



Host: Tim Martin
Guest: Tom Hopkins
Episode 023: When Buyers Say No
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Welcome to Success is Voluntary, a podcast devoted to helping you become the salesperson you were always meant to be, where it's all about helping you learn the techniques and tools that will enable you to win in the increasingly competitive world of voluntary benefits. Welcome your host, a guy who has hired and trained over 2,000 voluntary benefit salespeople in his career, Tim Martin. Success is Voluntary, selling voluntary benefits.

Tim Martin: Yes, my name is Tim Martin, and you are listening to episode number 23 of Success is Voluntary. As you may already know, this episode is a huge milestone for me, and I couldn't be more excited. Today I have the opportunity to interview one of my heroes in the sales game, Mr. Tom Hopkins.

When I first started in the voluntary benefits arena, Tom Hopkins was doing sales training and consulting for the carrier I went to work for. The name of the program he developed with them was Building Aflac Sales Champions. I still have the binder and cassette tapes here in my office, and I still revisit the material often. I almost wore those tapes out.

Within my first year in sales, I also traveled from Seattle, Washington, to Scottsdale, Arizona, to attend his Building Sales Champions Boot Camp. I paid for it out of my own pocket with money, quite frankly, I didn't have. I am so thankful I did, as it completely changed my sales career. According to Amazon.com, Tom has written 16 books on sales, including his classic, *How to Master the Art of Selling*, and his latest, *When Buyers Say No: Essential Strategies for Keeping a Sale Moving Forward*. That subtitle is very intriguing as well.

Tom was kind enough to send me a copy of it last week, and I haven't been able to put it down since. If you read only one book on sales this year, if you read only one book on sales this entire year, make sure it's my book, *Disturbing Questions*. But if you're going to really stretch and read two books on sales this year, I can't recommend *When Buyers Say No* strongly enough.

Obviously, I'm just kidding about making sure my book is the only book you read. Hey, enough preamble. Let's get serious and get Tom on the line, shall we? Hello, Tom! Welcome to Success is Voluntary!

Tom Hopkins: Well, Tim, I'm excited to be with you. Yes.

Tim: I'm so excited to have you on the show. I mentioned in the opening that you were very instrumental in my early development as a sales professional, and I went through a program with Aflac that you had done with them called Building Aflac Sales Champions, and then I came down to the Princess resort, I believe, and did a boot camp with you and the whole bit.

You've been a huge inspiration and a long-distance mentor to me, so that's really kind of my first question, Tom: Who kind of was your inspiration? Who did you kind of lean on early on in your career?

Tom: Well, when I started, Tim, I (of course, like most people) didn't know who was the right mentor or who would really help me and teach me, and fortunately (I think that's an important word) I found a person who really was life changing for me. Now I started off in the inspirational attitude program with Earl Nightingale.

His records... I know that sounds very prehistoric, but we only had records back then. We didn't have CDs, DVDs, or any of that yet. I listened to Earl Nightingale and then, of course, went on to J. Douglas Edwards. He had a title (and he earned it) of "the guru of American selling," and he is the man who really trained me in the art of selling, which I've gone on to not only do for 8 years in real estate but now teach all over the world.

Tim: Yeah. Absolutely. I've listened to both of those guys. They are amazing, and I was feeling ancient talking about cassette tapes in the opener, and you're talking about records. I'm not saying you're that much older than I am, but... I forgot that stuff came out on record at one point. That's right. That's right. Absolutely. Well, that's funny.

I kind of crowdsourced some of these questions. I mentioned in my blog and then emailed out to my list that you were coming on, and I said that because I've looked up to you for so long, I was a little nervous to have you on, and I asked people to send in their questions. I promised them a copy of my book. I actually have a copy of your book to give away that you were kind enough to give me as well, so we'll be giving out some books today.

I have a book out called *Disturbing Questions: Making the Decision Maker Uncomfortable*, and I promised I'd send them a copy of it if I used their question in this interview. The first one comes from my father, actually. I thought it was really cute. He's in his 70s and very technologically savvy. He follows the podcasts and everything.

He said the first question I should ask you is, "Do you put your pants on one leg at a time just like everybody else?" It was really nice of him to kind of give me that, but I'll get to the first serious question, and that is this. It comes from Pete Cormie. Pete is a regional manager for Redbird Advisors out in New York State. I've not heard of them before, but he follows the blog and the podcasts.

Pete's question is this: "With all of the technology available in the marketplace today, Tom, what (if anything) should change or be adjusted in our prospecting activities?" Then, kind of the flipside of that: "What basics should stay the same?"

Tom: Well, first of all, I like analogies. I like comparisons. Having a passion for the game of golf, I've always kind of used a lot of golf analogies as comparisons to the art of selling. If you

really think about it, the game that Bobby Jones played back 40 or 50 years ago that made him such a champion... The 14 reflex movements of the body to do the right swing, to get the trajectory and the distance of a golf ball hit, have not changed.

There are two things that have changed in golf. First, the equipment is so much better than back when Bobby Jones played. Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson and the great ones have equipment that has given them an extra 30, 40, or 50 yards in a hit. Then, of course, they also exercise. This is hard to understand, but back in the early days of golf, golfers would never do any real type of physical exercise, because they didn't want to tighten up the muscles.

They wanted the long, lean muscle for the long swings. Well, of course, all of that has changed. Tiger Woods is an avid workout fanatic in certain muscle tone exercises for his golf swing, as most golfers are today. There is an example of two changes, and the art of selling is kind of the same. Today, with the Internet, with the consumer being so educated, we as salespeople must be better than ever before.

We must have more knowledge, more expertise. We have to really know our products, and I would say this. One of the keys is to, instead of selling, come across with a more service attitude for a long-term relationship. It's not, "I want to make a sale." "I want to make you a happy client with a good relationship for many, many years (if not forever)," until you get out of the field of sales or whatever.

That's one of the differences, but the basics that should stay the same, Tim... There are seven fundamentals to selling any product or service. I don't care what it is. Those seven will never change. You must adapt into the cultures and the times, and those, of course, are the changes we make.

That's one reasons why before I do a seminar in a city, I usually have an evening before the program where I have some of the highest income-earning people in sales come in to meet with me, and I pick their brains on what's working today and what's different in today's times than back when I was in sales full time for eight years. I think the basics will never change, but the way you adapt them and approach your clients is the only real change I have seen.

Tim: That's really interesting. Daniel Pink in his book... Now this name escaped me really quickly, but he talks about product information symmetry. It used to be that the salespeople knew a lot more about the product and a lot more about the pricing and all of the different things than the consumer did, but today...

If you're going to go buy a car, for instance, you can just get on the Internet, and you'll probably know more about that car than the salesperson selling it to you. You know exactly what the dealer probably paid for it and all of those things, so that's really interesting. I can see how that would make a huge, huge difference, to really take it from a...

Tom: Tim, I will say this. There are going to be industries and have been industries drastically (in a negative way) affected by the Internet and the consumer knowledge that's available, but I still believe that in most bigger products, like real estate investment, a home, a car, or a large computer for a company, people still want a human being to be part of that transaction, and I feel there'll always be a need for salespeople.

Now one thing salespeople have to realize is they have to be flexible because if they've mastered the seven basic fundamentals of selling, they can take their training, their skills, and they can adapt to almost any product or service. One thing salespeople can't do is fight change, and they also have to have a reflex to say, "I can change. My product knowledge can be adapted to almost anything, and I'll learn another product or service or industry."

Tim: Right. Right. And yeah, you see that all the time, that whenever one opportunity goes away, there is always something else coming along that is a great opportunity for somebody who is a sales professional, so that's very interesting.

Tom: Oh, definitely.

Tim: Insurance is no different. We are very fortunate in the insurance industry so far that the consumer really doesn't want to buy most insurance products online. There are some they can; auto insurance, I think, has kind of moved that way. It has become a commodity and state mandated, but a lot of insurance...

The exchanges for the national health care reform and all of that is that are very confusing, and there has been a little bit of a backlash, but a lot of insurance and investment products must be explained by a human being, and the consumer really still wants that. That's exciting news for our industry.

Tom: Not only that, Tim, but the top people in insurance, regardless of what type, are not salespeople. They're expert advisors. They have to have such a great knowledge base. They have to have such an ability to quickly establish rapport. They have to have that ability to ask all of the right questions.

In fact, one thing I'm now training, which is kind of new, is that the real key to success in selling (I don't care what the product or service is) is to become a master asker instead of a telling talker. Now the reason I say that is that most people in sales talk and tell, whereas the great ones ask a lot of questions. This whole concept of master asker is really getting accepted well.

My newest book which just came out, *When Buyers Say No*, is getting such reviews and such ratings because no one has ever talked about, "Okay, nothing happens until they say no, but that's when you need to know how to turn the no into a yes," which is the art form in selling where you'll make the most money.

Tim: Well, you bet. I did get a copy last week. You were kind enough to send me a copy, and I haven't finished it yet, but I read pretty quickly. I'm about halfway done, and it is.

Tom: Oh, good.

Tim: It's exciting. I love that. Nothing really happens until they say no. Occasionally you do get that sale where they are ready to just throw money at you when you walk in the door, but... You mentioned in the book that if that were the case all the time, there wouldn't be any need for a salesperson.

Tom: That's right. Companies wouldn't need salespeople. They'd just mail out a form and say, "Please fill this out and send us a check or an American or MasterCard number, and we'll be happy to process your order." Well, see, that's nonsense.

Tim: Yeah.

Tom: The average American does need the face-to-face interaction, the presentation, and the emotional build. As you've heard me say in all of my training, people don't buy logically; they buy emotionally, but then they need someone to help them logically defend the purchase they made emotionally with the reasons why they said yes to make a financial investment.

Tim: You bet, and that was foundational in my sales career. Early on, I understood that because of your training. It has made a huge difference. I tell people all the time, "Nobody bought a car based upon the gas mileage."

Tom: That's right!

Tim: They may use that to back it up, but they didn't buy it based upon the gas mileage. That's funny.

Tom: I'm just saying that in today's world, we're so fortunate to have wonderful automobiles available. I mean, we got beaten up pretty good by Toyota, Nissan, and all of these foreign country cars, but today, we have fabulous products. I mean, I just can't tell you as I've done research on all of our American vehicles...

People here in this country have a great opportunity to get a lot of vehicle value for a very minimal investment. That's why people who market cars in the automobile industry should be thrilled, because they can compete against anybody today.

Tim: You bet. You bet. All right, well, the next question comes from Linda Bambacus. Linda is the vice president of service operations for Colonial Life. Linda's question is this. She says, "On Twitter, you [Tom] said, 'Don't worry about sales quotas. Take care of your clients, and the quotas will take care of themselves.' Well, many of my listeners live in a world of weekly, monthly, and quarterly goals, so how do I balance taking care of my clients with the pressure to hit targets?"

Tom: Well, you first have to start with a really goal-oriented attitude as to quotas. What I meant by that was that down the road, as you become a mature, professional salesperson, a veteran in the industry of selling (if you will), the sales will take care of everything with your client base being secure, with you having lots of referrals, and so forth.

Now in the beginning, that's not true. You have to write down your short-term goals and your long-term goals. You have to commit to, "What am I going to do this week? This month?" I think in the beginning of a selling career, maybe for two to three years, you must be very goal-oriented, very much watching productivity. Of course, productivity is the end result of activity, so it's more important to have your commitment to goals on the activities you do daily, which will result in the sales productivity.

I think a lot of people don't realize the fact that once you start doing well, if you take care of your existing clients, learn how to ask for referrals, and learn the art of follow-up, follow-up, follow-up, then, of course, these people will be loyal to you if you keep in touch. Today, that's another thing, Tim, that's so important. You have to stay closer to your clients than ever before.

Tim: Yeah.

Tom: Because where back in my day of selling (this is a long time ago), people liked you... They trusted you. They stayed with you. They didn't care about saving a few pennies to change. That's not true today. You have to be so close to your clients because for the smallest amount of money, for the profit of a company or a salesperson's income, they won't be loyal. They'll change.

I think the follow-up and the keeping in touch and the doing the nice little things tying around contact about holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and all of the old stuff are more important today than they were back when I did it.

Tim: No, I agree. The good news is there's a lot of technology to help you with that these days.

Tom: Oh yes.

Tim: I mean, you don't have to automate it. You don't have to, but boy, it's silly if you don't at least have some kind of electronic tickler file that brings that stuff up for you. That's important.

Tom: Well, I also want to add this, Tim. Some of the things we did in the past that have not been done for a while have more meaning than ever before. For example, I was maybe the first person ever to make a big thing about sending handwritten (not typed, not emailed, not printed) thank-you notes.

Tim: Yeah.

Tom: I've really gotten on the bandwagon of saying, "Guys, do something different. Go back into the past and try getting some very nice little stationery. Put a little note on there that's thanking them." I have 10 thank-you notes, and by the way, before we end this, I want you to let folks know we at Tom Hopkins International have a free resource page that allows folks to come in.

It costs nothing, and they have all of these resources, and one of the resources is all of my thank-you notes. They're professionally edited. We've written them. They're beautiful. I think today is the time to do what we used to do because I guarantee you no one else will take the time to handwrite a nice thank-you note, put a stamp on it, and mail it. As old fashioned and trite as it sounds, the power of it is better today than ever.

Tim: I couldn't agree more. I've been teaching that for 17 years, and I still practice it. I carry cards with me in my car, and I write them in the car. After the call, I pull out of their parking lot and into a neighbor's parking lot, write the card, and then find a mailbox on my way home so they get it right away. I think it makes a huge impact.

Tom: And you're still doing that?

Tim: I still do that to this day. Absolutely.

Tom: Yeah. Good. Good, good, good.

Tim: Occasionally I run into a salesperson who calls on me who does it, and I'll tell you it makes a huge impression. That's really good. All right, well, yeah. We'll get the link for that in the show notes as well. We'll get a link in the show notes for that page. What is the address of that?

Tom: It's just www.tomhopkins.com.

Tim: Yeah.

Tom: Go to the free Resource page.

Tim: Okay.

Tom: That'll take you through to where all of the stuff is that we have to give you as a gift for coming to our website. I will say this too, Tim. The people listening really need to make sure they have certain things in their files of all of their people. For example, if you have a husband and wife as clients, and these people have invested in your insurance program or whatever, you need to make sure you know their birth dates, of course, but also the anniversary date of when they got married.

Tim: Mm-hmm.

Tom: This is not something you normally get, but I used to say, "John and Mary, I'd like to get information. I'm just going to want to keep in touch, but a special day for most husbands and wives is the day you were married. What is your anniversary date?" Now the reason that was so important is no one else sent them a beautiful anniversary card congratulating them for having their marriage and this and that, but I had all of this information, Tim.

I also knew the birth date of every child. If you have a client with three children, Bobby, Billy, and Suzy, make sure you get the children's birth dates, and three days before their birthdays, you send them nice cards. The parents are knocked out because you did something most people don't do, and it's also another way of ingratiating folks to where they want to do business with you.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. No, that makes a lot of sense. That's awesome. That's awesome. All right, well, you mentioned your book, *When Buyers Say No*, and we brought it up a couple of times. I find the subtitle very intriguing as well, and that is *Essential Strategies for Keeping a Sale Moving Forward*. According to Amazon.com, this is your 16th book, Tom! Congratulations! That's amazing. You've been very prolific in writing.

Tom: You know what? I'm kind of knocked out too, Tim, because I didn't realize how this book would be accepted, obviously. It's my 18th book.

Tim: Oh, 18th?

Tom: I was just amazed how everybody and every publisher... I have more interviews today than I have ever had on a book because... I don't think anybody went after those two letters, N-O, and said, "We're going to show you how to make that no a yes." Of course, my gosh, my co-author Ben Katt's circle of persuasion that's built into the book is just fabulous.

Tim: Yes.

Tom: Again, I'm so thrilled, after all of these books, all of these years, almost 40 years of training salespeople, to come up with something that's kind of a new thing and something that everybody seems so excited about. Again, I used to have a little fun thing I'd say. People would say, "Tom, I think we have to say no," and I would always say to them, "Well, there are two letters, N-O, which I think might be the two first letters of the word *nothing*."

I meant, "If I do let you say no and you do say that, then you will have maybe nothing as to the benefits we have to offer, but if I can help you say yes, then you'll have all of the wonderful benefits this insurance program will offer you. Based on that truth, should I just say 'Okay,' to no, or should I help you say yes? What do you think?"

Tim: I like that.

Tom: Isn't that fun?

Tim: That is fun. That is fun.

Tom: Yeah.

Tim: That's why I love sales. It really is fun. Once you really understand it and you commit to being a professional in it, pay the price, read the books, go to the seminars, do what you need to do, and put it into practice, it does get fun. It's fascinating and challenging and fun at the same time.

Tom: You know what? Tim, I don't know a life that's more fun and wonderful. One thing that I'm excited about is happening in our country. When I first started doing seminars, maybe 10 percent of my audience would be women, and today, 54 percent of our audiences are women because women are realizing they cannot determine their financial position based on what a man or a company will pay them.

The only way they can really build their financial independence is by either opening up a company, which is dangerous and takes capital, or finding a product they love and becoming a top salesperson. I mean, I have stories you would not believe, Tim, about women making seven figures...not six figures. Back in my day, if you made \$100,000 a year, you were hot.

Tim: Mm-hmm.

Tom: Today, there are so many people hitting that seven-figure, that \$1 million a year, income because they found a product they love, they're passionate, they give service, and, of course, they build a business.

Tim: Right. Right. Absolutely. Absolutely, so for a lot of the same reasons men have gone into sales over the years, women are really discovering it. It gives them a lot of freedom and flexibility on the back end as well, so that's exciting. Absolutely. We see that in the insurance industry. I wish there were more women in the insurance industry, but unfortunately, it is somewhat male dominated as far as numbers.

The success is the opposite. More women are at the top of the leaderboard than men, typically, even though they make up a smaller percentage of the overall population. That's very fascinating to me. They tend to do very, very well in our industry. It's one of those things that drive me crazy (why we don't get more women into the industry) because they do very well.

Tom: Well, I think if I were an agent or a manager or owner of an insurance company, I would do some really aggressive campaigning and recruiting for women because I swear, I think a woman can sit across a table or a desk, and if she has trained on how to ask the right questions, how to do a great presentation, the buyers of insurance lower their defense barriers faster.

I think she can totally get them excited about not only financial independence and great debt benefit for the family, but all of the emotional reasons why insurance is so critical in a human being's life today, and I just think women can do better than anyone if... Again, they have to find a company they love, get good training, and hopefully let someone use some of their training to help them get good at the presentation.

See, everything is presentation. If you have a poor presentation, you'll have a low closing ratio, and thus a low income. But if you have a great presentation that's masterful, that's involving them, that's causing emotional desire to own with questions, my goodness, it's hard to say no, especially to the wonderful benefits insurance brings to the table.

Tim: Oh boy. Absolutely. You already mentioned that it's not about just showing up and talking. So much of that presentation is asking the right questions and getting them to emotionally understand why they need it and to see themselves in that picture.

Tom: Sure.

Tim: The better you can get at driving them to that, the higher your chances of closing are. And doing the right thing...

Tom: "Now Tim, what is your wife's name?"

Tim: Donna.

Tom: "Donna?"

Tim: Yep.

Tom: "Tim and Donna, let me ask you a question because I want to make sure I'm here for the right reasons. Our company has two things to offer people. First is debt freedom and getting out of all of the debt people have, and second is financial independence to enjoy your life and achieve your goals and dreams by being financially free. By the way, if I asked you this

question... If I had debt freedom in my left hand, Donna, and financial freedom and independence in my right hand, which would you choose?"

Tim: Wow. That's a great question.

Tom: Isn't that fabulous?

Tim: That's fabulous.

Tom: Now either one that they ask for... "Oh, we'd like to be debt free." "Then I'm here for the right reasons tonight."

Tim: That's right.

Tom: If they say, "We'd like financial independence," then, "Then I'm here for the right reasons tonight."

Tim: Yep.

Tom: "Because our insurance program offers you both, and that's why I'm so thrilled that we got together. We're not here for the short term. We're here for the long haul, meaning I've worked with most of my clients for years, so let's get started tonight and let's build a program that'll allow you to achieve the two goals of debt freedom and financial independence. How does that sound?"

Tim: Sign me up. I'm ready. Let's go!

Tom: That's right. Let's draft up our feelings.

Tim: Absolutely. Absolutely. Wow. Well, in your book you talk about the word *no*, and you actually identify eight meanings *no* can have. We don't have time to get into all eight of them today, but I found that just fascinating, and we could spend half an hour on how you know which *no* is which and all of that.

Instead of going there, because I really do want people to read the book, and that's just a fascinating section to me... Again, I've been selling for 17 years. It's not like this is my first rodeo. I was just blown away by that. That section is really, really eye-opening to me. But here's a question regarding the word *no*.

It comes from John Green, one of my listeners. He says, "As you know, in sales..." I guess he's talking about that final *no*. You talk about how a lot of times, that first *no* is not a final *no*. It could be a request for more information. It could be *no* to the features or benefits. It could be poor qualification or all of those different things, but if you get that final *no*, a constant barrage of, "No, no, no. We don't want or need your product," it is very discouraging for a lot of people.

"How do we remain optimistic or regain our optimism every day when we're pounding the pavement while looking for new clients?"

Tom: Well, first of all, I think people have to realize everybody has defense barriers today, and we also have the most procrastinating society we've ever had.

Tim: Sure.

Tom: Back in our day, when I first started in sales, we didn't have a lot of procrastinators. We had people who made decisions to spend money to invest in benefits. But in today's world, we have a lot of people who will put off making a decision because of all of the insecurity of spending money, of investing in something. I think it's so important that you realize many of the no's are really defense barriers.

I used to love it when... Let's say, for example... I say in the book, of course, that you'll probably not get a yes from the average buyer until they give you at least four no's as to why they shouldn't purchase, so based on my knowing that, I'm not upset by hearing no or procrastination or, "We're going to think it over. We'll get back to you. Give us a call in the morning." Those are all stalls.

Tim: Mm-hmm.

Tom: The pros aren't afraid of them, Tim. The pro are going, "All right. I'm getting closer to the yes. Just keep giving me the no's." I used to love it when they'd finally say, "You know what? I'm impressed, Tom. We should say yes to this, and we do see the benefits of your insurance program, but I think we just have to say no."

I used to love saying, "Well, would you help me then? My manager knows I'm here with you tonight, and my manager wants me to make sure I find out why people say no to something that's so good for them, so I'm taking my legal pad, and I'd like to write down why you feel you have to say no so I can explain it to my manager. John, Mary, would you do that for me?"

What I found, Tim, was that when they started talking about it and explaining it as I slowly wrote on a legal pad why they were saying no, all of a sudden they were looking at each other and saying, "You know what? Maybe we should consider this." I turned many no's into yes's with what I call the "tell the manager why you're saying no" technique.

Tim: That's great. You could even do that in prospecting. A lot of the people who listen to this are in a business-to-business insurance sales type of situation, and the biggest challenge they face is just getting to sit down with that business owner, so even at the counter when he's there and he doesn't want to meet, I can say, "Well, one of the things I have to do, Mr. Business Owner, is report back to my manager why a business owner would not be interested in a program that didn't cost them any money, could drive some money to their bottom line, in fact, and didn't change anything they're currently doing."

You have to do it with the right attitude. You can't be snarky about it, but if you do it from a really inquisitive, "I have to know so I can tell my manager," attitude, I think that could really kind of lower the defenses of that business owner. I could definitely see that working.

Tom: Not only that, but what happens too, Tim, is they suddenly have empathy for you because many of them have the same challenge with people in some hierarchy saying no to them. Suddenly they're empathetic. "Okay, so you're in a way saying, 'Hey, my manager will want to

know why you didn't say yes. Please give me some information so I can go back and explain it to the company. I make my living doing this. I feed my family doing this, so I would so appreciate any way you could help me by telling me why you're saying no."

Well, see, these are emotional ways to get them to open up on what is holding them back, and in doing that, oftentimes they give you that one little thing you need to go in and close the transaction.

Tim: You bet. You bet. That's great. That's great. All right, well, one more question from my readers and subscribers... He's a good friend of mine, actually, an author of an upcoming book called *The Job Search Road Map*.

His name is Paul Freed, and his question is, "How do you help someone, if you're a manager or a leader or maybe just peer to peer, how do you help someone on your team who is struggling in a sales slump without resorting to the platitudes of, 'Tomorrow is another day. We'll go get 'em'? How can you really help that person kind of get through that slump?"

Tom: Well, first of all, that's a great management question, and I will say a couple of ideas on that. It's so critical that a manager or a leader of a company watches the productivity of their salespeople. By that I mean you must really record what's happening on a monthly basis, because selling is a cycle, and you'll have a person who's hot, they're closing lots of sales, they're making lots of money, and darn, all of a sudden they hit a cycle where it's not going that well and you have to watch for this.

Step number one is you must bring them into your office and close the door, make it alone so they aren't in front of anyone else, and say, "You know, I just have a feeling you might be experiencing a cycle that we all go through in the field of sales (in fact, in business and in life) where things just seem to be slowing down a bit, and I wondered if maybe we've gotten away from the basics of making so many contacts a day."

Say, "As you know, the contacts you make daily will determine the income you have in 30 to 60 to 90 days, so I kind of have a feeling the cycle is maybe because of the rejection, maybe because of your attitude. Maybe you've quit the number of contacts we need. Of course, what I'd like to see, Jess, as your manager, is that we would get on that phone and call some of your happiest clients, those people who care about you, those people who like what you've done, and talk to people who are happy with what you've done. In doing so, you'll get your attitude back."

Then say, "I think we have to maybe expand the number of people you're talking to because activity today will breed productivity tomorrow. I think maybe we're in a little activity slump, and let's work ourselves together to get out of that. Does that make sense?"

Tim: Yeah, that's great. Even if it isn't an activity slump, it could have been that they've changed their scripting a little bit.

Tom: Right.

Tim: Or they've allowed some negative words... I know you talk a little bit about negative words and how they create negative emotions and create a negative result. For instance, I've seen

people even using the word *insurance* when they're trying to set appointments. Nobody wants to talk to an insurance person.

Tom: No.

Tim: So even though they might be doing the activity... Oftentimes you're right. It just is the activity. But even if they're doing the activity, by tracking, at least you can see those trends right away and you can step in and help that person before they really get discouraged.

Tom: Well, and not only that, Tim, but if you met somebody at a cocktail party or at a reception of a wedding (I went to all of those just to meet people)... There you're going around, and... Please, everyone listening, you have to work a room when you go to any event, meaning when you walk in the four walls in a room and you're there for a wedding reception, you have commonality.

Commonality allows you to make contact with people without being pushy or obnoxious. If I went into a room of 75 people who were there to see John and Mary's wedding, and now we were all having a reception, before I left, I would meet all 75 people...not in a selling mode but in a "How are you doing? You're in a business in the community? What do you do?" mode.

I'll ask them lots of questions. He does this. "Really? Well, you know what? I'm in business in the community too! I'd love to get your card, and let's maybe keep in touch. Maybe I can refer people to your company. Now does your company mind getting some business sent to them?" Now what are they going to say to that? Are they going to say, "Well, no"?

Tim: Yeah. "No, we hate that." Yeah. Of course they would like that.

Tom: "Yeah, we love business." "Good! Well, let's exchange cards. I'll be in touch." Then, of course, I send them a nice thank-you note. "I so enjoyed meeting you at John and Mary's reception at the wedding, and I think we might be able to do business together in the future." What's amazing is everywhere you go... I have a little thing called the three-foot rule.

That means that if I get within three feet of any human being, I'm going to qualify and try my best to build some type of a relationship for future business. Again, this is getting your ego out of the way, overcoming the fear of being told no, but I've found over the years that almost everybody wants to benefit in a business relationship.

I mean, I've met people in an elevator. If I have five floors to go up, I'd say, "You know what? I'm in business in the community." Now that's one of the key phrases. "I'm in business in the community." We never mention insurance. Now if someone blatantly said, "What do you do?" I would say, "I guess you'd say I'm a financial builder for the future."

"Now what does that mean?"

"Well, that's what insurance will do: build financial security for the future."

"Well, what is that?"

"Well, it's a way of helping people do two things: eliminate debt and build financial independence. Now I'm just curious. If I had those two things held in my left hand and my right hand, which would you prefer, being debt free or having financial freedom?"

"Well, I like them both."

"Well then, we're here for the right reason."

Tim: Exactly, right? Back to square one.

Tom: Back to square one!

Tim: "I'm so glad I met you, because that's the reason that I..." Yeah. Absolutely.

Tom: Exactly.

Tim: That's great. I love that. All right, Tom, I certainly don't want to take up any more of your time here. I know you've been so gracious to come on. I really do appreciate it. I know you are a busy guy! Man, I know you said you've been training for 40 years. I think you're busier now than you probably have ever been. I know you're working with Brad Lea over at LightSpeed VT and you have the book out. You have a big Sales Academy coming up in Las Vegas next month, August 22 and 23 at the Tropicana, which they've just recently redone.

They spent \$200 million on it. If you haven't been there recently... It is gorgeous these days. Where is the one place, if I want to point people to find you...? I know you're on Twitter and LinkedIn and all of those places, but what's the best place for people to connect with you and find out more about you if they have been living under a rock and haven't discovered you yet?

Tom: Sure. You're so kind, Tim. Well, if they go to www.tomhopkins.com, it'll open up all of what we do. I just have to say this. As long as you opened up that discussion... I am so excited about my two-day event in Las Vegas. Here on this call, we've had maybe 45 minutes, but I'm going to have 16 hours of in-person training. We're having it at the Tropicana. As you said, they've spent a lot of money. It's fabulous.

Tim: Mm-hmm.

Tom: We're offering our rooms at \$115 a night for a beautiful room at the new Tropicana.

Tim: Wow!

Tom: And the seminar is very reasonable. It's two days, a Friday and a Saturday. I train the whole two days, and they get a fabulous manual they can take home and study with, so I hope the folks who might be excited about the two-day event will consider that, and they can do that by just going to www.tomhopkins.com, and then they can just see all of the information.

We have the free resources, and if they want nothing except what we have to offer as a gift, they can get that too. But then what I think they'd love most, Tim, is to come to Las Vegas, spend two days, and let me put them through the paces. It's not a fun-and-games program. We work hard. We study.

We have a blast, and of course, what a great environment to do two things: have some fun and get education in Vegas. I hope that maybe the folks will call and see if they'd like me to come and train them personally for two days in August. If that's the case, I would love, love, love to do it.

Tim: Well, I can't recommend it highly enough, like I said. I flew down... In the opener, I mentioned that I used money I didn't have. When I put the boot camp on my credit card, I prayed that it would go through. It was one of those. I was just starting in sales. I came out of a business bankruptcy and was really not in a good financial place at all.

I had two major challenges: first, would it clear on the credit card, and second, would the lovely Donna kill me for having gone and done it? I should have asked her permission in the first place, but I didn't. I just paid for it and then went and asked for forgiveness. I'll tell you what. I think your rates are about the same as what I paid, and that was 16 or 17 years ago.

Tom: They are.

Tim: That's amazing.

Tom: You know what, Tim? We have the least expensive two-day events in the country. Of course, I've been very fortunate to train Tony Robbins when he was brand new, Brian Tracy when he was brand new, and all of these guys who are out there kind of started with me. It's an honor to be able to teach these fabulous folks, but I'll tell you I love when I get people in an audience who have not experienced the actual live presentation, hearing it from the stage, getting a workbook that follows everything.

It's a highlight for me, and I guess... Here's another highlight, really quickly, Tim. It seems like in every city I visit to do a seminar, I have people in their 60s and 70s and some in their 80s who come up to me at the breaks and say, "Tom, I came to your training 25 or 30 years ago, and it changed my life. I'm making more and having more fun than ever before."

If you're an educator, a trainer, a motivator, or whatever you want to license us as, God, I think that's a highlight, to have that happen and to have those who you have taught just totally give you recognition for how you can change their lives. That's kind of what I live for today. I'm doing so many fewer seminars than I used to, Tim. When I met you, I was doing probably about 110 or 120 engagements in a year.

Tim: Wow.

Tom: I'm only doing 40 a year now.

Tim: Mm-hmm.

Tom: That's plenty. We hit every country: Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and all of the places where they have selling. What I'm finding that's amazing is other countries want American selling. They want to know what we do in the seven fundamentals of selling products and services. So it has been an exciting life.

Tim: Well, I've said it two or three times already. You did change my life, and having trained a lot of salespeople myself over the years, I know exactly what you're talking about...not to the level that you do, but it is incredibly rewarding when you get somebody who comes up and hugs you or shakes your hand and says, "Thank you so much. You believed in me. You gave me the tools I needed to succeed. My family's life has forever been changed because of that."

I can say that unequivocally about you. You've done that for me, and you didn't even really know me. Last question, and I didn't send it over to you ahead of time, because I did want to kind of get your gut reaction. I think I know what it's going to be, but we all get just one trip on this planet, so how do you want to be remembered? I hope you live another 50 years, but sooner or later, that'll end up happening. How do you want to be remembered, Tom?

Tom: I want to be remembered as a man who helped those who needed help, who helped a lot of others so all of them benefitted from it, and I want to be remembered as a man who is a helper. That's really what I've tried to live my life as, Tim: someone who says, "Hey, I know where you are. I was there. I failed when I was young. I'm not a college graduate. I don't have a degree. All I did was find a business and work my heart out helping people and serving them, and in doing so, God has blessed me with an abundant life."

We all have a right to an abundant life, so let me say that, Tim. May I wish all of your listeners and all of you an abundant life.

Tim: Thank you so much. I appreciate you being on, Tom. Thanks again.

Tom: All the best, Tim. Thank you. Bye-bye.

Tim: Wow. How fun was that? I hope you really listened with a learner's mindset and were able to pick up several ideas that will propel your business forward. I also hope you'll give serious consideration to attending Tom's upcoming Sales Academy in Las Vegas on August 22 and 23 at the Tropicana hotel.

For more information about that or to see all of Tom's resources, just jump on over to www.successisvoluntary.com/023 for the show notes, links to Tom's website, Twitter feed, and LinkedIn profile, and much, much more. All right. Let me shift gears here for just a second. This week has been very exciting. Not only did I have Tom freaking Hopkins on the podcast, but I also got a call from former guest Steve Cunningham from Read It For Me.

You may remember that the good folks over at Read It For Me ran a great promotion for my listeners for the entire month of July. Well, that offer ended yesterday, and Steve told me they just couldn't continue at the same price due to the overwhelming response he received. At the same time, he felt the Success Is Voluntary tribe and Read It For Me needed to continue to partner together.

He then offered me a very generous sponsorship deal. He wanted to make Read It For Me the official sponsor of the Success Is Voluntary podcast, starting in August. As flattered as I was, I wanted to make sure you, the listener, were able to benefit from that arrangement more than I was. So I asked Steve to lower the sponsorship fee he was going to pay me and use that money to lower the cost of his products and services to my subscribers. He agreed, and I will soon be emailing you details of a very special offer that we are both excited to announce.

Hey, I really appreciate your listening to the podcast and would love it if you'd be so kind as to rate the podcast on iTunes. To do that, all you have to do is go to www.successisvoluntary.com/itunes and follow the instructions. I promise it'll take you less than 30 seconds, and it would be a huge help to me as it will keep the podcast toward the top of the business charts on iTunes, which will help new people discover it.

Hey, I look forward to seeing you back here next week. In the meantime, don't forget that everything you do in this business is voluntary, including success.