And if you’re loving the podcast and you’ve got a moment to spare, we’d “really” appreciate a short review and 5-star rating on iTunes (if you think we deserve it).
know you'll appreciate. On today's show, we dig into the deep meaning of what sales is really about, and reach some surprising conclusions. First, we explore Tad's introduction to the world of sales and marketing, where we learn how it was supposed to be.

TAD I did all the traditional sales to Tom Hopkins, Zig Ziglar, Brian Tracy, Tony Robbins, all that stuff, and I was eighteen, nineteen years old. I just drank the kool-aid really hard. I was using all the NLP, and hard-closing techniques and overcoming objections. My friends were commenting on it, that I was getting slick, and slimy. I was feeling it, and I didn't want to be.

DANNY It wasn't just his friends that noticed how much Tad was changing. It all struck home when he made a call to someone he considered family, asking for money to buy a plane ticket to a conference. This was the man who had helped to raise him, Tad's Uncle Art.

TAD At a certain point in the conversation he just stopped, and there was this frustration in his voice. He's like, "Can you stop wheeling and dealing me?" It just hit me so hard. Here's this person who babysat me as a kid, who's a friend of the family, who's such a good man, calling me out on wheeling and dealing him. I remember when I hung up, it just felt so awful. It just shoved it in my face. It was such a terrible feeling.

DANNY That was the beginning of Tad's search for a better way, but it wasn't until nearly a decade later that he discovered the concept of reverse selling through Ari Galper, one of the world's leading authorities on trust-based selling.

TAD It was the agenda to get the sale that created sales pressure, and that the sales pressure was the thing that made it feel terrible, and that made people dishonest with each other. That that sales pressure had its roots in us trying to get people to do something, and to buy from us. Instead of that agenda, if we made the central agenda being about trying to establish the truth of if it's a fit, then that shifted everything.
DANNY  Now, I talk a lot about the idea that a sales conversation shouldn’t be intended to result in a sale, so much as in a decision one way or the other. I know from experience that this can be a challenging idea when people are struggling to strike a balance between maintaining relationships with people, on the one hand, and the need for clients on the other. Maybe the idea of striking a balance is the wrong one to begin with.

TAD  It's not striking a balance, for sure. I feel like the two poles that people go back and forth between in the mainstream business scene, is either collapsing or posturing. Collapsing is this kind of self pity, making ourselves small, we lose, they win. Their needs matter more than ours. If people need a deal or it's like, "Oh, I can't afford it." We just give them the deal right away. We begin to resent it over time, but there is this kind of giving into collapsing. Especially amongst my crowd, a lot of the holistic practitioners, more conscious, it's just rife with collapsing. Almost all of them, that's their default.

The other one is posturing, which to me is more like the Donald Trump puffed-up, fake, plastic, pretending to be way more together than they are. Fake it til you make it, not self-pity, but more self-importance, making themselves very big, and more than other people, pulling rank all over the place. With that comes a fear, and there's this fear of being discovered as being a fraud. Collapsing is driven by this hidden agenda that sounds something like, "Love me, please love me! Like me!" Posturing is driven by this hidden agenda of, "Respect me, value me! I'm important."

DANNY  Not just that, they're both ... Underlying them both is a foundational ... It's a paradigm of thinking, that is very zero-sum. There's a winner and there's a loser, and you're going to be one or the other.

TAD  Right, totally, and so then most people, especially if they're at all connected to some sense of integrity, authenticity, try to strike a balance between the two. It's like, "Okay, well I guess I need to posture enough, and use some of these posturing sales techniques." Most of the sales techniques I learned, and most of what I see in the world of mainstream business, a lot of it is this posturing. Luckily,
we're seeing a lot of new stuff come out in the last ten, twenty years. There's so much steeped in this posturing. There's the sense of like, "Well, I need to do some of that to make money, but I need to collapse enough so people still like me so I'm still kind of human. I'm not like those people whom I judge."

That muddy middle doesn't work very well, because the basis of it, especially when we add in business, the hidden agenda of getting the sale, you get something that’s just not that appealing and doesn't feel good to anybody. The solution is not any of those things. The solution isn't some compromise. The solution is if there was like a line drawn above those, the posturing and collapsing, and the agenda to get the sale. It's something above that. This idea of composure, this idea of a real win-win attitude, and seeing people as equals, not as more or less than us, and having our agenda not being hidden at all anymore by having the agenda being the truth of "Is it a fit?" Wrapping everything around that instead of trying to get love and respect from other people, just coming from a place of self-love and self-respect. Knowing that we need to get sales, but it's the sale doesn't need to come from that person in front of us. That is just a whole other domain, rather than trying to compromise the two.

DANNY  I agree with you, but I'm going to play devil's advocate. People who are going to be listening to this, who are kind of thinking to themselves, "You know that's great to say when you've got tens of thousands of people following what you do, and you have sales coming in. I'm not making rent at the end of this month if I don't make a sale. There's one person in front of me right now, and I don't have where to talk-, I can't email twenty thousand people and talk to somebody else tomorrow." It's like, "This is it! This is my chance." In that situation, what do I do?

TAD    The answer is not the one that anyone wants to hear. It can be so tempting to just want to, "Okay, I'm just going to do whatever it takes to make this work even if my integrity slips a little bit, even if I push them a little bit."

DANNY  In some cases, even if they are very eager and willing, and to you,
you're looking at it and you're like, "I don't think this is a good idea."

TAD Right, it's not a fit for them. I know they want to sign with me, but I can see it's not a fit. Gosh, there's so much to say here. The big thing, I'd want them to look at, is how they're in that situation in the first place. My colleague, Mark Silver, talked about this idea four stages of business, and I know he got this from somewhere else, just this idea that ... Stage four, the optional one, is your business is totally independent. You could leave it for six months; it keeps running, lots of employees, awesome cash-flow, strong systems, strong niche. Phase three, kind of momentum, where you've got a few employees, things are really solid, cash-flow is solid, niche is solid.

Stage two, a concentration where your niche is coming into focus, your systems are being built, maybe you've got some part-time or maybe a full-time, assistant, cash-flow is still up and down, and you're squeaking by. Stage one, is kind of creation phase. Where you're just starting, you're fiddling, you're playing. You haven't really figured out your niche; you don't have any systems. You don't have a lot of experience. When people are in the creation phase, it's just important for people to get ... It's like your business can't sustain you here. It's not suppose to. It's like a little tree, a little sapling that's growing fast and it's learning a lot real fast, but it doesn't have the woody growth that it's going to need later to bear fruit. If you try to hang the swing on it, you're going to kill it.

I just know people who started as a life coach, and it's like, "Why am I not making six figures yet?" It's like, "Because you started a month ago, or you've been at it for one year and you're still figuring it out." People often jump into business, I think, and they're in the creation phase or maybe early concentration and their business can't sustain themselves, but they think it should. They have this story in their minds; I should be able to do this. That creates an incredible amount of pressure on them, and on everyone they talk to about their business. There's a kind of desperation, that has them sit with somebody who might be expressing mild curiosity, but out of their desperation they hear that as real strong interest and can't discern
People come to me in a financial crunch, and one of the first things I’ll say to some of them is, "You might need to get a part-time job. Your business might not actually be able to sustain you right now. You're putting an incredible amount of pressure on yourself to do that, or you're going to need to get some financing if you've got a really clear niche, and idea, and a solid business plan." That's not what people want to hear. What people want is, "Yeah, well how do I sell that person in a way that still feels in integrity." It's hard when you're desperate to really be committed to the truth. There's got to be ... If your needs aren't met, if you don't know you're going to be able to have food, it's very difficult to stay in integrity. It's very difficult to. We've got to get ourselves out of that situation first.

I have a program I do once in a while called the Meantime. I call it the meantime because people come to me and say, "I get this low marketing approach. I get the relationship building, but I'm in a crunch. What do I do right now? What do I do in the meantime while I'm working on the long-term fix?" The first thing, just as a principal, is you've got to create space so there isn't that pressure. The pressures on you is the first thing that has to be dealt with, and removed, so you can actually see clearly and build something solid. If you do pressure that person in when it's not a fit, the results aren't good from that. If it's really not a fit, their also probably going to be a difficult client. They may ask for a refund eventually, when it's even harder and money's even tighter. The word of mouth probably won't be very good, because it wasn't a fit for them, and so they have a mediocre-to-bad experience. It's not the long-term fix to just keep going hand-to-mouth. I often just want people to ... Let's just stop. Let's get a job, or let's find some other financing method so you can have a stable thing. Then, build your business from there. It's just hard the other way.

That way is just not the answer that people want to hear. People want some magic bullets. In the meantime I'll give them tactics, but still the first thing I do, it's like there's a bunch of steps and the first step is just go clean your home. Clean your office. Get rid of the clutter so
you can think clear.

**DANNY** When I'm feeling overwhelmed and stressed, my first thing is I wash the dishes because that is a giant mess that I can completely fix in thirty minutes or less. Also to be spoken to is, yes there are going to be difficult times. Doing the right thing is easy when doing the right thing is easy. When you've got a million dollars in the bank, saying no to a customer that isn't perfect, that's not a hard thing to do. It's at the edges of when things are tough, when it is a difficult decision, that integrity actually matters. When things are great and you've got lots of extra money, those are going to be the problem-clients anyway. It's easier to turn them away. There's a place, also, where we have to just decide what kind of people we want to be, what kind of businesses we want to be running. I think a very important element in your work, there's a lot of important elements, is that a lot of people have a picture of business where it is very zero-sum. It is very, as you described it, they're either kind of shrinking away and taking the hit, or they're puffing themselves up and kind of taking from somebody else. If that's the way you conceptualize business, those are your choices. You're showing another way.

**TAD** I'm curious if you could say more about the zero-sum mentality, because I think that's a really important thing for people to get. I'd love to just understand more of how you see it.

**DANNY** Here's the way I conceive of a good transaction, somebody buys something, whatever it is. A good transaction is creative in the very literal sense of the word. For it to make sense, it's got to be a value greater than cost equation. If I'm selling you something, then what you get from me is worth more to you than the money you're paying for it. You're happy; you've gained. There's a net gain on your end. Likewise, for me to want to sell it to you, the money you're giving me is worth more to me than the cost of giving that product, that service, delivering that outcome, to you. I gain. There is a net gain. Value is being created, it is creative in that sense of the word. I think the challenge for a lot of people is that hey feel like they're shuffling value around. Somebody’s going to win, somebody's going to lose. Somebody's going to get the good side of the deal; somebody's going
to get the bad side of the deal. It shouldn't be that way, to my mind.

**TAD** I love that. I've never thought about it that way. Essentially, that dynamic is not new. The phrase caveat emptor, let the buyer beware, that's old.

**DANNY** That's very old, Latin right?

**TAD** This dynamic is not a new thing. I'm curious what you would say if somebody says, "Well, yeah, we've just got to shuffle. You can't have both sides. You can't get value greater than cost, and they get value greater than cost. Somebody's got to win, or somebody's got to lose, there's no way you can both. That's just life. We just got to deal with that reality of life." I'm curious how you would respond to that, or what your understanding of that is.

**DANNY** I'd say that they're deeply, fundamentally wrong. This is a broader conversation, I think people don't understand what business is. I think people tend to construe business as being about making money. Business is the activity of making money. I don't think that's true. I think business is about sustainably getting done whatever it is that you want to get done. Part of sustainability is profitability. If it's not making money, if it's losing money, it's not sustainable in and of itself. If, fundamentally, you're shuffling value around, if somebody's going to lose, it's not sustainable. Maybe you'll make money in the short term, but it's not sustainable; it's not good business.

**TAD** That's interesting because one of the things ... I really liked that, that was good. One of the things that comes up when the whole niche conversation comes up in workshops is people will say, "What if there's this target market that can't afford to pay me?" My response is like, "There are different business models you can have. Sometimes you can have one target market that brings in the money, and the other one you can give it at a discount for certain communities. You also, may need to structure it as a non-profit. That's what you may actually have on your hands at that point. Then you fund-raise money to pay your wages and sustain yourself."
There's this core ... It's okay for you to sustain yourself; it's okay for you who's providing whatever product or service, to have your needs met too, which is what gets given up in collapsing. It's like, "I'll just keep on giving and giving and giving because they need it, and their needs matter more than mine." People burn out.

DANNY That's just not sustainable.

TAD This issue of sustainability is so huge in business, and I feel like ... It's one of the things I've been saying lately in my marketing workshops is just, "Marketing doesn't actually make you any money." What makes you money is your business model, your sales [inaudible 00:17:19], whatever. It's like the marketing just gets the people there, but if there's no container, there's no bucket, it's like a faucet pouring through a bucket with no bottom to it, or a bucket just full of leaks. Most people have not taken a serious enough look at their business model, at the structure of their business, and they've created a business model that's very hard. Then they wonder why they struggle, and they feel like failures. "What's wrong? I guess I just need to work harder, and turn the faucet on harder to get more water." Whereas what they often really need to do is just plug some of the leaks, maybe get a bigger bucket and rework the structure of what they're doing so that it is sustainable.

The two sides of it, it's safe for people to approach the pink spoon, the free sample, but it's also sustainable for them. Both have to be there, but most entrepreneurs ... I can see their eye, they're kind of nodding, and their eyes are opening in a way, when I start talking about that, I can see they've never actually, really thought about that. Structurally, there may actually be issues in their business, that have it be inherently unsustainable, and if they don't change something in the structure it will never be sustainable. Often a massage therapist, they just book a session, "Hey, do you want to book another session? How about another session?" That's their whole business model. That's just a hard one to do if they don't weave in other things, packages, products, programs, and may be a very difficult thing.

DANNY Absolutely! Let's bring this full circle, because we've gone through a
couple of fascinating tangents, but at the core of all this is this re-imagination that goes against the grain of the way people have come to look at business over centuries, for almost as long as there has been a business. It is zero-sum, someone’s going to win, someone’s going to lose. That means you’ve got to make that decision on which side are you going to be, and depending on your comfort level, and your integrity, you’ll land on one or the other. You’re really presenting a different picture. In the thirty to sixty seconds, what is that other picture, and then I want to talk in just a few minutes about how do you start painting that picture?

TAD I would say that the bottom line is, we need to look at how business can be sustainable, but also the marketing can be sustainable. On the business side we’re looking at a triple bottom line, where we stop just measuring money [inaudible 00:19:55], not just profits, but people on the planet. We need to take that kind of perspective. Then, in terms of the marketing, I got this from my colleague George [Karen 00:20:06], he talked about sustainable marketing. I love this as a question. The question is: whenever you’re evaluating a marketing tactic, there’s an implication beyond just you, sometimes we think, well does this tactic work to get me clients? Maybe yes, maybe no, but there also may be, in the marketplace, bigger implications for other people in the marketplace itself and the trust in the marketplace of you doing that tactic.

Whenever you take a tactic, if you look at it and ask yourself, what would it mean and what would it look like, what would the impact be if everyone else used this tactic? For some of them, especially some of the stuff I learned early on, the result of it would be less trust in the marketplace, a breakdown of relationships where people can no longer trust that their friends are referring this product or service because it's really good for them, but instead because they're getting a cut. It's an important filter to look beyond ourselves. Will this work? Okay, check one, but what will the impact be? Is it good? What if everyone did this?

I think we need to be looking at how's our business model sustainable for us and people on the planet? Is our marketing
sustainable in terms of recreating that sense of trust in the marketplace itself, so the marketplace becomes what it was supposed to be, and what it wants to be which is this vibrant ... I think of it like a market square where everyone’s coming and selling their goods, and it’s community building and people are coming together, and people are giving to each other, and sustaining each other, and finding these win-win exchanges. They're like, "You have chickens, well I’ve got some corn and we can trade. We both have things that each other need." There’s this incredible graciousness, and humility, and gratitude for the ways that we're able to come together and sustain each other. That’s what the marketplace wants to be. It can’t be that if we don’t consider something more than just us, and our success.

DANNY  The easy rule of thumb is to evaluate any kind of marketing, would you be comfortable and proud telling your parents, and your kids about it.

TAD  I love that.

DANNY  If not, don’t do it.

TAD  Another one is, would you be uncomfortable explaining to the people you're selling and marketing to, what you're doing? Would you be comfortable breaking it down? There’s so much of it, it’s ninja tactics, hidden tactics. You would never want your people to find out what you’re doing to them. If it got out, you’d be embarrassed and run out of town. People would be so-

DANNY  They’d feel betrayed.

TAD  - betrayed, totally. This huge sense of betrayal. "I thought you were just telling a story. You were using all these NLP techniques?" Would you really want people to know that? Even the way we talk about marketing, and the language that we use, sometimes I’ve seen it with marketers, and this was certainly true for me, in private is so different than in public. In private it’s like these conversations about
converting prospects and this very dehumanizing language. We stop looking at our customers as humans, but it's numbers. It becomes this game.

DANNY The language of funnels. People talk about tripwire. Think about that for a moment, a tripwire offer. What the hell is that?

TAD Even the positioning, flanking your competition and these military metaphors as if our customers are the enemy. Even when we use the term, a prospect, and how that renders them inert. They're actually a prospector, they're looking too. They're making their own decisions, and so even the language that we use around it, I feel like there's a lot of opportunity to ... Would you tell your parents about this? Would you explain to them, "Here's what I'm doing right now?" If you wouldn't, that's something to think about. If you come from this place of like, "What are you doing right now, I'm curious, in terms of your sales process with me in this moment?" "You know what I'm doing? I'm trying to figure out if it's a fit." "That's great!" They'll be like, "Thanks for actually wondering about that."

Versus, "What I'm doing right now, is I'm listening to you. I'm mirroring your body language to get a non-verbal state of responsiveness. I'm using your name a lot because I think that will help you feel more connected to me. I'm trying to find things that we have in common so I can build on that, and have you feel this sense of rapport. I'm also trying to subtly illicit your motivational strategies. I'm listening for whether you're more visual, auditory, or kinesthetic so I can start speaking in that language using those predicates. I'm also listening for your meta-programs, whether you move towards or away from, or out of necessity or possibility so I can feed you information that way. I'm also thinking about which close I'm going to use with you. Am I going to use an assumptive close? Am I going to use a multiple choice close? That's what I'm doing." You would never want to say that, because they would be horribly offended.
DANNY  It's just incredibly oppositional.

TAD  Right, they become the enemy. Even the overcoming objections is a language.

DANNY  It's not that all of these strategies are necessarily inappropriate. I'm just paying attention to whether someone is visual, or auditory, or kinesthetic ... You want to talk to people in the way that's going to be best received and understood. There is an implicit assumption about whether marketing is something you're doing to them, or something you're engaged in with in order to find that fit.

That was Tad Hardgrave, gently and deftly guiding us away from the conventional zero-sum view of sales to an approach that is constructive, creative, and sustainable for our businesses and our industries as a whole. To continue learning from Tad, find him at his two excellent websites, marketingforhippies.com and nichingspiral.com.

VOICEOVER  This podcast Business Reimagined is brand new, and we need your help to get the word out. When you subscribe and leave reviews in iTunes, you help us reach more people, bringing them knowledge, empowerment, and inspiration. To pay it forward, we'll mention a reviewer in our podcasts, and what he or she had to say.

DANNY  Today's reviewer is, batstayce, who said, "Danny Iny is his usual honest, soul-searching self in the podcast I listened to, it's clear that he asks questions because he really wants to know, and not because he has something to sell. What I liked most about the interview, is that it felt like a real conversation with genuine discussion as opposed to reading off a pre-written list of questions. As a result, the discussion went deeper and truer then it otherwise would have. Bottom line, real value for people wanting to engage in small business with integrity." Batstayce, thank you so much for that. It really means a lot to me that you've enjoyed what we've worked so
hard to create.

VOICEOVER  This has been Business Reimagined with Danny Iny. Join us next time as we talk to Charles H Green.

CHARLES H. GREEN  That's quite the mistake to think that personalizing things costs time. It's exactly the opposite.

VOICEOVER  Learn more about us at firepolemarketing.com.