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THE SECRETS OF  
SUCCESSFUL SELLING  
**NAKED**

**MICHAEL SMITH**

*“Great insights into how to build relationships and be more successful in sales without selling. A fabulous read.”*

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Forget the traditional model of selling which says that you should focus first on the transaction or the sale.

It's outdated thinking and there is another way.

A way to develop stronger, more powerful relationships by adopting an approach which is more authentic; which strips away the unnecessary layers, then focuses on how to add greater significance to others.

That way is to **GO NAKED**.

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*“You're going to discover why honesty, authenticity and a relentless service-orientation are the keys to building real relationships and outselling the competition in the new economy.”*

**JAMIE SMART** author of #1 best seller, *Clarity: Clear Mind, Better Performance, Bigger Results*

*“This book is a timely read for anyone in business looking to create lifelong clients who are also raving fans.”*

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Michael is the creator of **GONAKED®** – a series of training, coaching and development programmes based on seven principles of success which can help individuals and businesses to increased performance. He has worked across numerous sales and marketing management roles in three multi-national companies, most recently as Director of Sales for Europe. He now works as a Coach, Speaker and Advisor. Learn more at **WWW.GONAKEDSELLING.COM**

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**GO**

REVEALING  
THE SECRETS OF  
SUCCESSFUL SELLING

**NAKED**

**MICHAEL SMITH**

# RETHINK PRESS

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*For Andrea*

# PRAISE

A fabulous read! Great insights into how to build relationships and be more successful in sales without selling. Michael really shows us how to '*GO NAKED*'!

**SHAA WASMUND, ENTREPRENEUR AND AUTHOR OF  
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**JAMIE SMART, AUTHOR OF #1 BEST SELLER,  
*CLARITY: CLEAR MIND, BETTER PERFORMANCE, BIGGER RESULTS***

*GO NAKED* is a must-read for anyone in business. No matter what your job title, you are in sales and this book will show you how exactly how to stand out in your industry.

**JACQUELINE BIGGS, INTERNATIONAL  
BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, *MARKETING TO WIN***

Michael Smith's *GO NAKED* exposes everything you need to know about how to sell and how not to sell. From the beginning, he dispels myths and archaic ways of thinking, replacing outdated high-pressure, pump-and-dump techniques with fresh insights on building win-win relationships that last for a lifetime. Michael has a unique ability to break down complex topics into digestible chunks while also helping the reader zoom out to see and process the big picture. This book is a timely read for anyone in business looking to create lifelong clients who are also raving fans.

**ISAIAH HANKEL, AUTHOR, *BLACK HOLE FOCUS***

*GO NAKED* is the very essence of what it means to put the customer at the centre of all thinking. It strips away the perceived need for layers of tricks and tips and reiterates the fundamental fact, applicable to us all, that we only have our reputation. *GO NAKED* causes us to think deeply about how to build and safeguard that reputation and truly be accepted as a trusted advisor by the customer.

**RICHARD BEAUMONT, EMEA SALES TRAINING MANAGER**

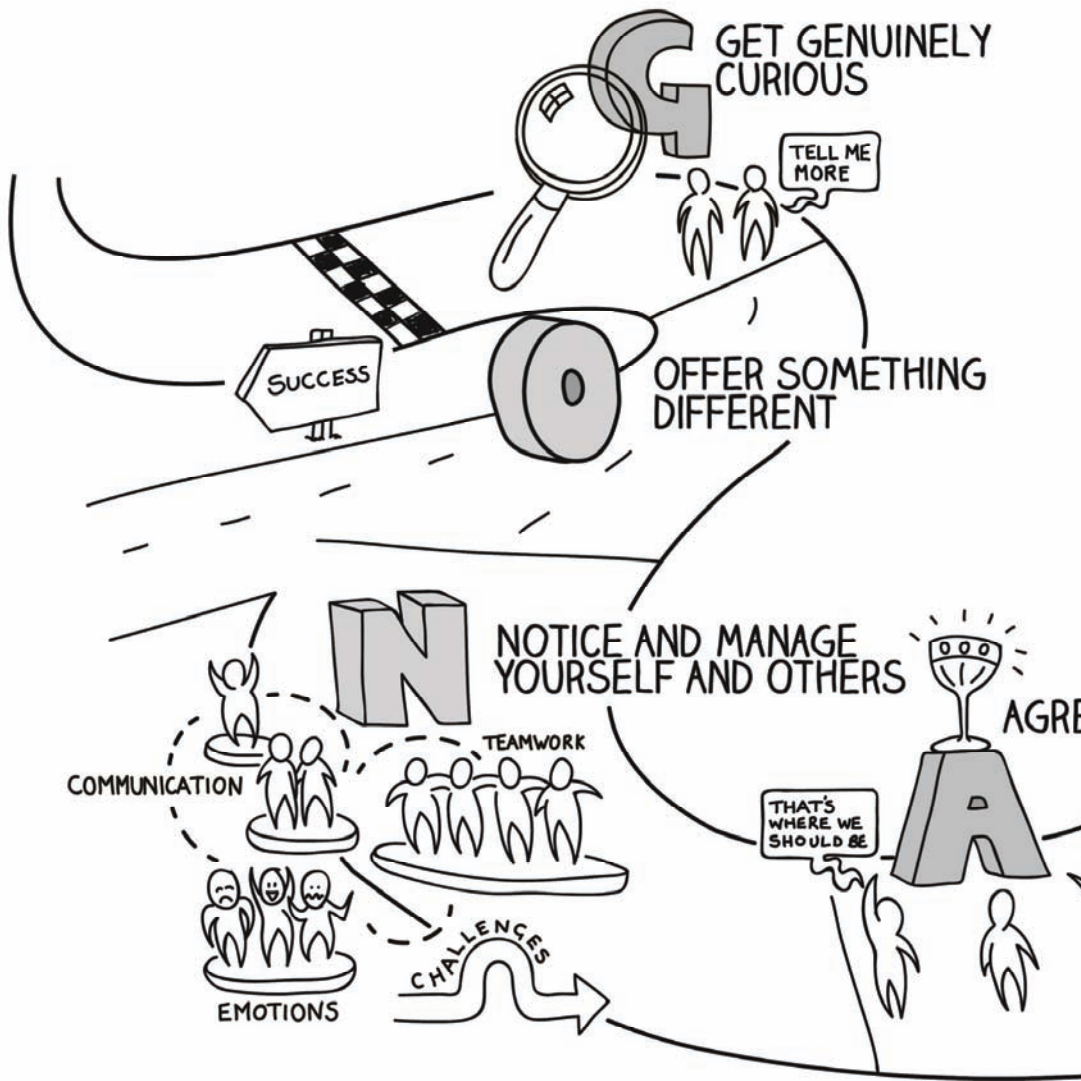
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GET GENUINELY CURIOUS

TELL ME MORE

SUCCESS

OFFER SOMETHING DIFFERENT

N

NOTICE AND MANAGE YOURSELF AND OTHERS

COMMUNICATION

TEAMWORK

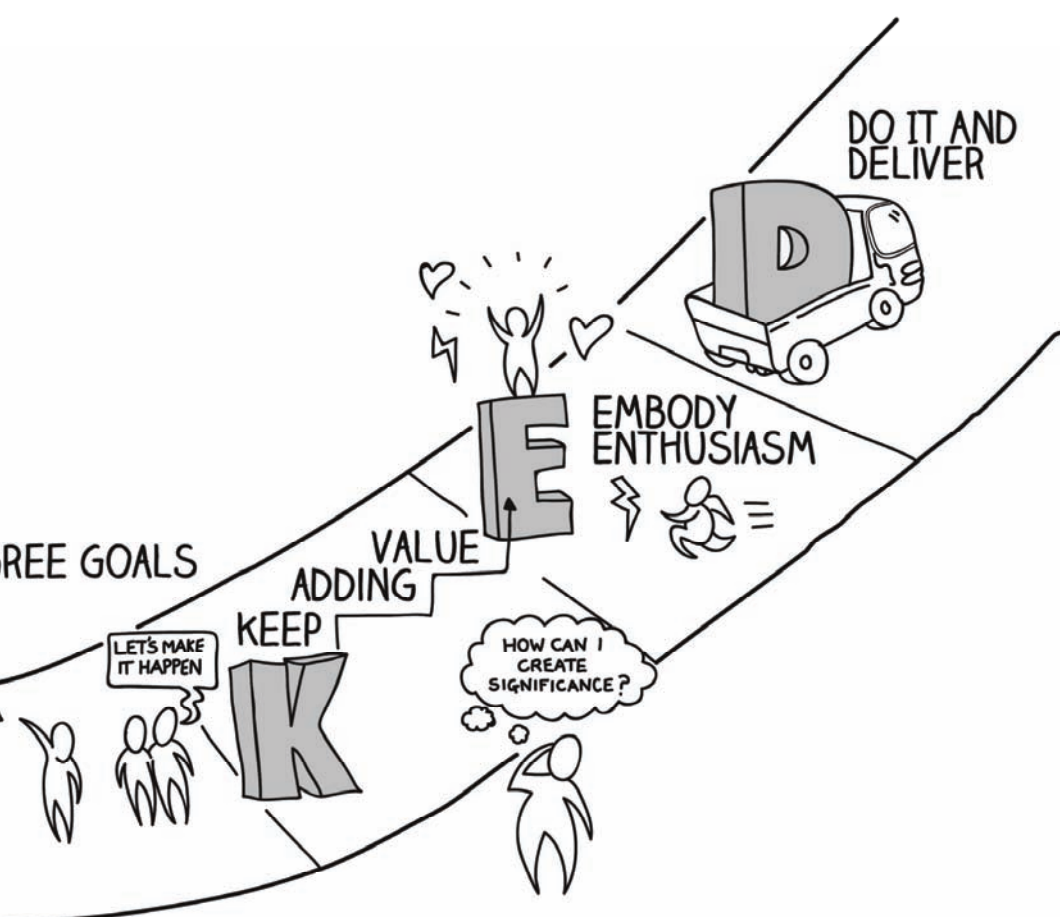
EMOTIONS

CHALLENGES

THAT'S WHERE WE SHOULD BE

AGRE

AGRE



# THAT FEELING

*The greatest risk for most of us in life  
isn't that our aim is too high and we miss,  
but that it's too low and we achieve it.*

MICHELANGELO, ARTIST, ARCHITECT AND POET

Back when I was in high school, I turned up to a gym lesson and, as we always did, began the ritual of getting ready for the lesson. The uniform at that time was a particularly unflattering white t-shirt and a pair of silky black shorts.

I'm sure you can picture the scene – organised chaos probably describes it – and, through the noise and hurry, I noticed a friend of mine standing looking into his bag, appearing anxious and concerned. He had forgotten his kit.

I walked over to him and offered to help. We asked around to see if anyone had any spare kit – they didn't – and so he went to see the teacher to explain what had happened. Expecting a reprieve from the lesson, my friend was taken aback as the teacher turned and said, 'Don't worry, you can just do it in your underwear!'

I was shocked. I couldn't believe what was happening. In that moment, my concern for my friend evaporated and my natural instinct kicked in as I shot over to my bag to check that all my kit was in there – there was no way I was going to risk doing the lesson in my underwear.

Now, had it been me I probably would have just gone home and I certainly wouldn't have done the class. My friend, however, strode into the gym with all the confidence in the world. And whilst at first all of the kids in there laughed, by the end of the lesson he was the hero for having the courage and confidence to do the lesson almost naked.

For some time afterwards I would often have a dream of turning up at gym class naked.

Did you ever have a dream during which you turned up to a party, to school or to work... naked?

In that split second when you woke up, how did you feel?

*Scared? Excited? Vulnerable?*

These are the same feelings we get when we step out of our comfort zone and take risks – and the most successful people do this every day. It's what drives them. It's what sets them apart from the rest. It's what makes them successful.

When you lay yourself bare, when you strip away superfluous behaviour, when you remove limiting beliefs, then in doing so, you open up a world of possibilities. It becomes easier to communicate and easier to build relationships because you demonstrate more of the authentic person you really are.

We all go through times when we feel we need to put up barriers or a façade in the hope that we become more credible, more believable, more worthy, more important. But the truth is that, in building relationships of any sort, these behaviours don't contribute to the successful development of long-lasting

relationships. At best, they hinder it and, at worst, they create relationships built on weak foundations that have no long-term sustainability.

Successful selling, relationship development and influencing are all about the manner in which we communicate. Let's face it, we all have to do this every day of our lives, whether personally or professionally. And the most successful people, the most successful communicators, influencers and relationship builders, are able to do so because they lay themselves bare.

Fortunately there is a pattern – a set of principles – and at its heart is the awareness for the need to strip away behaviour which doesn't contribute to success. Successful people remove the unnecessary layers, let go of limiting beliefs and are prepared to leave themselves open and vulnerable. They *GO NAKED*.

# LIFE IS ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

*If you want to make a real difference in people's lives, your commitment to giving them value has to outweigh your craving for their approval.*

JAMIE SMART, AUTHOR, SPEAKER AND COACH

Life is all about relationships. Whether we succeed or fail will ultimately be determined by the number of quality relationships we have. And no one is exempt from this. Whether you are in school or university; looking for work or in work; in music, the arts, sport or business; climbing the corporate ladder or setting out on your own, it is relationships and the strength of those relationships which matter and make the difference.

## PICTURE THE SCENE

A friend of yours is sitting in front of you. He's looking for a job, but it's tough out there at the moment and he's had no luck. You ask him what he's been doing to change his fortune and he tells you that he's been sending his CV to countless companies. 'It's so demoralising,' he tells you – and you bet it is. Ask him what else he's done to further his chances and he tells you he's been searching the internet for hours looking for companies who are recruiting, but there's just nothing out there. 'It's just so miserable trawling the internet for hours,' he tells you – and you couldn't agree more. Ask him if there's



anything else he's tried and he tells you there isn't much more he can do. 'The jobs go to friends of friends,' he proclaims, and that 'it's all about who you know, not what you know.' You agree that there's probably some truth in that. Ask him what more he could be doing to get the job he wants and he looks blank. 'What more *can* I do?' he asks in return.

A colleague of yours sits down for coffee with you. She's been passed over for promotion and just can't understand why. You ask her what went wrong and she doesn't know. She completed her application letter in time, turned up at the interview and performed well, she even had a letter of recommendation from her boss. 'It's just not fair,' she tells you – and you agree it's not. Ask her what she'll do differently next time to make sure the same doesn't happen again and she tells you, 'Nothing.' That she doesn't know what more she can do. Ask her why she believes the other person got the job ahead of her and she's convinced it's the same old story – that it was probably a *fait accompli* from the start. You agree she's probably right.

A guy you used to work with has recently set up his own business and you bump into him in the local Starbucks. He's feeling pretty down at the moment – none of his old clients moved with him when he left. Running his own business is 'far harder than I imagined,' he tells you – you bet it is. You ask him what he's been doing to try and drive a change and get things moving. He says he's spent hours emailing old clients asking for business, but of course 'the economy is bad at the moment and it's just so depressing – no reply after no reply.' You can only imagine. You ask him what's next and he tells you he's out of

ideas. It's been three months and he'll probably just have to try and get his old job back. 'At least I was safe there,' he tells you. You wonder whether he'll get close to getting his old job back and even if he does, *how* safe would he actually be?

## PLAYING WITH THE MAJORITY

Getting a new job – a job you really want – in a competitive environment is tough. There are a lot of bright, well qualified people out there with relevant experience. However, there are also a lot of less intelligent, less qualified people out there with only limited experience. But guess what? The majority are all doing the same thing. They're submitting their CVs and writing splendid cover letters, getting in line with everyone else. They go to monster.com and become one of the 63 million people looking for a job every month. No wonder it's hard.

Getting the promotion to the job you really want is equally challenging. Standing out from the crowd without leaving a cast of fallen colleagues behind isn't easy and requires you to buck corporate wisdom. Because that's what the majority are doing – playing a game of 'one-upmanship' with the person next to them; sending in their application and 'getting in line'. Yes, it's crowded out there and corporate life can at times feel like the opening scenes to *Saving Private Ryan*. Being the best employee, the best sales person, or the best marketer in the business is hard. But take a look at the company awards dinner. All too often, it's the same person or small group of people who win, year after year.

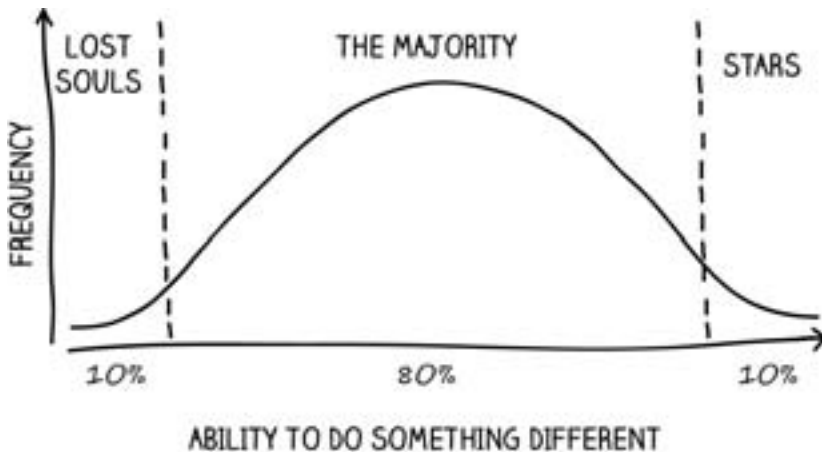
And finally, starting anything new and succeeding, regardless of the project or venture, is a slog which requires dedication

and persistence – to say nothing of the need for it to be better than what exists out there today. The problem is that the majority of new things out there aren't better than what's already out there. Most are equitable at best.

The truth is that we're all in sales now. Whatever your business, whatever your role – a key part, in fact the primary part which will determine success is the extent to which you can create great relationships.

### WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?

There are three types of people. 'Lost Souls', 'the Majority' and 'Stars'. The good news is that the 'lost souls' out there are few and far between: individuals and businesses so incapable of doing something different occupy only a relatively small proportion of the population, so the chances of falling into that group are small.



Depending on your view point, the fact that 'the majority' occupies such a large proportion of the curve is either bad or good news. Bad news if your mindset is close to those individuals referenced in the familiar stories above; good news, however, if you see the crowded majority as an opportunity to position yourself differently and to break out from the rest. Those people, the top 10 percent, are the 'stars', the differentiators, the ones on stage at the company awards dinner and the ones who stand out from the crowd. They're a small but powerful group – the ones who get the job or promotion they want, move from successful project to successful venture and who are amongst the top performers in their organisation.

### **WHAT DO THE 'STARS' DO DIFFERENTLY?**

If they're looking for a job, they don't join the majority. They don't send CVs and cover letters in on spec; they don't join the millions queuing virtually on line at monster.com; and they don't search aimlessly without clarity and focus. They understand that it's personal connections that matter and the value of a quality network and relationships. They find someone in the same industry or company they want to work in. If they don't know someone directly, they find someone who knows someone. They spend time with them and, for the price of a cup of coffee, ask them for their help – not in getting a job directly, but in helping them understand what it takes to get a job and succeed. They ask for a referral and they take whatever advice or guidance comes their way before determining what may or may not work for them – usually by giving it a go.

If they want progression or a promotion, they don't stand in line waiting with the majority for 'fairness' but they set their vision out early. And, critically, they don't just focus on the next job but beyond that role to the n+1 job – the one after the next one – and develop their skillset and network to support that goal. They invest in themselves, they put themselves in front of the right people and they create an opportunity. And when that opportunity arrives, they grab it with both hands.

If they're in sales – and everyone is to some extent – they realise that the biggest difference between them and 'the majority' is their mindset. That they are the ones in control of their business – that despite external circumstances they can adapt their offering in a way that resonates with their customers. They have relationships that stand the test of time and the foresight to create new opportunities long before others have realised there's a need. They use a series of simple but proven principles and are never short of ideas.

And when they start something new – a project or venture – they look for a gap, a niche, and they make sure that it's aligned with their capabilities. Then they go after it, with verve and gusto. They go into it with their eyes wide open and a plan to accompany it. They accept there may be some highs and lows, but they see an end point which they keep fixated on. They get good people around them and aren't afraid to ask for help. They're proactive and committed to action with purpose rather than the worthless option of low quality activity for the sake of it.

For 'the majority' who stand and point at 'the stars' and tell tales of woe; who talk of fairness (or lack thereof); who point to the conditions on the playing field as the reason for their per-

formance whilst others around them on the same field win; who, rather than try something new for fear of failure, stand in the perceived safety of the line; and who don't ask for help or invest in themselves it will remain hard if not impossible.

This is a book about relationships: about how to develop better, stronger, deeper relationships with people, and how to create significance in business life or personal life.

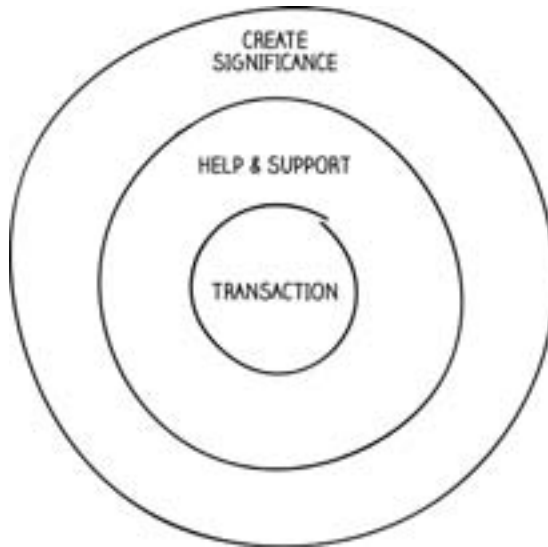
It's also a book about the majority, or actually about how to stand out from the majority. It's a book about how to become one of the 'stars', one of the top 10 percent.

Because being in the top 10 percent is tough – that's why it's reserved for the best. But it doesn't have to be impossible; in fact it's not. It's just reserved for those who step out of line, away from the majority and strip away the low quality thinking and limiting beliefs that hold many people back.

## **WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE FALL INTO 'THE MAJORITY'?**

There is a fundamental issue with our conventional understanding of sales.

In the traditional approach to selling, conventional wisdom teaches us to identify customers' needs through a series of funnelled questions and match those identified needs to our relevant *features and benefits* (the *transaction*). The features are the particular element of the product or service which is most suited to them, and the benefit is the 'what's in it for them' or 'what does that mean to them'.



Once needs have been established, features and benefits matched, the next step is to agree a mutually beneficial way forward of which one positive outcome is a sale, in whatever form it takes. After the sale is complete the *customer support* element starts. We find ways to provide a service or support mechanism to ensure the use of our product or service – hence the term ‘after sales service’. (*We help and support*)

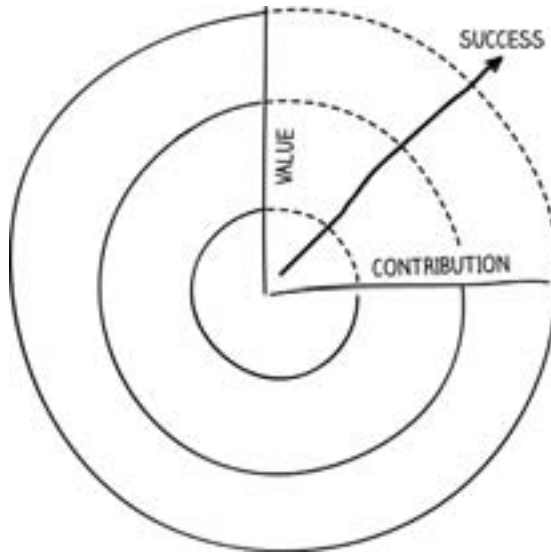
If we’re lucky, our relationship develops through the sales process and we may progress to a position as being seen as a *valued or trusted advisor* by the customer.

This is what I would term the ‘traditional’ model of selling:

1. Sell based on features and benefits
2. Provide after sales support or service
3. Become (if lucky) a valued or trusted advisor

## THE ROUTE TO GREAT RELATIONSHIPS

It is in the top right-hand corner of this diagram where we (as relationship builders, influencers or sales people) are able to create the greatest amount of value, and where the other person – whether customers or otherwise – generate the greatest level of contribution.



In business, this is where you get repeat business, can charge more for your products or services, and sell additional or complementary products or services. It's where the customer perceives a greater level of value being transferred to them and where the customer generates more sales and profit for the company or individual. In your personal life, this is the area where you get the most from your relationships. These are the people who you add value to but who also contribute greatly to your life.

And importantly, regardless of the context, this is the area in which you step away from the majority.



In the traditional model of selling, the relationship is built on the foundations of a transaction, on the feature-benefit sell. The help and support, and the journey to becoming a valued or trusted advisor where the relationship is most fruitful for everyone involved, becomes secondary. There is a lag and many business and sales people will admit that they don't get there. It is the promised-land – the area we all strive to operate in – but the one that for most individuals is never quite achieved because we're too focused on the transaction.

It is that way, not because of a lack of ability on the part of the individual or the sales person, but because of where the focus lies; on the way in which we approach the relationship, primarily on the transaction – feature-benefit sale – rather than the individual.

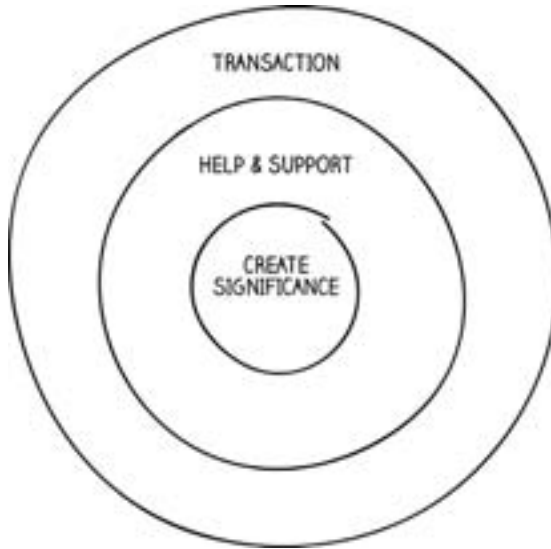
## FLIP IT

The way to step away from the majority and the way to overcome these issues are to invert the traditional selling model, to flip it. This means to forget yourself and to focus first on creating significance, then to offer help and support so that finally the transactional element, or the feature-benefit, becomes a *fait accompli*. It just becomes a matter of course and an inevitable result of an early focus on the other person, rather than focusing first on the features of the product or service. It is a focus away from the transaction and a focus away from the initial idea of selling.

So let's take a look at this principle in a little more detail and provide some greater insight as to its application. After all, it's fine in theory, but how does this come to life?

## START BY CREATING SIGNIFICANCE

When you build a relationship, a really great relationship, there are certain elements that are both integral to and consistent in what makes a successful relationship.



If we can focus first on building and amplifying these areas, then the traditional model inverts. Our primary goal becomes to create value and significance for the other person; we shift the focus away from us and our agenda and instead make it all about others.

In business and sales, we can improve the experience our customers have of working with us before moving on to the transactional part and the feature-benefit sale.

It's not exclusive to business. More generally, if we focus first on the other person and creating value and significance for them, we can mutually benefit from the help and support available to get more out of our relationships. And this is where

*GO NAKED* is centred – on first creating significance by adopting seven principles, which are to:

- Get Genuinely Curious
- Offer Something Different
- Notice and Manage Yourself and Others
- Agree Goals
- Keep Adding Value
- Embody Enthusiasm
- Do It And Deliver

We'll explore each of these principles in detail, but none of them should be viewed independently. Instead they should be seen a series of interconnecting points on a grid, each one linked with the other, bound together by a mindset and an approach which strips away the layers of conventional wisdom that don't contribute to success. This mindset requires us to be authentic and honest, to take action and take risks, to ask for help without fear of rejection, and to show humility. It requires us to *GO NAKED*.

In discussing what it means to create significance for someone and to focus on being a trusted or valued advisor, in highlighting the areas which contribute to the development of these sorts of relationships, then we are starting to peel back the layers and understand what it actually means to *GO NAKED*.

This book will, if you allow it, help you develop ways to build stronger relationships with people so that whether you are selling yourself, a product or a service, you can step away from the majority and increase the chances of longer-term success.

Read on to find out how.

# THE AUTHOR



Michael believes that strong relationships and connections lead to success and that the best way to create them is to 'GO NAKED'.

Michael graduated from the University of Leeds after completing a BSc in Medical Biochemistry. After taking up a sales role in a medical device company, he quickly established a successful career in the industry, which saw him appointed to numerous sales and marketing management roles across three multi-national companies, most recently as Director of Sales for Europe.

In 2010, Michael was awarded an MBA with distinction from the University of Warwick where his final dissertation focused on strategies for market entry. In 2012, Michael completed his Professional Certificate in Coaching at Henley Business School.

In 2013 Michael created GO NAKED® – a series of training, coaching and development programmes based on seven principles of success which can help individuals and businesses to increased performance. He now works as a Coach, Speaker and Advisor.

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You can also read his weekly blog at [www.gonakedselling.com](http://www.gonakedselling.com)