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VIKAS SAHAJWANI



BlueRoseONE^{.com}
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—
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Dedication



To my wife, Jasmeet.

This book may carry my name, but its heart carries yours.

For more than fifteen years, you have lived and breathed sales with passion, integrity, and excellence. You have been my toughest critic, my strongest supporter, and my greatest source of inspiration. You challenged my ideas, pointed out my mistakes, celebrated my victories, and stood beside me through every success and every setback.

Many of the lessons in these pages were first learned through our conversations.

Thank you for believing in me when I doubted myself, for reminding me to keep going when the journey felt difficult, and for helping me become not just a better salesperson, but a better human being.

This book is dedicated to you—with love, gratitude, and deep respect.

Vikas

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Real sales. Real stories. Real results — waiting inside every page.

CHAPTER 1

Born to Sell? Or Built?

Or maybe — both.



The Bus to Mount Abu

The journey that changed everything

It was June, and Rajasthan was doing what Rajasthan does best in June — trying to kill you slowly. The bus to Mount Abu was packed, the windows shut tight because the heat outside was somehow worse than the stale air inside. The air conditioning had a name. It did not have a function. People sat pressed against each other like cargo that had given up complaining.

I was on that bus. Vikas Sahajwani. On leave. Properly on leave.

No target to chase. No call from a boss waiting to ruin the evening. No client to meet, no pitch to rehearse. Just my phone, my family, and that small, forgotten slice of life that we salespeople almost never get — a life with no agenda.

I was sitting by the window. Outside, dry brown hills rolled past. Inside, the usual chaos — a child crying somewhere behind me, an uncle on a phone call shouting as if the person on the other end was on a different planet and needed extra volume to be reached. I closed my eyes.

But something happened. Something always happens.

Next to me sat a gentleman from Ahmedabad — somewhere in his fifties, white kurta, quiet, a little bored. He looked at me once. Then out the window. Then at his phone. Then at me again.

"What do you do, bhai?"

He asked it the way people ask things when sleep won't come, the phone battery is dying, and there is nothing left to look at outside.

I paused for a moment.

Now think about it — what would most people say here? "I'm in insurance" — and the conversation dies right there. Or "I run a business" — vague enough to close the door politely.

But in that one moment, something else occurred to me. This man was bored. This man wanted to talk. This man, right now, was actually in the mood to listen.

I smiled.

"I'm in investments. I secure people's futures."

He gave me that look — the look every middle-class Indian man gives when he senses someone is about to sell him something.

"You mean insurance?"

"I mean — even after you're gone, your family never has to struggle."

That was it. That was enough.

He went quiet. And I saw it — something shift in his eyes. An old worry he'd been carrying around, quietly, for years, had just stepped out into the open. Mount Abu was still two hours away.

In those two hours, he told me everything. Two sons, a daughter, a joint family, a shop in Ahmedabad that was doing decently — but no real plan for the future. "Yaar, I keep thinking," he said, "if something happens to me tomorrow, what happens to my children?"

I didn't explain any plan. I didn't show a single number. I didn't pull out a brochure or a chart.

I just listened.

When the bus stopped, he said it himself — "Vikas bhai, give me your number. We need to talk properly."

That trip had sixteen people in our group. Seven of them invested money with me in the weeks that followed. No office. No appointment. No preparation. Just a bus, a couple of hours, and a person genuinely willing to listen.

On that day — on leave, with zero pressure and zero targets — I did the most relaxed, and the most effective, selling of my entire life.

That night, lying in the hotel room, one thought stayed with me:

This isn't a job. This is who I am.

What Selling Actually Means

Before we go any further, let's settle something.

What does selling actually mean?

Most people think it means convincing someone to buy something they don't need. That's exactly why the word "salesman" conjures up a particular image — slicked-back hair, fast talk, a handshake that grips a little too hard, someone who agrees with everything you say a little too quickly.

That picture is wrong. And it's the very picture that keeps thousands of genuinely good people away from sales.

The real meaning of selling is this: understanding someone's pain, and offering them a way out of it.

That's it. Nothing more.

When a mother convinces her child to take medicine, she's selling. When a friend says, "yaar, you have to watch this movie, you'll love it" — that's selling. When a teacher convinces a student that maths actually matters — that's selling too.

Selling is everywhere. In every relationship. In every conversation.

The only difference is — in professional sales, you do it deliberately, you do it every single day, and there's something on the line in return.

Born vs. Built — The Real Answer

There are two kinds of people in this world.

The first kind says: "Salespeople are born that way. I just don't have it in me."

The second kind says: "Selling is a skill. Anyone can learn it."

My answer? Both are half right.

Researchers who've studied top-performing salespeople have found three traits that show up again and again — the ability to feel another person's pain, an endless curiosity about everything, and the resilience to fall down and get back up, over and over. Some of this is natural temperament. But all of it can be sharpened.

There's a well-known finding from a major survey of working professionals — on average, people spend around 41% of their working time on some form of selling, whether or not they're literally selling a product. Convincing someone of an idea, persuading a colleague to act, making your point land — all of it is selling.

Which means — we're all already selling. Most of us just refuse to admit it.

My own story: I sold insurance. I sold advertising space in newspapers. I sold health insurance. In recent years I've sold something harder still — sustainability, an idea companies don't yet believe pays for itself. Every place was different. The products were different. The people were different. The methods were different.

But one thing never changed — the human being sitting across from me.

Their fears were the same. Their dreams were the same. Their need was the same — for someone who would actually listen to them.

Some of this came naturally to me. But shaping it into something useful took years. I made mistakes. I heard plenty of "nos." Deals I should have won, I lost. And deals that looked impossible — somehow, I won.

A salesman is not born. And a salesman cannot simply be trained. A salesman is forged — in the fire of life itself.

Selling in India — A Different Game Altogether

This is something you need to understand deeply.

Read the Western sales books, and they'll tell you: "Get to the point. Don't waste the client's time. Be direct."

In India, that approach often falls flat.

Why? Because in India, selling runs on relationships. Here, you have chai first, and the deal happens after. Here, it matters how the client's son did in his board exams. Sending a Diwali message isn't a formality here — it's an investment.

In India, trust is sold first. The product comes later.

A major research study on Indian buying behaviour found that around 76% of significant purchase decisions in India are influenced by someone the buyer already knows, or by a personal recommendation. In other words — relationships and trust are India's biggest sales tool, by far.

I've seen this play out, every single day, for twenty-five years.

My biggest deals were never closed in meeting rooms. They happened at cricket matches. At weddings. On trains. While just sitting around, doing nothing in particular.

If you're a salesperson in India, you need to understand this — you are always at work. Not because someone is watching you. But because every single person you meet is a chance for your life to add value to theirs.

The Power of Listening — The Most Underrated Skill in Sales

If I had to pick the single biggest lesson from my entire career, it would be this:

Listen. Just listen.

It sounds simple. It isn't.

Most of us, when someone is talking, aren't really listening. We're busy preparing our next response. Thinking about what we want to say. Quietly waiting for the other person to stop, so we can finally speak.

That's not selling. That's just imposing your own opinion on someone.

A well-known sales researcher once analysed thousands of recorded sales calls — closely studying who spoke, and how much. The result? The average salesperson talks for about 70% of a conversation. The best salespeople do the opposite — they listen for about 70% of it.

That single difference changes everything.

When you listen, the other person tells you, in their own words, exactly what their problem is. What they actually need. And what would make them say yes.

All you need to do is hand it back to them — in their own language.

That's exactly what happened on that bus to Mount Abu. That gentleman said it himself — "if something happens to me tomorrow, what happens to my children?" I simply addressed that one fear. He worked out the rest, on his own.

The Things That Keep People Away From Sales

I've watched thousands of people enter sales — and thousands of people leave it. The reasons people leave are almost always the same.

1. The fear of hearing "no"

This is the biggest barrier of all.

When people hear a "no," they don't think, "this particular deal didn't work out." They think, "he rejected me." They take it personally.

But here's the truth — the other person didn't say no to you. They said no to that thing, at that moment. Maybe the timing was wrong. Maybe they didn't need it right now. Maybe they simply didn't fully understand what you were offering.

When a salesperson stops taking "no" personally — that's the day they truly become free.

Every 'no' brings you one step closer to a 'yes.' It's a numbers game.

2. The "I can't do this" mindset

This belief is the biggest enemy of all.

You believe you can't, so you stop trying — which means you genuinely don't — which only confirms the belief further. A loop that feeds itself.

There's only one way to break this loop — one small win. One conversation that goes well. One client who says yes. One moment where you feel, for the first time — yaar, I actually can do this.

3. Obsessing over the product, ignoring the person

Many salespeople spend so much energy mastering every detail of their product that they completely forget to understand the people they're selling to.

Knowing your product matters. But it isn't everything.

I've seen people who knew every single specification — and never closed a deal. And I've seen people who knew barely two or three things about their product, but connected with people so well that the deals just kept coming.

4. Not following up

There's an entire chapter coming up on this. But for now, just remember this one number —

In India, around 80% of deals close on follow-up. Not on the first meeting.

A salesperson who doesn't follow up is walking away from 80% of their own hard work — and leaving it on the table for someone else.

The Same Truth, Across Every Industry

Insurance

Selling insurance is among the toughest selling jobs in India. Why? Because you're selling something nobody can see, nobody can touch, and something whose benefit — God willing — they'll never need to claim.

What you're really selling is a fear. And nobody wants to talk about their fears.

That's why an agent who sells only numbers and returns stays average. But an agent who sells a family's security, a child's future, a wife's dignity — becomes someone entirely different.

The biggest deal of my career — a ₹5 crore premium — has its own story coming up later in this book. But its roots were exactly this: I understood a father's deepest fear.

Media & Advertising

Selling newspaper advertising space was its own art form.

The client always said, "Lower the rate." Always. That was the opening move, every time.

A salesperson who kept arguing about the rate always stayed weak. But the salesperson who could say, "this isn't space — this is fifty thousand new customers for you" — ended the rate conversation entirely.

Don't sell the price. Sell the outcome.

Retail

In retail, the biggest pain for a salesperson is this — hundreds of people walk in every day, and most walk out without buying anything. That same routine, day after day, breaks even good salespeople down.

But the retail salesperson who sees a fresh story in every customer — keeps every conversation alive.

I remember a young salesman in a clothing store telling me, "Sir, this colour will look great on you." I didn't react. He tried again — "Your wife will love it too." I took out my wallet.

He hadn't sold me anything. He'd sold my wife's smile. Smart kid.

Banking

In banking, trust comes before everything else. People don't hand their money to just anyone.

Here, your reputation is your biggest asset. One wrong piece of advice, one hidden charge, one broken promise — and the client is gone for life. And takes ten others with them.

What works in banking sales is always the same — long-term relationships, not quick commissions.

More recently, I've done a different kind of selling altogether — selling sustainability to businesses. It's a hard sell, because the first reaction is almost always the same: "this is all big talk, it doesn't work in real business." But the moment you show a company owner exactly how doing right by the environment also does right by their bottom line — the entire conversation changes, instantly.

The heart of selling, in every industry, is one and the same — speak in their language.

CASE STUDY: The Bus Deal

Situation: Peak summer heat. A bus to Mount Abu. Sixteen strangers. No office, no preparation, no appointment.

Challenge: Connecting with strangers, with zero preparation, in an entirely non-professional setting.

What he did:

- Gave a direct, thought-provoking answer instead of an explanation
- Listened — genuinely, for two full hours
- Shared his own life stories, the highs and the lows, honestly
- Connected today's worry to tomorrow's reality
- Applied no pressure, no urgency, no force

Result: Seven out of sixteen invested in the following weeks.

The real takeaway: *The best place to sell is the place that doesn't feel like selling at all. When you're truly present, truly curious — people are drawn to you, naturally.*

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — The Listening Test

These exercises aren't theory. They're an experiment.

In any one conversation today — with a colleague, a family member, or a stranger — try this:

Talk less. Listen more.

When the other person speaks, don't interrupt. Don't think about your next line. Just listen.

Notice what happens. Most people are surprised by how much the other person reveals — things they never expected to hear.

Exercise 2 — Reframe What You Sell

Describe what you do in a completely new way.

Don't describe what you sell. Describe the pain you remove.

For example:

- Insurance: "I don't sell insurance. I sell a peaceful night's sleep."
- Banking: "I don't give loans. I give people the opportunity that money was holding them back from."
- Sustainability: "I don't sell a concept. I show a business how much money is sitting in what it's already throwing away."

Write your own version. Try it in your very next conversation.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. When was the first time in my life I convinced someone of something — without realising I was selling?

2. When I talk to someone, what's my first instinct — to speak, or to listen? Why?

3. When I hear the word 'salesperson,' what's the first image that comes to mind — and where did that image come from?

4. Describe a moment when you sold something — somewhere you never expected to.

5. Rewrite what you sell today — not as a product, but as a solution to a pain.

6. My biggest natural strength as a salesperson — and my biggest weakness?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. Selling isn't a job — it's a way of being. We're all selling something, every single day.
2. A salesperson isn't born, and isn't simply trained — they're shaped, by life's experiences.
3. In India, selling runs on relationships. Trust first, product second.
4. Listening is the most powerful weapon in selling — and the least used.
5. When you're genuinely curious about people — selling happens on its own.

What I sold on that bus wasn't a product. It was their own tomorrow. I just showed it to them.

— Vikas Sahajwani

Next Chapter: The First Defeat — the deal I'll never forget, and the lesson that stayed with me forever.

CHAPTER 2

The First Defeat

The morning I never forgot



The Newspaper

What I expected that morning didn't happen.

I opened the door like I did every day. Picked up the newspaper like I did every day. Sat down for my first sip of chai like I did every day.

And then — there it was.

Front page. A full-page advertisement. The exact creative I had built. The exact campaign I had spent weeks sweating over. The exact timing I had suggested. The exact placement I had planned.

Everything was there.

Just one thing was different — it wasn't in my newspaper. It was in the competitor's.

The chai sat there, untouched. My hand froze mid-air. For one full moment, my brain simply switched off.

The same man who had told me, just a day earlier — "Vikas bhai, the campaign is getting a little delayed, let's look at it next week" — had handed everything I'd spent months explaining to him, to someone else, that very same night.

That morning was one of the biggest blows of my life. Not the loss of a deal — the loss of trust.

When Everything Seemed to Be Going Right

This was during my years in the media industry. Selling advertising space in newspapers — that was my job. And I was good at it.

I was in talks with a big client — a real estate company. They had a major project launching in the city. Big project. Big budget.

Our first meeting was just a casual one. But I had a habit — I took every meeting seriously. I understood what they needed. I learned about their project, who their target customers were. Then I built an entire plan.

A three-day campaign. A full-page ad each day. Day one — awareness, what the project was. Day two — details, what buyers would get. Day three — urgency, book now.

I had the creatives made by my team. I worked out the placement myself. I planned the timing around their launch date. Everything fit together perfectly.

The client was thrilled. Genuinely thrilled.

"Vikas bhai, this is a fantastic plan. Let's go with this."

I was thrilled too. This was going to be the biggest deal of my media career.

And Then, When Everything Was Ready

The deal was about to happen. The order was about to come in. Everything was set.

And then — the client called.

"Vikas bhai, there's a small delay. Let's confirm next week."

I thought — fine. This happens in business. We'll wait a bit.

I said yes. I ended the call.

What I didn't realise at that moment was this — I had been so open with this client, shared so much, that the entire campaign thinking, the creative ideas, the placement strategy, the timing logic — he no longer needed me at all.

He had everything. All he needed now was someone cheaper to execute it.

And he found one.

The Morning I Opened the Door

The next morning, I opened the door. Picked up the newspaper.

And there it was.

Full page. The same creative. The same plan. The same thinking. Just — a different newspaper. The competitor's.

I just stood there.

From inside the house, a voice called out — "Chai is ready."

I couldn't say anything.

What I felt in that moment is hard to put into words. This wasn't just about losing a deal. It was the loss of weeks of effort. The breaking of trust I had placed in another human being. And the realisation of my own naivety — for having shared everything, so openly.

The day was wasted. I went to office. I worked. But that newspaper never left my eyes.

What I Did Next

I didn't stay quiet.

I called the client. I told him exactly how I felt. He gave me his explanation — "Vikas bhai, they were cheaper. It's business. Try to understand."

I argued. I made my case. I got angry too. But in the end — nothing changed.

The deal was gone. The money was gone. The effort was gone.

And the biggest thing I understood that night — fighting gets you nowhere once the other person has already made up their mind.

Some things you cannot change. You can only accept them — and move forward.

The Lesson That Day Taught Me

What that one incident taught me — no book taught it to me, no training programme taught it to me.

Lesson One — Don't reveal everything before the deal is signed.

This isn't about being cunning. It's professional sense.

When you're working with a client — your full thinking, your entire plan, your complete strategy — don't hand it all over at once. Commitment first. The order first. Trust on paper first.

After that — give everything. Give it wholeheartedly.

My mistake was that I'd opened my entire heart and mind before I'd even thought about what the other person might do with it.

Lesson Two — Not everyone is honest. And that's not your fault.

This is something every salesperson needs to understand.

Some people will take your information, your ideas, your time — and give nothing back. That's their nature. You can't change that.

But you can change your own habits. You can learn how much to share, and when.

Lesson Three — Anger is an emotion, not an action.

I fought with that client. Got angry. Argued my case.

Result? Nothing.

Anger is natural. It should happen. But decisions made in anger usually cause more damage.

After that day, I made a rule that still serves me today — whenever something bad happens, just feel it for the first twenty-four hours. Don't make any big decisions. Don't say anything important. Just wait.

After twenty-four hours — do whatever needs to be done. By then, the mind is clear.

The Competitor Who Became a Friend

Now, here's an interesting twist.

The competitor who took that deal from me — I kept running into him in the same industry. We were both in media. Different newspapers. Same field.

For a while, it felt awkward. There was a knot in my chest every time I saw him.

But slowly — we talked. We met a few times. And eventually, we became good friends.

He never admitted he'd done anything wrong. I never told him he had.

Because in business — he did exactly what a smart businessperson does. He spotted an opening in the market and took it. My mistake was leaving that opening wide open for him.

By the time I left the media industry, we had a genuinely good relationship. No bitterness at all.

And the biggest thing that came out of that whole episode was this —

He won the deal. I won the relationship. And in life — the relationship is worth more.

What Defeat Really Means

In sales, you lose. Every single day.

Every "no" is a small defeat. Every deal that slips away at the last moment is a bigger one. Every month you miss your target is a long, drawn-out defeat.

But defeat doesn't mean it's over.

Here's something I've noticed — salespeople who take their losses personally slowly break down. And salespeople who treat every loss as a place to learn — come back stronger, every single time.

I learned this philosophy from a senior of mine, back in my insurance days. He told me —

Vikas, in sales, there are only two emotions — learn, or celebrate. There's no third option.

When a deal happens — celebrate it. Enjoy it. When a deal doesn't happen — learn from it. Why didn't it happen? What went wrong? What should be different next time?

That's it.

There's no time in this profession for grieving, sulking, or staying angry.

Indian Sales — Where Trust Breaking Hurts the Most

We talked, in the previous chapter, about how sales in India runs on relationships.

But there's another side to that — when that relationship breaks, the wound goes deep.

In Western countries, a salesperson says, "Business is business." They see a deal as a deal. They don't take it personally.

In India, we build relationships first — and then do the deal within that relationship. So when the deal breaks, it feels like the relationship has broken too.

This isn't a weakness of ours. It's our strength — one that occasionally hurts us.

But the answer isn't to stop building relationships. The answer is —

Build the relationship with your heart. Do the deal with your head.

Both can happen together. They should.

With your heart means — genuinely care. Understand what they need. Truly want to do something good for them.

With your head means — until there's a signature, until the order arrives, until the payment comes through, stay professional. Hold back your full strategy, your full thinking, your full effort — until there's a commitment.

The Mistakes Every Salesperson Makes

The mistakes that came out of that newspaper deal weren't just mine. They happen every single day, in every single industry, even now.

Mistake One — Moving too fast

I was so excited about that deal that I gave away everything, far too quickly. The plan, the creative, the strategy — all in the first or second meeting.

When we get excited about a big deal, this is our biggest mistake. We want to prove how good we are. And in that effort, we end up giving away far more than we should.

Controlling your excitement is an essential skill in sales.

Mistake Two — Trusting a verbal commitment

"Vikas bhai, let's go with this."

That was a promise. But it was only ever spoken into the air.

After that day, I made a rule I've never broken since —

Until it's in writing — it hasn't happened.

The client said yes — fine. But that yes needs to land somewhere. An email. A WhatsApp message. Something that can be pointed back to later.

You can't build a house on spoken promises.

Mistake Three — Ignoring the competition

I was so focused on my client that I never stopped to think about what the competitor might be doing.

In sales, you have to watch two things at once — the eyes of the client in front of you, and the market around you. Both, together.

Someone who only watches the client gets blindsided. Someone who only watches the competition forgets the client. You need both.

Mistake Four — Going soft on follow-up

When the client said "delay," I just accepted it. I didn't want to push too hard.

That's exactly where I went wrong.

A good follow-up should have happened right then. Not a call — a meeting. Sitting across from him. "Bhai, what happened? Is something wrong? Does the plan need to change?"

That one meeting might have changed everything.

Follow-up isn't just a reminder. Follow-up is taking care of a relationship.

How to Move On After a Big Loss

Every salesperson asks this question.

After a big defeat — you don't feel like going to the office. You don't feel like picking up the phone. You don't feel like meeting anyone.

That's natural. Let it happen.

But not for more than one day.

I made a personal rule for myself, during those exact difficult days —

Grieve for one day. Get up the next.

Day one — feel whatever happened. Be angry, be sad, whatever it is. But alone. Not in front of a client. Not in front of a colleague.

Day two — back to work. Make one call. Take one meeting. Find one small win.

That small win is what brings you back on track.

Rejection — A Different Way to Look At It

Research has found that, on average, a salesperson hears "no" about five times before a deal closes.

But most salespeople give up after the second "no."

Which means — by simply staying in the game a little longer, you could win more than half the deals you're currently losing.

It's a numbers game. Not an emotions game.

When you treat a "no" as a data point — "okay, that's one more no, on to the next one" — you can keep going for a long time.

When you treat a "no" as your own personal failure — every rejection breaks you down a little more.

CASE STUDY: The Newspaper Deal

Situation: Media industry. A three-day full-page campaign for a major real estate client. Weeks of work. The plan ready. The creative ready. The deal almost certain.

Challenge: The client said there was a delay. The next morning, the same campaign appeared — in the competitor's newspaper.

What he did:

- Shared the entire strategy before the deal was confirmed (a mistake)
- Treated a verbal commitment as final (a mistake)
- Went soft on follow-up after hearing "delay" (a mistake)
- Paid no attention to the competition (a mistake)

Result: He learned to withhold the full plan until signature, get written confirmation, never go soft on follow-up, and let anger pass rather than fight.

The real takeaway: *He went on to build a genuinely good relationship with that very competitor. The competitor won the deal. Vikas won the relationship.*

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Revisit a Past Loss

Take a piece of paper. Write down one deal that slipped away.

Now ask yourself:

- What was my mistake?
- What was the client's mistake?
- What was the market's mistake?
- If the same situation came up again — what would I do differently?

This exercise will sting a little. That's exactly why it teaches the most.

Exercise 2 — Build the Written-Commitment Habit

In your very next deal — the moment a client says "yes" — send a WhatsApp message right away.

[Name] bhai, great speaking with you today. You've agreed to [this]. I'll have [this] ready by [date]. Please confirm.

That's all it takes. It's a simple professional habit — and it will save you from a great deal of pain down the line.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. What was the biggest defeat of your life — in sales, or in life? What did it teach you?

2. Have you ever given away more than you should have in a deal — and regretted it later? What happened?

3. When a deal falls through, what do you normally do — get angry? Go quiet? Move on quickly? Be honest.

4. Do you have a habit of getting things in writing? If not — why not?

5. Think of someone who hurt you professionally. Were you able to carry that relationship forward? What happened?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. Don't reveal your full plan before the deal is closed — commitment first, strategy after.
2. A verbal yes isn't enough — always get something in writing. Email, message, anything.
3. Anger is an emotion, not an action — feel it for twenty-four hours, then move on.
4. Don't take losses personally — treat them as a place to learn.
5. The relationship matters more than the deal — protect it, even when the deal is gone. It serves you for life.

I've never forgotten that newspaper. But what it taught me was the most valuable training of my life — and it cost me nothing but one deal.

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Next Chapter: Sell Trust, the Product Can Wait — the ₹5 crore deal, a father's fear, and a salesperson's heart.

CHAPTER 3

Sell Trust, the Product Can Wait

The ₹5 crore deal that was never about the money



The Room. The Man. The Silence.

I was sitting in his drawing room.

It was a large room. Spotless. Family photographs lined the walls. A small puja corner sat in one corner. Outside, the traffic carried on as it always does — but inside that room, there was a strange, settled quiet.

Across from me sat an older gentleman. A respected businessman. Well known in the city. Money, status, all of it.

But what was in his eyes wasn't money.

It was a father's fear.

I had come there to sell insurance. But sitting in that room, I understood something — today, insurance wasn't going to be sold.

Today, something else was going to be sold.

Today, what would be sold was peace of mind.

How It Began

This was during my years at a large insurance company.

By then, I'd closed plenty of deals. Small ones, medium ones, a few big ones. But I'd never met a client quite like this one.

He came through a referral. A mutual contact had said, "There's a businessman, fairly big name, go meet him."

I took the appointment. We had our first meeting. And one thing became clear right away — this man wasn't meeting me because of the money. Something was weighing on him.

I didn't ask. I just listened.

In the second meeting, he opened up a little more.

In the third meeting, he told me something he probably hadn't told many people.

He had a daughter.

The Daughter, the Father, and the Responsibility

His daughter was around twenty, twenty-two. Educated. Sharp. But life had placed her in circumstances where she was entirely dependent on her father.

This businessman — a man who closed deals and made big decisions in the outside world without blinking — fell apart inside the moment he thought about his daughter.

One day, he said: "Vikas bhai, I'm not worried about myself. I've lived my life, whatever had to happen has happened. But the day I'm gone — what happens to my daughter? She needs money every month. There's no one to look after her. If I'm not there, where will she go?"

He stopped.

I stayed quiet.

The only sound in the room was the ceiling fan.

This was that moment — the one that comes once in every salesperson's career — when you realise the person sitting across from you isn't asking you for a product. They're asking you for a promise.

The Sales Call That Wasn't a Sales Call

I didn't take out a brochure that day.

I didn't show a single chart.

I didn't calculate a single return.

I just asked one question —

"How much money would your daughter need every month — to live comfortably?"

He gave me a number.

I asked, "And for how many years would she need this?"

He said, "For as long as she's alive."

I said, "Then let's set up something that works while you're here, and continues working after you're gone."

His eyes filled up.

He asked, "Can something like that really be done?"

I said, "Yes. That's exactly why I'm here."

The Biggest Deal of My Career

We talked it through that day. I explained the plan, slowly, in his language. I didn't explain returns. I didn't explain tax. I didn't explain maturity values.

I explained — your daughter will receive this much, every month. While you're here. And after you're gone.

Not once did he ask, "What's the rate? Would another company give better returns?"

He asked only one thing — "Is this guaranteed?"

I said, "Yes. My company gives you that promise."

He said yes.

A premium of ₹5 crore. One cheque.

Until that day, no single salesperson at my company had ever brought in a cheque that size.

When I walked into the office, everyone was stunned. My manager asked, "How did you do it?"

I said, "I didn't sell insurance. I removed a father's fear."

The Promotions — and the Journey That Followed

That one deal changed my career.

I spent five years at that insurance company. Five promotions in those five years. Each promotion had its own story. But that first big deal — that was the foundation.

People who think one deal can't change anything — they're wrong.

The right deal — at the right time, with the right person — can change an entire life.

But that deal happened only because of one thing I did — I listened to that father. Truly listened. I felt his pain as if it were my own.

That emotional connection is what created a ₹5 crore cheque.

Emotional Selling — Not Magic, Just Understanding

When people hear "emotional selling," sometimes it sounds like manipulation — make someone cry, scare them, and close the deal.

No. Not at all.

Emotional selling means understanding the other person's real emotion — and addressing it.

Behind every major purchase, there's an emotion. Always.

- Someone buys a house — not because they need a roof. Because they need to feel like they belong somewhere. They need security.
- Someone buys an expensive watch — not because they need to know the time. Because they want to show the world something.
- Someone buys insurance — not because the returns are good. Because they want their family to feel safe.

The salesperson who understands this emotion closes the deal. The salesperson who keeps reciting features and benefits keeps handing out brochures.

Trust — the Thing That Comes Before Everything

There was something else in that deal that I only understood later.

That businessman had met me three times — before that first deal. Three meetings. Three conversations. Three moments where I could have sold something — but didn't.

Why didn't I sell?

Because I sensed — he wasn't ready yet. He just wanted to know me. To weigh me up.

And in those three meetings — without selling anything — what I built was trust.

When he said yes in the fourth meeting — that yes wasn't for my product. That yes was for me.

Understanding this difference matters enormously.

When people buy a product, they're really buying the salesperson. The product comes after. What comes first is — can I trust this person?

If the answer is yes — the deal happens. If the answer is no — no matter how good the product is, the deal doesn't happen.

How Trust Is Actually Built

Every salesperson asks this question.

Trust isn't built in a day. It isn't built in a single meeting.

Trust is built — through small things, slowly, over time.

First — do what you say you'll do.

If you said, "I'll send it by tomorrow," send it by tomorrow. If you can't — don't say it in the first place.

Trust isn't built by promises. It's built by promises kept.

Second — admit what you don't know.

A big mistake salespeople make — trying to answer every single question, whether they actually know the answer or not.

This doesn't build trust. It builds doubt.

When you say, "I don't know this right now, let me find out and get back to you" — the other person trusts you more, not less.

Honesty is the biggest sales tool there is.

Third — put the client's need above your own.

Sometimes, the product you're selling simply isn't right for that client.

What do you do then?

If you sell it anyway — you'll make money once. But that client won't come back. And they won't send anyone else either.

If you say honestly, "Look, my product isn't right for you. You should go with this instead" — that client will be yours for life. And they'll send you ten more people.

Think long-term. Not short-term commission.

What That Deal Taught Me

What I learned from that ₹5 crore deal — no training programme ever taught me.

Lesson One — Behind every deal is a person, and a story.

Stop looking at numbers. Look at the person. Listen to their story.

When you understand someone's story, you can give them the right solution. And when the solution is right — the deal happens naturally.

Lesson Two — Patience is an investment.

I went through three meetings without selling anything. Another salesperson might have pitched in the very first meeting.

Have patience. Don't rush.

The right word, said at the right time, is worth more than a hundred words said at the wrong time.

Lesson Three — Big deals come from small things.

What made that ₹5 crore deal happen?

One question — "How much money would your daughter need every month?"

That's it. One question.

The most powerful weapon in sales — the right question.

Lesson Four — When emotion speaks, stay quiet.

When his eyes filled up — I stayed quiet.

I didn't fill the silence with conversation. I let that silence be.

Salespeople find silence frightening. But silence, in truth, says far more than words.

When a client gets emotional — stay quiet. Let them feel it. Don't end that moment.

Emotional Selling and Manipulation — Where the Line Is

This question matters.

There's a very big difference between emotional selling and manipulation.

Manipulation — when you take advantage of someone's emotion, frighten them, pressure them — to sell them something that isn't right for them, or that they don't need.

Emotional selling — when you understand someone's real emotion, genuinely address it — to give them something that will actually serve their life.

In the first — you're using the client. In the second — you're helping the client.

I didn't put fear into that businessman. His fear was already there. I simply addressed it. I gave it a solution.

When the deal closed — he was happy. I was happy. Both of us felt — this was right.

This is what selling actually is.

Trust — the Game That Plays Out in Every Industry

Insurance

Trust matters most in insurance. Because you're selling something whose benefit might never even be needed — and if it is needed, the client themselves won't be around to see it.

Which means — they're trusting the person. Not the product.

Banking

I knew a bank manager once. The customers who came to him had been coming for years. New branches opened, new managers arrived — but those customers still went straight to him.

Why? Because he'd built trust. Year after year. Through small things.

Media

In advertising, a client stays with you long-term when they feel — this person genuinely wants what's good for me. The rate might be a little higher or lower. But this person will give me the right advice.

Retail

There's an old shop somewhere. The owner knows every customer by name. Big shopping malls have come up around it. People still go to that shop.

Why? Trust.

It's no different in sustainability consulting. A company doesn't hand over trust in the first meeting — they want to know first whether you actually understand their business, and whether you genuinely care about their outcome, not just your own pitch. Once that trust is built, the deal follows on its own.

Every industry is the same. Only the product changes.

CASE STUDY: The ₹5 Crore Deal

Situation: A major insurance company. A prominent businessman. A daughter's wellbeing. A deep, unspoken worry.

Challenge: Closing a deal of this size — without pressure, without manipulation.

What he did:

- Three meetings without selling anything — only listening, only understanding
- Waited for the right moment
- Asked one question that reached the heart
- Didn't talk about features — addressed the feeling
- Built trust first; the deal followed

Result: A ₹5 crore premium — the company's largest individual deal at that time.

The real takeaway: *Big deals aren't built on money — they're built on emotion. And the road to emotion runs through trust.*

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Find the Emotion

Think of any one current client or prospect.

Now ask yourself — "Why would this person actually want to buy this from me? What's the real reason? What emotion is behind it?"

Once you have the answer — address that emotion in your next meeting. The product comes after.

Exercise 2 — A Trust Audit

Write down the names of your top five clients.

For each one, ask — do they fully trust me? Why, or why not?

Wherever trust feels low — is there one small thing you could do to strengthen it?

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. The biggest deal of your life — why did it happen? Was it really the product, or something else?

2. Think of a client who trusted you deeply. Why did they? What had you done to earn that?

3. Have you ever sold something that wasn't right for the client — just for the commission? How did that feel?

4. Do your clients buy from you because of your product, or because of you? Be honest with yourself.

5. What's your biggest weakness when it comes to building trust? Do you keep your promises? Are you on time? Are you honest?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. Behind every major purchase is an emotion — understand it, and the deal follows.

2. Trust is the road to emotion — and trust is built slowly, through small things.

3. Do what you say — keeping promises is the cheapest, most effective marketing there is.

4. Patience is an investment — waiting for the right moment always beats rushing.

5. Emotional selling isn't manipulation — it's genuinely helping someone. The difference is whether you're using the client, or serving them.

That day, I walked out with a ₹5 crore cheque. But what I'd actually been given wasn't a cheque. It was a father's peace of mind — and the knowledge that I'd genuinely done something good.

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Next Chapter: Follow Up or Fail — India's biggest sales mistake, happening every day, everywhere.

CHAPTER 4

Follow Up or Fail

India's biggest sales mistake — happening every day, everywhere



The Call That Never Came

I still remember it.

There was a client. We'd had a good meeting. He'd said — "Vikas bhai, let me think it over. I'll let you know in two or three days."

I said, "Of course. I'll wait for your call."

And so I waited.

Three days. A week. Two weeks.

The call never came.

I told myself — maybe he's busy. Maybe it's not the right time. Maybe he'll call when he's ready.

Three weeks later, I found out — he'd bought the same thing from someone else. Someone else had followed up. Someone else had knocked on his door.

And that deal — the one that was mine — became someone else's.

That day, I wrote down something in my heart —

Whoever doesn't follow up, fails. Always.

What Follow-Up Actually Means

A lot of salespeople think follow-up means — calling someone again and again, until you become a nuisance.

No. Not at all.

Follow-up means — taking care of a relationship.

When you meet someone, talk to them, share something with them — a relationship begins. That relationship is like a plant. It needs water. It needs sunlight. It needs a little care.

If you leave it alone — it'll dry up.

Follow-up is that water.

But too much water, and the plant drowns too. That's why follow-up needs balance.

The right follow-up — at the right time, in the right way, in the right amount.

Why Follow-Up Doesn't Happen — Especially in India

I've asked this question to thousands of salespeople. The answers always sound something like this —

"Sir, I think they're probably busy." "Sir, I'm afraid they'll get irritated."

"Sir, they said they'd call themselves." "Sir, I already called once — how do I call again?"

All of these — are different versions of the same thing.

That thing is — fear.

Not following up has nothing to do with the product. It has nothing to do with training.

Behind it is the fear of being told no.

And this fear runs a little deeper in us Indians. From childhood, we're taught — "don't keep going back to someone's house again and again. Don't become a burden." That upbringing serves us well — in life.

But in sales, that same upbringing holds us back.

Following up in sales isn't becoming a burden. It's doing your job properly.

The Numbers That Will Shake You

A study once looked at how salespeople actually follow up. The results were eye-opening —

- 44% of salespeople follow up once — and then give up
- 25% don't go beyond two follow-ups
- 12% follow up three times
- Only 10% of salespeople follow up five times or more
- And here's the most interesting part —
- 80% of deals close somewhere between the fourth and twelfth follow-up

Which means — the salespeople who close the most deals are exactly the ones who follow up the most.

This isn't a coincidence.

It's simple arithmetic.

Whoever gives up, loses. Whoever stays the course, gains.

Follow-Up and Annoyance — What's the Difference

Understanding this difference is essential.

I knew a salesman once. Extremely hardworking. He called clients every day. Sometimes two or three times a day. Always the same thing — "Sir, when will you decide? Sir, is it done? Sir, confirm today."

Clients stopped picking up his calls.

That wasn't follow-up. That was chasing.

Real follow-up has three things —

First — give something new, every time.

Every follow-up should carry some value. A piece of information. Something useful. A question that's about them.

"Sir, when we spoke last time, you mentioned you're planning an expansion next year — I thought of something that might help. Got five minutes?"

That's follow-up.

"Sir, when will you decide?"

That's irritation.

Second — be mindful of timing.

Every person has a time that works best for them. Some are fresh in the morning. Some prefer evenings. Some, right after lunch.

In your first or second meeting, find out — "When are you generally free to talk?"

And then reach out at that exact time.

It's a small thing. But it shows — you care about them.

Third — keep changing the format.

Don't call every time. Sometimes message. Sometimes email. Sometimes share an article that's useful to them. Sometimes, just check in.

A salesperson who follows up the same way every time starts getting ignored quickly.

A salesperson who keeps changing how they reach out — stays interesting.

A Practical Guide — The Methods of Follow-Up

The Call

Calling is the most direct method. But calling every time isn't right.

Call when there's something important. Or when you've already messaged and not heard back.

On the call — ask first, "Is this a good time to talk?" It's a small thing, but it shows you respect their time.

The WhatsApp Message

In today's world, WhatsApp is the most useful tool of all.

But don't write long WhatsApp messages. No more than three or four lines.

And the message should always have one clear ask. A vague message doesn't get a reply.

Email

Email is more formal. Good for bigger clients.

The subject line is the most important part. If the subject line is boring — the email won't even be opened.

"Regarding Insurance" — boring. "An idea for your daughter's future" — that gets opened.

The Personal Visit

This is the most effective follow-up of all. It's also the most effort.

But when a deal is stuck — one personal visit does more than ten calls.

"Bhai, I was passing by, thought I'd stop in."

It feels natural. It feels warm. And it works.

Build a Follow-Up System

This matters enormously.

Salespeople who rely on memory for their follow-ups — forget.

Salespeople who build a system — never forget.

The system doesn't need to be complicated. Even a simple diary works.

A simple system — one entry per client:

- Name
- When was the last conversation
- What was discussed
- When to contact next
- What to bring up

That's it. That's enough.

Set reminders on your phone. Use your calendar. Whatever method works — but have a system.

A salesperson's memory is their biggest asset. But don't trust memory alone — build a system.

What to Say — Some Real Examples

First follow-up — right after the meeting

[Name] bhai, great meeting you today. I've been thinking about what you shared — I'll send you something on it in a day or two.

This follow-up isn't about the deal. It's about the relationship.

Second follow-up — with something of value

[Name] bhai, read this article and thought it might be useful for you. Sharing it — take a look whenever you get time.

You gave something. Without asking for anything.

This builds trust.

Third follow-up — a gentle reminder

[Name] bhai, last time you said you'd think it over and let me know. If you have any questions, I'm right here.

No pressure. Just a reminder. And the door stays open.

Fourth follow-up — the direct conversation

[Name] bhai, it's been a while. Let me ask you directly — should we move forward, or is this not the right time? Either is fine — just let me know so I can plan accordingly.

This is an extremely powerful follow-up.

Why? Because you gave the client freedom. You didn't pressure them. And you showed that you care about them — not the deal.

Most clients are honest at this point. They either say yes — or they tell you clearly it's not the right time.

Both answers are good. Nothing is worse than uncertainty.

The Client Who Kept Saying No — and Finally Said Yes

There's one story I think of often.

There was a client. I met him regularly. Every time, he'd say — "Vikas bhai, not now. A little later."

This went on for six months.

A lot of my colleagues said, "Forget him. He's never going to buy."

But I felt — this person is genuinely interested. There's just something holding him back.

Every time, I brought something new. Sometimes information. Sometimes a new plan. Sometimes, just to check in.

In the seventh month — something happened in his family. Someone had a sudden health scare. In that moment, he realised — "Vikas bhai was right."

He called me himself.

"Vikas bhai, tell me now — what do we need to do."

The deal happened. And after that, he sent me five more people.

If I had given up in those six months — none of that would have happened.

Follow-up means not giving up on hope. Stay, until the client themselves tells you to stop.

"No" Doesn't Always Mean No

This is a big lesson.

In sales, "no" has several different meanings —

- "Not right now" — the timing isn't right. Come back a little later.
- "Not this way" — your approach isn't quite right. Change something.
- "Not at this price" — it's a pricing issue. Is there another option?

- "Not from you" — trust hasn't been built yet. Give it more time.
- "Truly, no" — this client isn't going to convert. Move on.

A genuine "no" — where there's really no hope at all — is quite rare.

But most salespeople treat the first "no" as the final "no."

This mistake costs them dearly.

The skill in follow-up is recognising which "no" this is — and acting accordingly.

Follow-Up — and an Unbreakable Relationship

Follow-up isn't just for the deal.

Follow-up is the most effective way to build a relationship.

When you remember a client on their birthday — without selling anything — they notice.

When you congratulate a client on their child's exam results — they remember it.

When you help a client with something small — something that has nothing in it for you — they never forget it, for life.

This isn't follow-up. This is humanity.

And humanity is the biggest sales strategy there is.

The biggest deals of my career came from people who weren't clients to begin with. People I just knew. People I met as one human being meets another.

One day, they needed something — and they remembered me.

When you're good to someone without an agenda — they remember you when there is one.

The Biggest Mistakes in Follow-Up

Mistake One — Following up too late

A meeting happens — and the follow-up comes three weeks later. By then, the client has forgotten you. Or already done the deal with someone else.

Within 24 hours of a meeting — the first follow-up. Always.

Mistake Two — Only asking, never giving

Every follow-up is — "Sir, is it done? Sir, will you take it? Sir, when?"

That isn't a relationship. That's a transaction.

Sometimes, follow up without asking for anything at all. Just to give.

Mistake Three — Following up the same way every time

Call every day. Call every day. Call every day.

Change the method. Change the platform. Change the message.

Mistake Four — Giving up too soon

Followed up twice — no response — gave up.

This is the biggest mistake of all. Remember those numbers from earlier — 80% of deals close between the fourth and twelfth follow-up.

Mistake Five — Following up without a purpose

"Sir, just calling to say hi."

This wastes time. Yours, and theirs.

Every follow-up should have a purpose. A reason. A piece of value.

CASE STUDY: The Seven-Month Effort

Situation: A client who kept saying "not now", for six months straight.

Challenge: Colleagues said to give up. Something held Vikas back.

What he did:

- Brought something new every time — never just asked for the deal
- Showed genuine interest in the client's life
- Applied no pressure — but kept the connection alive
- In the seventh month, the client called himself

Result: The deal happened — and brought five more referrals with it.

The real takeaway: *Follow-up is a game of patience. Whoever stays the course, wins.*

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Build Your Pending List

Today, write down a list of everyone you've spoken to — but the deal never happened. Everyone you forgot to follow up with.

In the list, write:

- Name
- When was the last conversation
- Why it stalled

Now, contact each one, one by one. Without pressure. Just check in.

You'll be surprised — how many people are still interested.

Exercise 2 — Build Your Follow-Up System

Get a diary — or use the notes app on your phone.

From today, after every new conversation, write down:

- Name and contact
- What was discussed
- When to meet again
- What to bring

Do this for one week. See how much of a difference it makes.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. Has there been a deal in your life that slipped away because you didn't follow up? What happened?

2. What's your biggest reason for not following up — fear? Forgetting? Something else?

3. Right now, roughly how many clients have you forgotten to follow up with? Take a guess.

4. When a client says "no," what do you normally do — go quiet? Or try to understand which "no" it is?

5. Do you have a follow-up system? If not — what system will you build, starting today?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. 80% of deals happen on follow-up — not in the first meeting. Stopping follow-up means throwing away 80% of your own effort.

2. Follow-up isn't being a burden — it's taking care of a relationship. The difference is between asking and giving.

3. Every "no" doesn't mean "no." Learn to recognise which "no" it really is.

4. Keep changing your follow-up method — calls, messages, visits, sharing something of value. One method alone wears thin.

5. Build a system — don't rely on memory. What's written down, gets done.

That call I kept waiting for — it never came. After that day, I stopped waiting. I go myself. I knock on the door myself. Because the door that's never knocked on — never opens.

— Vikas Sahajwani

Next Chapter: The Pain of the Team — when the numbers don't come, and the leader has to step onto the field themselves.

CHAPTER 5

The Pain of the Team

When the numbers don't come, and the leader starts to break



The Month That Wouldn't End

Every salesperson goes through a phase like this, at some point.

You look at the calendar, and the month feels like it's refusing to end. You look at the target sheet, and you look away. When the boss calls, you put the phone on silent. You look at your team's faces, and everyone seems tired. Defeated.

I've had several months like that in my career.

There was a stretch when I was an area head. The whole Ahmedabad district was my responsibility. Sixty to seventy people reported to me directly. And below them — more than 400 people were connected to me indirectly.

When that entire army wasn't performing — the pressure that builds up is hard to put into words.

Last in the region.

Read that sentence again.

A team of over 500 people — and last in the region.

For someone who'd always been at the top — that sentence cut deeper than anything else could.

Such a Big Team — Such a Big Weight

When a team is small, the leader knows everyone personally. There's a conversation every day with each person. Everyone's struggles are visible, right there in front of you.

But when sixty to seventy people report to you directly — and over 400 indirectly — the game changes completely.

You can't reach everyone anymore.

Now you have to work through managers. Your message travels through them. The numbers come through them. The culture is built through them.

And that's the biggest challenge —

Whatever you say — by the time it reaches 400 people, it changes.

Like a game of telephone — the first person says one thing, and the last person hears something else entirely.

Leading at this scale isn't management. It's an entirely different art.

A Leader's Pain Is a Different Kind of Pain

When you're a lone salesperson, your loss is only yours.

When 500 people report to you, the responsibility for losing belongs to the whole army. But the pain — that's yours alone.

At night, when everyone's asleep, the leader is awake.

"Where's it going wrong? Which manager isn't doing their job properly? Which team is falling behind? Where am I failing?"

And the next morning — you have to walk in front of that same team looking confident. Smiling. Offering encouragement.

It's a double burden.

And at this scale, that burden multiplies many times over. Because if you show even one day of being broken — that signal travels downward. The sixty to seventy direct reports see it. And it reaches all the way to those 400.

A leader's body language is the entire company's body language.

The Team That Wasn't Working

In those days, my direct team had sixty to seventy people.

Among them —

There were senior managers — people who'd been around for years. People who thought they knew everything. People who didn't adopt new methods, who never stepped outside their comfort zone.

There were mid-level people — good, but stuck. Neither moving up, nor sliding down.

There were new people — eager to learn, full of energy, but with no direction.

And below all of them — more than 400 people who were indirect. My influence on them — good or bad — travelled entirely through those managers.

It was a chain. And the weakest link in a chain — breaks the entire chain.

The Night I Thought — Maybe I'm in the Wrong Place

One night, I came home. Tired. Defeated.

Had dinner. Lay down on the bed. Closed my eyes.

And for the first time, a thought crossed my mind that I'd never had before —

"Maybe sales isn't for me. Maybe I can't do this."

That thought was terrifying.

Because sales was my identity. I'd put my entire life into it. And now — with a team this size — I was failing.

I stayed awake a long time that night.

And in that wakefulness — something happened.

The Night That Changed Everything

That night, I did something I'd never done before.

I was honest with myself.

I took out a piece of paper. And wrote —

"What do I expect from this team?" "What have I given this team?" "Out of all these people — who needs what, that I'm not giving them?"

And when I wrote it down — the answers showed up.

I was asking for numbers. But I hadn't given them a vision.

I wanted to see results. But I hadn't listened to their struggles.

I was becoming a leader. But in a team this size — I was only sitting at the top. I hadn't come down.

That night was the turning point of my career.

The Real Secret to Leading a Team This Big

This matters enormously — and no training programme teaches it.

When a team is sixty to seventy direct and 400 indirect — you cannot reach everyone. It's physically impossible.

So what do you do?

You build a culture.

Culture means — the way people work when you're not watching.

When I'm not in the room — how does my team behave? Do they work the same way as when I'm there? Or completely differently?

If it's different — the culture hasn't been built.

Culture is built when —

- The leader does what they themselves say
- The values at the top travel all the way down
- Every manager carries the same attitude as the leader

And to build that culture — you have to make your sixty to seventy direct people strong enough that they move in the right direction even without you.

Turn the leaders of your team into leaders — only then will those 400 people move in the right direction.

Layer by Layer — Understanding a Team This Big

At this scale, I learned one thing —

Every layer is different. And every layer needs to be handled differently.

Senior managers

They need respect. Their experience is valuable — make them feel that. Don't frighten them with new methods — instead, connect their experience to the new ways of working.

"What you've learned over twenty years — now sharpen it with this new approach."

Mid-level people

They need direction. They have potential, but they're stuck. Tell them clearly — where to go next. Build the path for them.

New people

They need encouragement. They need to know that failure is normal. Give them early wins — small victories that build their confidence.

The 400 indirect

You can't reach them directly. But whenever you do — make it count. The right word, at the right time, can change an entire team.

Lead by Example — When Doing Works Where Saying Doesn't

When my team wasn't bringing in numbers — I was just holding meetings. Giving training. Talking from the top.

Then one day, I made a decision —

I would get onto the field myself.

I went on client meetings with my senior managers. Made the calls myself. Heard the rejections myself. Closed deals myself.

When the sixty to seventy direct people saw that their area head was on the field himself — something shifted.

And when that news reached the 400 — the impact was even bigger.

"Sir himself is out on the field — why wouldn't we go?"

That was the power of leading by example.

Whatever you want from 500 people — do it yourself, first.

Rejection — a Different Kind of Pain at Team Scale

At this scale, rejection has an outsized effect.

When 400 people are facing rejection at the same time — a negative wave forms. One person's fear spreads to the next. And the next. And it spreads across the entire army.

Which is why, at this scale — setting the right tone in the room is one of the most important jobs there is.

Here's something I did, during those days —

I added a new section to our weekly big meeting — "Funniest Rejection of the Week."

Everyone shared their funniest rejection. The strangest thing a client had said. The most embarrassing situation.

At first, people hesitated. Then one person spoke up. Everyone laughed. Then another spoke up. And then —

An atmosphere formed where rejection wasn't something to be ashamed of. It was normal. Something to laugh about.

And once the fear of rejection lifted — people started making more calls. Taking more meetings.

The numbers started improving.

The Weight of a Target on This Many People

The combined target for 500 people is an enormous number.

Just looking at that number is enough to feel overwhelmed.

I learned a method —

Break the big target into small pieces. And give each piece to the right person.

Divide the whole team's target across the managers.

Divide each manager's target across their team.

Divide each team member's target across their weeks.

Divide each week's target across the days.

Now the question isn't — "How will 500 people hit such a massive target?"

The question becomes — "I need to make five calls today. Can I do that?"

Yes — that feels possible.

And when something feels possible — it happens.

The Moment 500 People Showed Up Together

In those difficult months, there's one moment I'll never forget.

In the final week of the month — we were far behind target.

I called a big meeting with all sixty to seventy of my direct reports. Spoke to them straight.

"We're behind. I know it. You know it too. But we have five days left. I want to ask you one thing — will we try? With everything we've got. Just five days."

The room went quiet.

Then one senior manager said, "Sir, we'll do it."

And everyone else said yes.

That message travelled down — to all 400.

For those five days, I saw my entire army in a completely different light. People came in early. Stayed late. Helped each other.

We didn't reach the target. But we got very close.

And after that month — the whole team changed.

Sometimes, the effort matters more than the result. And the spirit that showed up in those five days — it stayed.

Real Ways to Motivate a Team This Big

First — praise people. Genuinely. In front of everyone.

When someone on the team does something good — say so, right then. In front of everyone.

At this scale, when you praise someone — it isn't heard by just that one person. A signal travels to all 500 — "good work gets noticed here."

Second — address mistakes privately.

When someone makes a mistake — don't scold them in front of everyone.

At this scale, public shaming is even more dangerous. One person feels humiliated — and the other 499 feel afraid.

Third — turn your direct reports into leaders.

You can't reach 400 people directly. So take your sixty to seventy direct reports — and make the good ones even better.

Give them responsibility. Trust them. Let them own their work.

When your direct reports are strong — the 400 below them automatically improve.

Fourth — occasionally, go all the way down yourself.

When you personally meet someone from among the 400 — someone who's never met you before — it has an enormous impact on them.

"The area head spoke to me personally."

That feeling keeps a person motivated for months.

When Someone Leaves a Team This Big

In a team this size, people come and go. That's normal.

But when good people leave — especially people you've invested effort in — it hurts.

Here's something I learned —

People who leave with dignity, remember you with dignity. And sometimes — years later — they send referrals. Or come back themselves.

Let people leave gracefully — and they'll stay your ambassadors for life.

Keeping Yourself Motivated — the Hardest Job of All

Nobody talks about this part.

While motivating a team this big — the leader can sometimes run on empty themselves.

Giving energy to sixty or seventy people, every single day — that's exhausting.

So where does the leader get their strength from?

My answer —

Remember your "why."

Why am I in this work? Just for the money? No.

I'm in it because — when a new agent joins my team, scared and unsure — and six months later, closes their first big deal with confidence — that moment, that feeling —

It's bigger than any cheque.

When things got hard, I would remember those moments.

And those moments — picked me back up.

CASE STUDY: An Army of 500

Situation: Area head. Sixty to seventy direct team members. Over 400 indirect. Last in the region, for several months running.

Challenge: Leading a team this big — where every layer is different, every person is different — in one direction.

What he did:

- Built a culture — consistent from top to bottom

- Handled each layer of the team differently
- Got onto the field himself — led by example
- Turned rejection into something to laugh about — reshaped the room's energy
- Turned direct reports into leaders, so the right message reached all 400
- Praise in public, correction in private

Result: The team's spirit returned. Numbers improved. And most importantly — a culture formed that worked even without the leader in the room.

The real takeaway: *One person can't run 500 people. But the right culture — runs 500 people on its own.*

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Map the Layers of Your Team

If you lead a team — whether it's five people or 500 — look at it in layers today.

Who are the seniors? Who's mid-level? Who's new?

Write down — what does each layer need?

Exercise 2 — Write Down Your "Why"

Take out a piece of paper.

Write — "Why do I do this work?"

Think beyond money. Write down the real reason that gets you up every day.

When hard times come — take this piece of paper out.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. Have you ever led a large team? What was the biggest challenge in it?

2. In your team — or around you — is there someone with potential who isn't performing? What might the real reason be?

3. When you're exhausted, broken — how do you pick yourself back up?

4. Have you ever scolded someone in public — and later realised it was wrong? What happened?

5. Lead by example — do you do what you expect from others? Think honestly.

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. In a team this big, you can't reach everyone — so build a culture that works even without you.

2. Every layer is different — seniors, mid-level, new people. Each needs something different. One method doesn't fit all.

3. Turn your direct reports into leaders — only then will the hundreds below them move in the right direction.

4. Lead by example — 500 people are watching. Whatever you do, travels all the way down.

5. Remember your 'why' — beyond the money. When hard times come, remember the moments where you genuinely changed someone's life.

Leading sixty to seventy people directly, and over 400 indirectly — that was the biggest lesson of my life. I learned that real leadership isn't in the numbers. Real leadership is when you walk out of the room — and the team still does the right thing.

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Next Chapter: Learn, or Enjoy — in sales, there are only two emotions. There's no third.

CHAPTER 6

Learn, or Enjoy

In sales, there are only two emotions. There's no third.



The One Line That Changes Everything

This was early in my insurance career.

A month had gone badly. Targets hadn't been met. A few deals had slipped away at the last moment. The team's mood was heavy. And inside, I was full of doubt.

I was sitting in my boss's office. He looked at my face. Didn't ask anything. Just slid a piece of paper across to me.

On it was written —

When there's a deal — enjoy it. When there isn't — learn from it. There's no third emotion.

I read it. Once. Twice. A third time.

He said, "Vikas, keep this in your pocket. Whenever things feel hard — take it out."

I kept that piece of paper.

And today — all these years later — those three lines have become the biggest philosophy of my life.

The Trap of Emotions in Sales

Sales is a job that puts you on an emotional rollercoaster, every single day.

A big deal happens in the morning — you're on top of the world. A rejection comes in the afternoon — you're back on the ground. Another

deal happens in the evening — you're up again. At night, you remember how far the monthly target still is — and you're down again.

This up-and-down happens every day. To every salesperson.

And in this very up-and-down — a lot of good salespeople break.

Not because they're weak. They break because nobody ever tells them — what to do with these emotions.

My boss told me. And now, I'm telling you.

Emotion One — Enjoy It

When a deal happens — what do you do?

Most salespeople do one thing — they rush straight to the next deal.

Deal's done — fine — where's the next one?

This is the wrong approach.

When a deal happens — live in that moment. Celebrate it. For yourself. For your team.

Why?

Because celebration gives you energy. Celebration reminds you — this is possible. Celebration creates a positive loop that carries you toward the next deal.

Salespeople who ignore their wins — slowly forget what winning feels like.

And someone who forgets what winning feels like — eventually stops fighting to win.

Celebrating isn't a weakness. It's essential.

Practical Ways to Celebrate

Celebrating doesn't mean throwing a party for every deal.

It can be small. But it should happen.

For yourself

When a deal happens — pause for a moment. Close your eyes. Feel that feeling — the one that comes when a client says yes. Let it settle in.

Then, give yourself something. A good cup of chai. An hour's nap. That restaurant you'd been wanting to try.

Rewarding yourself prepares you to do even better next time.

For the team

When someone on the team closes a deal — celebrate it. In front of everyone.

A simple announcement — "Rajesh closed a big deal today — everyone, congratulate him."

Hearing this lifts Rajesh's spirits. And the rest of the team thinks — "I want to feel that too."

For a big deal

A big deal deserves a big celebration.

A team dinner. An outing. A certificate. Some form of recognition.

A leader who publicly celebrates their team's wins — that team will do anything for them.

Emotion Two — Learn

When a deal doesn't happen — what do you do?

Most salespeople do one of three things —

First — they blame themselves. "I'm useless. I can't do this."

Second — they blame everyone else. "The client was wrong. The market's bad. The product isn't good enough."

Third — they ignore it. Rush to the next call — without ever asking what went wrong.

All three are wrong.

When a deal doesn't happen — sit down. Think. Learn.

Five minutes. Just five minutes.

Ask yourself these five questions —

- What did the client say, right at the end, when the deal fell through?
- What in my pitch failed to convince them?
- Did I really listen to them properly?
- Did I say the right thing at the right time?
- What will I do differently next time?

These five questions turn every rejection into a classroom.

And someone who learns from every rejection — becomes a slightly better salesperson after every single one.

The Most Useful Way to Learn

I built a habit during my career.

Every night — before sleeping — I'd write three things in a diary.

First — what was the best thing that happened today?

No matter how bad the day was — something good always happens. A client spoke to you with a smile. You learned something new. An old client called.

Writing this down keeps your positivity intact.

Second — what was today's biggest mistake?

One mistake. Just one. The one that stung the most.

Writing this down keeps you honest.

Third — what will I do differently tomorrow?

One change. Small. Practical.

Three lines. Every day. 365 days a year.

A year later — someone who's done this carries 365 lessons with them. Someone who hasn't — stays exactly the same as they were.

The Third Emotion That Shouldn't Exist — Grief

My boss had said — "There's no third emotion."

That third emotion is grief.

Grieving. Crying. Staying sad. Carrying one rejection around in your heart for weeks.

In sales, there's no time for grief.

That sounds harsh. But it's true.

Grief is an emotion that keeps you stuck exactly where you are. It doesn't let you move forward. It lets your past defeats dominate your present.

And sales is a game that only moves forward. Whoever stops — falls behind.

But I'll say one thing for certain —

Don't suppress grief. Give it one day.

One day — feel sad. Feel it fully. Process what happened.

And the next day — get up. Move on.

Not more than one day.

Wins, Losses — and an Honest View of Both

Here's something I've observed across my entire career.

Salespeople who only remember their wins — become arrogant. They start thinking, "I know everything." And that very thinking brings them down.

Salespeople who only remember their losses — become fearful. They see their old defeats in every new deal. And that fear stops them from moving forward.

Salespeople who remember both — stay balanced.

I can do this — because I've done it before. But I need to be careful — because I've also made mistakes before.

This balance — this is what defines a long-term salesperson.

The Sources That Teach the Most

There are many ways to learn sales. Books. Trainings. Videos.

But in my experience — three sources have been the most useful, by far.

Source One — Your Own Mistakes

This is the best teacher there is. And the most expensive one too.

When you make a mistake — and learn from it — that lesson never leaves you.

What you read in a book gets forgotten. What you learned through pain — stays.

Source Two — Other People's Mistakes

This is the cheapest teacher there is.

When someone around you makes a mistake — observe it. Think — what would I have done differently here? Was there a better way?

Learning from others' mistakes is learning without the pain.

Source Three — Observing Good Salespeople

When a good salesperson is at work — watch closely.

How do they talk? When do they stay quiet? What kinds of questions do they ask? What do they do when closing a deal?

This observation teaches more than training ever could.

Enjoying It — a Deeper Layer

Enjoying it isn't only about celebrating.

Enjoying it means — actually enjoying this work.

Sales is a job where you meet new people every single day. Hear new stories. See new lives, up close.

That's a privilege.

There are people who sit in the same room, doing the same task, for years. No variety in their lives.

Our lives have variety. Every day, something new.

Enjoy that.

When I was sitting on that bus to Mount Abu — I was enjoying myself. I was on vacation. And selling was happening too. Both, at once.

When I met that businessman whose daughter's future weighed on him — I was genuinely interested in his story. He wasn't just a client to me. He was a person.

That interest. That curiosity. That joy. That is what real selling actually is.

When you enjoy the work — the work takes care of itself.

The Day Both Happened Together

There's one particular day I remember.

In the morning — a big deal happened. I celebrated. Told the team.

In the afternoon — another deal, one that had been almost certain, fell through at the last moment.

Same day. Both.

In the old days — I'd have gone home in the evening still thinking about the afternoon's loss. The morning's win would've gotten lost somewhere.

But that day — I remembered my boss's three lines.

I asked myself — why didn't the afternoon deal happen? What went wrong? I did a quick five-minute analysis. Understood a couple of things.

And then — I recalled the morning's celebration. That feeling.

I went home that evening — balanced. Not too happy. Not too sad.

And that balance — is the single most important thing, long-term.

Learn or Enjoy — a Formula That Works Everywhere

This formula doesn't just work in sales. It works everywhere in life.

In relationships

When a relationship is going well — enjoy it. Live in that moment. When there's friction — learn from it. What is this relationship trying to teach you?

In business

When business is going well — celebrate. Reward your team. When business is tough — analyse. What needs to change?

In life

When life is good — enjoy it. Fully. When life is hard — learn from it. Where is this difficulty trying to take you?

The third option — grief — doesn't belong anywhere.

The Night This Mattered Most

Earlier, I mentioned a night when I thought maybe sales wasn't for me.

The team wasn't working. The numbers weren't coming. I was exhausted.

That night — I stayed awake a long time.

And then — those three lines came back to me.

I asked myself — what am I learning, in these months?

And when I thought about it honestly — the answer came.

I was learning how to lead a team this big. I was learning how to build a culture. I was learning that every person is different. I was learning the difference between becoming a leader and being a manager.

No training programme had ever given me this. Those difficult months had.

And once I understood that — the night became something else entirely.

It wasn't grief. It was learning.

And from that learning — a new beginning came.

CASE STUDY: That Piece of Paper

Situation: Early, difficult days in his career. A bad month. Doubt setting in.

Challenge: His boss wrote down three lines — "When there's a deal, enjoy it. When there isn't, learn. There's no third emotion."

What he did:

- Wrote three things in a diary every night — something good, a mistake, tomorrow's change
- Celebrated wins — for himself, and for the team
- Turned every rejection into a classroom — five questions, every time
- Gave grief one day — and moved forward the next

Result: A philosophy that has held up for years, in every situation.

The real takeaway: *In sales, you don't control your emotions — you channel them to the right place. In a win — enjoyment. In a loss — learning.*

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Today's Three Lines

Tonight — before you sleep — write in a diary:

- What was the best thing that happened today?
- What was today's biggest mistake?
- What will I do differently tomorrow?

Just three lines. Every day. Try it for a week — you'll feel the difference yourself.

Exercise 2 — Analyse Your Last Rejection

Think of a recent rejection.

Ask yourself the five questions —

- What did the client say, right at the end?
- What in my pitch didn't work?
- Did I really listen?
- Did I say the right thing at the right time?
- What will be different next time?

Write down the answers. And treat that rejection as a classroom.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. When you close a big deal — do you celebrate it? Or rush straight to the next one? Why?

2. The biggest rejection of your life — the one you learned the most from. What was it?

3. Grief — do you carry rejections close to your heart? For how long? What effect does that have on your work?

4. The biggest lesson you've learned in sales so far — which mistake did it come from?

5. Do you enjoy your work? When you don't — why not?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. In sales, there are only two emotions — enjoy a win, learn from a loss. There's no time for grief.
2. Celebration matters — for yourself, and for your team. Whoever ignores their wins loses the habit of winning.
3. Every rejection is a classroom — if you sit with it. Ask five questions. Take five lessons.
4. Give grief one day — process it, feel it. But no more than one day. The next day, move forward.
5. Remember both your wins and your losses — that balance is the most important thing, long-term.

That piece of paper my boss gave me — I carried it in my pocket for years. Sometimes I'd take it out and read it. And every time — those three lines brought me back on track. Today, those three lines are in this book. Now it's in your pocket too.

— Vikas Sahajwani

Next Chapter: Every Industry Needs a Heart — from insurance to sustainability, the heart of selling is one and the same.

CHAPTER 7

Same Heart, Seven Industries

*From insurance to sustainability —
the soul of selling never changes*



The Question I'm Always Asked

Whenever I tell someone my story — insurance, then media, then health insurance, then retail, then banking, then HR, and now sustainability — they always ask the same thing.

“So many different industries — how did you do it? Every time, a new product, new people, a new way of working. Wasn't that difficult?”

My answer is always the same.

“The industry changed. The product changed. But the human being sitting across from me — never changed.”

And when the human being doesn't change — neither does selling. That is the foundation of this chapter.

Twenty-Five Years. Seven Industries. One Truth.

Over my career, I have sold many things. Life insurance — something no one can see or touch. Newspaper space — that becomes yesterday's news by tomorrow. Health insurance — needed most when things are at their worst. Retail products — things people could see and hold. Banking products — where every cheque had to be accounted for. HR solutions — where people themselves were the product. And now, sustainability solutions — where it is a way of thinking that has to be sold.

All so different. And yet — in every single one of them — one thing remained constant.

The person sitting across from me needed to know three things:

Is this relevant to me? Does this person actually understand my situation?
Can I trust them?

Three questions. Every industry. Every client. Every time.

The salesperson who can answer these three questions — can sell in any industry on earth.

Industry One — Life Insurance

When You're Selling the Invisible

Life insurance selling is one of the hardest forms of selling there is. You are selling something that cannot be seen, cannot be touched, whose benefit — hopefully — will never be claimed, and whose very subject makes people deeply uncomfortable. You are, essentially, asking someone to talk about death.

So how does insurance get sold? When you stop selling death — and start selling life.

You don't say: “If you were to die one day...” You say: “As long as you're here, your family is secure. And when you're no longer here — they're still secure.” It's the same information. But the impact is completely different. The first sentence frightens. The second one reassures.

The biggest lesson from insurance: turn fear into security.

People's fears are real. Don't ignore them. Address them — but give them a solution. The deals I lost in insurance were mostly because I made the fear bigger. The deals I won were because I gave that fear an answer.

Industry Two — Media and Advertising

When You're Selling Tomorrow

Selling space in a newspaper is a strange business. You are selling something that will be printed today, will be old news by tomorrow, and the day after, no one will ask about it again. And the client is always thinking: “This much money? For just one day?”

So how does media space get sold? When you stop selling space — and start selling customers. You don't show the client how many square centimetres they're getting. You show them that fifty thousand people will see their advertisement over their morning cup of tea. Now the conversation is no longer about space. It's about business.

The biggest lesson from media: always speak the language of ROI.

Every business owner understands one language — money in, money out. Show them clearly what they're getting back. And one hard lesson from media — never reveal everything before the deal is done. Media taught me that. In the most expensive way possible.

Industry Three — Health Insurance

When You're Selling Dignity

In life insurance — the event might happen. In health — the event will almost certainly happen. Illness comes for everyone. Hospital visits come for everyone. The only question is when.

So how does health insurance get sold? When you stop selling hospital bills — and start selling dignity. There is a hard truth in India: when someone in the family falls seriously ill and there is no money, a person is forced to ask others for help. To request from relatives. To borrow from friends. That is not a question of money. It is a question of self-respect.

When I started using this angle — “If something were to happen tomorrow, would you want to hold your hand out in front of others?” — the conversation changed completely.

The biggest lesson from health insurance: dignity is a powerful emotion.

Industry Four — Retail

When the Product Is Right There — and Selling Is Still Necessary

Retail has a strange paradox. The product is right there. The client can see it. Touch it. Try it. And yet — many people walk away without buying.

Because seeing a product doesn't make the buying decision. The decision happens when the client feels: this is for me.

“This shirt will look good on you.” — That's generic. “Sir, for the meeting you have coming up — this colour will make you look very confident.” — That's personal. The client can ignore the first. The second one lands.

The biggest lesson from retail: fit the product into the client's life.

Don't show them what the product is. Show them where it belongs in their world. Which moment it makes better. Which problem it solves.

Industry Five — Banking and Financial Services

When Trust Itself Is the Product

In banking, one thing is absolutely clear — people do not give their money to just anyone. It doesn't matter how good the product is, how high the returns are, how solid the guarantee seems. If there is no trust in the person sitting across from them — there is no deal.

Banking has another layer too. People don't easily share their financial situation with others. It's private. It's sensitive. When a client opens up and tells you about their finances — that is an act of trust. That trust is extraordinarily valuable. Never betray it.

The biggest lesson from banking: confidentiality is your greatest asset.

Industry Six — HR Solutions

When You're Selling People

Your product here is people. Their skills. Their capabilities. Their potential. And the company buying is making an investment whose returns won't show today — they'll show months from now. This is the most patience-intensive selling there is.

In HR, you have to convince the client that this training, this hiring solution, this programme — is not an expense. It's an investment. And in India, many companies still treat HR as a cost. Not an investment.

The biggest lesson from HR: make the long-term ROI visible.

“We'll train your fifty people. If each person's productivity improves by even ten percent — what does that return look like for your business?” When you put numbers to it — the conversation shifts.

Industry Seven — Sustainability Solutions

When You're Selling a Way of Thinking

This has been one of the more challenging kinds of selling I've done. When you sell sustainability, you're selling something that isn't immediately visible, whose results take time to arrive, and which most people put in the “important, but later” category. And the biggest difficulty — most people still see sustainability as an obligation. A cost of doing business.

So how does sustainability get sold? When you stop selling the environment — and start selling money.

“This industrial waste that you spend money every month to dispose of — I can turn that into a revenue stream for you.”

In that one moment, the conversation transforms. Because now it's not about the environment anymore. It's about business.

The biggest lesson from sustainability: always speak in the client's own language.

A factory owner's language — money. A government officer's language — compliance. A young professional's language — impact. An investor's language — future returns. The same message — four different ways. Every time, in their language.

The One Thing That Never Changed

So many industries. So many products. So many clients. But one thing always stayed the same. Every client — in every industry — wanted the person across from them to understand them. To understand their need. Their difficulty. Their life. And when they felt that — the deal happened. In insurance. In media. In retail. In banking. In HR. In sustainability.

The heart of selling is one: understanding the human being. The product changes. The industry changes. But this heart — this never changes.

The Fear of Changing Industries — and How to Beat It

Many salespeople stay in one industry their whole career — not because they can't go elsewhere, but because they're afraid. “I don't know that industry.” “I'll have to learn a new product.” “I don't have contacts there.”

The core skills of a great salesperson — listening, understanding, building trust, following up — these work in any industry. Learning a new product takes two or three months. But learning to understand people — that skill takes years to build. And once built, it works everywhere.

Every time I moved to a new industry, I had to learn new products, new clients, new language. But the core understanding of selling — that came with me. And that was always my greatest advantage.

A Salesperson's Real Capital

People think a salesperson's greatest asset is their contact list. It isn't. A contact list can become outdated any day. People change. Numbers change. Companies change.

A salesperson's real capital is their method. Their understanding. Their heart.

A salesperson who can talk to anyone — connect with them — understand what they truly need — can walk into any industry and make a start. And within a few months, the new contact list builds itself.

But that method — that understanding — that heart — no one can take that from you.

Case Study: Seven Industries, One Salesman

Based on a real career

The journey:

- Life Insurance — 5 years, 5 promotions

- Media Advertising — 7 years, 3 promotions
- Health Insurance — 8 years, 5 promotions, Area Head
- Retail, Banking, Financial Services, HR Solutions — hands-on experience across all
- Sustainability Solutions — ongoing

What changed in every industry:

The product. The market. The clients. The terminology.

What never changed:

Understanding the human being. Building trust. Listening. Following up. Showing up with genuine care.

An industry is a vehicle. Selling is a skill. The vehicle changes — the skill doesn't. Whoever understands this can thrive anywhere.

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Identify Your Core Skills

Take a piece of paper. Write down five things you could do in any industry — listening, building trust, follow-up, presenting, negotiating. These are your real assets. Know them.

Exercise 2 — Understand a Different Industry

Today, speak to a salesperson from a completely different field. Ask them: “What's the biggest challenge in selling in your industry?” Listen. And think — could your skills work there?

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. You are currently in one industry — or perhaps you have worked across several. What is the biggest challenge in selling in your field? How do you handle it?

2. Have you ever changed industries? If yes — what was the hardest part? If no — what has held you back?

3. Name three core skills you have that would work in any industry. Write them down.

4. What language does your client speak? What do they care about most — money, respect, security, growth, compliance? How do you adapt your message to that?

5. If you had to start in a brand-new industry tomorrow — what would be your very first step?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. The industry changes — the human being doesn't. And selling is the act of understanding the human being. That never changes.
2. Every industry has its own emotional key. Fear to security in insurance. ROI in media. Dignity in health. Personal fit in retail. Trust in banking. Investment mindset in HR. The client's language in sustainability.
3. A salesperson's real capital is not their contact list. It is their method, their understanding, and their heart. No one can take that from you.
4. Speak the client's language — not yours. Adapt the message. The truth you're delivering is the same — only the frame changes.
5. Don't fear changing industries. Learning a new product takes months. Learning to understand people takes years. You've already done the hard part.

"I've worked across many industries. Every time, there was a new product, new people, a new world to navigate. But every time — when I saw the understanding arrive in a client's eyes, that moment of feeling truly heard — that moment was identical every time. That moment is what selling really is."

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Next Chapter: The Woman in Sales — when a woman enters sales, she doesn't just become a salesperson. She starts a quiet revolution.

CHAPTER 8

The Woman in Sales

*She doesn't just become a salesperson.
She starts a quiet revolution.*



The First Woman Who Joined My Team

Her name was Priya. Twenty-seven years old. Married. One child. Her husband had a small business, but money was tight at home. She decided she would work. She came into insurance.

On her first day, a few of the older male agents in my team said to each other — “She won't last. Three months and she'll be gone.”

Six months later, Priya was the top performer in that entire team. Those same male agents were still average.

That day, something became clear to me that I hadn't fully understood before —

A woman brings something into a sales room that no training programme has ever taught.

Women and Sales in India — The Real Picture

In India, sales is still seen as a man's job. Going out in the field. Meeting strangers. Absorbing rejection. Negotiating with a loud voice.

“This is not for women.”

This thinking is old. And it is completely wrong. But it persists. In homes. In offices. And sometimes — in the minds of women themselves. This chapter is my attempt to dismantle it. One wall at a time.

What Makes a Woman a Naturally Powerful Salesperson

I am not writing this to pay a compliment. This is observation. Twenty-five years of it. After watching thousands of salespeople across multiple industries.

Strength One — The Power of Listening

On average, a woman listens better than a man. This is supported by science. It is confirmed by experience. When a female salesperson sits with a client, she doesn't just hear the words. She hears the tone. She hears the pause. She hears what wasn't said.

And in selling — what isn't said is often the most important thing of all.

Strength Two — Empathy

A mother who reads her child's need before it is even spoken — that empathy doesn't switch off when she walks into a meeting room. It follows her there. When a female salesperson sits with a client, they instinctively feel: she will understand me. That trust is built before a single word about the product has been spoken.

Empathy is not soft. Empathy is the most powerful selling tool there is.

Strength Three — The Ability to Build Relationships

Women nurture relationships. It is in their nature. And in sales — long-term relationships are the real business. A female salesperson who builds a genuine connection with a client doesn't just close one deal. She creates a bond that lasts years. That brings referrals. That brings loyalty. She doesn't sell once and move on. She plants something that keeps growing.

Strength Four — Patience

The most important virtue in sales is patience. Following up. Waiting. Hearing “no” again and again and still showing up. Women who have spent their lives learning to wait, to hold their ground, to stay steady through uncertainty — they possess this virtue naturally.

Strength Five — Attention to Detail

A woman who runs a household notices everything. Where every thing is. Who needs what. What matters when. In sales, the details are what separate average from exceptional. Remembering a client's birthday. Knowing their child's name. Recalling exactly what was said in the last meeting.

These aren't small things. These are the things that make a client feel: this person genuinely cares about me.

Priya's Story — How She Became the Best

Priya had no fancy sales training when she walked into her first client meeting. No polished presentation. No scripted pitch. What she had was genuine curiosity — about people.

She would visit a client's home and before saying a word about insurance, she would ask about them. Their family. Their children. The things that were worrying them. People opened up to her the way they open up to an old friend.

And when she finally made her recommendation, she wasn't selling a product. She was offering a solution to the exact worry they had just shared with her.

One client told me: “Vikas bhai, send Priya. When she speaks, it feels like someone who truly knows you is talking.”

That was her secret. She made every client feel known.

The Homemaker Who Found Herself

There is another story I think of often. A woman, thirty-five years old. Her whole life had been her home. Her husband had a business. The children were growing up. One day she decided — I want to do something. For myself. She came into sales. Insurance.

In the beginning, she was nervous. Every call made her anxious. Every meeting felt like a test she hadn't prepared for. But she had a strength that no one had noticed — not even her.

She understood people's lives. Genuinely. When she visited a family, she felt that family. She understood their dynamics, their tensions, their unspoken fears. And when she spoke, she spoke in their language. Within a year, she was among the top performers in her area.

When her husband heard, he said — “I didn't know you had this in you.”

She replied — “Neither did I.”

Sales gave her more than income. It gave her an identity. A confidence. A version of herself she had never met before.

That is the deeper power of sales — it doesn't just fill your bank account. It tells you who you are.

The Challenges That Are Real — and Must Be Said

This chapter is honest. So I won't only speak of strengths. There are challenges that come specifically with being a woman in sales in India. They are real. They deserve to be named.

Challenge One — Balancing Home and Work

In India, a working woman is expected to give five hours to the office — and then go home and do everything she always did. Sales is demanding. Field visits. Late meetings. Targets that don't care what time it is. And at home — children. Meals. In-laws. A hundred small responsibilities that don't pause.

This balance is not easy. Anyone who says otherwise has never had to maintain it.

But the women who find that balance become extraordinary. Because anyone who can manage two worlds simultaneously can manage anything.

Challenge Two — The “You're a Woman” Attitude

This comes from clients. It comes from colleagues. Sometimes it comes from managers. “This is a field job — can you really handle it?” “This client is tough — let's send a male colleague.” “It's too late for you to stay.”

My job as a leader — every time I saw this attitude in my team — was to address it immediately. Because this kind of attitude doesn't just insult. It quietly dismantles the confidence of someone who was building something real. There is no place for it.

Challenge Three — Safety

Field sales means going alone. Meeting strangers. Sometimes travelling solo to unfamiliar places. This is a real concern. It cannot be brushed aside. A good sales organisation creates safe environments, clear protocols, and a culture where no woman ever feels exposed or unsupported. And a smart salesperson trusts her instincts. If a situation feels wrong, she leaves.

Challenge Four — Believing in Herself

This is the deepest challenge of all. Many women who enter sales carry a quiet doubt: Can I actually do this? That doubt wasn't born in them. It was placed there — by a society that underestimated them, by families that set smaller horizons, by people who never truly saw what they were capable of.

But the woman who breaks through that doubt — who decides to trust herself anyway — she doesn't stop. She doesn't look back. She goes further than anyone expected.

What the Women in My Team Taught Me

Over the years, I have managed teams of sixty to seventy people. Many of them women. And I observed something consistently.

Their client retention — how long a client stayed after the first sale — was better than their male colleagues'. Their referrals — new clients brought in by existing ones — were higher. Their complaints — client grievances — were lower.

Why?

Because they built relationships. They didn't just close deals. And in the long run — the relationship is the business.

For the Woman Who Wants to Enter Sales

If you are a woman thinking about sales — or already in it and finding it harder than expected — hear this.

First — Your sensitivity is not your weakness.

People will tell you: don't be so sensitive. You need thick skin for sales. They are wrong. Your sensitivity is what connects you to people. It is what lets you feel what a client needs before they've said it. Don't abandon it. Use it. Intelligently.

Second — A “no” says nothing about you.

Rejection is part of this work. For everyone. No exceptions. When someone says no, it is not a verdict on your worth. It is a verdict on that particular moment. The next moment will be different.

Third — Build your network.

In sales, your network is your most valuable asset. And a woman's network — when she builds it with care — is exceptionally strong and exceptionally loyal. The connections around you — mothers' groups, neighbourhood circles, school communities, family friends — these are not distractions from your work. They are your work.

Fourth — Running a home is the best sales training there is.

Managing a kitchen, getting children to school, keeping track of a hundred things, navigating family dynamics, solving problems before they become problems — that is management. That is multitasking. That is people skills under pressure. You may feel you lack experience. You have the most important experience of all — the experience of real life.

For the Leader Whose Team Includes Women

First — Understand their challenges. But never lower your expectations.

Understanding means recognising the real pressures they navigate. It does not mean giving them easier targets or steering them toward smaller deals. They can do everything their male colleagues can do. Often more.

Hold them to the same standard — and watch what happens.

Second — Create a safe environment. Non-negotiably.

No uncomfortable comments. No dismissive jokes. No “you're a woman” attitudes, however subtle. This is not just an HR policy. This is what decent leadership looks like.

Third — Celebrate their wins. Loudly.

When a female salesperson closes a big deal, celebrate it at least as much as anyone else's. Sometimes more. Because she got there carrying weight that most people never see.

Case Study: From Doubt to Top Performer

Based on a real story from Vikas Sahajwani's team

The situation:

A new female agent. No sales experience. Scepticism from male colleagues. Full family responsibilities at home.

The challenge:

Proving herself in an environment that had already decided she wouldn't last.

What she did:

- Saw every client as a person — not a target
- Used her natural empathy as her primary tool
- Built genuine relationships — not transactional ones
- Learned from every rejection without being broken by it

The result:

Top performer in six months. Better client retention than her male colleagues. More referrals. Fewer complaints.

Gender is not a barrier in sales. It never was. A woman who plays to her natural strengths doesn't just compete. She leads.

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Name Your Strengths

If you are a female salesperson, take a piece of paper. Write down five things you do naturally well: listening, empathy, detail, patience, relationships — whatever is true for you. In your next client meeting, use them consciously. Watch what changes.

Exercise 2 — Map Your Network

How many women are already in your life who could become clients — or send you clients? Family. Friends. Neighbours. School parents. Community circles. Make a list. And reach out to one person this week — not to sell anything. Just to reconnect. Just to care.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. If you are a female salesperson — what made you choose sales? What was the hardest part at the beginning?

2. Have you ever felt underestimated because of your gender? What happened — and how did you respond?

3. What do you consider your greatest strength as a salesperson — one that you believe comes from who you are as a woman?

4. How do you manage the balance between home and work? What actually helps?

5. If you could say one thing to a woman just starting out in sales, what would it be?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. A woman's natural gifts — listening, empathy, patience, relationship-building, attention to detail — are exactly the skills that make the greatest salespeople. They don't need to be learned. They need to be recognised and used.
2. Sensitivity is not weakness. It is the quality that creates connection. It is what makes a client feel truly heard. Don't abandon it — sharpen it.
3. Running a home is the best management training there is. Every skill that sales demands — organisation, patience, reading people, problem-solving under pressure — a woman who runs a household has been practising it for years.
4. Sales gives more than income. It gives identity. Confidence. A version of yourself you may not have known existed. For many women, sales is not just a career. It is a discovery.
5. If you lead a team — create a safe environment, hold your female team to the same high standard as everyone else, and celebrate their wins loudly. They will never let you down.

"When Priya joined my team, some people said she wouldn't last. Six months later, she was ahead of everyone. That day I learned — never judge a person by their gender. Judge them by their heart. And the heart — the heart has no gender."

— Vikas Sahajwani

Next Chapter: New Job, Old Heart — when a fresh graduate walks into sales, here's what no one tells them.

CHAPTER 9

New Job, Old Heart

*What no one tells you when you start in sales —
but what you need to know*



That First Day

I still remember it clearly. A new shirt. New shoes. Hair properly combed. A small diary with notes written in it for the first day. I was walking into my first sales job.

There was a strange mix of feelings — excitement and fear, sitting side by side. And one thought running underneath everything: today, my real life begins.

I reached the office. Met people. Sat through some training. And at the end of the day, the manager handed me a list.

“Go to the field from tomorrow. Here's your list. Meet these people.”

That was it. No script. No handbook. No one telling me what to say in that first meeting. What to do when the door gets slammed. How to handle a client who doesn't want to hear a word you say.

The next morning, I went to the field. I knocked on the first client's door. An elderly gentleman opened it. He looked at me for one second and said —

“Not interested.”

Door closed. I stood there on the doorstep. Diary in hand. Pen in hand. New shirt. New shoes.

And one thing I did not have: any idea what to do next.

The Truth No One Tells You

Every year, hundreds of thousands of young people join sales jobs. Insurance. Banking. Telecom. FMCG. Real estate. Pharmaceuticals. Every field, every industry. And nearly everywhere, the same pattern plays out.

There is training. The product gets taught. A pitch gets memorised. And then — the field.

What doesn't get taught:

- How to live with rejection
- How to keep yourself motivated when nothing is working
- How to handle a client who is rude or dismissive
- What to do when the month's target feels impossibly far
- What to do when you start to wonder whether this job was ever meant for you

This chapter is for everything that no one told you — but that you needed to hear.

The First Rejection — A Beginning, Not an End

That elderly gentleman who closed the door — I walked away. Went to the next house. Nothing there either. Next house. Same. By evening — seven homes. Seven nos.

I came back tired. Discouraged. My mother asked, “How was your first day?” I said, “It was fine.” That night, lying in bed, one question was circling in my head:

Can I actually do this?

The next morning, I got up. Went back to the field. More rejections. More closed doors. On the third day, something different happened. One client listened. Heard the whole thing. Didn't buy anything. But listened.

That evening, walking home, something had shifted.

The first rejection is where sales begins — not where it ends. The person who understands this moves forward. Everyone else goes home.

What You Need to Know — The First Three Months

The first three months of any sales job are the hardest. This is true. Accept it. But this is also true — the person who survives the first three months almost always goes on to something significant.

Because what the first three months teach you cannot be found in any classroom:

- How to handle rejection without collapsing
- How to motivate yourself when no one else will
- How to read people quickly
- How to build confidence out of nothing but persistence

These are field lessons. They only come from the field.

The first three months have one job: learn. Expect results, but make learning the priority.

The Five Mistakes Every New Salesperson Makes

Mistake One — Talking Too Much

New salespeople believe that the more they say, the more convincing they become. Wrong. The more you talk, the more the client switches off. Or gets irritated. In sales — speak less, listen more.

If in your first meeting you spoke 40% of the time and listened 60% — you are already ahead of most salespeople.

Mistake Two — Reciting the Pitch

Training gives you a pitch. Word for word. And new salespeople memorise it and deliver it the same way to every single client. The client feels it immediately — this person is reading from a script. And the moment a script is felt, connection is lost.

Use the pitch as a guideline. Not a script. Let it guide you — don't let it replace you.

Mistake Three — Taking Every 'No' Personally

This is the most damaging mistake of all. The client said no — therefore the client rejected me. No. That is not what happened. The client rejected that product, in that moment. Perhaps the timing was wrong. Perhaps something wasn't explained clearly enough. Perhaps the need genuinely isn't there right now.

You were not rejected. The moment was. The next moment will be different.

Mistake Four — Wanting Results Too Quickly

A deal in the first week. A big commission in the first month. This pressure is understandable. But pressure is the enemy of good selling. Sales is a long game. The first three months are an investment. You are building the foundation — not harvesting the crop.

Invest first. Learn. Build relationships. The results will come — and when they do, they compound.

Mistake Five — Trying to Fight Alone

New salespeople often think that asking for help is a sign of weakness. It isn't. It is the fastest path to getting good. Learn from your manager. Shadow your senior colleagues. Go to the field with someone who has been doing this for years and watch how they do it.

Mentorship is the shortest route to competence. Use it.

What No One Says — But What Really Matters

First — Every client is different. Treat them that way.

There is no formula that works on every client. One client wants numbers. One wants a story. One just needs to feel that you genuinely care about their situation. Look at every client with fresh eyes. Don't carry the method that worked with the last person into the next meeting.

Second — Believe in your own product.

If you don't trust what you're selling, you will never convince anyone else to. Whenever you join a new organisation, before you learn the pitch —

understand this: whose life does this product actually improve? And how? When you genuinely believe in what you're offering, the confidence that follows is not manufactured. It arrives on its own.

Third — Appearance matters more than you think.

In sales, the first impression is everything. Clean, well-kept clothes. A presentable look. Eye contact. A confident handshake. All of these help the client answer the question running in their mind before you have said anything: can I trust this person?

But before the visual impression, there is an even earlier one — your energy. A person who walks in confidently changes the atmosphere of the room before they speak.

Fourth — Time management is the most underrated skill in sales.

New salespeople pour their time and energy into clients who will probably never buy. And the people who are genuinely interested don't get enough attention. Give every client an honest assessment early on —

- Seriously interested — give them real focus
- Maybe — keep in touch regularly
- Not going to happen — move on

Your time is your most valuable resource. Spend it on the people who are most likely to value it.

Fifth — Never lose yourself.

Sales under pressure can push people to compromise. To sell what a client doesn't need. To exaggerate. To bend the truth slightly, just to close the deal. Short-term, one deal might happen. Long-term, your reputation is gone.

Your values are non-negotiable. No commission is worth more than your integrity.

The Moment When It Feels Like It's Not for You

This moment comes. For every new salesperson. Without exception. A bad month. Targets missed. More rejections than usual. Pressure building at home. And one morning — you don't want to get out of bed.

In that moment, ask yourself one honest question:

Have I genuinely tried? Or have I just been going through the motions?

If you have genuinely tried and things still aren't moving — that's okay. Give it a little more time. If honestly, you haven't — then do that first.

And if, after three to four months of full effort, it still feels wrong — that is a valid conclusion. Not everyone is built for sales. But most people make that decision far too early.

Give it at least six months of real effort. Then decide.

Anil — The Boy Who Almost Left

There was a new agent in my team. His name was Anil. B.Com graduate. First job. Came in full of excitement. First month — nothing happened. Second month — one small deal. Third month — he came to me and said, “Sir, I don't think this is for me.”

I asked him: “Anil, how many clients have you met so far?” He said, “Around fifty or sixty.” “And how many of them actually heard you out properly?” He thought about it. “Maybe ten to fifteen.” “And among those — did any of them show signs of being interested?” He said quietly, “Yes. Three or four of them.”

I said, “So you already have three or four potential clients in the pipeline. And you want to quit after three months?” He was quiet for a moment. “No, Sir. I'll try a little longer.”

Six months later, Anil was the most consistent performer in my team. Those three or four potential clients had all converted. Each of them had sent referrals. Each referral had opened another door.

The chain that was already forming just needed a little more time.

He almost walked away from it.

A Road Map for Your First Year

This is not a guarantee. It is a guideline.

Month One — Learn

Understand the product properly. Understand your market. Go to the field — expect to observe, not to close. From every rejection, pull out one question: what went wrong here?

Months Two and Three — Practise

Start delivering the pitch in your own words — not recited. Build the follow-up habit. Close one small deal, however modest. That first deal will do more for your confidence than any training.

Months Four to Six — Build Relationships

Now it's not just about deals — it's about people. Get to know your clients genuinely. Ask for referrals. A small network will begin to take shape.

After Month Six — Build Your System

By now you know what works for you. Build a system around it — for follow-ups, for meetings, for continuous learning. And run that system every single day.

A Word for You — From Me

If you are new to sales, I want to say this directly. The road ahead is hard. I won't pretend otherwise. There will be rejections. There will be bad months. There will be days when everything feels pointless.

But there will also be this —

- The moment your first real deal closes
- The client who calls to thank you personally
- The first commission that lands in your account
- The feeling — deep and quiet and real — of having built something yourself

Those moments are what the difficult road is for.

Sales is not just a job. It is a school. And what you learn here — you carry for the rest of your life, into everything you do.

Case Study: Anil — Three Months and Almost Gone

Based on a real story from Vikas Sahajwani's team

The situation:

New agent. First job. Three months in. No significant deals. Ready to quit.

The turning point:

An honest conversation revealed that three to four potential clients were already in the pipeline — they just hadn't been properly followed up.

What he did:

- Stayed. Gave it more time.
- Followed up properly with every interested prospect.
- Asked for referrals. Started building a small network.

The result:

Six months later — the team's most consistent performer.

Some of the best salespeople in the world are simply the ones who didn't quit when quitting felt easiest.

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Go Back to Your First Day

That first day. That first rejection. That first deal. Write them down. Remember them. Remember the person you were then. And then ask: from that day to today, what have I actually learned?

Exercise 2 — Plan Your Next Six Months

If you are new, write a road map. Month one — what will I do. Month three — where should I be. Month six — what do I want to have achieved. Write it. Look at it every morning.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. What did your first day in sales feel like? What was your first rejection like — and what did you do next?

2. What was the hardest thing about your first three months? How did you get through it?

3. Has there been a moment when you seriously considered quitting? What made you stay — or go?

4. Your first real deal — what did that feel like? Do you still remember it?

5. If you could say one thing to someone starting in sales today, what would it be?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. The first three months are the hardest — and the most valuable. What you learn in this period cannot be taught in a classroom. Survive it, and you carry those lessons for life.
2. Rejection is not about you. It is about the moment. The client said no to a product, in a context, at a time. The next moment is different. Keep going.
3. Speak less. Listen more. The salesperson who listens 60% of the time in a first meeting is already ahead of most. The client is telling you everything you need — if you are quiet enough to hear it.
4. Never lose yourself. Pressure will come. Targets will loom. In those moments, your values are your anchor. No commission is worth your integrity.

5. Sales is a school. What you learn here — about people, about yourself, about persistence — goes with you into every room you ever walk into. It does not stay at the office door.

"When I stood at that first door, diary in hand, after it was shut in my face — I didn't know what to do. I still went to the next door. And the one after that. That decision — to keep walking — that's the whole story of my career."

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Next Chapter: The Mid-Career Pain — the years have passed, the experience has built up, and yet you feel stuck in the same place.

CHAPTER 10

The Mid-Career Pain

*The years have passed, the experience has built up,
and yet you feel stuck in the same place.*



The Man I Met After Ten Years

I ran into an old colleague once.

We had both started in insurance at the same time. Same training. Same product. Same targets. Ten years later — I was Area Head. He was exactly where he had started.

We sat down together for tea. Talked for a while.

He said: “Yaar, I don't know where it went wrong. Ten years have passed. No big promotion. Salary hasn't grown much. Same work every day. Same calls. Same rejections. It feels like I've been walking in circles.”

There was a tiredness in his eyes. But it wasn't the tiredness of hard work.

It was the tiredness of someone who felt that life had moved on without them.

That day, I sat with him for a long time. And what came out of that conversation — that is the foundation of this chapter.

What Mid-Career Stuck Actually Means

In sales, the people who are somewhere between five and fifteen years in — many of them are sitting in a strange in-between place.

They're not new enough to have the excitement of learning everything for the first time. Not senior enough to carry real leadership responsibility. Not struggling enough to feel genuine urgency. Not successful enough to receive significant recognition.

It is a comfortable zone. And that is exactly what makes it the most dangerous zone of all.

Because here — nothing bad happens. And for exactly that reason — nothing particularly good happens either.

Life just moves along. And one day, you look back — and ten years have passed. And you're standing in the same spot.

Five Reasons People Stay Stuck in Mid-Career

Reason One — The Comfort Zone Trap

When something is working, we don't want to change it. A salesperson who has a base of old clients — people who buy something from them every month — stops looking for new ones.

Why? Because finding new clients is hard work. There's the fear of rejection. Old clients are safe. Comfortable.

But old clients don't last forever. They retire. They change companies. They move cities. Sometimes — they simply disappear.

And when they go, you discover that you never built a new network. The ground you were standing on was borrowed.

Reason Two — Stopping Learning

New salespeople want to learn everything. They attend trainings. Read books. Ask senior colleagues questions. In mid-career — that curiosity quietly fades.

“I already know all of this.”

This thought — is the most dangerous one there is. The market keeps changing. Clients keep changing. Technology keeps changing. The person who doesn't change gets left behind.

Reason Three — Bitterness

Some mid-career salespeople become bitter. “There's no meritocracy here. The person who flatters gets ahead. Hard work doesn't count for anything.”

This feeling can be real. Sometimes it is even accurate.

But bitterness is a poison that only damages you. When you carry bitterness, your energy turns negative. Clients feel it. Colleagues feel it. Managers feel it.

And a bitter salesperson never moves forward. Never.

Reason Four — Being in the Wrong Place

Sometimes the problem is simply this: the person is in the wrong industry. The wrong company. Selling the wrong product. They show up and do the work. But their heart isn't in it.

And when the heart isn't in it — average is the ceiling.

Reason Five — Not Being Honest With Yourself

This is the most subtle reason of all. Many mid-career salespeople look away from their real situation. They convince themselves — “Everything is fine. The market is just a little slow right now.”

While the truth is: they haven't learned anything new in two years. Haven't built new clients. Stopped following up.

Until you are honest with yourself — nothing changes. The first step is always the hardest: seeing things as they actually are.

The Conversation That Changes Everything — With Yourself

That day, I asked my colleague three questions.

“What new thing have you learned in the last two years?” He went quiet.

“How many new clients have you built in the last year?” Still quiet.

“How many of your old clients have given you referrals?” Now there was an uncomfortable look on his face.

I said — “Yaar, I'm not asking to judge you. I'm asking because the answers to these questions contain your problem. And when you know the problem — the solution follows.”

He was silent for a while. Then he said — “Vikas, I'm just stuck in a routine. Same work every day. Nothing new happens.”

I said — “Then break the routine.”

Breaking the Routine — Five Practical Ways

First — Learn One New Skill

One thing you don't know — learn it. Digital outreach. Social media. Public speaking. Data analysis. The world of sales is changing. The person who doesn't adapt gets left behind.

Learn one new thing every month. It can be small. But it has to be new. Growth begins the moment you step outside what you already know.

Second — Step Into a New Market or Industry

If you've always worked with the same type of client — try a different type. If you've always worked with individuals — try corporates. If you've always been in one city — explore a new geography.

New territory is frightening. But new territory also brings new energy. And new energy is exactly what mid-career stagnation lacks.

Third — Mentor Someone

This may sound counterintuitive. But when you teach someone newer than you — you learn too. Explaining your methods to someone else forces you to see them with fresh eyes.

And sometimes, a simple question from someone new — one you've never been asked before — gives you a perspective you didn't know you needed.

Fourth — Build Your Personal Brand

LinkedIn. Writing. Speaking. People who become a known voice in their field — opportunities come to them. People who remain invisible — they keep searching for opportunities.

Mid-career is the best time to invest in becoming visible. You have the experience. Now use it publicly.

Fifth — Do an Honest Self-Assessment

Take a piece of paper. Write down five things:

- What is my greatest strength?
- What is my greatest weakness?
- What new thing have I done in the last two years?
- Where do I want to be in the next two years?
- What do I need to change to get there?

These five questions — with honest answers — open the door to a new beginning.

How to Let Go of Bitterness

This matters deeply. Bitterness is a heavy weight you carry into every meeting. Every call. Every client interaction. And the client feels it — even if they can't name it. Something just feels off.

First — Accept that life isn't fair.

This is true. The most capable person doesn't always get ahead. Politics exist. Favouritism exists. This is the reality of organisations.

But this is also true: the person who consistently does good work, builds relationships, and creates genuine value — in the long run, they always move forward. The long game belongs to the person of integrity.

Second — Stop comparing yourself to others.

“He moved ahead. I didn't.” This comparison doesn't help you grow. It only causes pain.

Compare yourself to yourself. Am I better than I was six months ago? Have I learned something new? This is the only comparison that moves you forward.

Third — Practise gratitude.

This sounds simple. But it works. Every day, write down three things that are genuinely good about your work — a stable income, flexible timing, good clients who trust you, colleagues you respect.

When you train your attention on what's good — bitterness loses its grip. Not all at once. But steadily.

When It's Time to Change Jobs

Sometimes the reason for being stuck is simply this: you are in the wrong place. And then — changing jobs is the right decision.

But the decision should never come from fear. Never from bitterness. It should come from a clear head.

Signs that it may be time to leave:

- You feel anxious every morning before work — consistently, not just on bad days
- Your values and the company's values no longer align
- There is genuinely no path to growth — you've looked honestly and it isn't there
- You've tried everything and nothing has changed

Signs that you should stay and try harder:

- You want to leave because of one bad month
- You haven't yet given it your full effort
- One specific incident is troubling you — but the overall situation is fine

A decision made in haste is usually the wrong one. Sit with it. Talk to someone you trust. Then decide.

The Year I Was Stuck Myself

I will be honest.

There was a period in my own career when I hit this wall.

Insurance had been good to me. Promotions came. Good deals happened. But there came a point when I looked up — and saw the ceiling. I could feel the edges of what was possible in that particular room.

That was when I made a decision: I would change industries.

Media. Then health insurance. Then retail. Then, eventually, sustainability.

Every time — it was frightening. Every time — it was a fresh start.

But every time — there was new energy. New perspective. New learning. And looking back now — every industry change made me better. More versatile. More capable of understanding people across different worlds.

Staying stuck is a choice. Moving forward is also a choice. The only difference is that the second choice is harder.

Mid-Career Reinvention — Why This Word Matters

Reinvention doesn't mean forgetting who you are.

Reinvention means taking what you already are — and making it better. Adding new capabilities. Pointing yourself in a new direction.

The same skills. A new application. That is reinvention.

And it is possible at any stage. Five years of experience. Ten. Fifteen. As long as the desire to learn is alive — reinvention is possible. The moment you stop believing that, the ceiling becomes permanent.

Case Study: The Colleague I Met After Ten Years

Based on a real experience from Vikas Sahajwani's career

The situation:

An old colleague. Same starting point. Ten years later — one had grown significantly, one hadn't moved at all.

What had kept him stuck:

- Comfort zone — old clients, no new ones
- Learning had stopped
- Bitterness had set in

The honest conversation:

Three questions. Three silences. And then — the truth. “I'm stuck in a routine. Nothing new happens.”

What he did after:

- Broke the routine
- Learned one new skill — digital outreach

- Stepped into a new market
- Consciously let go of the bitterness

The result:

Within a year, his situation improved noticeably. He received recognition he hadn't seen in years.

Being stuck is not a destiny. It is a situation. And situations can change — provided you are willing to change first.

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — The Honest Self-Assessment

Ask yourself those five questions today. Write the answers down. Don't rush. Don't be kind to yourself. Be honest. The truth on paper is the beginning of the path out.

Exercise 2 — Start One New Thing

Today, decide one thing you will learn or do differently in the next thirty days. One skill. One new type of client. One new approach. And tomorrow — begin.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. Are you comfortable in your career right now? And is that comfort holding you back from moving forward?

2. In the last one year, what have you genuinely learned — professionally? Something new, not something you already knew.

3. Is there bitterness in you — about someone, about a situation, about how things have gone? Where did it come from?

4. If you were not afraid — what would you do differently in your career right now?

5. Where do you see yourself five years from now? And what is the very first step toward that place?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. The mid-career comfort zone is the most dangerous place there is. Not because something bad happens there. But because nothing does. And life passes.
2. Stopping learning is the slowest form of falling behind. The market moves. Technology moves. Clients move. The person who stands still watches the world walk past them.
3. Bitterness is a poison you carry into every room. It damages only you. Let it go. Replace it, gradually, with gratitude.
4. Reinvention is possible at any stage. Same skills. New direction. New energy. As long as the desire to learn is alive — it's never too late.
5. Staying stuck is a choice. Moving forward is a choice. The second is harder. But it is always available to you. You decide.

"That colleague is still my friend. After that conversation, he changed a few things. Not dramatically — just a little. But that little change became a new direction. Sometimes in life you don't need a grand transformation. You just need one honest conversation. With yourself."

— Vikas Sahajwani

Next Chapter: The Business Owner and Sales — when you start your own business, the first thing you have to sell is yourself.

CHAPTER 11

The Business Owner and Sales

*When you start your own business,
the first thing you have to sell is yourself*



The Day Everything Changed

There comes a day in some people's lives when they decide — no more jobs. Now, it's my own.

That day came for me too.

Twenty-five years of working for others. Insurance. Media. Health. HR. Retail. I worked everywhere. Learned something everywhere. Gave something everywhere.

But one day — a voice rose up from somewhere inside me.

*“Vikas, for all these years, you sold other people's dreams.
Now it's time to sell your own.”*

That was the day I stepped out on my own — building a sustainability-focused solutions venture, and, alongside it, my own identity as a sales coach and speaker.

But the day I took that step, I understood something immediately —

Selling inside a job and selling inside your own business are completely different games.

Job Selling vs. Business Selling — What's the Difference

In a job — there was a company name behind me. A brand. An office. A visiting card with a recognised name printed on it.

When I met a client, there was already some credibility in the room before I even spoke. The company's name did some of the work for me.

In business — none of that existed.

When I walked in carrying this new, unknown venture, the first thought in people's minds was —

“What is this? Who is this person?”

Every single time — in every single meeting — I had to prove two things at once: myself, and the idea. That was a completely different kind of challenge.

In a job, you sell a product. In business, you sell yourself. And selling yourself is far harder than selling any product.

What “Selling Yourself” Actually Means

When I say “sell yourself,” I don't mean praising yourself constantly. Pushing your own name to the front of every room.

Selling yourself means one thing — making people believe that working with you is genuinely good for them.

There are three things that make this happen.

First — State your value clearly.

Every business owner needs to be able to answer this question with total clarity:

“What do you do — and why is it different from everyone else?”

If you can't answer that in thirty seconds, the client won't be able to figure out why they should choose you either.

Second — Tell your story.

In business, your story is the single biggest selling tool you have.

My story is twenty-five years of a sales journey. Seven industries. Hundreds of deals. Thousands of people met along the way. That story gives me credibility. It tells people — this person knows what he's talking about. His experience is real.

When your story is powerful, people buy from you. Not just from your product.

Third — Show results.

A business owner who can't show results is only making promises.

Results means — who worked with you, and what happened as a result. Testimonials. Case studies. References.

This kind of social proof is the strongest form of trust you can offer a new client.

The First Big Obstacle

When I started out on my own, the first big obstacle wasn't that the idea wasn't good.

The idea was good. It addressed a real need. The market was ready.

The first obstacle was trust.

People didn't know whether this would actually work. Whether this person would actually deliver. And building that trust — took time.

There was a biogas project I pitched to a sugar manufacturer. It wasn't easy.

First there were meetings. Then presentations. Then doubts surfaced. Then more meetings.

But in every single meeting, I did one thing consistently —

I spoke in their language. Not the language of environment. The language of their business.

“This waste you're currently paying money to dispose of — it can be converted into biogas. That biogas will cover part of your factory's energy needs. Which means your electricity bill drops. And your waste disposal cost drops too.”

Once the numbers were on the table — the trust was built.

The deal happened.

The Biggest Mistakes Business Owners Make in Selling

Many talented people start businesses. And many of them fail. Not because of the product. Not because of the idea. Because of the selling.

Mistake One — All Time on Building, No Time on Selling

Many business owners believe: first, I'll make the product perfect. Then I'll sell it.

Wrong.

Building and selling have to move together, side by side. Until you start selling, you don't actually know what the market needs. And without that knowledge, you keep building something that pleases you — not the client.

Mistake Two — Treating Everyone as a Potential Client

A new business owner is excited. They feel — I can sell to anyone.

That's wrong. No product is right for every single person.

Define your ideal client. Who is the person who needs your product the most? Who will value it the most? Who is genuinely ready to pay for it?

Find that person. Focus entirely there.

Mistake Three — Hesitating on Price

This is an extremely common problem. New business owners, especially, undercharge for their services and products.

Sometimes it feels wrong to charge more. Sometimes there's a fear the client will say no.

But here is the truth —

Someone who doesn't know their own worth gets bought at a discount by everyone else.

Know your value. Price according to it. And stay confident at that price.

Mistake Four — Ignoring Networking

A new business owner thinks: my product is good. People will come on their own.

They won't.

In business, networking is the single biggest sales tool there is. Every event. Every conference. Every casual conversation — is an opportunity.

And the business owner who shows up genuinely, everywhere, consistently — opportunities start coming to them.

Mistake Five — Fearing Rejection

In a job, a rejection happened — fine, there was always another client waiting.

In business, a rejection happens — and sometimes it feels like the entire business has failed.

That feeling is wrong.

Rejection happens more often in business than in a job. Because the stakes are higher. The emotion is higher. But the principle is exactly the same — rejection is feedback. Not a personal attack.

After every rejection, ask — why not this client? What will I do differently next time?

The New Era of Business Selling — Both Digital and Personal

Today's business owner can't only go door to door. A digital presence is essential.

LinkedIn. Instagram. A website. Content.

But there's a misunderstanding many business owners carry —

“I'll post on social media — and the sales will come.”

No.

Social media builds awareness. It builds trust. It starts conversations. But the deal — even today — happens through personal connection.

Digital presence plus personal relationship equals business growth. Neither one works alone.

I followed this exact approach for my own venture. I posted consistently on LinkedIn — my journey, my ideas, my experiences. And alongside that — real meetings. Real conversations. Real relationships.

One supported the other.

Your Personal Brand — A Business Owner's Greatest Asset

This matters enormously.

A business owner's personal brand is bigger than their business.

Why? Because a business can shut down. It can be rebranded. The product can change.

But a personal brand — if it's built right — stays with you always.

When people hear my name, what do they think?

“Twenty-five years of sales experience. Real stories. A Sales Architect.”

That is a personal brand. And it existed before any venture I started. It will continue after too.

Build your personal brand. It is your most permanent asset.

To build a personal brand:

- Decide on a clear positioning — what you are, and who you are for
- Share content consistently — your learnings, your stories, your ideas
- Target a specific audience — not everyone
- Think long-term — a personal brand is not built overnight

A Word on Pricing — Because Every Business Owner Faces This

Pricing is a science. And it's also an art.

Price too low, and people assume there's no quality. Price too high, and people feel it isn't justified.

The right price is the one that represents your value — and feels fair to the client.

A practical approach:

First — know your costs. Your time. Your expertise. Your infrastructure. Your opportunity cost. Together, these give you a minimum price. Never go below it.

Second — understand the market. What do your competitors charge? What can your client actually afford? This is a reference point. Not a benchmark to copy.

Third — add your unique value. If you do something that no one else does, charge a premium for it. And justify that premium clearly.

“I bring twenty-five years of cross-industry experience. The insights I offer don't exist anywhere else.”

That is how you justify a premium.

The Moment That Venture Closed Its First Big Deal

I can't forget that meeting.

A large company. The full board was present. I was presenting.

The people in that room were experienced. Knowledgeable. They asked sharp questions.

I did the one thing I had always done.

I spoke in their language.

I didn't talk about the environment — I talked about revenue. I didn't talk about compliance — I talked about cost savings. I didn't talk about the future — I talked about today's problem.

After the meeting, one board member pulled me aside and said —

“Vikas ji, many people came before you talking about sustainability. But you are the first person who spoke in our language.”

The deal happened.

And that deal gave the venture a new identity.

Case Study: A Salesman's Own Business

Based on Vikas Sahajwani's real story

The situation:

After twenty-five years of working for others — a business of his own. No brand. No ready-made client base. Just an idea and a vision.

The challenge:

Selling himself and the idea, simultaneously, in every single meeting.

What Vikas did:

- Spoke in the client's language in every meeting — business value, not environmental talk
- Used his twenty-five-year story as a foundation of credibility
- Built a digital presence — consistent content on LinkedIn
- Showed results — case studies, testimonials, references
- Built a personal brand — the Sales Architect

The result:

A university collaboration. A biogas project. A growing client base.

In business, you are sold first. The product comes after.

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Write Your Value Proposition

In thirty seconds, say this clearly: “I work for [who]. I solve [what problem] for them. My approach is different because [why].” These three lines are your entire business pitch.

Exercise 2 — Write Your Story

The story that makes you unique. Where you came from. What you did. What you learned. What you do now. Five minutes. Honest. Real. This story is the foundation of your personal brand.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. If you are running your own business — or want to — what is your biggest fear?

2. What is your unique value — something no one else brings?

3. Do you have a clear story you can tell people? If not, what should that story be?

4. When it comes to pricing — do you ask for what you're worth? Or do you rush to discount? Why?

5. What is your personal brand right now — what do people think of you? And what do you want them to think?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. In business, you are sold first — the product comes after. Your story, your value, your results — these are your real product.
2. Define your ideal client. Trying to sell to everyone means selling to no one.
3. Know your price, and stay confident in it. Someone who doesn't know their own worth gets bought at a discount by everyone else.
4. Digital presence plus personal relationship equals business growth. Neither one alone is enough.
5. Your personal brand is your most permanent asset. A business can change. A brand, built right, doesn't.

"The day I stepped out on my own, I knew the idea was good. What I didn't know was that I would have to sell myself first. That was the hardest lesson. And the most necessary one. Because once a person trusts himself — everything else follows."

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Next Chapter: The Door Will Open — when everything feels closed, there is still a way through.

CHAPTER 12

The Door Will Open

When everything feels closed, there is still a way through



The Longest Night

In this book, I have told you many stories.

The bus where I made my first sale without any plan. The newspaper deal that broke my trust. The five-crore deal that was born from a father's fear. The months when my team wasn't performing. The day it felt like sales wasn't meant for me.

But there is one night I haven't told you about yet.

The night when everything came crashing together at once.

Targets were being missed. The team was struggling. There were responsibilities waiting for me at home. And a deal I had been counting on — one I genuinely believed in — had just slipped through my fingers.

That night, I went up to the terrace. Alone.

There were stars in the sky. The city lights stretched out below. And inside me — there was just emptiness.

I asked myself one question.

Is there still a way forward? Or does it end right here?

The Thought That Came That Night

I sat there for a long time.

And then — a thought arrived. A picture, almost.

I remembered every closed door of my life.

That very first door — when an elderly gentleman shut it in my face, on my very first sales call. That closed door too.

The newspaper deal that slipped away — that was a closed door as well. Those months when the team wasn't performing — another closed door. And every single time — after every closed door — something had happened.

After that first door, I learned how to handle rejection. After the newspaper deal, I learned how to protect trust before it's earned. After those difficult months with the team, I learned what it actually means to lead.

Every closed door had opened a new one. I simply hadn't been able to see it — because I was still standing at the closed one, staring at it.

Why a Door Closes

This question matters a great deal.

In life — and in sales — doors close. They always will.

But every closed door carries a meaning. And that meaning isn't always the one we assume in the moment.

Sometimes a door closes because that path simply wasn't the right one. The client who didn't buy from you — perhaps that product genuinely wasn't right for them. And if the deal had happened anyway, perhaps a bigger problem would have followed later.

Sometimes a door closes because the timing isn't right yet. Some things wait for their moment. What didn't happen today may have been meant for tomorrow.

And sometimes a door closes so that you can learn something. The lesson you needed was waiting behind that very door. And until it closed, you would never have gone looking for that lesson.

And sometimes — a door closes simply so you go looking for a better one.

But one closed door never means every door is closed.

“Knocking” — A Philosophy

Someone very close to me once said something I have never forgotten.

“Vikas, doors in life don't open on their own. You have to knock.”

It's a simple sentence. But there's real depth in it.

The person who stands in front of a door and waits — hoping someone else will open it — stays standing there forever.

The person who knocks — and gets no answer the first time — knocks again. And again. And one day, that door opens.

This is exactly how sales works.

You contacted a client once, and there was no response. That doesn't mean the door is closed. It only means — it hasn't opened yet.

Knock. Then knock again. Then again.

One day — it will open.

And if that particular door truly never opens — knock on a different one. There is always some door, somewhere, that is open. You simply have to go find it, and knock.

The Doors of My Own Life

When I look back, my entire journey is really just a series of closed doors and opening doors.

In insurance — many doors closed. But some opened, and I earned five promotions.

In media — one very big door closed. That newspaper deal. But that very closed door taught me something I have used every single day since.

In health insurance — many doors closed, many opened, and I became Area Head.

When I left my job and started out on my own — in the beginning, every single door felt closed. No brand. No network. No client base.

But I kept knocking.

Meetings happened. Presentations happened. Rejections happened.

And slowly — doors began to open.

A collaboration with a university. A biogas project with a sugar company.
A growing community on LinkedIn. A place within a coaching certification programme.

Every single one of those doors — came after some other door had closed.

The People Who Never Gave Up — and Won

I have seen many people in my life.

Some stopped at the very first closed door. And stayed there.

Some made it to the second door, the third, the fourth. Then grew tired.
And stopped.

And some — never stopped.

I told you Anil's story earlier — three months in, ready to quit. He stayed.
Six months later, he was the top performer.

I told you Priya's story — everyone said she wouldn't last. She lasted. And
went further than anyone else.

I told you about the client who kept saying no for six months — and in
the seventh month, called me himself.

There is one thing common to every one of these stories —

None of them stopped knocking on that door — until it finally opened.

When It Feels Like Every Door Is Closed

This feeling comes to every person, at some point in life.

When it feels like every direction says no. Every path is blocked. There's
no hope left anywhere.

In that moment — remember one thing.

“All doors are closed” is a feeling. Not a fact.

When we are deeply tired, deeply discouraged — our eyes only see the closed doors. The open ones become invisible to us, even when they're standing right in front of us.

In that moment — do one thing.

Stop. Breathe. And look again, with fresh eyes.

Maybe the door you never tried — that's where the way through is.

Maybe the person you never spoke to — could be the one who helps.

Maybe the idea you haven't thought of yet — is exactly the answer.

When we pause, we start seeing things we couldn't see while we were running.

The Door Within

Throughout this book, I have spoken about doors on the outside. Clients' doors. Deals' doors. Opportunities' doors.

But there is one door that matters more than all of them.

It is the door inside you.

The door that says either “I can do this” — or “I cannot do this.”

The doors on the outside — whether they open or close — we cannot fully control. But the door inside — that one is entirely in our hands.

When the inner door is open — “I will try. I will learn. I will move forward.” — even the closed doors outside start to feel weaker, less final.

When the inner door is closed — “I can't do this. I've already lost.” — even an open door outside becomes invisible to us.

The very first door you need to open — is the one inside you.

The Art of Knocking — Practical Lessons

Knocking isn't simply trying the same thing over and over.

There is an art to it.

First — Do something different each time.

If one approach hasn't worked, don't keep repeating that same approach. Try a new method. A new angle. A new conversation.

Second — Persistence, with patience.

Knocking isn't about being pushy. It's about continuing to try, steadily, with patience. Don't knock so hard that the person on the other side gets frightened away. But don't knock so softly that no one even hears you.

Third — Keep knocking on other doors too.

Don't pour all your energy into one single door. While you wait for one to open, keep knocking on others as well. One of them will open. Perhaps the one you never expected.

Fourth — When a door opens, be grateful.

When a door finally opens — value it. Take care of it. Because an open door arrives only after many closed ones. Understand what it's worth.

Life and Sales — The Same Lesson

Throughout this entire book, I have spoken about sales.

But the truth is — everything I learned in sales is really a lesson about life.

Rejection happens in sales. It happens in life too. We follow up with clients — we follow up in relationships too. Patience is needed in deals — it's needed in dreams too. We build trust in business — we build it in families too. Learning, or enjoying the moment — that applies to work, and it applies to life.

And doors — they exist in sales. They exist in life too.

The door of a career. The door of a relationship. The door of health. The door of a dream.

All of them can close. All of them can open.

The only difference is — who keeps knocking.

Back on That Terrace

Let me return to that night — when I sat alone on the terrace.

That night, I didn't make some big decision. There was no dramatic moment.

Just — a small thought arrived.

“Tonight, just sit here. Tomorrow — you will knock again.”

And the next morning — I got up. Got ready. And went out.

Nothing big happened that day. No deal closed. No miracle occurred.

But that day — I knocked on one door. Then another. Then a third.

And a few weeks later — one door opened. Then another.

And today — I am writing this book.

That night — the darkest night — is, today, one of my most valuable memories.

Because that night taught me something —

Darkness is never permanent. And a door — there is always one, somewhere. You only have to find it, and knock.

Case Study: That Night, and What Came After

Based on Vikas Sahajwani's real experience

The situation:

A night when everything felt closed at once — targets, team, personal life, all in difficulty together.

The turning point:

One small thought: “Tonight, just sit here. Tomorrow, you'll knock again.”

What Vikas did:

- Made no major decision that night — simply paused
- Started again the next morning — one door, then another
- Tried new approaches — didn't repeat the old ones
- Kept knocking for weeks — without letting go of hope

The result:

Doors slowly began to open. And a new journey began — one that eventually led to this very book.

Even after the darkest night, a morning arrives. You only have to hold on until that morning comes.

Exercises — Do This Today

Exercise 1 — Count Your Closed Doors

Recall the five biggest closed doors of your life. After each one — what new door opened? What did you learn? If a door feels closed right now — ask yourself: what door might open after this one?

Exercise 2 — Knock on One New Door Today

Something you've wanted to do — but have been avoiding out of fear. Do it today. One call. One message. One meeting. Just one knock. See what happens.

Workbook — Reflect On Yourself

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. What was the biggest closed door in your life? What new door opened after it?

2. What door feels closed in your life right now? Have you truly knocked on it fully — or did you stop trying too soon?

3. Is the door inside you open or closed right now? Do you trust yourself?

4. Is there something you want to do — but keep avoiding out of fear? What is that fear, exactly?

5. If you could only knock on one door today, which one would it be?

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. Every closed door closes for a reason. Sometimes the wrong path, sometimes the wrong time, sometimes a lesson that needed learning first.
2. Doors don't open on their own — they have to be knocked on. And if you keep knocking, one day, it opens.
3. “All doors are closed” is a feeling, not a fact. Stop. Breathe. Look again, with fresh eyes.
4. The most important door is the one inside you. You can't control the outside doors. But the inner one is entirely yours to open.
5. Life and sales teach the same lesson. Rejection, follow-up, patience, trust, learning, enjoying the moment — all of it applies everywhere.

"That night I sat on the terrace — everything felt closed. Today I am writing this book. Between that night and this book, there was only one thing. I didn't stop knocking. In your life too — however dark it feels right now — there is a door. Full of hope. Just knock on it. It will open. It will surely open. I only have to keep knocking."

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Next Chapter: Vikas's Promise — this is not the last page of this book. It is a new beginning.

CHAPTER 13

Vikas's Promise

*This is not the last page of this book.
It is a new beginning.*



When I Began Writing This Book

When I first sat down to write this book, there was a fear.

“Will anyone read it? Will my stories be of any use to anyone? Can the words of a salesman become a book worth reading?”

And then one thing came back to me.

In my entire life, I have done only one thing — talked to people. Listened to them. Tried to help them.

This book is that same work. Only this time, my voice can reach thousands of people at once.

And if even one story in this book — just one — can make a small difference in one person's life, then this book has done its job.

What This Book Held — A Look Back

Let us turn around for a moment and see what we carried together.

We began with a bus. A journey to Mount Abu. A sale that happened without any plan, without any training. From there came the first understanding — selling is not a job. It is a way of being.

Then came a newspaper — which broke my trust one morning. From there came the lesson — never reveal everything before the deal is closed. And a relationship is always bigger than a deal.

Then came a drawing room — where a father's silent worry became a five-crore deal. From there came the heart of this book — the real work of selling is understanding emotion, and giving it an answer.

Then came the lesson of follow-up — India's biggest sales mistake. Eighty percent of deals happen through follow-up. The person who gives up too soon throws away the largest part of their own effort.

Then came the pain of the team — the night of doubt when many people depended on one person, and the numbers weren't coming. From there came the understanding — a leader builds culture. A manager only watches numbers.

Then came those three lines on a piece of paper — learn, or enjoy. No third emotion exists. Celebrate when you win. Learn when you lose. There is no time left for grief.

Then came seven industries — and one heart. The industry changes, but understanding the human being never changes.

Then came the woman in sales — a quiet revolution. Sensitivity is not weakness. It is the greatest strength of all.

Then came the new job, the old heart — what no one tells you when you begin. The first three months are the hardest. But whoever holds on, moves forward.

Then came the mid-career pain — when years pass and nothing seems to have changed. Being stuck is a choice. So is moving forward.

Then came the business owner and sales — when you have to sell yourself first. You are always sold before your product is.

And then came the door — the door that will open. Every closed door opens something new. Just keep knocking.

Twelve chapters. Twelve stories. Twelve lessons.

But the truth is — all of them say the same one thing.

Selling happens from the heart. Everything else is just method.

My Promise — To You

While writing this book, I made a promise to myself.

I decided — I will not write a single word that I have not felt myself.

Every story — whether of winning or losing — was real.

Every lesson — whether it seemed easy or difficult — I had lived it myself.

And now — I make a promise to you.

If you take what is written in this book and apply it honestly — your selling will change. Your life will change.

This is not a magic promise. This is not one of those “get rich overnight” kinds of claims.

This is a simple, straight promise — built on principles I have tested myself, over twenty-five years.

If You Could Only Remember Five Things

This book is long. Twelve chapters. Thousands of words. Dozens of lessons.

But if you could only carry five things with you — these are the five.

First — Listen. Listen more. Speak less.

This is the simplest lesson. And the most powerful. The person who listens — understands. The person who understands — offers the right solution. And the right solution — makes the deal.

Second — Follow up. Don't give up too quickly.

Eighty percent of deals happen through follow-up. The person who stops too soon throws away the largest share of their own hard work.

Third — Build trust first. The deal comes after.

Do what you say you will do. Think long-term. Trust doesn't build in a day. But it can break in a single moment. Guard it carefully.

Fourth — Learn, or enjoy. No third option exists.

Celebrate when you win. Learn when you lose. There is no time left for grief.

Fifth — Keep knocking on doors.

One door closes — knock on another. Then a third. One day — some door will certainly open.

These five things — if you bring them into your life — this book has done everything it set out to do.

For Everyone Reading This Book

I don't know who you are.

Perhaps you are a fresh graduate — just beginning your first sales job. Frightened. Excited too.

Perhaps you are a mid-career professional — feeling that a few years have passed without much to show for it, and wondering what comes next.

Perhaps you are a woman — who wants to enter sales but is afraid. Or who is already in it and finding the road harder than expected.

Perhaps you are a business owner — trying to take your idea out into the world.

Perhaps you are a team leader — with many people depending on your decisions.

Or perhaps — you are someone who never thought of yourself as a salesperson at all. But somewhere in reading this book, you realised that you sell something every single day.

Whoever you are — I want to say this to you directly.

You are not alone.

Every story I have told in this book — every rejection, every defeat, every fear, every doubt — I have felt all of it myself. And I am still here today. Still moving forward.

If I could do it — so can you.

One Last Story

Before I close this book — one final story.

A few years ago, I was at an event. A coaching summit. Many experienced people were present.

I was given three minutes to speak.

Three minutes is very little time.

I went onto the stage. I had no slides. No data to show.

I simply said one thing —

“I am a salesman. I have been for twenty-five years. And today, I want to share with you one small truth from my life — selling is not a job. It is a way of seeing the world. Every person. Every relationship. Every opportunity. All of it is a form of selling. And the person who learns how to genuinely help someone else — that person will always move forward.”

Three minutes ended. I walked back to my seat.

Afterwards — many people came to me. They said: “What you said touched the heart.”

I realised then — my greatest strength was not some polished presentation. Not some clever data.

My greatest strength was truth. Speaking from the heart.

That is also the greatest strength of this book — if it has any.

A Request — From Me to You

After reading this book — I have one request.

Please don't just read it and put it away.

Every chapter had exercises. Every chapter had workbook questions. If you skipped them — go back. Do them.

Because reading gives you knowledge. But doing brings change.

Choose one exercise — today. And do it.

One follow-up you have been putting off — make it today.

One closed door you walked away from — knock on it again today.

A small step — but today.

A Final Word

As I bring this book to a close — one thought is sitting with me.

This book is the story of my life. But it is not only my story.

It is the story of every person who has ever knocked on a door — and found it closed. Knocked again — and found it closed again. And then knocked one more time — and one day, it opened.

It is the story of the mother who persuades her children every single day. The teacher who inspires new students every year. The fresh salesperson who is stepping into the field for the very first time today. The business owner who is moving forward, trusting in their own idea.

It is everyone's story.

And now — it is yours too.

Your door is somewhere out there. Find it. And knock.

I promise — one day, it will open.

Workbook — The Final Page

Answer honestly. This is for you, not for anyone else.

1. Of this entire book — what touched you most? One story, one line, one moment.

2. Which chapter connected most closely to your own life? And why?

3. One thing you will do differently, starting tomorrow. What is it?

4. If your life were a book — what would the title be?

5. A promise — to yourself.

Five Things to Remember From This Chapter

1. Selling is not a job — it is a way of being. Every one of us sells something every single day.
2. Trust is the greatest capital there is. It takes time to build. A single moment to break. Guard it.
3. In defeat, learn. In victory, celebrate. No third emotion exists. There is no time left for grief.
4. Behind every closed door — a new one. Just keep knocking. One will open.
5. All of this happens from the heart. That is why — sell from the heart.

"This book began with my story — on a bus, on an unplanned journey. It ends in your hands — at the beginning of your own journey. What I learned — I have given to you. Now it is your turn. Knock on your door. It is not closed. It only looks that way. Knock. It will open. Thank you. And with all my wishes — for your journey."

— *Vikas Sahajwani*

Vikas Sahajwani

Sales Architect · 25+ Years in Sales Leadership