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Part of motivating others is appealing to their ideals. Another part is animating the vision and breathing life into it. To enlist others, you need to help them *see* and *feel* how their interests and aspirations align with the vision. In sales, the classic example of this is the test drive. The reason sellers want car shoppers to get behind the wheel and take it for a spin right away is simple. There's no better way to *see* and *feel* what it would be like to own that vehicle than by driving it.

Without a tangible, test-drivable product, you must paint a compelling picture of the future, one that is so vivid and specific that buyers know exactly what it would be like to live and work in that exciting and uplifting future state. That's the only way they will be sufficiently motivated to commit their time, energy, and sustained focus to the vision's realization. Animating the vision makes it so real and meaningful that people will boldly act to do their part in advancing toward it. You may not think of yourself as expressive or emotional enough to paint a word picture that would give people this kind of courage and commitment. You may not see yourself as someone who can speak with genuine conviction about the meaning and purpose of your work with your buyers.

You may think you work with buyers who want facts and figures, minus the fluff. The truth is that everyone is capable of speaking expressively and convincingly, and you do it more often than you realize or appreciate.

When you *believe* strongly in something, you naturally speak in an impassioned way to communicate what you feel. Your passion brings it to life. Your enthusiasm and expressiveness come from your beliefs. When you unleash your enthusiasm and expressiveness, you muster commitment and courage in others. Don't underestimate your talents.

Don't let your talents be diluted, either, by canned sales presentations that are packed full of data and product features. Details derail sales. Buyers want to be stirred into action. American architect and urban designer Daniel Burnham understood this. When he was eulogized by his archrival Frank Lloyd Wright as "an enthusiastic promoter of great construction enterprises," Wright spoke to Burnham's sales abilities more than his architectural style, and said, "His powerful personality was supreme."

This visionary architect didn't rely on blueprints, sketches, drafts, and plans. Burnham surely had all of those in hand, but he didn't lead with them. Instead, in describing his "city of the future" master plan for Chicago, he spoke from his heart about what he'd pictured for his hometown. He used imagery, descriptive words, and the interests and dreams of those to whom he was talking to inspire the city's movers and shakers to support the plan. Sellers in any sector can do the same.

When you weave the emotional connection to what matters most to the buyer together with the logical case for change, you animate the vision. You breathe life into it by making it more concrete. To accomplish this, leaders use symbolic language to create mental pictures and provide something familiar that makes a vision seem more real. They tell stories and share

anecdotes to connect the elements of the vision and portray what it will look like as it takes shape. They offer examples and testimonials to draw parallels between something proven in the past and an image of the future. All of this helps buyers, too, to picture the possibilities.

**"To enlist others, you need to help them see and feel how their interests and aspirations align with the vision."**

Metaphors have this power. A metaphor is a figure of speech used to show a resemblance to something that is not actually the same. "You ain't nothin' but a hound dog," "all the world's a stage," and "the elephant in the room" are metaphors that conjure up instant images and elicit comparisons to promote understanding. Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce, is a master of metaphors. He includes "make your own metaphors" as one of the crucial plays that contributed to the explosive growth of Salesforce from a little idea to a company worth \$8 billion in under twenty years. Marc says metaphors are a great way to communicate your message: "I spend a lot of time creating metaphors to explain what we do. For example, early on I explained what we did with the metaphor 'salesforce.com is Amazon.com meets Siebel Systems.' Later, when we launched AppExchange, we called it 'the eBay of enterprise software.' "

Relating something new to something familiar creates a feeling of comfort. Symbolic language and comparisons help people see what you're proposing. With a little practice, you can create your own powerful metaphors. They're all around you, and you probably use them already. There are art metaphors, game and sports metaphors, war metaphors, science fiction metaphors, machine metaphors, religious metaphors, and spiritual metaphors. James Geary, deputy curator at the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University and a leading expert on the use of metaphorical language, reports that people use a metaphor every ten to twenty-five words, or about six metaphors a minute. Learning to intentionally use metaphors and other symbolic language greatly enhances your ability to enlist others in a common vision of the future.

Storytelling is another way to infuse facts with meaning and connect the dots between emotions and logic. Educational psychologist Jerome Bruner determined that people are twenty-two times more likely to remember a fact when it has been wrapped in a story. This is why television commercials and letters from charitable organizations show you the stories of people your donations can help instead of giving you the simple facts about the need. When you can relate emotionally to the story, you are more likely to respond. Stories invite listeners to travel

somewhere new with you, from “once upon a time” to “happily ever after.” When we listen to stories, we are engaged and feel a sense of belonging. This buyer’s simple statement sums up the importance of telling stories: “I appreciate personal stories because it helps to build not only a business relationship but a personal one as well. It has a huge impact as it builds trust and creates a partnership.”

A vision is an image in the mind. A vision becomes real as you translate images into concrete and relatable form for your buyers. The word *vision* itself stems from the root word “to see.” Vision statements, then, are not statements at all. They are pictures. They are images of the future.

This means to enlist others in a shared vision, you must be able to speak about the future and create pictures with words so buyers have a mental image of what things will be like when they embark on this quest with you. You have to use descriptive phrases and specific examples to deliver the mental image a buyer can relate to and see. This is not a skill reserved for a few gifted speakers. This is something you already do when you genuinely want people to understand things the way you do.

Think about something you enjoy doing. When you describe your hobby to someone else, you speak descriptively and share specific examples. You create mental images by using words alone. How you say them matters, too. Social scientists have found that individuals who are perceived as charismatic are simply more animated than people who are not perceived that way. They smile more, speak faster, pronounce words more clearly, and move their heads and bodies more often. Being energetic and expressive are the keys to being perceived as someone who is charismatic. Humor and energetic interaction add to the perception. The old saying that enthusiasm is contagious is certainly true for sellers.

Creating a mental image, telling stories, and using descriptive language all trigger emotional responses. These techniques for animating the vision simultaneously produce an awesome connecting experience infused with meaning and emotional sway for your buyers. Your commitment and conviction will shine through as you appeal to common ideals and enlist others to animate the vision.

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# 20 Questions

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- In what parts of the world do we want to be operating?
- What will our core products and services be?
- What markets and distribution channels will be most important to us?
- What technology or proprietary know-how will we possess?
- What markets and competitive position will we have achieved?
- Why will customers buy our products or services?
- What's our value proposition?
- How will we differentiate ourselves against the competition?
- How will we organize?
- What will our leadership philosophy be?
- How will employees feel about working with us?
- What competencies will our work-force have?
- What values will drive everything we do?
- What covenants will we have with our key stakeholders?
- How we measure our performance?
- What performance will we have achieved?
- What values will pervade our company?
- What will our image and reputation be?
- What will a future *Fortune* article say about what we've achieved?
- How do you want to describe our company to your children and grandchildren?