern, buyers start a process of deep trust with you because you are one of the only people to get them.

Make the meetings all about the buyer. You have probably heard this a million times yet experienced yourself talking way too much. The challenge is we are wired to be self-centered. The favorite subject for everyone to talk about is ourselves, and when we are not talking about ourselves, our favorite subject is thinking about ourselves. So, why not utilize this phenomenon to get buyers to tell you everything you need? They are wired to do that, if you just stop focusing on your favorite subject and focus on theirs. Utilizing this and deep listening allows the prospect to make an assessment that you are different compared to the others they interact with in sales situations. When you allow

someone to tell you everything you need to know and do it in a differentiated way, you become a valuable partner, not a “service provider.”

Align your client-centric words with actions. Many companies and people say that they are client-centric, but then the experience with them is the exact opposite. They talk about themselves and how awesome they are, a lot. They dominate conversations. They ignore the wants and desires of prospects because “they know what their clients need.” Their sales process is all about the company or salesperson. You must make the client the center of everything. Everything you do and how you show up must be aligned. Your offers must be client-centric, your sales process must be client-centric and how you serve must be client-centric.

Listen for promises and make offers into them. When you align with someone’s promises, they feel like you are on the same team. Pain and problems are the things blocking prospects from their promises. What prospects are really buying is your help to fulfill promises they made. So, stopping at the pain or problem is only halfway to the most powerful thing to align with. Making an offer to remove a pain is not connected to their strongest desire, but their promises are.

When you make an offer to help someone fulfill a promise, they feel like you are serving them and not selling them. You connect with them on a deeper level because pain or problems are on the surface and promises are below. We all make promises and then try to fulfill them, but few people take the time to assist us in making them come to fruition. Heck, you are reading this book because you are trying to fulfill a promise to yourself, your family, and/or your boss. The pain you have is that you don’t feel that your sales mindset is strong enough to fulfill that promise. So, I could say that

this book could help remove that pain. On the other hand, I could ask you, “Why does it matter that you remove that pain?” and it’s highly likely you will reveal all or a part of a promise you made. It could be: “So I can buy my significant other a house,” “So I can hit my quota,” or “So I can make one million dollars.” Each one of these respectively is a form of promise to your significant other, your boss, and yourself. So, removing the pain is only half of what prospects want to accomplish.

I’ve seen the approach of serving vs. selling completely transform someone’s business and results. Sales becomes something that empowers them to make the impact they desire in other businesses instead of it being a dreaded activity they loath. It takes the unnecessary pressure they put on themselves and gives them the confidence they need to produce the results they are looking for. This approach is also such a natural state for people that they feel more authentic because they don’t have to “be a salesperson.” So, if you want to either produce more results or stop feeling all the negative things you feel around sales, I encourage you to take on this mindset of serving and watch yourself soar to new heights!

### **About the Author**

Bryan McDonald spent his whole 23-plus-year career in new revenue growth, focused on a superior sales strategy that has a track record of success by serving versus selling people. He’s a partner at onPurpose Growth, a coaching and consulting firm that serves entrepreneurs who have ambitious yearly or multi-year revenue goals to actually fulfill that ambition.

Bryan also is the board president of two non-profits. One is a men's Christian leadership development organization called Battel Cry International, helping men become better fathers, leaders, and men. The other is Fox Valley Entrepreneurship Center (FVEC.org), which invests in the growth of local businesses in the suburbs of Chicago. In his free time, Bryan enjoys life with his wife and two daughters.

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