



## Friends, Motives and Profits: [Avoid Fear-Based Selling](#)

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Imagine that your best friend in the world needs your help. Your friend needs to buy some of the service that you sell. And—knowing that you are an expert in this area, and that they can trust you—they have sought you out.

“I want you to advise me in this area,” they say. “I’ll do whatever you tell me to do.” And you know that they will.

What do you do with that power and trust?

How much, and in what ways, would you treat your best friend differently from a new client off the street? What does that say about your level of trustworthiness? About your sales effectiveness?

Under which conditions would you buy from you?

### SELLING TO YOUR BEST FRIEND

I don’t know you, of course. But I’m willing to bet that, when it comes to selling to a friend, you’ll do most of the following six things:



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- If you feel conflicted, or uncomfortable, you'll advise your friend to seek out another salesperson—and probably suggest someone;
- You'll ask your friend to explain exactly what they're looking for—and you'll listen carefully to decide the best answer for them;

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- You'll explain to your friend a little bit about “how it really happens,” or “what's really important here,” or “what you should focus on” in your business;
- You'll have a strong point of view about what particular service or product is right for your friend—and you'll tell them what it is;
- You'll think carefully about the right price, ending up somewhere between a pretty good deal

for your friend and a reasonably fair deal for the both of you;

- If, after all the discussion, you decide that your friend either should not buy the service at all, or that a competitor actually

has a variation of the service that is better suited to your friend—you'll advise the friend either to not buy the service, or to get it from your competitor.

How many out of that list of 6 describe what you would do?

Now for my last prediction: if you do those things, your friend will be very happy with you regardless of the recommendation. Even if—no, especially if—you recommend the friend not buy or buy elsewhere, the friend will be grateful to you—and will most likely buy from you again when they need what it is that you do.

This sounds like a happy outcome. A friendship is deepened. A client is very satisfied. You get positive references. You get a new client at a zero cost of sales. And, you feel good about having helped someone.

The question is: why would you ever sell any other way?

### SELLING TO YOUR NEWEST CLIENT

Because, let's face it—how often do we sell to someone as if they were our best friend? When faced with a new prospect, how often do you:



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- Advise they seek another firm or salesperson;
- Listen for what the client needs—not what you can sell;
- Share inside info about how the industry works
- Think about the best service for the client, not for your sales

to be your friend, and whom you don't trust.

### FEAR-BASED SELLING

If we're honest about it, the reason we don't treat strangers like friends is simple: we're afraid. Afraid they might take advantage of us, or put one over on us. Or—afraid they'll think we're trying to take advantage of them, or put one over on them.

We're afraid we won't get the sale. And if we don't get the sale, our boss won't like us, our promotion will be put off, our bonus will go down. If we don't get the sale, we'll slip in the eyes of our would-be peers. And that means we slip in our own eyes—which are really the reflected views of what we imagine others will think of us. Our perceived self-worth is at the heart of this fear.

Fear-based selling always drives us in one direction: to control the outcome. We seize on any opportunity to shift the odds, alter the perceptions, control the process. We read books on closing, try new screening processes, experiment with process flows. And all of this attempt at control drives us further and further away from treating clients like friends.

*We're afraid  
we won't get the  
sale.*

- Aim for a price range whose upper limit is “a reasonably fair deal”

- Recommend a competitor?

For that new prospect, how many of those descriptions fit what you would do?

Compare the two scores. What's the gap between what you'd do for a friend, and what you'd do for a stranger.

Let's call that The Trust Gap.

Who would you rather buy from: a friend, with scores like your first list? Or a stranger, with scores like your second? Which you would you buy from?

The Trust Gap is the measure of the distance between buying from a friend—and buying from someone who probably says he wants



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Specifically, the fear-based desire to control leads us to:

- Influence the client to buy from us, not from others
- Listen for what is advantageous to us, secondarily to what helps the client
- Don't share information about our friend

*The best short-term results come from focusing on long term relationships.*

- or our business, lest it "give away" perspectives
  - Think about the most profitable service to us, not the best for the client
  - Aim for maximum price
    - Steer clients away from our competitors.

This of course is the exact opposite of how we would treat our friends. And the result is eminently predictable: we become suspicious of people who behave from fear. We doubt their motives, and rightly so. We do not trust them. And, so, we do not buy from them (unless left no other choice).

### FRIENDS, MOTIVES AND PROFITS

In the first scenario, selling to your friend, your motive is almost entirely to do right by

your friend. The consequences are positive and many: you make a profitable sale to a satisfied customer; you improve a friendship. You increase the chances of future sales, both directly from your friend, and indirectly from any referrals he or she would generate. You paid nothing for the lead and the testimonial.

This is very good business.

And it all comes from good motives crowding out fear. This is the paradox of selling from trust:

- The best short-term results come from focusing on long term relationships;
- Serving the client's best interests is the best way to improve your own;
- A relationship is not a means to a sale—a sale is the outcome of a relationship;
- If you treat profit as an outcome, not a goal, you will outperform someone who sets profit achievement goals.

Sell to your clients the way you would want your friends to sell to you. The trustworthy way.

The good business way.

## TQ DIAGNOSTIC TEST

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Answer 20 simple questions based on the [Trust Equation](#), and you will discover a powerful tool for business success—your Trust Quotient and your Trust Temperament™. These revealing answers will tell what you do that helps people trust you, and the things you can do to improve the way you are perceived.

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- Improve credibility in business
- Build deeper and more satisfying personal relationships with people who matter

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