

Selling Your Way IN

The Playbook for Setting Your Income and Owning Your Life

Kristie Jones

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About the Author

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. Which 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.

26 | The Work to Get to the Top Doesn't Happen at Work

If you could make an additional \$3M, \$5M, or \$10M in your lifetime, would you be willing to dedicate three to five hours a week upping your game?

Of course you would. You just don't think it's possible.

If you think I'm kidding about those numbers, I'm not. If you're not reaching the Top 10 Percent of your profession, you are leaving a lot of money on the table.

“Income Math”

Let's start with the assumption that you dedicate thirty years of your life to selling.

Your **average** base salary over those thirty years is \$60,000 = **\$1,800,000**.

Your **average** commission percentage is 8 percent over those thirty years.

You sell \$400,000 a year in your first ten years and \$750,000 a year in your next twenty years (on **average**) so over thirty years, you sell \$19,000,000 x 8 percent = **\$1,520,000**

So as an **average** sales professional you'll make **\$3,320,000** in those thirty years (we'll ignore inflation and pretend the government isn't taking a large percentage of your income for the purpose of this exercise).

- Average Base Salary: \$1,800,000
- Average Commission/Bonus: \$1,520,000
- Average Total: \$3,320,000

Let's say that you dedicate thirty years of your life to sales **AND** you spend fifteen of those years as a **Top 10 Percenter**. Now let's re-run the math:

Your **Top 10 Percenter** base salary over those thirty years is: \$85,000 = **\$2,550,000** (companies pay more for top talent).

Your **Top 10 Percenter** commission percentage is 10 percent over those thirty years (as a Top 10 Percenter, you'll reach the top of the commission scale and will get bonuses.)

You sell \$500,000 a year in your first ten years and \$1,000,000 a year in your next twenty years (on average) so over thirty years, you sell \$25,000,000 x 11 percent = **\$2,750,000**

- Top 10 Percenter Base salary = \$2,550,000
- Top 10 Percenter Commission/Bonus = \$2,750,000
- Top 10 Percenter Total = \$5,300,000

*Financial difference of being a Top 10 Percenter: **\$1,980,000***

How would an extra **\$2 million dollars** change your life and that of your family?

The data don't lie (#Kristieism). Three to five hours a week really is all it takes. But here's the catch; those three to five hours don't happen “on the clock.” I'm not talking about spending three to five hours doing more cold calling, prospecting, researching, or hobnobbing. I'm talking about spending three to five hours a week on your mental, physical, and spiritual game so you have the edge when you are doing things at work, like cold calling, prospecting, researching, hobnobbing, and *selling*.

There are no lazy Rock Stars. In the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell, he writes that his research showed the very best in every field—from basketball stars like LeBron James to real Rock Stars like Mick Jagger—put in 10,000 hours of intense practice to reach mastery. As a competitive tennis player, I enjoy following a number of professional tennis players and understanding what makes them top competitors. One player in particular has had my attention for a few years, Novak Djokovic. I just watched Djokovic win the 2023 US Open Grand Slam at thirty-six years of age! He is now the oldest person to ever win a Grand Slam.

Djokovic first got my attention for his antics on the court—I appreciate a little bit of rebel in my idols—but what kept my attention was when I learned how much time and attention he spends on his mental, physical, and spiritual game to make his body perform like someone in their twenties.

I'm sure it won't come as a big surprise that Djokovic spends two to three hours a day practicing on the court, but here's how he ensures he is getting the most out of those practice sessions so, at thirty-six, he's ready to take on the likes of nineteen-year-old Ben Shelton and twenty-year-old Carlos Alcaraz.

Djokovic makes sure he gets eighth to nine hours of sleep each day. He eats an almost exclusively plant-based diet. He starts each morning with a glass of warm water with lemon, to help his body detoxify. After that, he drinks celery juice followed by a green smoothie. He eats mostly fruits and veggies in the morning so his body doesn't have to expend any energy on digestion because he wants to make sure he has all the energy he needs for his practice sessions. His first meal of the day is a power bowl containing grains, fruit, nuts, almond milk, and honey (which has antibacterial properties.) His lunch is a complex-carb affair, usually including pasta and a salad. For dinner he will have another salad, pasta, and maybe a piece of salmon if he's got a match coming up the next day.

Djokovic isn't only committed to making his body a temple; he's committed to his physical, mental, and spiritual health as well. Here are a list of other tactics, strategies, and activities he's committed to, which he believes will get him to the top of the ATP tour and keep him there:

- Stretching: even before charity matches!
- Dynamic stretching to mimic his movements on the court
- Foam-rolling: my least favorite post-match activity!
- Time in the Space Egg: this little-known machine is used by top athletes to increase oxygen absorption and aid in recovery
- Training at high altitudes (he likes to hike in the mountains)
- Yoga: not only for flexibility, but he also practices the spiritual side of yoga, fifteen minutes of mindfulness practice each day
- Breathwork
- Meditation
- Strength training

I know it's easy for a man whose total prize money is hovering around \$175M to afford nutritionists, trainers, coaches, sports psychologists, physios, and a \$100K Space Egg. But remember what I said about my choosing to have coaches, hypnotists, and therapists on my team? I don't do it because I can afford it, I can afford it because I made the investment *before* I could easily afford it. I know Djokovic didn't get to that \$175M mark without investing both money and discipline. You can have all the resources in the world, but if you don't invest in your success and apply discipline, none of those resources and benefits will help you.

Would it really be that hard to listen to a sales podcast or business book on Audible instead of listening to music in the car? Could you go to bed at 10 p.m. instead of 11:30 p.m.? Could you start your day with a walk or meditation? Could you change one meal a day from processed foods to whole foods? Would you be willing to make some minor changes that could have a major impact on your income and your life, to the tune of \$2,000,000?

I don't just want you to get to the top 10 percent, I want you to be able to enjoy it with those you love for years to come. Not to catastrophize, but are your eating, sleeping, and exercise habits (or lack thereof) not only keeping you from getting to the Top 10 Percent but also shortening your life and your total earning potential? Are you willing to trade \$250,000 in earnings for a third glass of wine? Are you willing to give up \$500,000 in income instead of walking three miles five times a week? For some of you, we're not talking about getting to the top 10 percent, we're talking about not seeing your kids graduate from college, not walking your daughter down the aisle, and not playing catch with your grandkids.

I mentioned earlier that Mick Jagger put in 10,000 hours of intense practice to reach mastery. Based on his 2013 biography titled, *Mick: The Wild Life and Mad Genius of Jagger*, you might be calling me out about the importance of the mental, physical, and spiritual game. True, the 60s Mick might not have been the poster child for health, but here's what he's been doing for years that has gotten him to eighty! Jagger's diet consists primarily of fresh fruit and veggies, whole grains, legumes, chicken, and fish. He also does regular interval training and is said to work out two to three hours a day! Many eighty-year-olds are sitting in front of the A/C, watching TV or playing cards in the game room of the nursing home. What Jagger is doing daily requires discipline. I have a feeling he's intending to live a high-quality life for a long, long time.

Being a Rock Star sales rep is no different; if you want to earn at the top of the game you have to play at the top of the game. And if you want to #ownyourownlife you have to live like a true Rock Star as well and that includes being disciplined.

If you've read this far you know there are a whole string of other #kristieisms that relate to doing the work outside of work.

- #ownyourownshit
- I can't motivate the unmotivated, but I can inspire the self-motivated
- Help those who want to help themselves
- Decisions are free, consequences are not
- Do the right things, and the right things will happen
- #SowtoGrow

Here's what all those #kristieisms add up to: if you want to be the person who makes it to the top, you don't stop doing the work just because the clock hits 5 p.m. or the calendar says it's a weekend.

You may remember that when I'm conducting interviews I always ask this question: "Name three things you do consistently, regardless of the job you have or the role you're in, that you think has led to your success."

I know I'm talking to a potential Top 10 Percenter when, without hesitation, they tell me about the things they're doing *outside* of work.

- I'm at the gym every morning by 6 a.m.
- I listen to sales podcasts weekly
- I read a business or sales book each quarter

- I have a spiritual practice
- I put my phone down for two hours a day so I can be present for my family
- I make sure I get eight hours of sleep each night
- I write down my goals and have an accountability partner
- I go to church each week
- I have a group of friends, and we use each other as advisors or a personal board of directors

Top 10 Percenters have not only mastered the sales skills needed to outperform and out-earn their co-workers and their competition; they also know there are other skills they must sharpen to stay at the top once they've arrived—skills that aren't even on the radar for the other 90 percent. And they're working on those skills on their own time.

The answers I shared here to that question, “Name three things you do consistently, regardless of the job you have or the role you're in, that you think has led to your success,” are just some examples. Top performers build top performer habits (#Kristieism). So I know they will list at least one habit in each of these categories:

- Physical health: they have a schedule for how often they go to the gym, or take a walk, or work with a trainer, or do yoga and they're building habits that support their body like sleep, relaxation, and nutrition
- Relationships: they regularly spend quality time with people they love, they have professional groups and networks, they have social habits that keep them connected with a wider community
- Learning: they have habits that build their personal development as well as their professional knowledge, and they're investing in having an active brain and staying in learning mode
- Mental/Spiritual: they're consistent in their “inner work” through meditation, prayer, journaling, church, or other spiritual groups

Top 10 Percenters know they won't perform at their best if they're only getting five hours of sleep a night, eating poorly, and can't climb a flight of stairs without stopping at the top to catch their breath. They need their body, mind, and spirit to be just as sharp as their professional sales skills. And they know the most important work they do to get to the top isn't happening “on the clock.”