

THE BIG IDEAS

We're All in Sales Now
Welcome to the club!

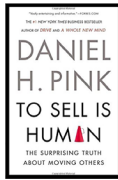
The New ABCs of Sales
Attunement + Buoyancy + Clarity.

A is for Attunement
Humility, perspective, mimicry.

B is for Buoyancy
Before, during, after.

C is for Clarity
1%, good questions, what to do.

Servant-Selling
Improve lives + change the world.



To Sell Is Human

The Surprising Truth About Moving Others

BY DANIEL H. PINK · RIVERHEAD BOOKS © 2013 · 272 PAGES

“Some of you, no doubt, are selling in the literal sense—convincing existing customers and fresh prospects to buy casualty insurance or consulting services or homemade pies at a farmers’ market. But all of you are likely spending more time than you realize selling in a broader sense—pitching colleagues, persuading funders, cajoling kids. Like it or not, we’re all in sales now.

And most people, upon hearing this, don’t like it much at all.

Sales? *Blech.*

... I’m convinced we’ve gotten it wrong...

This is a book about sales. But it is unlike any book about sales you have read (or ignored) before. That’s because selling in all its dimensions—whether pushing Buicks on a car lot or pitching ideas in a meeting—has changed more in the last ten years than it did over the previous hundred. Most of what we think we understand about selling is constructed atop a foundation of assumptions that has crumbled. ...

By the end of this book, I hope you’ll see the very act of selling in a new light. Selling, I’ve grown to understand, is more urgent, more important, and, in its own sweet way, more beautiful than we realize. The ability to move others to exchange what they have for what we have is crucial to our survival and our happiness. It has helped our species evolve, lifted our living standards, and enhanced our daily lives. The capacity to sell isn’t some unnatural adaptation to the merciless world of commerce. It is part of who we are. As you’re about to see, if I’ve moved you to turn the page, selling is fundamentally human.”

~ Daniel H. Pink from *To Sell Is Human*

Dan Pink is a brilliant writer. His books have been translated into over 35 languages and have sold over 1 million copies in the US alone.

We featured another one of his *New York Times* bestsellers called [Drive](#). That one is all about “*The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us.*”

This one, as per the sub-title, is all about “*The Surprising Truth About Moving Others.*”

The super-short story? Although only 1 in 9 of us technically earn our living as “salespeople,” we’re ALL in sales. In other words: To sell is human.

The book has three parts: Part One is called “Rebirth of a Salesman” in which we explore the fact that we’re all in sales now. Part Two moves on to the new “ABCs” of sales (aka “How to Be”) while Part Three gives us a snapshot at the nuts and bolts of “What to Do.” (Get a copy [here.](#))

Of course, it’s packed with Big Ideas. I’m excited to share a few of my favorite Ideas you can apply to your life TODAY so let’s jump straight in!

“The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell. And the funny thing is, you’re a salesman, and you don’t know that.”

~ Arthur Miller,
Death of a Salesman (1949)

WE'RE ALL IN SALES NOW

"The 'What Do You Do at Work?' survey begins to provide a richer portrait of the twenty-first-century workforce, as exemplified in the world's largest economy. The existing data show that 1 in 9 Americans works in sales. But the new data reveal something more startling: So do the other 8 in 9. They, too, are spending their days moving others and depending for their livelihoods on the ability to do it well. Whether it's selling's traditional form or its non-sales variation, we're all in sales now."

~ Daniel H. Pink

"Working with Qualtrics, a fast-growing research and data analytics company, I commissioned a survey to uncover how much time and energy people are devoting to moving others, including what we think of as non-sales selling—selling that doesn't involve anyone making a purchase.

This study, dubbed the *What Do You Do at Work?* survey, was a comprehensive undertaking. Using some sophisticated research tools, we gathered data from 9,057 respondents around the world. ...

Two main findings emerged:

1. *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 out of every hour to moving others.*
2. *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."*

That's from chapter 1: "We're All in Sales Now."

We've gotta start here because, well, step 1 in optimizing this facet of our lives requires we establish the fact that it's worth our time, eh? :)

So, quick recap.

People spend about 40% (!) of their time in "non-sales selling"—"persuading, influencing, and convincing others in ways that don't involve anyone making a purchase."

And, we all know that it's SUPER important to our professional success.

But it's not just all the "selling" we're doing at work. We're also hustling to "move" people to our perspective in other facets of our lives.

A couple of recent examples from my life include: selling a philosophical idea to my five-year-old (that, for example, challenges and mistakes are awesome and are what make learning possible); and, selling the idea of a metabolic approach to cancer to my brother and his wife along with the inevitable ups and downs of all healing journeys.

How about YOU?

Can you see any examples of "non-sales selling" in *your* professional and personal life?

We're all in sales. So, let's get good at it!

P.S. It's time for a two-part pop quiz!

Question 1. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning 'not the least bit sold' and 10 meaning 'totally sold,' how sold are you on the idea that you're in sales now?

Question 2. Why didn't you pick a lower number?

(Well, whaddya say?!)

And... Hah!

Those two questions are actually a little hack (inspired by the book *Instant Influence*) Dan teaches in a later chapter on the importance of questions—and the strange power of "irrational" questions like that one.

For now, I hope you're at least *partially* sold and I'm excited to dive in a little deeper!

*"Twisting the dial toward someone else's perspective doesn't mean claiming that you've been to the place where your prospect just vacationed or that your uncle lives in her hometown. That's not attunement. That's lying. The key is to be strategic *and* human-to be strategic *by* being human."*

~ Daniel H. Pink

THE NEW ABC'S OF SELLING

"A-B-C,' he explains. 'A—always. B—be. C—closing. Always be closing. Always be closing.'

'Always be closing' is a cornerstone of the sales cathedral. Successful salespeople, like successful hunters of any species, never relent in pursuing their prey. Every utterance and each maneuver must serve a single goal: pushing the transaction to a conclusion—your conclusion—and getting the person across the table ... 'to sign on the line which is dotted.'

Always be closing. Its simplicity makes it understandable; its alphabeticality makes it memorable. And it can be constructive advice, keeping sellers focused on a deal's end even during its beginning and middle. But the effectiveness of this advice is waning because the conditions on which it depends are fading. When only some of us are in sales—and when buyers face minimal choices and information asymmetry—'Always be closing' is sensible counsel. But when all of us are in sales, and none of us has much of an information edge, Blake's prescription seems as dated as the electric typewriters and Rolodex cards that dot Mitch and Murray's office.

Remapped conditions require revamped navigation. So here in Part Two, I introduce the new ABCs of moving others:

A—Attunement

B—Buoyancy

C—Clarity

Attunement, buoyancy, and clarity: These three qualities, which emerge from a rich trove of social science research, are the new requirements for effectively moving people on the remade landscape of the twenty-first century."

Welcome to Part Two. It's time to learn our ABCs.

Gone with the old, high-pressure "Always be closing!" approach and in with the new, let's-be-(cool)-human(s) "Attunement, buoyancy and clarity!" model.

Dan talks about the uber-creative marketing genius and author Seth Godin in the book. Seth tells us that, essentially, the only thing we should be thinking about with each communication we have with our community of customers and prospective customers is simple: Build more trust.

Therefore, it's not "always be closing" but "always be building trust"—which is pretty much what Dan walks us through with our new ABCs. Let's take a look at each!

But... First, another pop quiz! (Recall from Learning 101 that *quizzing yourself* is the best way to *Make It Stick!*) So... Question: What are our new ABCs?

A = _____

B = _____

C = _____

(Answers: Attunement + Buoyancy + Clarity.)

A IS FOR ATTUNEMENT

"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 your fingers five times as quickly as you can. Then, again 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.)"

*"Attuning yourself to others—
exiting your own perspective
and entering theirs—is essential
to moving others."*

~ Daniel H. Pink

Welcome to A is for Attunement.

Please take a moment to do that exercise to yourself. First, with your dominant hand, snap your fingers five times. Then, using your pointer finger, draw a capital E on your forehead.

You do it? (Seriously, do it! :)

Now, how'd you draw the E? Did you do it so YOU could easily read it or did you do it so someone looking at you could easily read it? Psychologists call this the E Test and they use it to measure "perspective-taking."

Our ability to take someone else's perspective is a HUGE part of being able to get an A in Attunement. -> "Attunement is the ability to bring one's actions and outlook into harmony with other people and with the context you're in."

Dan tells us there are three components to Attunement. Here's the super brief look.

1. **"Increase power by reducing it."** Research shows that if you're feeling a bit too all-mighty, you're going to have a hard time connecting with others (and, therefore, selling them on anything). Antidote? Practice some humility.
2. **"Use your head as much as your heart."** Empathy is, of course, a very important aspect of our humanity. But, Dan tells us: "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.'" How? Simple: When you're negotiating or otherwise "selling" someone on an idea, try to imagine what the other person is *thinking!*
3. **"Mimic strategically."** If you've ever been to a leadership seminar (or a Tony Robbins event), you probably know the power of "mirroring" someone else's movement (and words). We naturally "mimic" other people with whom we're attuned and one way to increase attunement is to *start* by mirroring. The trick? Don't be lame! (Hah.) Seriously. Be cool. Be subtle. Be human about it. If people *know* you're trying to mimic them it'll backfire.

P.S. Have you ever heard of "ambiverts"? Part introvert. Part extrovert. Know this: The ambiverts—who are a little of both—are BY FAR (!) the best sales people. Not too pushy (like some extroverts can be) and not too reserved (like some introverts can be).

Goldilocks ambiverts. <- That's where it's at. (Where are you at? -> Find out [here.](#))

B IS FOR BUOYANCY

"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."

~ Daniel H. Pink

"Draw a map of the world of selling and the most prominent topographical feature is that deep and menacing ocean [of rejection]. Anyone who sells—whether they're trying to convince customers to make a purchase or colleagues to make a change—must contend with wave after wave of rebuffs, refusals, and repudiations.

How to stay afloat amid that ocean of rejection is the second essential quality in moving others. I call this quality 'buoyancy.' ... 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."

Welcome to quality #2 in Part 2 on "How to Be."

You may have noticed the "ocean of rejection" that is, as Dan says so poetically, "the most prominent topographical feature" (!) of sales. Well, Dan tells us there are three phases in which we need buoyancy: before, during and after. He offers great tips for each. Here's a quick look.

Before: As we prepare, we can psych ourselves up via positive declarations like all the self-help gurus have told us to do. Or, we can do something much more effective: Ask ourselves a question. It's called "interrogative self-talk." It's surprisingly effective.

"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?'"

~ Daniel H. Pink

"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 instead you ask, 'Can I make a great pitch?' the research has found that you provide yourself something that reaches deeper and lasts longer."

During: What do you do *during* your pitch? Keep the positivity ratio high. Dan talks about Barbara Fredrickson's research on positivity. Short story: We want a ratio of positive to negative interactions that's about 3:1. Not 1:1 or 2:1. And.. Not 11:1. 3:1. Grounded, willing-to-talk-about-challenging-stuff yet more positive than negative.

"Fredrickson sees the healthy positivity ratios ... 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.'"

After: And how about *after* the pitch? Well, that's when Martin Seligman's explanatory styles come into play. Dan walks us through the research that shows how optimists outperform pessimists that we discuss in our Notes on *Learned Optimism* and the same 3 P's from [this +1 on How to Learn Optimism](#). Short story?

"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.'"

Stay buoyant. Before. During. After. Repeat. :)

C IS FOR CLARITY

"A long time ago, when I was in law school, I took a course called 'International Business Transactions,' taught by a professor named Harold Hongju Koh. I don't remember much about the particulars of what we learned in class that semester—a few things about the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. But I've never forgotten something Professor Koh told our class one spring afternoon.

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 the one percent, and being able to explain it to others, is the hallmark of strong minds and good attorneys.

Clarity operates by the same logic. Whether you're selling computers to a giant company or a new bedtime to your youngest child, ask yourself: 'What's the one percent?' If you can answer that question and convey it to others, they're likely to be moved."

C is for Clarity. Fastest way to get there? Find the one percent. Then be Attuned + Buoyant and we've got our new ABCs! That's Part 2. In Part 3 we talk about "What to Do." Of course, check out the book for more. The short story? Three more things: **Pitch + Improvise + Serve**.

Dan tells us about the original elevator **pitch** and gives us six other pitches to practice. Here's one for today: Can you summarize your pitch in a Tweet? (Try it!)

Then lean into the energy of **improvising** (see Notes on a book Dan recommends called *Improv Wisdom!*): *"As goes improv, so go sales and non-sales selling. If you train your ears to hear offers, if you respond to others with 'Yes and' and if you always try to make your counterpart look good, possibilities will emerge."*

<- I especially love: *"always try to make your counterpart look good."* ("Yes and" is also wise. :)

Then... Remember to **serve**. Which is our next and final Idea!

"In the new world of sales, being able to ask the right questions is more valuable than producing the right answers."

~ Daniel H. Pink

"Sales and non-sales selling are ultimately about service.

But 'service' isn't just smiling at customers when they enter your boutique or delivering a pizza in thirty minutes or less, though both are important in the commercial realm. Instead, it's a broader, deeper, and more transcendent definition of service—improving others' lives and, in turn, improving the world."

~ Daniel H. Pink

SERVANT-SELLING

"The time is ripe for the sales version of Greenleaf's philosophy [of servant-leadership]. 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 is over, will the world be a better place than when you began? ... An effective seller isn't a 'huckster, who is just out for profit,' he [Alfred Fuller] said. The true 'salesman is an idealist and an artist.'

So, too, is the true person. Among the things that distinguish our species from others is our combination of idealism and artistry—our desire both to improve the world and to provide that world with something it didn't know it was missing. Moving others doesn't require that we neglect these nobler aspects of our nature. Today it demands that we embrace them. It begins and ends by remembering that to sell is human."

Those are the final words of the final chapter: Serve. Each chapter has its own practical ideas to help bring the conceptual ideas home. The last two in this chapter?

"Treat everybody as you would your grandmother." <- Can you imagine that?

And: *"Always ask—and answer—these two questions: 1. If the person you're selling 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? If the answer to either of those questions is no, you're doing something wrong."*

We're all in sales now. Let's serve first and sell later as we master servant-selling.

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

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About the Author of "To Sell Is Human"

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Daniel H. Pink is the author of six provocative books -- including his newest, *WHEN: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*. *WHEN* is a *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, and *Publishers Weekly* bestseller.

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives so they can actualize their potential as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + practical tools. Learn more and optimize your life at optimize.me.