



# The Steli Efti Guide to Becoming **Dangerously** Good at Sales

## Why You Need to Be **Dangerously** Good at Sales

Have you ever spent time in the mirror psyching yourself up to make a sales call? Or maybe you replay a demo in your head all night instead of just sending the damn proposal?

If you've ever had a moment of doubt, fear, or hesitation, we have one message for you: You already know what you need to do. You just need to do it.

Sales isn't hard—it just feels hard when you're in your head about it. Sales gets easy when you get out of your own way.

We're here to help you get there. Because in a world flooded

with noise, automation, and polite mediocrity, it's not enough to be "good" at sales. You need to be dangerously good. That means being unforgettable, unshakeable, and unstoppable.

I've been rejected from Y Combinator seven times, failed at multiple startups, and then bootstrapped Close to \$50M+ ARR with a lean team. The reason we made it work at Close: Sales. We didn't have a magic growth hack, just the relentless application of showing up, following up, and going for the close.

This guide is the playbook I wish I had tattooed on my forearm in my early years. Print it, binge it, share it with your team. And most importantly: **apply it daily**.

## CHAPTER 1: Show the F Up

Selling starts the moment you show up. Many reps hide behind research, LinkedIn scrolling, or “waiting for the perfect moment.” It’s sales theater: actions that feel like sales, but don’t actually move the needle.

The sales reps who win are the ones who pick up the phone, send the email, and walk into the meeting. They take the imperfect action.

Back in 2012, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman told me a story about a partnership deal for his startup, Loopt, that fell apart at the last minute. Instead of sulking or sending an email, he and his team flew across the country overnight and showed up unannounced at the partner’s office.

That bold move turned a flat “no” into a three-hour conversation that saved the deal and changed his company’s trajectory. In sales, sometimes showing the F up looks like getting on the damn plane rather than overthinking it. Most people won’t go that far—the ones who do, win.

**Practical takeaway:** Try these daily rituals to show up in your own way. Block your mornings for outreach. Calls, emails, DMs—no “prep” work. By 10 a.m., you should have already spoken with 10 prospects. Momentum compounds.

Remember that activity creates opportunity. Don’t wait for something to happen. Build a bias toward action into your bones. Create it by showing up relentlessly.

## CHAPTER 2: Bring the Energy

Buyers won’t remember your demo deck or product spec sheet. They will remember how you made them feel. Your energy is a multiplier. If you show up flat, tired, or distracted? The deal dies before it starts, because your buyers will respond to energy before they’ll respond to logic.

Before a call, I do an energy reset: Stand up, stretch, breathe deep, and remind myself of one reason why this call matters. Even two minutes of this state change can flip your energy from meh to magnetic. Your confidence will be contagious.

**Practical takeaway:** Record our own call and listen back. Would you buy from you? How does your energy make you feel? If your vibe is low, your close rate will be, too. Think energy first, tactics second.

In sales, **you are the battery**. Charge yourself before you connect with anyone else.

## CHAPTER 3: Be Relentlessly Clear

Some reps confuse discovery with being talkative and curious. Wrong. Your job is to create a sharper definition

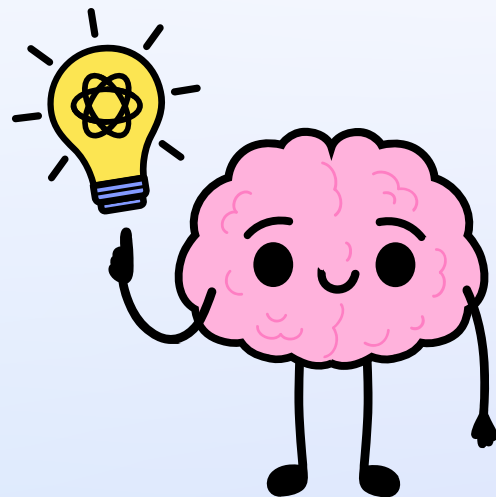
of the prospect’s reality than they currently have for themselves.

Think like a doctor. A patient might say, “My knee hurts.” If you just nod and prescribe ibuprofen, you’ve failed. A good doctor doesn’t take that complaint at face value. They ask specific, pointed questions, run tests, and dig until they uncover the root cause.

That’s your job in sales. Don’t settle for accepting surface-level pain. Your job is to go deeper: “What happens if you don’t fix this? Who’s the most impacted? How much revenue is slipping? What’s the cost of inaction?”

This isn’t curiosity—it’s leadership. You’re not wandering through random questions hoping to stumble on something worthwhile. You’re steering with intent. Every question you ask needs to get you closer to clarity, and clarity is what earns trust and control.

Remember: Information is leverage. The one who has the clearest picture wins the deal. And that comes from asking the right questions, at the right time, with the right purpose.



## CHAPTER 4: Sell the Philosophy Before the Product

If you lead with a feature checklist, you’ve already lost. Your product features are commodities, but philosophy is your differentiation.

Here’s what I mean by that. At Close, we don’t sell CRM features. We sell a philosophy of fast, simple, communication-first sales.

If a prospect says, “But you don’t have advanced inventory management,” we say, “Exactly. We don’t believe bloated CRMs help small teams close deals.” That’s philosophy over product.

**Practical takeaway:** Next time a prospect challenges you on a missing feature, don't apologize. Stand firm in your point of view. Your job is to show you're the expert. Buyers just want to leave the call with clarity. They're buying how you think, not just what you built.

Once you get their buy-in on your philosophy, then sell them on your solution with your existing feature set.

When you sell what you believe in, you're not just closing a deal—you're building trust and a following.

## CHAPTER 5: Show Friendly Strength

The best salespeople are friendly, but not pushovers. They're confident, but not jerks. Instead, they have friendly strength: They're empathetic, but also unshakably confident. When you lead with conviction + empathy, you secure trust and authority.

This mindset and behavior will come in handy when handling objections, resistance, and in any weird power dynamics. But it also positions you to be someone they want to follow, not someone who folds under pressure.

Here's an example: A prospect kept hammering me with, "We need this discount." Instead of folding, I said, "I hear you. If I drop our price, I'd be lying to you about what it takes to get the result you want. Do you want me to lie to you?" Silence. Then they signed at full price.

**Practical takeaway:** When faced with resistance, don't match aggression and don't cave. Acknowledge them, then calmly stand your ground.

Be friendly but lead with strength.

## CHAPTER 6: Work Urgently, Not Desperately

Urgency is solving their problem fast. Desperation is trying to solve yours. Prospects can smell desperation a mile away, and it kills deals. You want to focus on building momentum, not pressure.

Here's how to spot it: Reread one of your last emails. Does it sound like you're asking for a reply? Or are you creating momentum by showing clear next steps? Replace "just checking in," with "here's what happens next if we move forward."

I once told a rep, "If you need this deal, you've already lost." Detach yourself from the outcome. Focus on serving, not closing. Ironically, that's how you close more.

Urgency comes from clarity, not panic. Always ask: What's the fastest way I can help this prospect win? **That's the urgency they'll pay for.**



## CHAPTER 7: Follow Up Until You Get a Yes or a No

The number one reason reps lose deals? They quit too soon. Most give up after 2-3 follow-ups. Here's my formula: Day 1, day 3, day 10, then weekly, monthly—then don't stop until you get a yes or no.

Years ago, I emailed the CEO of PayPal 48 times. Forty-eight. On the 48th, he finally replied. That persistence turned into a meeting, and that meeting changed my career. Not because I was clever, but because I kept following up. The only way to guarantee a "no" is to stop following up.

**Practical takeaway:** Build a follow-up system. Use templates that are short, respectful, and persistent. Always add value or clarity with each touch. Then never stop following up.

Remember, a lack of a response isn't rejection. It is **not** a sign to stop! It's just noise. Stay in the game longer than anyone else, and you'll win deals others didn't even realize were winnable.

## CHAPTER 8: Negotiate Like a Killer

If you want to be a dangerously good negotiator, you need to remember that it's not about winning a battle. It's about securing alignment. But alignment requires backbone. If you flinch, fold, or over-explain, you've lost your leverage.

Price objections don't always mean rejection—they mean interest. If they didn't care, they wouldn't negotiate. Answer your conversation in value: "We're not the cheapest, we're the fastest to revenue. That's what you're buying."

**Practical takeaway:** Anchor in value, reaffirm outcomes, and set clear boundaries. Then, walk if you need to, because desperation destroys leverage.

Here's a line to use: "If price is the only thing that matters, we're not the right fit. And that's okay." Watch how that flips the dynamic.

Never forget: they don't respect your price if you don't.



## CHAPTER 9: Go for the Close

If you don't ask, you don't close. Period. Too many reps dance around this. They just wait for the customer to close themselves.

The goal of all sales conversations is to arrive at an outcome: yes or no. If you're not asking for the sale, you're not driving to an outcome.

When do you ask for the sale? The moment you've shown value and gotten buy-in on the problem. Example: "It sounds like this solves what we discussed. Are you ready to get started?" Simple, direct, strong.

When prospects stall with "I need to think about it," call it out: "Totally fair. What exactly do you need to think through?" Don't be afraid to push for clarity. Your job is to help them through it.

Asking is leadership. Don't let the deal linger. Lead them to the decision.

## CHAPTER 10: Lead with Confidence

Think of your confidence as the product. If you're not sold on what you're selling, your prospect won't be either. And confidence doesn't mean being bold or loud—it means being certain. It's about having conviction in everything you say and do.

**Practical takeaway:** Before a call, remind yourself of three customers you've already helped win big. Borrow their success stories to fuel your belief and energy. Start a folder on your desktop of wins, shout-outs, and success stories to build you up when you need it. Don't underestimate the power of a positive mindset to get your head back in the game.

When you hit a slump, don't fake your confidence. Take a pause, breathe, and rebuild it. Go back to the basics: think

about small wins, easy closes, and momentum. Your confidence compounds.

Prospects don't buy your tool. They buy your certainty that you can get them results.

## CHAPTER 11: Own the Outcome

There are no excuses in sales. You either closed the deal or you didn't. Don't blame marketing, product, timing, or the market. The second you outsource responsibility, you lose your power.

Extreme ownership means treating every deal like it's entirely on you. Didn't close? What could you have done differently? Closed the deal? How did you replicate that? How do you make sure you remember your lessons and what worked, and why?

Here's one of my favorite reframes: At the end of the month, don't say, "We missed quota because ..." Instead, say, "I didn't figure out how to make quota. Next month I will." That mindset makes you dangerous.

In sales, you are the outcome. Own it or be owned.

## CONCLUSION

If you've made it this far, now you know for sure: sales is not complicated. It can be challenging. But the actions are simple—show up, follow up, and close. What makes selling feel hard isn't the work. It's us. It's our fear, hesitation, and overthinking.

This guide is not about tricks or hacks. You'll find none of that Twitter Thought Leader Course BS here. It's about stripping sales back to its essence. When you embrace that and truly live it, you stop being "good" and start being dangerously good—the kind of rep prospects remember, respect, and say yes to.

Here's the kicker: Most people won't do this. They'll keep hesitating. They'll quit after three follow-ups. They'll fold on price. They'll stay in their own way and default back to what's comfortable. That's why there's so much room at the top for the ones who will.

So the next time you're hesitating, doubting, or waiting for the right moment, stop. Pick up the phone. Send the message. Ask the hard questions. Take the imperfect action. Get on the damn plane if you have to!

The reps who go further than everyone else are the ones who win. Be one of them.

You got this. 🦊