

MARGINS

Season 3, Episode 5: “Sell Me Something, Mister!”

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MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: From Managing Editor Magazine, this is Margins. If you have “content” in your job description, or you’re just interested in how we all talk to each other online, we made this podcast for you. And this season on Margins, we’re exploring the idea of influence: who has it, who wants it, and how we wield it at work and in our communities. I’m your host, Mary Ellen Slayter.

ELENA VALENTINE: And I’m your co-host Elena Valentine.

The Big Idea

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Early on in my career, I was a journalist, and journalists for the most part, they’re definitely not salespeople. And there’s always the business side of the house and there’s the news side of the house. And never the twain shall meet, and it’s even awkward if they were in the elevator.

ELENA VALENTINE: Ooh.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Right. But when I went to SmartBrief, my job became more of a crossover, a little more of a hybrid, which I found interesting. And I started going on sales calls with our salespeople. And there’s a couple of people that I watched the way that they worked. And I was like, okay, this is awesome. These guys, what they’re doing is, they’re really successful, but they also just had a different way of working that really surprised me. Because all my assumptions about what made someone good at sales were it was basically the used car salesman, right? It was they’re loud and they’re brash and they’re charming and they’re doing whatever. It’s really pretty obnoxious when you think about it. But it’s all about them. But I would watch these two guys. And it’s Tom O’Brien is one of them. And the other one is a guy named Joe Riddle. And the two of them, what I noticed was that they actually listened in most of the meetings. These guys walked away from the meetings that we would sit in on and they knew so much about the client’s problem. They knew so much. And they were able to come back and really craft solutions when it was appropriate. And they would say, this is appropriate, and here’s how I think we could tackle this. And when it wasn’t appropriate, they also weren’t scared to say that. And they were good. I mean, these guys, to this day, they’re just so good at their jobs. And when I started to look at that, that’s when I started to realize that my assumptions about sales were based on incorrect ideas about what made a great salesperson.

ELENA VALENTINE: They’re just really bad stereotypes. When we think of sales, we think of the very aggressive, transactional sales person that we might see at the kiosk of a mall, or we have the images conjuring up of a used car salesman. But in reality, for a lot of the things that we do, there’re sales all around us. And what I get really excited about, and I know our guest, Josh, really gets into this, is that we’re selling to everything. I mean, Mary Ellen, you are selling to your children every day, right, of the things that they should be doing that day. Or why is it you should be eating this over that? And I think that’s what’s really fascinating about sales is that it actually comes up in so many other things. We don’t look at it that way. We don’t talk about it that way, but inevitably, the same principles apply.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Right. And I think, okay, so this is where we’re going to apply it to our personal lives. Take sales and marketing, right? So sales is when I close the deal, right? It’s like, if I’m trying to get Rena to take piano lessons, because I believe that she should, and it would be good for her overall education and well-roundedness as a person, if I just walk up to her, and I say, “Do you want to take sales?” Let’s take, I’m trying to sell her on, I’ll just walk up to her, and I say, “I want you to take piano lessons.” With no mention of it ever before. How likely is she to get on board?

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ELENA VALENTINE: Not at all.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Not very. Not very. So leading up to that, I have to do some marketing, right? Where I have to talk about, “Oh, this piano. And I talked to this teacher and they seemed really fun.” And this all sorts of leads up, so by the time I get to the point where I ask her, “Oh, well, so do you want to take lessons,” she’s ready to say yes. And I think one of the biggest mistakes that I see people make in sales and marketing is they run to that question, right? They run up and they say, “Do you want to do this? Yes or no.” And the answer, if you do that, is going to be no. But then the flip side of it is if you just mark it forever, I could just keep talking about how awesome piano is and hope that at some point she says, “Hey, I’d like to take some piano lessons,” I’m going to wait a lot longer. That is also a failure. And that’s the part that sales does. It actually closes the business, closes the idea.

ELENA VALENTINE: It is. But I think it also, we see throughout all of this is that it’s okay if it’s a yes or no, right? From that example that you gave when you were at the post with the sales people, that sometimes it is a very fine answer that this isn’t a fit and that’s okay. And I think that’s where that feeling of a salesman being too pushy, for example, when it’s like, hey, at some point that sales person has the self-awareness and has gotten enough of the learnings that they need from that prospective client to know, hey, your problems match the problems we can solve or not. And I think being able to make that decision as well in the process, and for that sales person is equally, I think, part of the game here. There’s two paths. Both of those paths are fine.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: So another thing that really changed my way of thinking about sales was I came across this study, this article in Harvard Business Review, where they had looked at the traits of the most successful salespeople. And you go in with the assumption, for example, that, oh, they are more likely to be extroverts. That they’re going to be gregarious, that they’re going to be that outgoing, that stereotype we were talking about. And instead they found that the best salespeople, I mean, the people who really knocked it out of the park in their industry tended to be strong introverts. It was more about the discipline, and it was more about listening, and it was more about the customer and not about the salesperson. That really transformed my whole way of thinking about it. Because it was a huge study. It covered a lot of people. And I guess I’m wondering, does that surprise you —

ELENA VALENTINE: Not at all.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: ... that the introverts actually win at this game?

ELENA VALENTINE: No, not at all because inevitably I think they’re more, I think, inherent listeners. They’re probably ones to ask more questions, perhaps instinctually, because they wanted to divert the attention off themselves. Right? So you just engage in questions to get the other person to talk. So I’m not at all surprised by that. And I think a big unlock for me in any sales conversation in the product or services that we’re providing them is how am I making you as an individual more awesome? And that includes both when we’re having that first conversation of what do you need to be more awesome? How might our product or service help you be more awesome? And again, it’s with a question, right? So I’m actually not at all surprised by that. And the best salespeople are ones who inevitably are the best listeners.

Interview 1: Josh Braun

ELENA VALENTINE: Josh Braun is the founder of Sales DNA, but he’s also something more important. My sales mentor, and someone who’ve I’ve affectionately called my “Sales Yoda” for many years now. So when we decided to have an episode about the intersection of sales and influence, I couldn’t think of anyone better to call up.

JOSH BRAUN: So my first sales job was when I was a elementary school teacher. I was teaching kindergartners, and the product that I was selling was a love of reading and writing. And I learned early on that that’s a sales job. You have to explain things in a way that will inspire people to care and to learn more. And so I learned how people learn and I learned how to teach. And it turns out that selling and teaching are very closely aligned. So I really enjoy teaching. And I think selling, at the heart of it, is teaching.

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ELENA VALENTINE: So really is there anyone in this world who doesn't sell every day, because what you've just done is really expand the definition of selling.

JOSH BRAUN: I think you make a great point. I think everything is a sale, whether you are trying to get a new job, whether you are trying to explain an idea to your boss, perhaps you're trying to explain an idea to VCs. Perhaps you're trying to sell your significant other on a trip, or as I'm trying to do right now, a home renovation to add a gym, which is quite an interesting sale. Or maybe you're trying to sell your mom on why you think she should go to an assisted living facility. And so really it's about having productive conversations with people and not necessarily assuming that everybody wants what it is that you're selling. And so my approach has really not based so much on a sales process, but really on a buying process. And that's a fundamental shift from how most sales people are taught. Pretty much every sales book is written on how to sell, but not really how people buy.

ELENA VALENTINE: And why is that?

JOSH BRAUN: I don't know. I think it's because sales people are inherently motivated and compensated to close sales. And when you are compensated to close sales, and when your goal is to close every sale, and to assume that everyone you speak with is a sale, it sets in forth all sorts of destructive behavior. So one of the first things that I talk to people about is having what I call pure intent, which is that not everyone you speak to, even though you think you have the greatest thing since sliced bread, is going to have a need or a desire for what it is that you are offering. And this idea of detaching from the outcome and understanding that when you talk to people, they're getting the job done right now the best way they know how, and the problem might not be big and intense enough for them to warrant switching. Because there's all sorts of anxieties when you want to switch away from something. And the story that I tell is the sale that I tried to make to my grandma. I mean, she had a toaster that was awful, Elena. Only one side of the toaster worked. It only made light toast. And it took forever. So I would go over to my grandma's house all the time, me being a sales professional that studied how to sell. And I would bring these new toasters. Go, "Grandma. Look at this toaster. It's got a new toaster user interface. It makes two slices of bread. It makes it faster. It makes it dark." It was clearly better, but she was never motivated to buy it because, although those things mattered to me, they didn't matter to my grandma because she wasn't in a rush. She only liked one slice of toast, and she only made it light. And the last thing she wanted to learn was a new toaster user interface. So as salespeople, we get caught up in our new toasters, and we forget that the last thing people want is something new. There's a lot of risk with new, there's anxiety with new. Am I going to lose my job? There's inertia, there's habits. I know how to use this thing already. And sometimes that is forgotten because we have a motive to sell new toasters.

ELENA VALENTINE: And what exactly is the role of influence in sales?

JOSH BRAUN: So imagine you are in the mall, and you're taking a walk. And all of a sudden, one of those mall kiosk people says to you, "Hey, can I ask you a question?" And this person is selling this, sea scrub for your hands. Now, if you're like most people, what do you do when you hear that? Can I ask you a question in the mall? What are you going to do mostly?

ELENA VALENTINE: You're like, no, I'm on a mission. I'm trying to get to another store.

JOSH BRAUN: You're trying to walk, run as fast as you can. Or maybe you're going to pretend that you got a phone call and hold it up to your ear. You're going to do anything you can to duck and dodge that person. Now let's imagine that same scenario, but you and I, Elena are out to lunch. You and I have known each other for a while now. How many years has it been? My God, it feels like since you were five years old, but it hasn't been that long.

ELENA VALENTINE: Five years ago. So as a company, I was basically a toddler. I was a toddler company, a crawling baby, really.

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JOSH BRAUN: Right. So we've known each other for awhile. And I would imagine you and I are sitting out for ramen noodles. You take me to the most amazing ramen noodle place. And I say, "Elena, you got to try this soap. It's so unbelievable. It's the sea scrub. And it makes your hands just absolutely so awesome feeling. Will you try some?" Now, would you be more open to listening, and maybe even trying it out?

ELENA VALENTINE: Oh, I would buy a barrel full if you told me, "Yeah, Elena, you should try it."

JOSH BRAUN: So what's the difference? I mean, we're selling the same thing. One of them you're walking away from really quickly, but the other one you're like, "Let me see what it is. And if you say so, let me buy it." What's the difference there?

ELENA VALENTINE: It's personalized. So you and I are sitting together, a one on one conversation. I would think given our relationship that the reason why you are sharing this amazing sea scrub with me is because you know that I'm all about having spa days or you know a little bit of my experience to provide some context for that. And then there's trust.

JOSH BRAUN: Why is there trust?

ELENA VALENTINE: Because we've built our relationship over time. We rumbled together, and I've had successes already with your recommendations.

JOSH BRAUN: That's exactly it. Trust happens over time with consistent behavior. It's the same reason why I'm guessing that when your husband finally asked you for your hand in marriage, he was pretty certain that you were going to say yes. A close is sort of natural because you built trust over the course of time. If you would have asked you to get married on the first date, it would have been weird. And yet as salespeople, we often end up sounding more like that and more like the mall kiosk person, rather than taking the time to slow down a little bit and build up trust. The biggest fear that people have when you reach out to them is, is you, is this idea that I'm going to be sold something I don't want. And so the idea with influence is how do you position yourself in a way where you're more like the relationship we have, and less like the relationship that mall kiosk people have. And I give you an example of this. This happens to me every week. Every week, I get a phone call from sales leaders and we get on the call, and they always start this way. "Josh, I can't believe I'm actually talking to you." And they start going on about the podcast or about the posts that I've written. I have no idea who these people are, but they know me because of the content that I'm producing and how it's affected them, and they've enjoyed it. There's actually something called parasocial persuasion, or parasocial relationships, it's called. And it's actually a bond that you have with something that you've listened to on YouTube or through a podcast, but that person's unaware of your existence. But because you've actually been teaching them through the course of three or four months through your content, they feel this bond with you. And the keyword being, over time. And when you have that, you start to have influence, and people start to trust that you are in it, not for your own best interests, but for their best interests.

SPONSOR READ: Sorry to interrupt. I'm from New Zealand. When we're not making movies about Hobbits we're making software that gives you complete control over your marketing content. Check out showcaseworkshop.com/margins. Made by New Zealand. Well, not all of us.

Interview 2: Brigitte Lyons

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: During this pandemic are opportunities for in-person business development have been very limited. Digital channels, such as virtual events, webinars and podcasts have become more important than ever before. I hope you're ready to get meta, because Brigitte Lyons, the CEO of Podcast Ally is going to talk to us about what makes a great podcast guest.

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BRIGITTE LYONS: So when we're vetting a client for whether or not they'll make a good client, which is a good podcast guest, generally speaking, we're looking for a golden combination of three things. So the first thing is that podcasts are a storytelling venue. And so when you go on a podcast, you really have to have something, a personal story, a lot of great examples that you can talk about, right? You don't want to just go on and give a bunch of advice. And it goes back to also that likability and relatability factor. So the more storytelling you can do, the more, not only are you going to get on podcasts, but you're going to actually get more sales from your podcast experience because people will like you more.

BRIGITTE LYONS: The other piece is that aha or insight. So what can you bring to the show that is a twist on a subject that people aren't thinking about, or a way that they can come to a transformative moment in their own lives. So we look for that, that combination of storytelling and sort of insight or inspiration. And then the last piece actually that we look for, and this comes to placing a podcast guest, so this isn't necessarily about being a great podcast guest, but we really need to have a client that does have some influence already. And when we think about that, a lot of people think, oh, you had to be a social media influencer. The best guests are people that already have massive social media followings. And I find that that actually is helpful sometimes, but it's not the only way. And so we look for people with client connection to a podcast that we can use that makes a little bit more of an intro, really great case studies, maybe it's the size of their platform. But one of the biggest mistakes that people make when they pitch podcasts and try to go on is that they try to over rely on all of those accolades they have, and don't think about the topic, the stories, the aha moments that they're going to bring to a show. So to me, that's actually like the least important part.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: I am so glad to hear you say that because we have run into that a number of times where people, they almost consider part of their strategy in launching a podcast is to get guests who have more reach than they have. And they're really focused on that. And whereas I don't care. What I'm looking for, so I've got my own reach, right? I've got the reach. And what I'm looking for are good stories. I'm looking for you to say something different. And I find that the more polished, the bigger the platform, the famous people, it's just the same old shit. They've got their talking points. And it is very difficult to knock them off of it. Every once in a while I can shake something out, but you'll have a one hour interview, and the first 30 minutes is totally something that they've said on every other podcast that they've been on. So I'm really glad to hear you say that.

BRIGITTE LYONS: Yeah. I really hate the way that I have to water down my message when I go into mainstream media. So if you go on a TV program, if you're lucky you're going to get a two minute segment. Or if you are in a major newspaper, I mean, how many inches of space in the Washington Post or the Wall Street Journal are you really going to get? Not that much. It's so important to realize that podcasts really are a more relationship-based venue that is really about forming that connection. And I think that podcast audiences are really special. I talked a little bit about the fact that people who go on podcasts tend to see more ROI. So our clients and I have this experience of, when I go on a podcast, I make a couple sales. And the reason for that is a little bit of that piece where the host is introducing you to an audience. But if that were it, that would also be the case with mainstream media. And in my experience, it usually isn't. I think the reason that podcasts are so special is because their audiences are really special. Podcasts can really dive in deep with a subject matter that their audience really cares about. And these audiences are super informed, super passionate, and they want to hear that in your voice. They want to hear that you care about the things that they care about. And if you're super scripted, it's just going to land really flat for most people.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Listen, I'm a content marketer, and I'll be the first to tell you that storytelling isn't always easy. So how can we help our clients turn their sound soundbites into compelling narratives?

BRIGITTE LYONS: Yeah. This is a tough one. And for some people it comes really naturally, and other people, it's like you're on the struggle bus. And for me, it's really about practicing a discipline of saying things like, for example. So not just giving a piece of advice, but telling an example or giving a concrete example, whether it's a story or a statistic, or something. Statistics do not come naturally to me. I do not remember data at all. I'm one of those —

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MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Most people don't.

BRIGITTE LYONS: ... those people that just... Yeah. And so I'm not going to come on a podcast and wield influence by throwing a bunch of stats at you. But sometimes we think we have to, right? I sometimes feel really insecure, like, well shouldn't I have the data to backup every single thing I say, and be able to spout these things at you. But I can't. That isn't how I am. And so for me, it's about figuring out what are the storytelling that I can do, or being really, really concrete. And one of the ways that people struggle is they want to give these really vague answers because they want to relate to everyone. Where the more specificity you have, I think that the more authority you have on your subject matter where even if it doesn't apply to 100% of the people listening, it's actually more interesting to hear people go nerd out on their topics.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Especially in a podcast. There's tolerance for that. There's patience for it.

BRIGITTE LYONS: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And then, there's little things like, I don't know, I'm not a big fan of super name-dropping kinds of moments where people are constantly name-dropping their big name clients, or the accolades they have. But I think there's a place for doing a little bit of that, maybe. Maybe the host will do it for you in the introduction, which is even better, right? Having somebody refer things to you. And so I think there's that. And then I think, again, it kind of goes back to this idea of being authentic in yourself and likable is actually a way of influencing. It's not always coming down from this mountain top and telling everybody that you have everything figured out. And one of the other principles is this one, I think it's called unity. And the idea is that sometimes you're influential just by being an in-group member. And so if you can let those things out about yourself that you're really passionate about and care about, it's going to repel some people, but the people who are right for you, it's really going to attract. And so I think in the content sphere, this really comes back to knowing your audience and knowing those common ground that you have with them. And I think sometimes we forget that influence doesn't have to be this unapproachable thing. That there's other ways to have influence on people that aren't just appeals to authority.

Interview 3: Blair Enns

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Blair Ennis is the CEO of Win Without Pitching, a sales training organization. He's also the author of two of my favorite books on sales, one by the same name, and another called Pricing Creativity: A Guide to Profit Beyond the Billable Hour. We've started our conversation by discussing what he thinks of the relationship between influence and sales, and exactly what that relationship has to do with physics.

BLAIR ENNS: I visibly recoil because I think of Instagram and social media influences. And there's something about that whole idea that I just find personally, offensive would be too strong, it's not offensive, but I think a lot of what's wrong with the world these days is the peddling of influence to sell more shit to people. Can I swear on your podcast?

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Yes. Absolutely.

BLAIR ENNS: Because I'm just getting warmed up. So that's my initial reaction. And then I kind of calmed down a little bit and think, well, no influence is a legitimate word. And before it was co-opted by influencers or people who are trying to position themselves as influencers, we just have to acknowledge, people have influence. We could get quite deep about this. You grow up thinking that there are objective facts and reality. And at some point, maybe not everybody gets to this place, but I've got to this place in my life where I realized there is very little that is outside of us that is kind of objectively true. Because everything is subjective and we influence everything that we perceive, everything that we interact with. So this idea of influence at one level, at almost like a physics level, influence is everywhere, and you just cannot get away from it. You interact with something, you're influencing it. You are being influenced, and you're influencing. And the people who think that they are not influenced, are free from influence, they're just absolutely delusional. We are all influencing, and we are all influenced in ways that we can't even be able to comprehend.

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MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: As we record this, we're in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. So what's it like selling now? Is it even ethical?

BLAIR ENNS: Well, that depends on what your definition of sell is. Because if your definition of sell or selling is talking people into things, then it was never ethical to sell, and you're going to get validation on that idea if you try to sell anything to anybody right now. I believe selling is the act of helping. It's the act of looking for somebody that you can help, and then helping to facilitate a choice that is in the best interest of that person or entity. And if that best choice is they hire somebody other than you, then you should be okay with that. That's how I view selling. And yeah, of course there's a little competitive aspect to it where you think, well, they could hire us, they could hire these others. I'm not talking about those situations where somebody else might be marginally better than you. I'm talking about those situations where somebody really needs a solution of some kind. And it's clear that you're not the person or the organization to do this. They would be better off without you. Or it's clear that they can't afford you, or they don't recognize and value your expertise. You're basically looking for a really good fit, suitable enough to take the next step. Next step involves you getting paid for whatever it is you do. That's how we should think about selling.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Sometimes even when both sides really want to work together, something else holds us back from closing a deal, our aversion to loss. Blair offers a way to overcome that bias. The old school money back guarantee.

BLAIR ENNS: Loss aversion bias says that we value losing something about twice as much as we value gaining something. So here's an example. My business is called Win Without Pitching. The first book is called the Win Without Pitching Manifesto. The pitch in the creative world, as we know, is that you're asked to give your ideas away for free as proof of your ability to do the job. And I think about derailing the pitch. So I've got this hierarchy, number one, win without pitching if you can. Number two, derail the pitch. Number three, gain an advantage. Number four, if you can't gain an advantage, walk away. So how do you derail a pitch. If a client comes to you and says, "We're interested in hiring you, but we're talking to these other firms, and we're going to send you an RFP. And we want you to start doing the creative. Give us some strategy and creative for free. And we'll decide whether or not we work with you." One way you can derail the pitch is you can say to the client, "Listen, we're not going to do that. We don't part with their thinking before we're engaged and paid. But why don't we do this? Why don't we break this up into just a small bite size first step, where you can hire us to do X." And it's usually a form of diagnostic, understand the situation, and present findings and recommendations. "You pay us what you would normally pay us," which is this much money. "And then when we present the findings and recommendations, if you're happy with what we've presented, if you're happy with how we've been able to work together, and you want to proceed, you'll choose one of our recommendations, and we'll move forward on that basis. And if you're not happy at that moment, if you don't agree with our findings, don't like our recommendations, or for whatever reason, you think we're not the firm for you, then we'll part company right there. You can go hire somebody else. And we'll give you your money back." So it's a money back guarantee on the first phase. Now, when I say that to creative firm owners initially, their first reaction is I'm not going to do that. It's terrifying. The idea of offering a money back guarantee. And I point out, "Well, you routinely give this stuff away for free anyway. You're willing to give it away for free, but somebody gives you the money. And you say, 'If you don't like what I pitch you, I'll give you this money back,' you have a problem with that." That's loss aversion bias illustrated. The idea of giving up money that we already have is horrifying. We value that significantly higher, almost twice as much, as we do gaining something.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: It also never happens. I've literally never had it happen. Once in my whole life, I've had this business for almost nine years, I've never had to give that money back.

BLAIR ENNS: Have you offered a guarantee?

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MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Yeah. I've said it, whenever I've had that kind of reluctance. I've never given that money back for that audit. It's never happened. No one's ever... You know what I mean? Because what I find is that, I mean, I do feel I'm pretty confident in my diagnostic. Right? And we call it an audit. It's never happened.

BLAIR ENNS: So you know what you're doing.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Yeah. But no, it's hard. I mean, I will say psychologically, to say that, to say, "Look, if you don't like it," I get why that hurts for people. I can almost feel the pit in your stomach when you say it. Once you say it a few times, you sort of get over it.

BLAIR ENNS: But you think that the net of effect of giving it away for free and hoping the client will hire you versus —

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: Yeah.

BLAIR ENNS: Yeah. So once the client parts —

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: That's crazy.

BLAIR ENNS: ... with their money, they're engaged. And if the first phase doesn't go well, if the audit isn't perfect, you're likely to just talk through it. And if you feel like you can improve upon it, you can say, "Oh yeah, I'm sorry I missed that. Why don't I take another day or two and go back and get that information, or factor that into the recommendations." And you both have skin in the game at this point. The client's given you money, and you've worked together properly rather than you doing a whole bunch of stuff and just pitching it at the client.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: And finally, Blair left us with a few closing thoughts about influence and sales.

BLAIR ENNS: Here's something to think about in terms of using influence in the sale. This would be the most noble most effective way to think about it, I think. If you think of why you do what you do, and I'm asking that to everybody who's listening, and if you read Simon Sinek or watched his TED Talk on start with why, and I haven't read his book, but if you ever do the exercise of tapping into your why, why do you do what you do, you're going to find that we all have the same why with subtle variation. So anybody who's got the base levels of needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs met food, clothing, shelter, somebody loves you, you're not in financial distress, et cetera. I believe that we all have the same why. And it's a variation of this, of transforming ourselves by helping others. And so what would change from person to person is what we consider, what type of transformation we're looking for, who we help, how we help, the tools we use. But I've just seen again and again, when people do this exercise, they come up with some version of raising myself by lifting others. And so just remember, you get up in the morning, you've had a good night's sleep. This is your motivation. This is you at your best. You're transforming others, and thereby transforming yourself. Your client gets up in the morning, they have the same goal. Later on in the day, you're both beat down by the gnats, all the little issues, you're fatigued by the coworkers, et cetera. And you find yourself across the table from each other. And the client, even though they have this vision of transformation, they want to transform the customers of their organization and lift themselves. And you want to transform your clients and your core workers, and thereby lift yourselves. So you both have these noble goals. You have your eyes on the horizon, on these noble goals. And then at the end of the day, you're just beat down. And you are just a thing on your clients to-do list, hire these guys to do X. And this client is just another thing on your to-do list. I'm not going to fight this battle and try to convince them this is more strategic. I'm just going to take the money. And you do that day after day after day. And you look back on your career, you're not going to have a lot of satisfaction. The greatest satisfaction in your career you will find is in those moments where you kind of leaned into the discomfort and pushed back and said, "I'm not going to let this person who's busy and overwhelmed get away with passing on the strategic opportunity. This thing that she's framing to me as a tactical initiative, it isn't. It's a strategic initiative, and it's my job to lift her gaze. The more that you can do that in your career, the more successful you will become as a sales person. And the more fulfilled you will be as a person. And that means leaning into the discomfort and having the difficult conversations.

MARGINS

Closing and Housekeeping

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: So that's it for this episode of Margins from Managing Editor. Find us on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, or wherever you like to listen in. Subscribe now so you don't miss a single episode.

ELENA VALENTINE: And if you like what you hear, share us with your friends — and rate us on your favorite podcast platform.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: If you want to hear more from the Managing Editor team, then there's an easy way to do that. We send an email every Friday morning. You can join the club at managingeditor.com/subscribe.

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ELENA VALENTINE: And a special thanks to the smoothest talkers in marketing, producer Rex New and audio editor, Marty Madness McPadden.

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: We'll see ya'll next time.

Outtake

MARY ELLEN SLAYTER: So now one thing I will say, Rex will kill us because we barely talked about sales.