A successful sales relationship hinges on the ongoing conversation you have with your customer. The dialogue starts, strangely enough, with the conversation you have with yourself. You can listen to others more effectively when you know how to listen to yourself. I first learned this years ago at my first media company job.

They sent me to a conference in Houston, Texas. I had just come out of a long-term relationship, and to be totally honest, I felt a little bit lost. I remember sitting in a hotel room and coming across an infomercial featuring a very youthful Tony Robbins promoting something he called “personal power.”

I was intrigued enough to buy what Robbins was selling. When I got back to New Zealand, there was a box waiting for me with Tony’s signature on it.

I devoured the material; it re-ignited my love of knowledge and showed me how to improve my outlook and my self-talk. I did all of the exercises and kept a journal. One skill I learned was how to ask quality questions of myself.

It started with questions recorded in a journal and culminated in a completely new focus that brought better results. The disparity in the quality of people’s lives often comes down to the difference in the questions they consistently ask.

You prime your mental computer to look for a particular type of answer. If you’re asking, “What’s wrong with me?” Your mind will come up with an answer – you are stupid or you don’t deserve to do well.

On the flip side, if you ask questions like, “How can I take this experience and use it to contribute to others’ lives?” Your brain will come up with much more constructive answers.

You will be able to see the path forward, rather than feeling like you have reached a dead end. Here are some examples from my long-ago journal:

What am I happy about in my life right now?

What about that makes me happy and how does it make me feel?
What am I most excited about in my life right now?
What makes me excited?
What am I grateful for in my life?
What am I committed to in my life right now?
Asking these questions helped me see clearly how positive questions lead to a growth mindset, which leads to better results down the road. When you think in terms of constructive, positive questions, your brain goes off and works on them even when you're not thinking about the answers consciously.

For example, consider the difference between "Why does this always happen to me?" and "How can i learn from this experience?" They are simply worlds apart in terms of choosing your next step.

Develop a pattern of questions that empower you. If you seek a shift in your life, make this part of your daily routine. Over time, asking these types of questions changes how you question your clients. Here are some sample business questions that evolved from my personal questions:

What am I most happy/excited about in my business?
What am I most proud about in my business?
How does it make me feel to employ other people?
What am I committed to doing to improve sales systems?
How/why do I value my customers?
Set up systems to formulate these questions for your sales team, so their conversations with customers flow more naturally from a foundation of self-knowledge.

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Mike Brunel started mikebrunel.com after being a successful entrepreneur and founder of NRS Media. He co-founded NRS Media in Wellington, New Zealand, expanded it into a global powerhouse in media sales and training, and was eventually responsible for opening offices in London, Atlanta, Toronto, Sydney, Capetown, and Bogota. His products and services are now sold in 23 countries and in 11 languages generating $350 million annually in sales for his clients. Mike sold the company in 2015 and now spends his time following his passions which include rugby, travel. His promise: “I can find thousands of dollars in your business within minutes – GUARANTEED” TRY ME!