

Rave reviews for Joe Girard

“Fantastic! The auditorium was jam-packed, they were sitting in the aisle!” “You were inspirational.” “You have such strengths as a presenter and it really connected!” “You had positive impact!” “Great talk!”

—Harvard Business School

“What a dynamic speaker!”

—Stryker Medical Devices

“Joe Girard’s Guinness World Record sales achievement is one of its premier examples in its story ‘The Art of Selling.’”

—*Fortune*

“I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book. It was an inspiration of ‘can do’ and believing in oneself and reading about other successes and realizing how we have the ability to succeed. It was fabulous.”

—Debra J. Fields, founder, Mrs. Fields Cookies

“Fabulous! We definitely overachieved our objective!”

—IBM

“Girard captures the essence of rising to the top in any endeavor: Set ambitious goals and visualize success, work hard, persevere, and stick to your principles.”

—Mary Kay Ash, founder, Mary Kay

“Loved Joe’s enthusiastic, catching style.”

—General Electric

“Joe Girard is not only a master salesman but a master teacher. He has the uncanny ability to communicate to you the secrets of how he did it himself.”

—Kemmons Wilson, founder, Holiday Inn

“An absolute turn-on for our salesmen . . . bar none!”

—PPG Industries

“It takes guts to be an entrepreneur. In that quest, Joe Girard’s riveting book will empower you to become tomorrow’s entrepreneurial legend.”

—Warren Avis, founder, Avis Rent-A-Car

“Delivery was obviously a big hit; upbeat, positive, and nicely tailored.”

—Allstate Insurance

“You most definitely made a major positive impact on our people.”

—Ingersoll Rand

“The consummate salesman!”

—*Forbes*

“Joe’s presentation was electric!”

—Bell Canada

“You are truly #1!”

—John Deere Co.

“Joe Girard is something special.”

—*Newsweek*



ALSO BY JOE GIRARD

How to Sell Yourself

How to Close Every Sale

Mastering Your Way to the Top

HOW TO SELL ANYTHING TO ANYBODY

JOE GIRARD
with Stanley H. Brown

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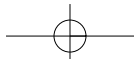
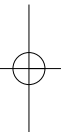
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*To my sainted mother in Heaven
for the love that saved my life
and helped me believe
that I was a worthwhile human being*



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Introduction

You've got this book in your hands because you think it can help you get more out of your work—more money and more personal satisfaction. This probably isn't the first book about selling that you have read. Chances are you have seen and read a lot of other books, books that promise to give you the “secrets,” the magic, the inspiration. You probably already know a lot about how to hype yourself by looking in the mirror every morning and repeating certain phrases to yourself. By now you know the mysteries of “PMLA” and “HPD” and some other magical-power expressions and attitude builders. You know a lot about what you should think and what you shouldn't think, positive and negative. And maybe you are a little confused by this time from all the contradictory advice the books have offered.

I don't want to take anything away from the promoters, the ex-

perts, and the other well-meaning people who grind out all those books. They have to make a living too.

But let's face it. What you want to know is how to sell real products and services now. And most of those authors never sold very much in their lives, except their books. They may be professional writers or professional sales training experts. Some of them may have spent a few weeks or months selling something until they figured out something at which they were better. And maybe one of them made a good living selling one multimillion-dollar real estate development every two years, which has nothing to do with the kind of selling you do and want to do better.

That's the point. They just aren't our kind of salesman, out there selling every day for a living. They don't do it because they have to. When you read their books, they sound fine. And they probably give you a little help, maybe even enough to earn back what they cost you. But when you think about those books, you realize pretty soon that these writers—even the best of them—just aren't our kind of salesman.

But I am. I sold cars and trucks. New ones, at retail, no fleet deals, just new cars and trucks, one at a time, face to face, belly to belly, to the same kind of people you sell to, every day. Maybe you sell cars or suits or houses or appliances or furniture or something else, day in and day out, something that you have to sell a lot of to make out. And when you read these books by the experts, you probably have the same gut reaction I do: There's something missing. What is missing, your intuition tells you, is first-hand, on-the-job involvement with *our* problems, *our* people, *our* world. Those guys just don't feel like they've been out there in the trenches every day the way we have to be if we're going to eat tomorrow.

That's why my book is different. That's why this book is going to work for you in ways that the others never did. Because I was out there every day the way you are. I did what you do. I felt what you feel. I wanted what you want. And I got it. Other people have been called the world's greatest salesman. But they aren't our kind of salesman. Among our kind of salesman, I am the

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world's greatest. You don't have to take my word for that claim. If you want to check me out, take a look at the world's foremost authority, the *Guinness Book of Records*. To prove I am not A.T.A.N.A. (all talk and no action) like the others that say they are #1 with their self-proclaimed records, my claim was audited by one of the top auditing firms, Deloitte & Touche (letter available upon request). Look up the world's greatest salesman. You'll find that it's me, Joe Girard. Or check stories about me in *Fortune*, *Chicago Tribune*, *US Weekly*, *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, *The Toronto Star*, and *Woman's Day*, or in hundreds of other magazines and newspapers. You've probably seen me on one or another national television show in recent years. And they always introduce me as "the world's greatest salesman" as attested by the *Guinness Book of Records*.

How well did I do after I started selling in 1963? In my first year, I sold only 267 cars. Only! Even those days that would be more than just a living. In that first year, I was the top guy in the dealership. In 1966, my third year, I sold 614 cars and trucks (retail). This is the year I became NUMBER ONE RETAIL CAR AND TRUCK SALESMAN IN THE WORLD. And every year since, I was the NUMBER ONE RETAIL CAR AND TRUCK SALESMAN, increasing my business better than 10 percent a year and some years as high as 20 percent, even when we had bad recessions, layoffs, and long strikes. In fact, the worse the economy got, the smarter I worked and the better I did. I have stayed on top even when the auto dealers in the Detroit area cut the workweek from six days to five.

In 1976, which was my biggest year, I had gross earnings from commissions in excess of \$300,000. Not too many beat me, except maybe those guys who spend three years paying off some cabinet minister in some country to buy their airplanes or missiles. But that's not the kind of selling you and I are talking about.

What we are talking about is a profession that uses skills and tools and experience and practice. It brings us lots of headaches and frustrations, no matter how well we do. But when we do it

right, it brings us more financial and emotional pleasure than any other kind of work in the world. I did what I did because I love the money and the excitement and the satisfaction of winning again and again and again.

You may already be doing pretty well. You may have a home, a vacation place, a boat, and a couple of cars. But if you have read this far, you think there is more to be had than that. And you're right. There is more of all the kinds of pride and satisfaction every good salesman should feel. In fact, the better you are, the more you should want. If you think you have enough of everything, then you aren't doing as well as you could, so keep on reading. Because I have a total system for selling that is a lot like farming in a country where things grow all the time. With my system, you do a lot of things that are like planting seeds. You do them all the time, and then you begin to harvest—all the time. And every time you have harvested a sale, you plant something else. You plant and plant and harvest and harvest—all the time—through every season. There is nothing like it. I guarantee it.

But if you think that there is nothing you can do to sell and win, because you're a loser, let me tell you that I was a bigger loser than you have ever been.

For the first 35 years of my life I was the world's biggest loser. I got thrown out of high school. I got thrown out of about 40 different jobs. I lasted only 97 days in the U.S. Army. I couldn't even make it as a crook. I tried twice. The first time I wound up with nothing but a night of terror in juvenile detention. The second time the charges against me were dismissed for lack of evidence. And when I finally got into a business where I was making a small but fairly steady income, the first time I tried to expand I wound up facing bankruptcy, owing more money than I had ever seen, because I believed somebody who had no reason to tell me the truth.

How I got from there to here is what this book is about. This book is not being written by a spectator with a fancy title and a lot of degrees. This is being written by a working salesman who was

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in the front lines every day selling. Even when I travel around the country giving talks to other salesmen, I am selling, because salesmen have to be sold that the people who show them how to do it know how to do it because they did it. The story of how I got to be the world's greatest salesman gives me an enormous amount of pride. But I get even more from the letters I receive from working salesmen who meet me and hear me talk and then write telling me how I have changed their lives by making them better, happier, more prosperous salesmen.

WINNING BLOODLESS VICTORIES

Remember that for a real salesman there is nothing better than selling. It is like home runs for a hitter, touchdowns for a running back, victories for a general. But when a salesman sells there are no losers. Both the buyer and the seller win if it's a good sale. The confrontation that leads to a sale is like a game or a war, but one where nobody bleeds, nobody loses, everybody wins. What's better than that?

But the process that leads to that victory should start long before you ever see your prospect for the first time. And it goes on long after the customer signs the order, pays, and leaves with his purchase. In fact, if you think the sale ends when, like they say in the car business, you see the customer's taillights, you're going to lose more sales than you ever dreamed of. But if you understand how selling can be a continuing process that never ends, then you're going to make it to the big time.

Once my selling system got into high gear, I never had to look for customers among the people who walk into the front door of the showroom. I didn't take "ups." All my customers in those days were people who asked for me by name. All of them. And for every 10 sales I made, roughly 7 of them were to people I sold at least once before. And we're talking about automobiles. People buy them about every three or four years, and even less often among the middle- and working-class people who were most of

my sales. If you're selling clothes or booze or things that people buy a lot more often, getting them back again and again is even more important. But it is harder to do with cars. So if I can show you the ways I kept people coming back to buy cars from me, you know it's going to mean even more sales for you if you're selling these other kinds of products and services where success depends even more on bringing them back again.

I guarantee you that my system will work for you, if you understand it and follow it. I looked at selling situations and customers in different ways than I once did. This means that I have changed my attitude about a lot of aspects of my profession. I know there are a lot of people who talk about the importance of attitudes. They tell you that if you change your attitude toward something they have put CAPITAL LETTERS on, then everything will be just dandy for you. Most of these people are sincere but they aren't out there selling face-to-face day after day.

Let's face it. We live in the real world, and it is a very tough world. Whatever you are selling, there is probably somebody else out there selling one exactly like it. Not probably. It's a fact. It is a very competitive world. And, aside from the thousands of Chevy salesmen who are trying to sell exactly the same car to exactly the same customers as I was, there are hundreds of thousands of other salespeople trying to take the same money from them for everything from furniture, houses, swimming pools, and motorboats to vacation trips, tuition, and savings accounts. And when you finally get the customer to come in, he is looking to hustle you in some way, not because he is a bad person but because he has come to believe that you are. It is a very tough profession we have chosen, but if we choose to deal with it as a profession with rules and standards and principles, it can be made to pay off in financial and emotional satisfaction.

The first thing you'd better know—if you don't know it already—is that this is not always a nice world. Competition is a tough game, but everybody competes with everybody else for everything you and they want. I am no philosopher, but I knew

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that almost from the day I was born. And it is one of the few things I learned before the age of 35 that turned out to be useful to me. What I am trying to say is that the so-called experts are putting ideas in your way that you will either have to get rid of or reshape before they can help you make more money and have more satisfaction from selling.

It is a very tough, competitive world. But when I say that, I don't mean that you are going to have to cheat or steal to survive. Stick with me and you will see what I do mean. You will see how you can change people by selling them the right way, my way, and wind up with their money and their friendship. In fact, if you don't get both their money and their friendship, you are not going to be in business very long. Don't get me wrong: When I talk about friendship, I am not talking about goody-goody things like Love Thy Neighbor. How you get along with your neighbor is strictly your business. But when you get to the chapter on the Law of 250 you will understand exactly what I mean by friendship. We are going to deal with the kinds of attitudes customers have toward salesmen and the importance of telling the truth and the value of certain kinds of lies. If you don't understand whom you're dealing with and what they really want to hear, then you can't make it in the long run. I assure you of that.

But even before we get to the business of your customers' attitudes, we are going to have to deal with your own. Remember that I was a total loser for 35 years, which I am going to describe with enough detail so you'll start to feel sorry for me, like I felt sorry for myself. But I'll tell you right now that feeling sorry for yourself is a trap. It guarantees that you'll keep on losing. It kills everything that it takes to be a winner in the war of life and of selling. I'll show you that too. And I'll show you how I went from being a loser to being a big winner, the world's greatest salesman, like it says in the book. I did it all by myself. I'll tell you and show you how I did it. And you'll be able to see what you are doing in your own life that is defeating you and that can be turned around to make you a big winner.

I mean that. You'll have to do it to yourself and for yourself. Nobody can do it for you. But I believe that I can show you what I did with my life—and why I did it—so that you can be guided by it to look at yourself and your life and learn to turn the disadvantages into advantages, the liabilities into assets, the failures into successes, the defeats into victories.

Once you have come to that point, you get a set of attitudes built into your head. I know that most of those so-called experts tell you to do it the other way around. That is, they give you the words, the attitudes that you ought to have, and they tell you to develop them. They tell you to make yourself believe them by repeating them every morning when you get up or by saying them to yourself in the mirror or some such thing as that.

THE WAY TO WINNING ATTITUDES

But if you do that without knowing why or how, it's not going to be worth any more than squeezing a rabbit's foot or rubbing a lucky piece. The only way to have the right attitudes is to know what the wrong ones are and how you got them and why you keep them. And I am going to lead you through the story of my attitudes: the wrong ones, and then the great change in my life that led me to the right ones. Don't get the idea that I'm referring to some magical moment when a finger from heaven touched me. The change in my life came for a lot different and more understandable reasons, as you will discover.

I am not saying that what I went through was easy, but I did it. And if I could do it, coming from where I came from, anybody who is sick and tired of being a loser can do it. I guarantee that too. But you have to build in your own version of the right attitudes as the first step. Then you will understand the other rules and parts of my system, and why they work if you work them properly and consistently. The Law of 250 will make it clear why you will want to use the system all the time. When we get to the use of time, you will understand not just the obvious facts about

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the value of time and the cost of wasting it, but also the importance of being realistic about yourself and what you can do, and how to be good to yourself in the long and the short run. When we get to certain aspects of what I did, I will of course be talking about how I sold cars to people. I will relate what I did to what salespeople in other fields do. A lot of it is obvious and you can figure it out for yourself. When I say it is essential to get a customer to take a demonstration ride, you know, if you're selling houses, that the equivalent is getting the people into the model. Or putting the suit on the customer. Or even cooking them a meal if you're selling them a new kitchen. The old-time door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman used to throw dust and dirt on the floor and then run the vacuum to show how well it worked. The Club Aluminum salesman cooks a meal when he shows his line. A mattress salesman has got to get the customer to lie down. Those obviously are all equivalents of the demonstration ride in a new Chevrolet.

But whatever I did and say that has to do with selling cars, there is almost always an equivalent for selling anything else. Maybe a life insurance salesman can't get you to go to your own funeral like Tom Sawyer did, but he'll get you to talk about your wife and children, and maybe get you to take out their pictures and leave them on the table while he is talking. This can be a helluva good reminder that you're not going to be around forever, and this may be all he needs to remind you of. It's a kind of demonstration ride.

From here on out, I am going to take you step by step through my discovery of the way to change from loser to winner. I'll show you how I built in the attitudes of a sure winner and how those attitudes led me to the development of my system. And remember this: Those attitudes and that system have made me the World's Greatest Salesman.