

The



Circle of Others

By Steve M. Rigby

The *Circle of "Others"*

*Sometimes it's the "little" things in life
that make the "biggest" difference.*

I'm not sure where I first heard this statement, but I don't know of one that's more appropriate when it comes to this "little" circle we're about to discuss. The letter "O"...the only true circle of all the letters (the "Q" has a tail on it, remember?), serves to remind us of one of the most important words we'll ever learn about selling, or for that matter about life. That word is **others**. That's right...**others**. Because that's what selling, and life, is really all about: **others**. It's not about you or me, about how successful we can be or how much money you or I can make. It's not about how much we know or how good we are at what we do. It's not about you or me, period.

When you program yourself to think, "What can I do for *others*?" some amazing things will happen. I seem to recall reading somewhere that William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, recognized the importance of this philosophy when he chose that same word, **others**, to represent the focus of his efforts. And what a difference he and his organization have made since they were founded more than 150 years ago. When you help others to obtain what they want, they will help you get what you want. And conversely, when you put your needs first, others will NOT help you obtain what you want. It's an interesting paradox, but it's true. I know, because I learned it the hard way.

I lived the philosophy of the *Circle of "Others"* for the years I was on the sales floor. My absolute sole purpose was to help others fulfill their dream of owning a new home. It wasn't about the money, but I made plenty of it. It wasn't about the sales contests, but I won plenty of them. It wasn't about recognition, but my superiors noticed my performance. So much so that I was offered, and accepted, a sales management position in Dallas with that company.

And it was a sweet deal. I was put on their payroll immediately, had a nice bonus as part of the package, and would receive 100 percent of the commission I would make on anything I sold for the next month before I would make the move. So, on the three-hour drive back home, I began adding up the salary, the bonus, and *all* the commissions I would make based on the sales rate I had enjoyed for all the previous months. I was gonna get rich!

During that last month on the floor, for the first time I saw dollar signs on everyone that walked into my model home. I turned up the heat on the selling burner. I was hot! I was cooking!! I was smoking!!! I *sold* like I had never sold before!!!! And I...well...I failed!!!! That's right...failed.

For the only month in my new home-selling career, I failed miserably. Zero. A goose egg. Why? Because I put *my* needs first, over the needs of others. I was doing it for me, and not for them. And my guests could tell. I don't know *how* they knew it, but they *knew*. And just think of the irony of it all. That zero, that goose egg, that big "0," was the result of my NOT putting the "O" in **others** first.

Now does this mean that anyone in sales that does it just for the money won't be successful? No. We probably all know salespeople that have never put the needs of their guests first and have still made plenty of money. So how do we explain that? Think back about the type of selling dance they were likely doing. If the product they offered had a distinct advantage in the marketplace or was priced at a bargain, they could do the "**Sales Clerk Jig**," the "**Sales Person Shuffle**," or the "**Tell Person Tap Dance**" and dance all the way to the bank. But if those salespeople had been doing the "**Sales Professional Slow Dance**" and focused on putting the needs of others before their own, they could have owned the bank.

When we internalize this *Circle of "Others"* philosophy, we are transformed into **givers**. When our focus is "What can I *sell* them?" we're thinking about what we can *get*. We're *takers*. And that's *not* productive. But when our focus is "How can I *serve* them?" we're thinking about what we can *give* others. And that *is* productive. The most successful people I know in sales are **givers**. They produce. They get results, the right way and for the right reasons. What makes the *Circle of "Others"* so powerful is that giving connects us with our purpose: serving others, helping others, enhancing other people's lives. We're making a difference, and that purpose gives our lives meaning.

*What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments,
but what is woven into the lives of others.*

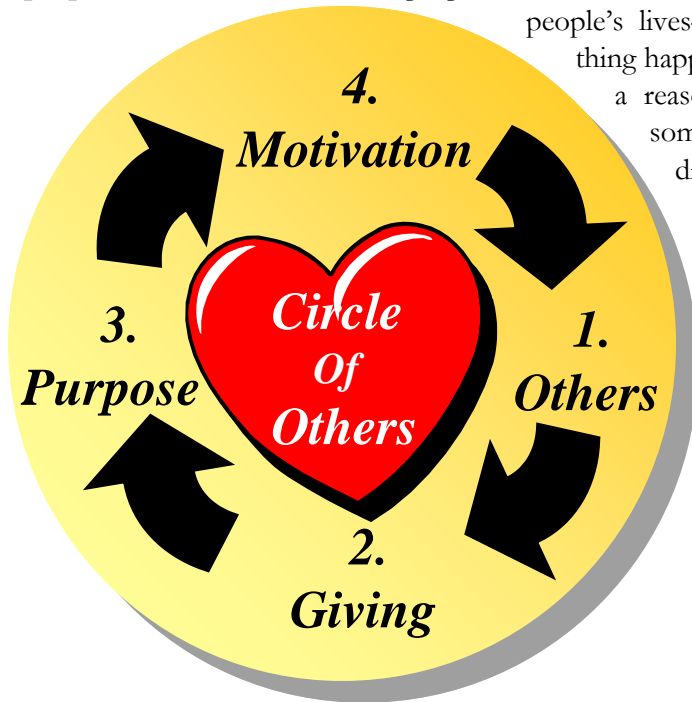
~ Pericles

Speaking of difference, I'm often asked by companies to speak on the topic of motivation in hopes that I can make a difference in the performance of their salespeople. "Our people need motivation. Can you come in and pump them up?" is what I usually hear. Now believe me, I understand the need to be motivated. We *all* need to feel the excitement, the energy, the rush, the call to action, the desire to do something or to make things happen that motivation spurs.

I'm flattered others feel I can do that. And perhaps I can for a brief time. But I don't believe *real* motivation should come from the outside. To me, it needs to come from the inside, from *within* one's being. After all, **motivation** is defined as *a reason for doing something*. And would you rather be motivated for someone else's reason or for your own? I think we both know the answer to that. And what better reason can we have for selling than knowing what we're doing makes a difference in the lives of others. It fulfills our purpose: that of serving others, helping others, enhancing people's lives. To me, that's as good as it gets.

So motivation actually begins from the inside by putting **others** first. And when we learn to always put others first we become **givers**. And when we are givers, we become connected with our **purpose**. And when we have a purpose for what we do—serving others, helping others, enhancing

people’s lives—we are **motivated**. And an interesting thing happens when we become motivated: we have a reason for doing something. And since that something we want to do is about making a difference, dedicated sales professionals are continually seeking out ways in which they can find others to serve, and the cycle repeats itself over...and over...and over.



You might consider the following acronym as a gentle reminder of what’s involved in *living* the *Circle of “Others”* philosophy...

- O**wn the vision of it being about *others*.
- T**hink about what you can *give*.
- H**ave a *purpose* in everything you do.
- E**njoy the *motivation* it will instill within.
- R**eap the *bountiful harvest* you will be given.
- S**tart the *process* over again, and again, and again.