


FOREWORD BY **MIKE WEINBERG**

**SELLING  
YOUR  
WAY**  **IN**

THE PLAYBOOK FOR  
**SETTING YOUR INCOME  
AND OWNING YOUR LIFE**

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## Foreword

The book you are now holding is one of the most unique and powerful resources I have consumed in my thirty-four-year career.

*Selling Your Way IN* is not just a great book. And it is not just a must-read for anyone currently in sales seeking to take their game to the next level, or someone considering the life-changing career transition into professional selling. Kristie Jones has written a blueprint for success in life and sales.

From the introduction to the final chapter, you immediately know with 100 percent certainty that this book was written by a *real* person, who's lived a *real* life with *real* experiences, has experienced *real* success, and is on a mission to help others do the same. Kristie's personal stories are as captivating as they are valuable—and completely relatable to me as our career paths are eerily similar from our parents' mentoring to why we moved into sales, from how we progressed into leadership roles and eventually went out on our own into the “sales improvement” business.

I've had the privilege of watching Kristie's business and influence in the sales community rapidly expand over the past decade. When I am asked why she has been so successful, my answer is simple and direct: She is a master at making others successful. And this was her motivation for writing *Selling Your Way IN*: a desire to provide you with a behind-the-scenes peek at the makeup, mindset, disciplines, approaches, and actions of the top ten percent of sales pros, the real sales rockstars who exceed quota, year after year—so you can become a sales Rock Star too!

Unless you are already the top salesperson in your industry, earning more money than you ever dared dream, this book is for you. I have consumed over fifty books on sales, and none were similar to *Selling Your Way IN*. Kristie's masterpiece is a refreshing reminder of why I got into sales in the first place and a powerful reinforcement why, to this day, I still proudly proclaim that I. Love. Sales.

If you're looking to experience the fun, the freedom, and yes, the financial rewards from becoming a top-producing superstar, grab a highlighter, pad, and pen and get ready to open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart for what Kristie has prepared for you. And while you will be tempted to consume her blueprint quickly because it's a fast read with entertaining stories and sage advice, my strong encouragement is to intentionally slow your roll. Don't rush through the pearls of wisdom that Kristie's years of experience enable her to share.

While the entire book offers practical value nugget after value nugget, the #Kristieisms in Chapter 3 are so packed with applicable life wisdom that they are worth the price of the book alone—my two favorites being #ownyourownincome and “hunters aren't helpers.”

I promise this is one of those rare books that truly delivers on the promise of its subtitle, *The Playbook for Setting Your Income and Owning Your Life*. However, this promise comes with one critical caveat: you must digest and then apply Kristie's counsel in Section One . . . to *meet yourself* (and recognize your own style and tendencies) so you can position yourself in a sales role that plays to your strengths. Sales is not a one-size-fits-all career. You will have way more fun and experience faster and greater success by ensuring you get yourself into the *right seat* on the *sales bus*.

Once you've crafted your personal plan to maximize your sales career success and satisfaction, dive into Section Two, which offers a helpful big-picture view of the sales process, covering essential topics ranging from strategic targeting of accounts to, one of my favorites, sharpening your sales story (value

proposition). These nuggets from Kristie are the essential building blocks for launching a highly effective new business development-focused sales initiative, and wise salespeople will adopt them as their own.

Finally, drink in the priceless life coaching from Section Three that will help you tie it all together. Learn how top producers view themselves, their jobs, and their customers while building disciplines into their life that keep them mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy so they consistently live and sell from an abundance mentality.

Wishing you all the fun, freedom, and financial rewards that accrue to the salesperson who masters the concepts presented in this wonderfully helpful, well-written book!

**Mike Weinberg**, author of *New Sales. Simplified*, *Sales Management. Simplified*, and *The First-Time Manager: Sales*

## Preface: My Kitchen Table MBA

It isn't everyone who can say they got an education in sales at the dinner table, but for my brother and me, that's exactly where our education, and our love of sales, began. We both earned the equivalent of an MBA at the kitchen table.

My father was the owner and broker of a Coldwell Banker franchise, and my mother was a top agent. Our family dinner conversations often revolved around listings, out-of-town buyers, and commission checks. Money was a transparent topic in our family. We knew what each of my mother's commission checks were, what my dad paid himself, whether or not he was taking a paycheck, or if he was forgoing his own salary to make sure he was able to pay his employees. We even knew when his paycheck was going straight to the government to cover the taxes from my mother's income. When I say transparent, I mean *really* transparent. So from a very early age, my brother and I knew there was big money to be made in sales and more money as an individual contributor than as an owner or leader.

For my brother, those impromptu training sessions turned into a career as an extremely successful individual contributor. Me? I pursued other careers initially, until finally, I realized sales really was my first love and my true passion. What I also learned was that, unlike my brother, my joy isn't in building success through selling, but in building success for people who want to build their own success through selling.

Over the years, my brother and I have often discussed our different sales roles, how he followed our mom's path as an individual contributor and how I went the sales leadership route, following in our dad's footsteps. Both think the other is crazy and wouldn't change places under any circumstance. But what we both agree on is that if my dad hadn't made the decision in 1979 to quit his job with the United Telephone Company to partner with his brother in running the Century 21 Real Estate office, our lives would probably have been very different.

Our life before Dad made that decision and moved us to Topeka, Kansas, wasn't a bad life. But that decision to become a business owner afforded our family an even better life. My dad was making a fair salary as a mid-level manager with the telephone company, but my mom was a teacher working in rural schools where in some cases K-12 were all in one building, and none of the teachers made much money. She spent thirteen years as an underpaid employee before using her time off one summer to get her real estate license. That decision was a real game-changer for our family. She quit her job teaching and threw herself into selling real estate full time. She doubled her income in the first year.

Between my dad's savvy as a sales leader and manager and my mom's ability to outsell her competition, our family sold our way out of the life we had into a life that afforded us more financial freedom, bigger houses, and the ability to pay cash for cars and college, with enough left over for my parents to build a nice retirement account. All thanks to their choosing a profession in sales.

A sales career can do the same for you. You can sell your way out of an unfulfilling job, financial struggles, and a life of someone else controlling your income . . . and into a life of financial abundance, a rewarding job, and being in full control of your income.

That's why I wanted to write this book, because I know I am blessed to have had a different upbringing than most people, and as a result, I believe I have a responsibility to pass along my knowledge, advice, and encouragement to make it easier for you to navigate your way to the best possible outcome for you and your family.

If you're just now considering a career in sales, my hope is that by sharing my story, successes, and missteps and offering actionable tips and advice that I wish I'd learned earlier, you will find the confidence to leave the job you dread getting up for each day and consider a career in sales. I want this book to be a resource for how you can build a sales career to change your current professional situation into one that you've only dreamed about.

If you've already made the leap into a career in sales, my hope is that after reading this book, you'll have the courage to take your sales career to the next level by asking for that promotion you're not sure you're ready for or deciding to leave your current sales position or company for one with more personal growth and financial potential. Some of you may even decide that you'd rather use your sales skills to start your own business. I want each of these to be options for you.

I want to help you leverage a sales career, *your* sales career, to buy that dream house, take a vacation without worrying about how you'll pay it off long after the memories have started to fade, and see your kids graduate college debt-free, as my son did, and have a different life than most college grads today. All of this isn't just for "natural salespeople"; it can be a reality for anyone willing to learn and do the work. You *can* sell your way into a life that is more professionally, emotionally, and financially rewarding—filled with possibilities and opportunities. I want everyone to have the life they want, and by choosing a career in sales, I know that I can help you make that a reality.

## What Does Selling Your Way IN Really Mean?

*There are jobs with a set income, and jobs where you set your income. You get to choose.*

I don't believe that money buys happiness. But I know that it buys opportunities, and my life is proof of that. When I was thirty years old, I made what seemed like a rash decision at the time, to leave a retail career with a fortune 500 company, a profession where I'd built considerable success and a solid reputation, to enter the world of software sales. I'm grateful for all the opportunities my family and I have taken advantage of because of my decision to dedicate my professional life to a career in sales and sales leadership.

Growing up in a sales family gave me a front row seat into the ups and downs of making a living selling and running a small business, so no one was more surprised than me when I decided to start my own business seven years ago. Neither my brother nor I ever discussed taking over the real estate company when our dad retired. I didn't even give that idea any consideration, and I don't think my brother did either. We had seen firsthand how hard it was to be a 100 percent commissioned real estate agent and a business owner, and yet, years later, that's exactly what my brother and I are both doing. My brother Scott makes the majority of his income from the commissions he earns, and I'm running my own company, solely dependent on my efforts for my livelihood. We've both come to understand that the financial pros of being in sales outweigh the cons of occasional stress and of starting every month at zero.

We often speak in sales about selling to your ICP (ideal customer profile), and true to form, I have an IRP (ideal reader profile). I want readers who love learning new things, who understand that your self-talk can propel you to success or limit your possibilities, who are willing to take risks to reap the rewards, and who know they have more to give and more to achieve and are willing to do the work to get there. If you fit that profile, then let's get started teaching you how to sell your way into a better life!

I want to start our journey together by making sure you really understand who you are. If you're not able to truly understand your strengths, what you like and what you don't, and what makes you uncomfortable, you could pick the wrong sales role, and picking the wrong sales role will impact your ability to be the best sales rep you can be and ultimately your income. So I'll ask you to get really honest with yourself so I can be of more help to you.

I'll then walk you through how to evaluate the different types of sales roles that are available and guide you in deciding what type of role will best play to your strengths, skills, and personality so that you will have an easy path to President's Club, beating the competition, or winning the big deal.

I want you to understand what your superpowers and secret weapons are, how to hone them, and when to use them to accelerate your career. You don't need to be great at everything. You just need to understand what special skills you have that differentiate you from the other 90 percent of sales reps.

I want to share my "three-year rule" and how putting that rule in play will make it so much easier for you to find the right prospects and close deals more quickly. I want you to understand that sales is part art and part science and how having a repeatable and customized process you can rely on is one of the keys to long-term success.

I want to teach you some sales shortcuts that, if you follow them consistently, will reduce the number of years it will take you to reach the top of your profession in the sales field of your choosing. I've worked with hundreds of sales reps and sales leaders over more than twenty years

and seen what the Top 10 Percent are doing differently than the other 90 percent. I want to share their “secrets” with you so you can join them and live the life they are living.

Those are just a few of the areas we’ll cover together as you make your way through the book. I know you think that you’re reading a sales book, but I hope you’ll realize this book is so much more. I’ve been blessed to have so many amazing people come into my life who’ve taught me so much about not only sales and business but about life. I couldn’t have possibly written this book without all their wisdom being woven throughout. Wisdom I want to share with you so you’ll not only be a better “person who sells” but also a better person who is happy and fulfilled in your chosen career.

I can’t wait to hear from you after you’ve read the book about the changes you’ve made, the successes you’ve had, and the ways you’re helping others who want to excel at sales do just that.



## 5 | Choose the Right Seat on the Bus

I've worked with different companies over the years, and I've learned that everyone has a different definition of what a sales representative is, as well as a large variety of titles for those sales reps. As I like to say, "Titles are cheap and business cards are cheaper!"

There are as many types of sales positions as there are companies. Two or three times a month, someone I know will come to me and say, "Hey, I've got a friend looking for a sales job, would you mind talking to her to see if you can help?"

To which I always answer, "Sure, I've got thirty minutes for everyone. What kind of sales job is she looking for?"

The confused look on my friend's face tells me all I need to know. They think a sales job is a sales job, right? So the questioning (and the education) begins. Inside or territory rep? Hunting for net new business or taking on a book of business and growing and retaining it? Do they want to keep what they catch or give the fish over to someone else to clean and fry? I laugh as their eyes get big and they respond with, "Oh, I have no idea. Can you just give them a call?"

"I'd be happy to," I say.

The thing is when I do meet with this friend of a friend who is looking for a sales job, quite often they don't know how to answer those questions either. This probably explains why so many people leave the sales profession, having decided it just "wasn't for them." They took a seat on the bus that wasn't the seat they could be happy in because they didn't know themselves, and they didn't know their options.

To further illustrate my point, I had a conversation with a woman just last week who was referred to me by a friend because she wanted a new sales job. I started down my usual list of questions and at the end, she said, "I don't mind hunting, but I want to keep the client after I land them."

"Perfect," I said. "That narrows the playing field considerably."

I love it when I can work with someone who knows what they want, knows what they're good at, and is willing to be honest with themselves and with me. I was so happy that she understood the type of sales position that would satisfy her. This will make her search much easier.

Just as confusing as understanding what type of sales jobs are out there is the variety of titles that companies use for those jobs. I've worked with account executives, account managers, regional directors, regional managers, sales associates, business development reps, inside sales reps, and more. And I can promise you that just because two people have the same job title, it doesn't mean they do the same job.

It's important as you look for a "sales job" that you don't make any assumptions based on title alone. You must read the job description and expectations; then you'll start to better understand what type of sales position it is.

Taking the wrong sales job will be frustrating, confidence-breaking, and could lead to failure. After you understand what all your options are, you then need to ask yourself, "Which sales position will best play to my strengths and skills?" The better you understand your strengths (which we'll spend more time discussing in a future chapter) and how you want to interact with prospects and customers, the easier this becomes.

Let me outline some differences between the two main sales position options, hunters and farmers:

**Hunters** (a.k.a. account executive, sales development reps, business development reps, regional directors)

- Love the chase
- Don't know a stranger
- Naturally curious (some may say nosy)
- No interest in continuing a relationship after the sale
- Money-motivated
- Risk-takers
- Love to be in control
- Enjoy the tension during the sales process

**Farmers** (a.k.a. account managers, customer/client success managers)

- Helpers and nurturers by nature
- Enjoy the process of getting to know someone over time
- Moderate risk tolerance
- Enjoy being a subject matter expert and always knowing the answer
- Like the consistency in their day-to-day work life
- Don't like the "sales tension"

Remember, as I shared in my Kristieisms, hunters aren't helpers and would prefer to just give birth and let someone else raise the baby. Farmers, on the other hand, wouldn't miss a milestone if their life depended on it.

When you know which role is best suited to your strengths and preferences, you can put yourself in the right position to become that true Rock Star. When you don't know, you're likely to find out the hard way.

Let me tell you about the time I made the mistake of hiring two sales reps for a hunter job, only to find out they weren't hunters at all. I was working for a SaaS company as the director of Sales. The company was growing, and the owner and I decided it was time to add to the sales team, so I went in search of a few more hunters. I define a hunter as someone responsible for acquiring new companies as customers and then handing them off to someone else to grow and retain the account.

After interviewing several candidates, I made offers to these two women. Back then, and still today, it was very unusual to find women in the sales field who were natural hunters, and I was not only excited to be expanding the team but to be doing so with women no less! While onboarding, it was obvious they were smart, ambitious, and quick learners. They got off to a fast start and were doing a great job of prospecting and filling their pipeline with deals. I was very excited and happy with their performance. Of course, they needed some hand-holding to close a few deals, but I told myself that was to be expected.

Over the next few months, both women started to struggle. They weren't putting enough deals in their pipeline to reach their monthly quotas. I met with them more frequently, monitored more calls, and provided extra encouragement, yet they continued to underperform. I could feel their frustration, disappointment, and concern as they fell further behind their annual quotas. I, too, was concerned. Had I mis-hired them? Were they not up for the challenge?

Around the five-month mark, that voice in my head, the one I don't like to hear but have learned to listen to, told me the struggles the ladies were having were more than just newbie

challenges. I sat down with the rep I felt I had the best relationship with and gave her what I affectionately call my “Mommy” speech. This is where I tell struggling reps they don’t really seem happy, are clearly frustrated, are spending more time at work than at home, but they should wake up every morning happy to come to work. I suggested this isn’t normally the case when reps miss their quotas.

“You don’t seem to be enjoying the job as much anymore, am I right?” I asked.

She told me I was right. “I love it here. I love working for you, but I don’t know what to do to be more successful, and I don’t look forward to coming to work,” she said.

“What part of the job *do* you enjoy?” I asked.

“I love talking to the prospects and learning about them and how they’re training their employees,” she said.

“What don’t you like?”

“I don’t like the prospecting, calling in to companies and trying to get past the gatekeeper,” she shared.

Then it hit me! She was not a hunter; she was an account manager. I had mis-hired her! I put her in the wrong seat on the bus, as the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins explains it. She most definitely belonged on the bus, but I set her up to fail by putting her in the wrong seat.

I moved both women to the Account Management team, where they flourished. In fact, I’m proud to say that seventeen years later, the woman I was closest to is now the CCO—chief customer officer.

Let me break down my failure as the interviewer and how I could have better identified them as farmers earlier on. And how, if they had known themselves better and maybe read this book, they would have applied for roles that were better suited to their strengths and preferences.

One of the women had prior retail experience but not inside or phone sales experience. I now know, older and wiser, that those with retail experience sometimes rely on face-to-face and nonverbal cues to read their customers. Also, the type of retail sales she was doing provided for repeat business and allowed her to build a relationship with her customers over time. I could have asked more interview questions about her likes and dislikes about her job. Knowing what I know now, I’m sure she loved helping the same customers over and over again over the years—*account manager alert!*

Don’t rely on an interviewer to determine if the role is right for you or not; you need to take responsibility for choosing a sales position you can be successful at.

I tell candidates during the interview process, “You should know before I do if this is something you will enjoy and can be successful at.” Even though I take full accountability for mis-hiring those women, if either of them had had even one additional sales position under her belt before applying for the hunter role, she might have determined for herself that she wasn’t going to be playing to her strengths.

There’s one more type of sales role worth mentioning. These are the sales-support players who ensure that hunters, farmers, and the company are successful. These positions can be just as rewarding and challenging as a hunter or gatherer. Again, the better you know yourself, the easier it will be to decide if one of the following roles would be a good fit for you.

### **BDR/SDR (Business/Sales Development Rep)**

This is a “starter” hunter sales job and is usually held by someone who is a year or two out of college. This position is responsible for setting up “discovery” appointments for the more senior hunters on the team. It is usually a base + bonus position and is a great way to find out if you like

to hunt, as it is a pure hunter position. This position may be part of the sales organization or might be part of the marketing organization, as it is closely tied to lead generation. This is a great way to test drive the quota-carrying hunter position to see if it would be something you could be successful at.

### **Solutions Consultant/Sales Engineer**

This position is part of the sales team and usually supports more than one hunter. In a more complex software sale, the hunter is not expected to demonstrate the software or understand all the technical complexities of the product. The SC or SE's responsibility is to demonstrate the software being sold and act as the technical contact. This is a great position if you're technically inclined *and* an extrovert who brings a side of "helper" to the table. This is usually a base + bonus position and a great way to see if you might like hunting, as you'll be an integral part of the sales process.

### **Implementation/Onboarding Specialist**

These individuals are responsible for onboarding new clients to the product or service. Think of them as the bridge between the hunter and the farmer. A new client might be assigned an implementation specialist for a few weeks as the product and technical post-sale specialist. Once the product is customized and up and running, the client is then moved on to their customer success or account manager, where they will live out the rest of their time as a client. This is a great way to test drive the farmer position to see if you'd like to manage, upsell, and renew customers on a daily basis.

If you're unsure if you are a hunter or farmer, take a minute and answer the questions below.

### **Hunter/Farmer Assessment**

#### **Questions (Yes/No)**

1. Would my friends and family describe me as a risk-taker?
2. Do you love building a relationship over a long period of time?
3. Are you more likely to ask for forgiveness after making an "executive decision?"
4. Do you get satisfaction from caring for and nurturing others?
5. Do you thrive on competition?
6. Do you get satisfaction from helping others and being a trusted resource?
7. Do people sometimes call you nosy?
8. Are you more likely to ask for forgiveness?
9. If you miss your flight and need to stay at the airport hotel for the night are we likely to find you at the hotel bar chatting it up with other stranded travelers?
10. Do you love teaching someone something new?
11. Do you think a dial-by-name directory is just a game to be won?
12. Are you most comfortable with a base salary that will cover your living expenses?
13. Do you want full control over your income?
14. Are you more likely to ask for approval from your boss before getting back to a prospect about a discount?

Add up all the odd questions to which you said yes. Do the same with the even numbered questions.

If you answered yes to six or more odd numbered questions, **you're a true hunter**. You love the thrill of the hunt and closing deals and are always keeping score. Starting at zero every month doesn't bother you, and truth be told, it gets you out of bed each day. You are a risk taker and would be fine with 80 percent of your total compensation being uncapped variable/commission.

If you answered yes to four or five odd numbered questions, **you lean toward being a hunter** and would prefer that your compensation plan include a variable/commission component but are comfortable with your base salary being at least 50 percent of your total compensation. You like the challenge of closing deals but would prefer to keep what you catch to grow and expand the business.

If you answered yes to six or more even numbered questions, **you are a true farmer**. Your friends, family, and colleagues consider you a nurturer and look to you when they need a supportive ear and a shoulder to cry on. Your clients expect you to ask about their kids, vacations, and sick parents, and you're sad when your main client contact changes jobs and you are no longer in regular contact with them. You don't want the pressure of having to ask anyone for money.

If you answered yes to five or fewer even-numbered questions, **you lean toward being a farmer** but wouldn't mind a job that gives you some commission or has a bonus plan based on renewing or upselling a client. You like helping others and enjoy getting to know your clients and being in regular contact with them.

Sales can be such a rewarding career. Each of the positions I've outlined in this chapter are important to the success of a company and can be extremely rewarding both professionally and financially. Think about the sales position you believe would be the most rewarding and where you could have the biggest impact. I encourage you to ask a few friends and family members if they agree, but ultimately, *you* are accountable for your success and happiness.

## 18 | Mastering the Mental

As I've grown myself and my business, I've realized there is one thing more than any other that I wish I'd known much earlier in my life and that I wish I could instill in every single person I know. It's this: you really are in complete control of your life and your future, and the difference between the life you have and the life you want is all in your head—literally.

Here are a few more things that fall under the category of “What I wish my younger self had known”:

1. Self-talk is as important as physical practice.
2. Visualization can change the future.
3. Bad and unpleasant things will happen, but there is always something to be grateful for.
4. The only limits are the ones you place on yourself.
5. Your circle matters.
6. Judge less and listen more.
7. Daily affirmations spoken out loud will imprint on your mind.

I remember the first time I truly understood the power of my mind. I was in my late teens and was taking a private lesson with my racquetball coach, Pete. We were working on a forehand drill, using one of the cans the balls came in as a target. I took some practice swings to get the muscle memory to kick in and started the drill. I hit the can a few times but not as often as Pete thought I should, and I made some smart-a\$\$ comment about it being hard or not being able to master it. I groused that, of course, it was easier for him; he'd been playing racquetball for something like seventeen years (which was about how long I'd been alive, so it was like forever!), and he couldn't expect me to be that good yet.

You remember the story of how Mike Weinberg, many years later, taught me a lesson in acknowledging the strengths I'd already mastered when he coached me into starting my business and setting my fees to match my abilities? Well, Pete didn't buy into my self-doubts any more than Mike did. He decided to demonstrate how my body already knew how to hit the target; I was just letting my mind tell me that it was "hard" and that because I hadn't been doing it as long as Pete had, I couldn't be as good as Pete said I was.

He told me to grab a bandana off my racquetball bag and come back onto the court. As I reentered, I saw that he'd taken the two blue racquetballs out of their can and was setting up the empty can against the front wall. "OK," he said, "take a good look at where the can is." After giving him side-eye, I did as I was told. He then instructed me to put on the blindfold. Hmmm. This was getting weird. "Now," he said, "hit the can."

"What?" I lifted the blindfold from over one eye and came back at him with my trademark sass.

Pete didn't blink. "You said you saw it. Now visualize it again in your mind exactly where you saw it and drill it with your forehand."

*Now, how in the world am I supposed to make contact with the ball I'm holding in my hand, let alone hit a target I can't even see?* I thought.

"Go ahead," Pete prodded.

So I took another good look at the can against the wall, lowered the blindfold, and tossed the ball up as I would without the blindfold and hit it. I heard the ball hit the front wall.

"Close," Pete informed me as he went and chased down the ball I'd hit and returned it to me.

"Try again."

I visualized where I had seen the can and then replicated the motion and almost instantaneously, I heard the can explode. I ripped off the blindfold to see the can with a massive dent and the blue rubber lid lying close to it. The grin on my face was almost as big as the one on Pete's face.

*Wow! That was super empowering!*

"If you can hit the target blindfolded, then you shouldn't have any issue hitting it with both eyes open!" Pete exclaimed. He was right. It was all about keeping my eye on the ball but also about visualizing that ball going exactly where I wanted it to go.

From that day forward, I not only visualized shaking hands as the winner after a tennis match but also enjoying a lazy day on a private beach with the man I love. I still fully embrace the power of my mind and all the amazing things I can manifest if I choose.

The key word here is *choose*. You can choose to be frustrated and pissy when things aren't going your way, or you can dig in and use all the available tools you have at your disposal to manifest a more fulfilling future for you and your family. And by all available tools, I mean a whole range of mental training tools, not only visualization but also gratitude, speaking affirmations out loud, and positive self-talk.

Visualization is powerful, as I learned on the racquetball court, but it shouldn't be confused with daydreaming. Daydreaming has no direction or purpose and is mostly unconscious. Visualization is a conscious thought process with a very specific desired outcome. You see the end results you want, and you imprint that outcome in your mind so your mind will work to ensure that what you visualized will come to life.

I feel just as strongly about positive self-talk and speaking affirmations out loud. When I'm out on the tennis court and things aren't going my way or my energy level is low, I repeat these two phrases: "You're the winner" and "Win this point." I want my brain to kick my body into gear and get on the winning program. I don't always win every match, but I couldn't look my teammates in the eye when I came off the court if I didn't use every tool available, and that includes my mental tools.

Tennis is just my hobby and happy place, but it's a good case study for what happens when I apply the same concepts to my life and career goals. Winning is the same mental game in life, business, and tennis!

Positive self-talk is another powerful tool. It's so easy to get down on yourself and engage in negative self-talk. A few years ago, my son started to say, "I'm so stupid" when he'd do something, well, stupid. I didn't think much about it until I heard Brené Brown's "Power of Vulnerability" seminar, and she said you need to stop saying "you are" and start saying "you did."

So I explained to my son that he might have done something stupid, but that didn't make him stupid and he needed to change his self-talk to "That was stupid," or better yet, "I guess I wasn't thinking."

This one is harder. You need to be as compassionate and supportive with yourself as you would be with a friend who was taking a big risk or struggling with something. You wouldn't jump on the bandwagon and tell your friend she wasn't smart enough to be promoted or ask her when she thought she might be asked to pack her box. You'd reassure her that she is just as smart and capable as the other candidates and coworkers or that this, too, shall pass and best to chalk it up to a lesson learned.

How we talk to ourselves is really a way of telling ourselves what we believe about ourselves. If our talk is all blame and doubt, the belief we're communicating is that we are a person who does things wrong and will probably keep on doing things wrong. If our talk is full of compassion and commitment, we're communicating the belief that we make mistakes, and by recognizing the mistake and #owningourownshit, we can *and will* do better in the future.

I've also added verbal affirmations to my daily routine. I start every day saying, "Today is the best day for/to \_\_\_\_\_." I usually fill that blank with something like personal growth, a new

relationship, financial success, learning something new, or similar aspirations. I usually add a little more color commentary in, but I want to make sure I set my intentions for each day.

What if every day, before you fired up the computer, you said out loud, “Today is the best day to successfully prospect,” or “Today is the best day to close the deal I’ve been working on?” What if you were brave enough to take it one step further and said to yourself, “I am good enough,” or “I deserve happiness and success?”

And what if you told yourself this every day? How long do you think it would take before you not only believed it, but before it imprinted on your mind? Powerful.

I started using out-loud verbal affirmations after I added a hypnotherapist to my “team.” She was in a mastermind group I belonged to called Kick Ass Chicks. (Hint: having a mastermind group you engage with regularly is another tool in the arsenal.) This group is made up of women entrepreneurs who meet monthly to share ideas, solve problems, and support each other. I’d been in the group with Michelle for a couple of years when it occurred to me that her services might be an interesting addition to my mental game.

I know you might be thinking I’m blessed to have the financial resources to add Michelle to the team and see her quarterly, and you’re right. But ask yourself whether I can afford Michelle because I’m successful or if I am successful because of Michelle and the other coaches and mentors I’ve added to my team. This is just part of my commitment to use every tool I can to create the life I want to live.

We met in her office, and she asked me what made me call. I told her I had some lofty goals that year, and I needed all the help and positivity I could get. She asked questions around what my specific goals were and what challenges I might bump up against. No surprise if you’ve been paying attention, but I asked her to specifically address my fear around raising my rates and charging more. In general, I wanted her to fill my unconscious with words around how strong, smart, and successful I am and how I effortlessly solve challenges that are presented to me when they arise.

Michelle says I’m hypno-friendly. I think this is because I believe the mind is the “twelfth man.” This is a phrase used in football. There are eleven players for each team on the field for every play. The twelfth man is the hometown crowd supporting and cheering on their team from the stands. Interestingly, the twelfth man usually comes into play when the home team is behind, and the players rally the support of the fans to help them turn their current situation around.

A mind that is trained to be the twelfth man can be the difference between the life you have now and the life you could have. Use your mind as your twelfth man to encourage and support you when you’re getting ready to make that do-or-die presentation to your client’s executive team or when you’re struggling to get that enterprise deal across the finish line. I hope you have people you can count on to cheer you on, but one of my Kristieisms is that sometimes you must “bring your own pom poms” and be your own cheerleader.

Speaking of your circle, as I’ve discussed throughout the book, your circle matters. They say everyone comes into your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. I’ve found this to be true. That means not everyone who comes into your life was meant to stay. Be selective about who you



bring into your circle, personally and professionally, while also being aware when a relationship might have served its purpose and can add little or no value moving forward.

As I've continued to grow personally and professionally and challenge myself to be better each day, I've had to accept that there are those who aren't going to be interested or capable of coming on the journey with me. For me, I know that if I want to grow as a person and take my career as far as I can, I'll need to be leveling up my team and my circle every step of the way.

There's one last way you need to stretch your mind to ensure you can have the life you want. You need to understand the concept of abundance. The definition of abundance according to Cambridge Dictionary is, "The situation in which there is more than enough of something." To have abundance, you need an abundance mindset.

You can live in a world of abundance, or you can live in a world of limitations, either/or, or what if. The choice is yours. Accepting that there is plenty all around you will help you see opportunities you've never seen before and understand that it's not either work or family—that you can have both. Asking "What if X doesn't work out?" isn't getting you where you want to go. Limitations are fear-based. You must push that fear aside to open up the possibilities that await you.

Living in a world of abundance is to believe you can have it all, and I'm not just speaking of financial wealth. You can have an abundance of love for others, an abundance of time, and an abundance of friendships. Using visualization or affirmations will help you create abundance in your life. Visualize the life you want so when it starts to manifest, you'll recognize it. What your mind sees, it will strive to bring to life. Use positive affirmations to open the mind to new possibilities and help you reduce your negative and limiting thoughts.

Over time, you'll see opportunities and possibilities everywhere instead of roadblocks and danger signs. There really is enough of everything in the world for everyone to have what they desire. The possibilities for you are endless. You just need to decide what you want and speak it into the Universe, and when you start to produce more than you need for yourself, you can begin to bless others who are still on their way to abundance.

The thing to remember is visualization and mindset build a foundation, but abundance comes from taking action on the vision. I regularly get calls from people who say, "I want to be you when I grow up." They love what I've built for myself, and they want to know how to have it for themselves. I tell them, "Come on in; the water's warm, and there are plenty of clients for all of us." But very few actually put on their swimsuits and jump in the pool.