

# **IGNITE YOUR SALES POWER!**



***MINDFULNESS SKILLS  
FOR SALES PROFESSIONALS***

*also by*  
JOY RAINS



*Meditation Illuminated:  
Simple Ways to Manage Your Busy Mind*

# IGNITE YOUR SALES POWER!



## *MINDFULNESS SKILLS FOR SALES PROFESSIONALS*

J O Y   R A I N S

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Bethesda, MD

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*For Dad,  
who pointed the way  
to a sales career*





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# PREFACE



**B**OTH MY FATHER and my grandfather were professional salesmen, so selling is part of my DNA. When I was in high school, I landed a part-time telemarketing job and began a long sales career, following in their footsteps.

After college, I earned my living as a traveling saleswoman, selling optical products to wholesalers. I moved on to selling computer products to the U.S. government, then telephone systems to commercial accounts, and finally print and online advertising to businesses.

When I began my sales career, I noticed that some sales reps rose to the top like heavy cream and others sank to the bottom like heavy weights. I wanted to understand this disparity, so that I could be one of the salespeople who rose.

In the early 1990s, learning to meditate taught me how to become mindful — and how to develop the enormous power of awareness. Roadblocks became easier to navigate. Opportunities became easier to recognize. Business poured in. Sales flourished.

I was so excited about the benefits of mindfulness and meditation that I wrote a book for beginning meditators, *Meditation Illuminated: Simple Ways to Manage Your Busy Mind*. (You'll find some excerpts from it in Chapter 1.)

Since mindfulness was key to my business success, I decided to write this book on mindfulness for sales professionals. You'll find ideas, lessons, and techniques that can help you rise to the top. My intent is to help you boost your business — and ignite your sales power.

Hope you enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping initial "J" and a smaller "ay" following.

# INTRODUCTION



## THE POWER OF AWARENESS

**O**NE COLD MORNING before the days of electric cars, I was miffed that my car wouldn't start. My husband turned to me and matter-of-factly stated, "You need three elements for ignition: fuel, air, and spark."

Now you can discover elements to ignite your sales power. Within these pages, you'll find a framework of three parts: *Fuel*, *Air*, and *Spark*. You'll learn how to build your power of awareness with mindfulness skills — and how to apply these lessons to best practices for sales.

Here's a summary of each section:

## I. FUEL

### *MANAGING YOUR THOUGHTS*

Your thoughts are fuel for your mind and for your actions in the world.

Learn how to:

- Navigate a path to the sale with meditation.
- Realize your potential with your imagination.

## II. AIR

### *GIVING SPACE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS*

Rather than immediately filling the air with the benefits of your product, fill it with curiosity — and compassion for your customers.

Learn how to:

- Identify customers' needs and challenges with concentration.
- Establish a loyal customer base with consideration.

## III. SPARK

### *GENERATING ENERGY TO DO YOUR JOB*

My father used to tell me that sales is the worst paid job for those who don't work hard — and the best paid job for those who do!

Learn how to:

- Stay motivated with your determination.

I recommend picking and choosing the techniques that resonate with you. The more engaged you are in this process, the more successful you'll be.

At the end of each chapter, you'll find an Action Plan with suggestions for techniques and practices to try, ways to evaluate their effectiveness, and recommendations for moving forward with them. You'll find an additional Action Plan within the body of Chapter 2.

The Appendix contains eighteen ideas for practices to try. You can try a new practice each day, or skip around and choose those you like. Note the ones that resonate with you and try to integrate them into your sales activities.

I hope you discover the practices that are right for you, so you can ignite your sales power!



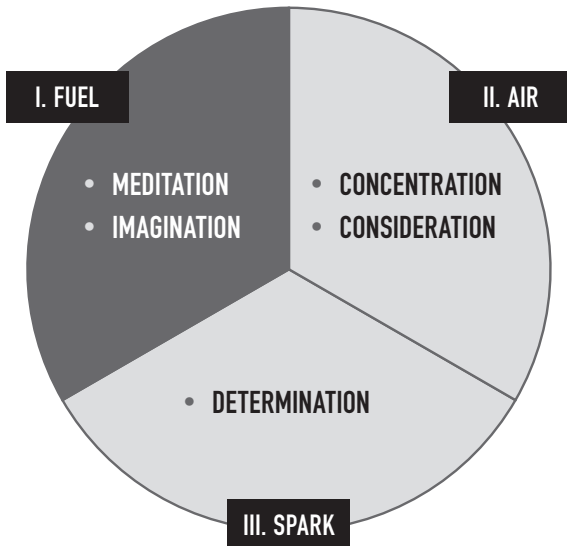


# I FUEL



## ***MANAGING YOUR THOUGHTS***

*Your thoughts are fuel for your mind  
and for your actions in the world.*







# MEDITATION



## *NAVIGATE A PATH TO THE SALE*

**M**EDITATION IS A practice of training the mind to develop present moment awareness. This awareness is called mindfulness. Mindfulness allows you to become aware of both your internal experiences, such as your thoughts — and your external experiences, such as what your customer is communicating.

In this chapter, you'll learn how awareness of your internal experiences can help you recognize thoughts that could impede your sales efforts. You'll learn how to meditate — so you can release thoughts that don't serve you, clear your mind, and navigate a path to the sale.

To start, let's take a look at the nature of thoughts, and how awareness of your thoughts can improve your results.

## THOUGHTS AND AWARENESS



It's widely reported that the average person generates anywhere from 50,000 to 70,000 thoughts per day. Thoughts may range from bigger issues (*Should I make a career change now?*) to thoughts about smaller issues (*Should I eat lunch before or after my appointment?*) to judgments of liking or not liking (*I love this new product!*) to regrets about the past or worries about the future (*I'll never overcome her objection!*).

Thoughts often happen at lightning-fast speed, either with the same thoughts repeatedly cycling through the mind, or with the mind jumping from one random thought to another. Consider, for example, a sales professional meeting with a customer. As there's a pause in the conversation, her mind wanders. If you could listen to her thoughts, you might hear: *I hope I can close this deal. Maybe then I'll win the trip to Hawaii! Better get to the gym, so I look good in my bathing suit. Darn! I ate too much cake last night — but hey, it was my birthday. I can't believe how old I'm getting!*

Thoughts like these can become obstacles to the sale. Rather than paying attention to her customer, this sales

rep is allowing her thoughts to pull her away from the present moment. If she's distracted, even just momentarily, it might be at the moment her customer says, "If your software will save us time, I think my managers would be interested." She could miss this important buying signal and the opportunity to understand her customer's needs — not a good formula for sales success.

Meeting prospects and customers with a clear mind can be challenging. After all, just as it's the nature of the heart to beat, it's the nature of the mind to think. I call the mental content that cycles through the mind "STUFF," which is an acronym for:

Stories

Thoughts

Urges

Frustrations

Feelings

STUFF serves an important function, since it helps you navigate through life. Yet, you may not even realize this STUFF is present. It can fade to the background of the mind, but it's still there, influencing your behavior.

*Try this:* Pause for one minute. Notice what's going on in your mind — your STUFF.

Some people are surprised by the amount of STUFF they notice during this one-minute exercise. Others don't notice much of anything at all. The point of the exercise is to be aware of your experience; there's no right or wrong.

Awareness will allow you to make a conscious choice about how to manage your STUFF, so it doesn't distract you. You'll learn how to develop awareness with meditation later in this chapter.

## THOUGHTS AND JUDGMENTS



Thoughts can also become obstacles when they're in the form of negative judgments. If a potential customer looks unhappy, do you interpret that as meaning he's not interested in your product or service? If you hear the economy is in a slump, do you tell yourself a story that your sales will collapse, as well?

Consider an example from my experience.

It's the monthly meeting of the National Association of Professional Saleswomen, sometime in the 1990s. The room is filled with 100 saleswomen, waiting to learn how to make a telephone cold call. I'm presenting.

“First, let's break the habit of saying ‘how are you’ when the prospect answers the phone. It sounds canned and inauthentic.”

“Take the envelope from under your chair. There's a balloon inside with ‘how are you’ printed on it. Blow up the balloon and tie it in a knot.”

“Now, let's break the habit!” I stomp on my balloon. One hundred women follow suit and the air fills with sounds of balloons breaking.

People are laughing and having a grand time, except for one woman, an esteemed colleague in the audience, scowling and shaking her head in disapproval. Rather than noticing everyone who's having fun, my eyes are drawn to her like a magnet. The voice in my head says, *She hates your presentation.*

*She's an expert in this field and her opinion matters.*  
My heart sank.

Afterwards, when everyone had filed out of the room, she was waiting to talk. She said, “I loved your message, but that noise, the noise of the balloons breaking was so loud, it reminded me of my difficult childhood, growing up in a violent neighborhood.”

This woman's reaction had nothing to do me. I created a negative story around her response, giving the story a meaning that had more to do with my insecurities than anything else. Awareness would have enabled me to realize: *This woman is scowling and I don't know why.* Instead, I reacted to a story that turned out to be false.

**Consider this:** Have you ever told yourself a story that led to a lost sale? How else could you have responded? Take a moment to reflect.

Your judgments directly affect your responses. What's your response if a customer says “no”? If you realize you're treating a customer's negative response as a permanent roadblock,

consider looking deeper to see if there's another path to the sale.

As ancient Greek philosopher Epictetus wrote, “We cannot choose our external circumstances, but we can always choose how we respond to them.” Developing your power of awareness will allow you to respond to life's events *consciously*, rather than react to them *unconsciously*.

## THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION



A proven way to build your awareness is through the practice of meditation. Meditation helps you clear your mind, as you learn to release distracting thoughts and negative judgments.

Meditation is a practice of noticing. You don't try to stop thinking; rather, you allow your STUFF (Stories, Thoughts, Urges, Frustrations, Feelings) to surface and then let it pass, without judgment or internal comment. You practice noticing your experience in the present moment, observing your STUFF as if you are witnessing it.

The awareness you develop during meditation can make a profound difference in your sales results. In addition to practicing at a regular time, I recommend tak-

ing a few minutes to meditate and clear your mind before contacting customers. A clear mind will help you recognize opportunities and navigate roadblocks. As you become aware of the present moment, you may be more likely to notice your customers' body language, such as posture changes that signal likes or dislikes. You may become more aware of your customers' audio cues, such as shifts in voice inflection. You may become more aware of subtle, underlying issues as you listen closely to your customers' words. These observations will give you insight and help guide your responses.

Imagine setting your goals aside before contacting customers, clearing your mind, and approaching your sales call with *present moment awareness* — a sense of being completely grounded in the here and now. As you meet with your customer, instead of your mind being in “drive” to reach your goals, your mind will be in “neutral” — allowing you to pay attention to your customer's wants and needs, understand objections, and recognize buying signals. Keeping your focus on the present moment will help you navigate a path to the sale.



## HOW TO MEDITATE



I recommend choosing a regular place to meditate, so you can practice building your power of awareness. Sit on a chair or floor cushion in a quiet room. Start with 2–3 minutes, setting a timer if needed. As you become used to practicing, gradually increase your time to 15–20 minutes a day if your schedule allows. If you're short on time, try to meditate for just a few minutes to maintain a daily routine.

Here are steps to follow:

1. Start by sitting up straight, without being rigid. Keep your spine aligned with your head and neck. Gently close your eyes. Try to release any physical tension, keeping your body relaxed — but your mind alert.
2. Choose an anchor — a neutral focal point that doesn't stimulate your mind. Commonly used anchors are: your breath; your body; a word repeated silently, such as *peace*; a sound you listen to, such as ocean waves; or an object to hold, such as a smooth stone.

3. Rest your attention on your anchor. Whenever your mind wanders, gently refocus on your anchor. For beginners, this may be as often as every second or two. Although many people think the practice of meditation involves stopping all thoughts and feelings, this is not so. Expect that thoughts and feelings will continue to arise.
4. Accept your wandering mind. Meditation is a practice of returning to your experience in the present moment. Again and again and again. *Notice* when your attention wanders, and then *return* your attention to your anchor. The intent of meditation isn't to suppress thoughts and feelings. Consider anything that draws attention away from your anchor to be like a cloud passing, or like a boat floating by as you watch from the riverbank. Allow it to pass without judgment and gently refocus on your anchor.
5. Continue gently refocusing on your anchor for the rest of your practice time. This process is key, since it exercises your mind's "muscle." Just as the repeated practice of doing abdominal crunches can build your core strength, the repeated practice of noticing dis-

tractions and returning to your anchor can build your power of awareness. The practice of shifting your attention to a neutral focal point (your anchor) is like shifting your mind out of “drive” and letting it rest in “neutral.” Each time you refocus on your anchor, you’re training your mind to let go of distracting thoughts.

Meditation is a simple practice, but it can be challenging. As stated earlier, people often have the best success by starting with brief periods of regular practice time and gradually increasing the length of time spent meditating as they become used to practicing.

## WHEN TO MEDITATE



You can meditate almost anytime. (Note: Don’t meditate when driving or performing another task that requires your full attention.) It’s important to practice when it works best for your schedule. Meditating for a few minutes is preferable to not meditating at all.

Many people find practicing first thing in the morning works best, before they get busy with the day. It’s helpful to schedule meditation practice to coincide with an

from one place to another. World-renowned meditation teacher Thich Nhat Hanh says to “be aware of the contact between your feet and the Earth.”

## MORE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION



One significant health benefit of meditation is reduced stress. Since mindfulness helps you experience life in the “here and now,” you may notice tension that you hadn’t noticed before. For example, you might realize that your breathing is shallow or your muscles are tense — or, that you’re adding to your stress by imagining negative scenarios. Becoming aware of tension can help you release it. Try a *Body Awareness Meditation* to help you release physical tension or a *Simple Breath Meditation* to help you release mental tension.

Many scientific studies point to significant mental and physical health benefits of regular meditation. For more information on the health benefits, see the National Library of Medicine’s website at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/) and search “meditation.”

## ACTION PLAN



### EXERCISE

*Pause for a couple of minutes before a sales call. Choose an anchor to use. Gently rest your attention on your anchor. Release your STUFF each time you notice it, and return your awareness to your anchor.*

*Alternatively, listen to an audio meditation before contacting your customer. You can find recordings of varying lengths on [www.joyrains.com](http://www.joyrains.com).*

*As you walk to your customer's office, rest your attention on the soles of your feet as they touch the ground. When you talk to your customer, see if you can maintain present moment awareness. Any time you notice your thoughts wandering, gently bring them back to your customer, as if your customer is your anchor.*

**EVALUATE**

*After you meet with your customer, rate the following statements on a scale of 1–5, with 1 strongly disagreeing and 5 strongly agreeing.*

- \* I was able to release physical tension prior to my meeting. *1-2-3-4-5*
- \* I was able to clear my mind prior to my meeting. *1-2-3-4-5*
- \* I was able to focus on my customer. *1-2-3-4-5*

*Based on these ratings, what will you do again — or do differently — on your next sales call?*

**MOVING FORWARD**

*What practice or practices would you like to integrate into your life? Possibilities include:*

- \* Meditating at a regular time each day.
- \* Setting up a regular meditation place at home.
- \* Taking a moment to clear your mind before contacting customers.

... MOVING FORWARD CONTINUED

- ✧ Trying to become aware of physical tension and releasing it.
- ✧ Evaluating your quality of awareness after sales calls.
- ✧ Using a walking meditation when transitioning from one place to another, noticing the soles of your feet as they touch the ground.
- ✧ Listening to guided audio meditations, found by searching “guided meditation” online or found on [www.joyrains.com](http://www.joyrains.com).



*Learning to direct  
your attention is one  
of the most powerful  
ways to navigate a  
path to the sale.*







CHAPTER 2

# IMAGINATION



## *REALIZE YOUR POTENTIAL*

**Y**OUR IMAGINATION HAS a tremendous amount of power. You can change your outcomes by using your imagination to change your beliefs about reality. Since the brain treats imagery the same as it would treat real-life action, new behaviors can be “ingrained” in your mind simply by engaging your imagination.

When you couple the power of your imagination with the power of awareness, you can intentionally plant positive thoughts in your mind. In this chapter, you’ll learn how to create your vision of success and realize your potential by activating your imagination through:

- Words, using positive statements called **affirmations**.
- Images, picturing your goals with **visualization**.

Of course this only works if what you imagine is within the realm of possibility. If you're a sixty-year-old man with lower back problems, and you visualize an outcome where you're the star player of a pro-football team, it's unlikely you'll actually realize your vision.

## REALIZE YOUR POTENTIAL WITH AFFIRMATIONS



The technique of using affirmations is a powerful way to use your imagination when you *aren't* with your customer — to help optimize results when you *are* with your customer. Affirmations are written or spoken statements that describe your goals as if they're already happening.

For instance, you could use the following affirmations to help you find new prospects: *I easily find customers who are eager to do business with me; My prospecting activities create bridges to a future pool of customers; I approach prospecting with a sense of expectation and adventure.*

Note your affirmations on index cards, on your computer, tablet, or cell phone, in a journal — or anywhere that you're likely to see them. Once you have your affirmations written, repeat them silently or aloud, while imagining them to be true.

## TIPS FOR USING AFFIRMATIONS



If you've never used affirmations before, using them may seem awkward at first. If this is the case, putting that awkwardness aside and mustering up a belief in the power of the affirmation will bring the best results. The more you believe the affirmations to be true, the more effective they'll be.

### ***PRESENT AND POSITIVE***

- Write the affirmation in the present tense, as if it's already true. Affirm *I listen closely to my customers* instead of *I will listen closely to my customers*.
- Say what you *are doing* in the statement, rather than what you *are not doing*. Affirm *I make efficient use of my selling time* instead of *I do not waste my selling time*. Avoid negative words such as “not” or “none.”
- If you notice internal resistance to an affirmation, try a “willing to” affirmation first. For example, *I reach out to new prospects every day* can be changed to *I am willing to reach out to new prospects every day*. Once you accept the affirmation as true, use the affirmation without adding “willing to.”

# APPENDIX



## ***18 WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR POWER OF AWARENESS***

*Here are eighteen ideas for practices to try.*

*You can try a new practice each day,  
or skip around and choose those you like.*

*Note the ones that resonate with you and try  
to integrate them into your sales activities.*



## *Notes*



### *1. Meditate for two minutes at home.*

Find a quiet place to meditate. (If you'd prefer to listen to a guided meditation, you can find a two minute meditation on [www.joyrains.com](http://www.joyrains.com).)

Sit in a comfortable position and lower your eyelids. Bring all your attention to your breath. Continue with the Simple Breath Meditation, as learned in Chapter 1.

***Reflect:*** Were you able to focus on your breath during this meditation? This can be a challenging practice if you're new to meditation. Continued practice is key. How would you like to incorporate meditation into your life going forward? How often will you practice?

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## *Notes*





## *2. Meditate for a few minutes before contacting a customer.*

Find a quiet place to meditate. Sit in a comfortable position and lower your eyelids. Bring all your attention to your breath. Practice the Simple Breath Meditation as learned in Chapter 1.

After your meditation time, see if you can maintain present moment awareness as you meet with your customer. Any time your attention wanders, gently bring it back to your customer.

***Reflect:*** How did the quality of your awareness affect your meeting? Do you want to continue to use this practice, and if so, how will you incorporate it into your sales activities?

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## *Notes*





### *A final thought ...*

In the Introduction, I shared my father's wisdom: *Sales is the worst paid job for those who don't work hard — and the best paid job for those who do!* Considering his words, I recommend that you work like a dog.

I happen to love dogs. I love the way dogs accept people for who they are, freely sharing their affection. When I gaze into their soulful eyes, I feel like they're totally present. A dog doesn't think: *Will I see FiFi in doggy day care tomorrow?* The dog's attention is fully in the present moment.

It's with this idea of complete presence that you can meet your customer. It gives the expression “work like a dog” a whole new meaning!





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