The Rhetoric of Benjamin Franklin as an Ethical Model for the Practice of Sales

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THE RHETORIC OF BENJAMIN AS AN ETHICAL MODEL FOR THE PRACTICE OF SALES

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By
Mark Craig

May 2014
THE RHETORIC OF BENJAMIN AS AN ETHICAL MODEL FOR THE PRACTICE
OF SALES

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ABSTRACT

THE RHETORIC OF BENJAMIN AS AN ETHICAL MODEL FOR THE PRACTICE OF SALES

By

Mark Craig

May 2014

Dissertation supervised by Calvin Troup, Ph.D.

The world of the sales representative is rhetorical in substance and in action. In the examination of the current communicative environment of the capital equipment salesperson, the literature demonstrates that the role can be characterized primarily by being accountable for revenues and quotas. Additionally, the role is one that operates at the periphery of organizations and is somewhat autonomous from the day-to-day operations of the firm by which the salesperson is employed. A third characteristic that comes to the fore is the constant emphasis on building and maintaining relationships with the stakeholders in the interests of the company. These stakeholders involve relationships among customers and prospective customers and among supervisors, peers, partners, suppliers, manufacturers, administrators for billing, and other support roles, as well as the marketing and other facets of the very organization by which the salesperson is
employed. Fourth, the salesperson has to operate in the rhetorical venue of constantly persuading these stakeholders. The fifth and final characteristic of the environment that comes to the fore is the fact that the salesperson’s role is perceived as one that is inherently deceitful and breaches ethical boundaries.

There is a definitely a tension between ethics and sales. This tension between sales and ethics is illuminated extensively in the majority of literature on the subject of sales ethics. With the belief that salesperson must be a liar in order to succeed, with the implications of the lies being severe, yet at the same time the implications of failure being just as severe, how does a person succeed in sales while maintaining a personal and professional sense of integrity?

The answer to this question begins by examining Alasdair MacIntyre’s notion of the practice. By entering into a practice of sales, one relies on the Aristotelian idea that all activity should be guided by virtue and aimed at the good of society. Additionally, by entering into a practice guided by virtue, one can complete a unified life. It consists of complexity, goods internal to the practice, and its own standards of excellence. The successful practitioner of sales embodies passion, a lifelong commitment to excellence, and the virtues of honesty, ambition, friendliness, wittiness and tact, justice, and courage. To accomplish this, the practitioner’s personal narrative must be consistent with this view of sales and the character formed by the habitual display of the virtues must fit into the practice of sales. In addition, the commitment and passion for sales must be congruent with one’s narrative to be in the practice. Practitioners of sales must learn the nuances of the companies that they represent. They must develop the knowledge of sales techniques,
negotiation techniques, and overall knowledge of the business. Identifying and engaging
the assistance of formal and informal mentors with integrity accelerates this learning.

This project illuminates the rhetoric of Benjamin Franklin as a model to follow to
enter into such practices. Franklin, very similar to Aristotle and MacIntyre relied on the
idea of phronesis to guide him in his business affairs. Practical wisdom is the specific
type of wisdom that Franklin was concerned about when he talked about wisdom in his
previous works. His work has influenced the American democratic society for the many
proverbs that he wrote in his works. Practical wisdom is involved with doing what is
good, whether in private or public situations, for the betterment of everybody. This
emphasizes the importance of utilitarianism to Franklin’s views. This kind of propensity
for practical wisdom is reflected in his numerous proverbs, Poor Richard’s Almanac. He
intended the proverbs in the book to be used across all nations to be wiser about their life.
Franklin provides a fine example of rhetorically robust, ethical practitioner for sales
professionals seeking to practice their craft with integrity.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The world of the sales representative is rhetorical in substance and in action. In the examination of the current communicative environment of the capital equipment salesperson, the literature demonstrates that the role can be characterized primarily by being accountable for revenues and quotas. Additionally, the role is one that operates at the periphery of organizations and is somewhat autonomous from the day-to-day operations of the firm by which the salesperson is employed. A third characteristic is the constant emphasis on building and maintaining relationships with the stakeholders in the interests of the company. These stakeholders involve relationships among customers and prospective customers and among supervisors, peers, partners, suppliers, manufacturers, administrators for billing, and other support roles, as well as the marketing and other facets of the very organization by which the salesperson is employed. Fourth, the salesperson has to operate in the rhetorical venue of constantly persuading these stakeholders. The fifth and final characteristic of the environment is that the salesperson’s role is perceived as one that is inherently deceitful and breaches ethical boundaries.

Our examination is of the world of capital sales, that is, people in the business of selling equipment, hardware, software, and services primarily from one business to another. The position we are describing has been termed “outside sales,” and while the concepts described can pertain to other types of sales, such as retail or business to consumer sales or person to person selling, these positions fall outside of the scope of our investigation and analysis. Describing the communicative environment of the world of
sales is difficult primarily because all sales organizations are different, just as all workplaces are different. Each company and each location has its own culture with its own idiosyncrasies. The role of the salesperson of today is unique and can be differentiated from other roles related to corporate responsibilities.

1.1 The Four Eras of Sales

The nature of sales has changed over the years based on emphasis, from production-centric, sales-centric, marketing-centric, and most recently partnering-centric. The era of partner-centric sales has demanded more and more from the salesperson, but the demand for sales has not decreased. In the production era, when demand exceeded supply, the salesperson was primarily concerned with meeting the short term goals of his or her firm. The role was characterized by informing customers of availability of products and services and taking orders. The sales representative in this era was evaluated on his or her level of activity rather than ability. Quantity of sales calls and product demonstrations in this era were emphasized. Selection and training of salespeople were given far less emphasis, as was the design of the territory and call planning. The role in the production era was to stimulate demand for products and services rather than to satisfy demand for products. To be effective in this role was to be aggressive and to overcome objections in order to close more sales. The focus of management in this era was to motivate the salesperson to work harder to make more calls and product demonstrations.

The marketing role of the salesperson shifted more to customer orientation. Representatives were concerned with solving a customer’s problem with their firm’s current product and service offerings. This remains the same paradigm, with an emphasis
given to the customer's interest; however, sales representatives were still more interested in selling to meet their company's needs for revenue and profit generation than in solving those prospective customers’ needs. Activity was still very important; however, the sales representative was encouraged to work smarter (i.e., on the right prospects at the right time to generate more revenue and profit). Management emphasis in the era of marketing was focused on training towards a customer orientation, activity focusing on the number of calls and the quality of these calls.

With the evolution of the sales representative into the role of a relationship manager, more research has been done to explain the difference between successful sales representatives and their mediocre counterparts. Plouffe and Barclay (2007) have examined the role of the sales representative from within their own organizations and have put a new emphasis on the ability to work within one's own organization to facilitate the success of the current day sales representative. They have shown that as the role has evolved from a transactional facilitator to one of relationship manager, the relationships within the representatives company is just as important as the external activity and relationships. Therefore, sales representatives have relationships both with buyers and with their own organizations. The ability to navigate within their company and within their hierarchy has great implications to their success. This research is summarized as "how stuff gets done inside our company and how sales are enabled for the customer" (Plouffe & Barclay, 2007, p. 531).

1.2 Sales is Rhetorical

Of all of the literature reviewed, the idea of persuasion has been one of the key attributes of the salesperson. Tom Hopkins (1982), in the introduction to his bible, How
to Master the Art of Selling, used the word *persuade* as a synonym for the word *sell.*

Everything in this book is designed to help salespeople persuade others into buying or, as the author likes to say, *own* the product or service that the salesperson is selling. Hopkins (1982) illuminates the trade by using techniques designed to lead the prospect down the primrose path of getting to say yes. He covers every aspect of the sale, from prospecting, the initial meeting, the presentation, and demonstration to closing and then asking for referrals and following up with the customer for repeat business. Hopkins and many others in the sales-training business have written countless books and sold countless audio and videotapes all aimed at teaching the ability to persuade others (Gitomer, 2003; Hopkins, 1982; Pacetta, 1995; Thull, 2010). Robert Cialdini (1993) has examined the techniques used by sales professionals from a social scientific perspective in his work *The Psychology Influence of Persuasion.* Cialdini (1993) refers to salespeople as "compliance professionals." In this work, the author "combined experimental studies with a decidedly more entertaining program of systematic immersion into the world of compliance professionals" (Cialdini, 1993, p. xii). Through his experiment posing as a salesperson, the author found that six basic techniques were employed by salespeople to get the prospect to say yes. The principles he outlined were "consistency, reciprocation, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity" (Cialdini, 1993, xiii). This work is written from a psychological scientific perspective because the author is a psychologist.

Interestingly, the author uncovers and demonstrates the psychological principles that the sales professional uses in getting a person to say yes to an offer. While the approach is questionable, one cannot argue with the principles outlined in his work. However, Hopkins (1982) would most assuredly argue that the approaches Cialdini outlines are far
more complex than described. The sales literature is all based on social science, advancing the principles of psychology in order to stimulate a favorable response of yes. While traditional approaches to sales are based on psychological principles, the idea is to persuade. I am arguing that the profession of sales belongs not to the field of psychology, but in the tradition of rhetoric.

The Importance of Establishing Credibility with Customers

Thull (2010), Hopkins (1982), Gitomer (2003), and numerous other authors in the arena of sales, wrote about the need to establish credibility with the customer. There are various techniques provided in the literature, among them are to reiterate the company's narrative, provide third party proof sources, and to refer to ancient wisdom in order for sales representatives to distinguish themselves as ones that speak the truth. The world of sales is marked by persuasion and in order to accomplish this, the sales representative must establish credibility with the customer.

As previously discussed, the role of the sales representative is increasingly becoming more centered on longer term relationships with customers and prospective customers as well as relationships inside the sales representatives own company. The idea of relationships in business is ancient. Since before the open marketplace, relationships have existed for the purpose of making a profit. In the world of sales, relationships often become ever more important for the success of sales representatives, their managers, and upper management, as well as the success of the company itself. Many a merger has begun with the relationship between the sales representative and the buyer. The partnering aspect of sales demands that such relationships exist and thrive. Relationships can be problematic. For the salesperson, the idea of a relationship can be
especially troubling because the long-term relationships with customers, managers, and other stakeholders grow and evolve, feeling more and more personal.

There are great legal implications to a company when a sales representative lies, exaggerates the effectiveness of his or her product, or belittles competition. These actions can cost the company millions in fines and judgments (Boedecker, Morgan, & Stoltman, 1991). Beyond the legal implications is the cost in capital in dealing with customers and prospects. According to Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987), pursuing short term goals may negatively affect long-term goals such as developing a continuous relationship with buyers. This juxtaposition of goals can be manifested in several ways. For example, a salesperson "stretching the truth" in an effort to sell might alienate prospects and others who become aware of that behavior, yet would be rewarded if quotas are met (Boedecker et al., 1991).

The perception of salespeople being more dishonest is pervasive, and there are many reasons that the perception exists. First, some salespeople are dishonest and look for short term gains quickly and at any cost. The prime examples of court cases listed are those of people lying to get the sale. The culture of the selling organization can also be a factor in lies and deception that take place in the market because salespeople learn from one another.

The moral dilemmas that salespeople face and the perceptions of salespeople acting immorally usually involve the perception that they lie. Whether they are misrepresenting a product’s capabilities, delivery times, warranties, or any of the examples given previously, we have shown that there are great implications to the lies that they might tell. There is also the perception of the salesperson having to lie in order
to succeed. On the surface, it may appear that the stress that salespeople feel, such as the consequences of not reaching or the possibility of failing to reach short term objectives imposed on them by the company for which they sell and at the same time having the possibility of gaining high rewards through a commission-based compensation system puts them a position where they feel the need to cut ethical corners in order to achieve their objectives. According to Strutton, Hamilton, and Lumpkin (1997), the tendencies of salespeople to engage in corrupt transactions are influenced by the circumstances that they are exposed to, such as them working in isolation, the competitive nature of the job, and opportunities for temptation. These are factors that lead to ethical and moral problems faced by the representative (Belizzi & Hite, 1989; Boatwright, 1993; DeConnick, 1992). However, while these may be pressing issues and contributing factors, the sales representative of today, being also the conflict manager or relationship manager, faces far too many dilemmas to be based solely on compensation issues.

Ethical codes are in place at the majority of sales companies and ethical behavior is usually encouraged (Belizzi & Hite, 1989; Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1991; Strutton et al., 1997). However, because sales representatives are often in solitude, the situation poses circumstances of temptation, opportunity and pressures that are extremely difficult to address by a single code. Additionally, salespeople rarely agree on what constitutes unethical sales behavior (Chonko & Hunt, 1985; DeConnick, 1992).

Trust and honesty constitute the basis for a successful exchange in the marketplace. Without a basis of honesty and trust, business cannot be conducted at any level (Bok, 1978). The problem with sales ethics has been summarized by Strutton et al. (1997) as the problem of motivating salespeople to do what is right, which is something
that they already know. A related problem which frequently occurs, involving salespeople has to do with the uncertainty regarding whether absolute truth standards apply in a given situation (an “uncertainty” problem). This problem arises when salespeople do not know whether or not what degree of truth-telling (e.g., full disclosure) is morally required (Bok, 1978).

It has been shown that if salespeople can resolve ethical issues, they face less tension on the job, less anxiety, and less frustration (Levy & Dubinsky, 1983; Strutton & Hamilton, 1997). The resolution of such conflict results in lower turnover and often higher productivity (Dubinsky, 1985). According to Boedecker et al. (1991), salespeople who engage in unethical practices lead to negative word of mouth and general dissatisfaction from customers.

There appears to be a tension between sales ethics and sales results. In a letter to company employees, Ann Mulcahey (2008), the chairperson of the Xerox Corporation, alluded to this tension when she states: “In our highly-competitive environment, where the pressure to perform is intense and relentless, we must constantly strive to do more and do better. Results are important – vital in fact – and the pressure to improve results will always be with us” (Business Ethics Policy memo). Mulcahey goes on to explain that the “means we use to achieve our results” are equally important. This tension between sales and ethics is illuminated extensively in the majority of literature on the subject of sales ethics. With the belief that salesperson must be a liar in order to succeed, as has been shown previously and the implications of the lies being so severe and also at the same time the implications of not succeeding being just as severe if not more so, how does a
person succeed in sales while maintaining the sense of integrity that is mandated personally and professionally, honestly, morally, legally, and ethically?
CHAPTER TWO

SALES AS RHETORIC

The premise advanced is that the role of the sales representative is rhetorical in substance and action. This chapter describes the sales representative’s world and places it in the broader tradition of the classical rhetorical construct. The usefulness of this rhetorical tradition becomes evident when characterizing the nature, formation, and development of relationships associated with the role of the sales professional.

The marketing and sales literature characterizes the role of the capital equipment salesperson as one of primarily being accountable for the generation of sales revenues and the attainment of specific sales quotas. The role is boundary spanning, situated at the periphery of the company, and largely autonomous from the company’s day-to-day operations. Additionally, the salesperson’s role places considerable emphasis on building and maintaining relationships with the various stakeholders of interest to the company and important to the welfare of the sales person personally. These stakeholders include customers and prospective customers, supervisors, peers, partners, suppliers, manufacturers, billing administrators, and individuals in other support roles (e.g., marketing, advertising). The nature of the environment in which the salesperson operates is a rhetorical venue of constant persuasion of these stakeholders. Characteristically and unflatteringly, the role is often described as one that is inherently deceitful and breaches ethical boundaries.

This investigation focuses specifically on the role of the capital equipment salesperson who sells equipment, hardware, software, and services primarily business to business. The position also has been called “outside sales.” While the concepts relating
to outside sales can pertain to other types of sales, such as retail or business-to-consumer sales or person-to-person sales, these positions fall outside of the scope of the current investigation and analysis.

2.1 The Communicative Environment of Sales

Describing the general communicative environment of the world of sales is complex. Sales organizations differ, as do the companies in which they are situated. Each company and each location has its own culture with its own idiosyncrasies. The role of the salesperson however is unique and can be differentiated from other roles in the organization. These unique attributes can be described by the following statements made by Dubinsky, Howell, Ingram, and Bellenger (1986):

1. Salespeople are physically, socially, and psychologically separated from other line and staff personnel. This separation tends to lessen the normative constraints felt by the salesperson and mitigates any social control resulting from informal group affiliation in the home organization.
2. Salespeople must be flexible and innovative because of the non-routine nature of their jobs.
3. The selling job puts the salesperson in a boundary (spanning) role position. Salespeople must work with a wide range of customers and gatekeepers who are outside of the organization.
4. Salespeople play multiple roles. They are often responsible for making sales to new and current customers, providing customer service, assisting with market analysis, and other diverse tasks. In some situations they are called to be advocates for their employer, in others they may represent the customer, and in still others themselves.
5. Selling necessitates great persistence and self-motivation. Salespeople often are directed by automatic supervisory aids such as quotas, compensation plans, and expense policies in the absence of personalized supervision.
6. Generally the selling situation is filled with uncertainty and interpersonal conflict; thus the demands for coping are greater than in most other jobs. The fact that salespeople’s performance is very visible adds to their role stress.
7. Many selling jobs produce delayed results from the salesperson’s effort. The fact that a sale may take months of effort lessens the reinforcement of good performance, contributing to disillusionment.
The role of the salesperson is dynamic. Over the past thirty years, the role has taken many different directions. In the production era, salespeople focused on simply making the sale, with little emphasis on relationship building or on long-term customer satisfaction. The role as it has evolved now requires building relationships at every level of the prospective customer's organization and fulfilling that organization’s needs and requirements through the benefits and added value that the salesperson's organization can provide.

2.2 The Four Eras of Sales

The evolution of the sales role can be thought of as consisting of four focal eras: production, sales, marketing, and, most recently, partnering. With each era, the role has expanded and changed. Each era has demanded higher levels of personal investment from the salesperson.

Production era. In the production era, when demand exceeded supply, the salesperson was primarily concerned with meeting the short-term goals of his or her firm. The role was characterized by informing customers of availability of products and services and taking orders.

Sales era. The sales representative in this era was evaluated on his or her level of sales activity rather than ability. Quantity of sales calls and product demonstrations in this era were emphasized. Selection and training of salespeople were given far less emphasis than now, as was the design of the sales territory and call planning. The role in the sales era was to stimulate demand for products and services rather than to satisfy demand for products. To be effective the sales person had to be aggressive and overcome customer
objections to close more sales. The focus of management in this era was on motivating the salesperson to work harder to make more calls and product demonstrations.

**Marketing era.** The marketing era shifted the sales representative’s job to a more customer-oriented role. Representatives were concerned with solving a customer's problem using their firm's current product and service offerings. This paradigm remains, with a nod given to the customer's interest; however, sales representatives in this era were still more interested in selling to meet their company's needs for revenue and profit generation than in solving prospective customers’ needs or problems. As such, the focus in the marketing era was on selling products in the firm’s existing product portfolio rather than envisioning future products based on unmet customer needs. Activity (e.g., calls and visits) was still very important; however, the sales representative was encouraged to work smarter (i.e., focus on the right prospects at the right time) to generate more revenue and profit. Management’s training emphasis in the era of marketing was on developing a customer orientation with primary activity focusing on the number of calls and the quality of these calls.

Traditional approaches to sales have emphasized activity external to the representatives’ company. The quality and quantity of sales activities had to be given priority for the sales representative to succeed. The task of making sales calls was given top priority.

**Partnering era.** In today’s era of partnering, more demands are placed on the sales representative to create value for the customer. Sales representatives are now concerned not only with generating revenue and profits for the firm they represent but also for helping their customers and prospective customers with the challenge of
decreasing their firm’s costs and/or increasing revenues. Customer relationships are emphasized considerably more. Given this focus on the customer, the quality of the salesperson’s business acumen is tied integrally to his or her success because capital investments made by the prospective customer are often riskier and more expensive and the time spent by the sales representative courting prospective customers is greater. The focus is on building trust. This type of relationship often has been compared in the literature to a marriage because both parties must work together in a fashion that is mutually beneficial, focusing on long-term outcomes (Piercy & Cravens, 1995; Kanter, 1994). Beginning with this era, the focus shifts from a short-term transactional orientation to a longer-term, mutually beneficial relationship. In distinguishing the production, sales, marketing, and partnering eras, three main differences emerge: (a) more attention given to interpersonal communication, (b) emphasis on long terms goals, and (c) focus on developing relationships.

2.3 The Relationship Manager and Conflict

In the current partnering era, special attention is given to conflict management because it is inherent in maximizing outcomes for both the company the sales person represents and the company with which they are doing business. The sales representative must now satisfy the needs of both the selling and buying organizations. Persuasion takes on a new dimension in this partnering era. The representative is no longer simply attempting to persuade the prospective or current customer; but he or she must also persuade his or her own organization of the benefits of the partnering relationship. The current literature puts emphasis on a new unit of analysis—the sales team, meaning the people involved in the selling process from both the buying and selling organizations. No
longer is the sales representative the unit of analysis. However, in fact, accountability for
the success of the partnering relationship lies with the sales representative. Excuses are
not accepted when representatives lose a long-term customer or when representatives do
not meet the expectations of their employer. Representatives must engage the proper
resources within their firms and within their customers’ firms to gain a competitive
advantage in a given situation. The individual representative usually does not have the
knowledge or the intra-firm influence to propose and implement programs that have the
potential to change the way both firms conduct business. As a result, the sales
representative becomes a relationship manager. He or she is now responsible for
managing the relationship between the two firms and the conflicts that can arise between
and among all of the stakeholders in the processes involved (Brooksbank, 1995; O’Neal
1989; Webster, 1992; Weitz & Bradford, 1999).

Today the sales representative is a relationship manager. Complex selling
situations call for a development of a series of relationships within the sales person’s firm
and the firms to which he or she is selling. Sales representatives must gain entry to a
prospective firm, stimulate interest in products and services within that firm, and then
gain access to the decision makers within that firm. These representatives must propose
potential solutions for the specific problems within the firm while continuing to gain
interest and awareness at higher and wider levels, ultimately persuading higher and wider
levels of the organization of the value of their partnering relationship. The sales
representative conducts a symphony in which all of the players agree at some level that
the solutions proposed can be implemented without drawing too heavily on the resources
of either firm involved.
Conflict has been defined in the sales construct as "the behaviors or feelings that one or both of the parties have when the other party has the potential to or obstructs, interferes with, or makes less effective a party's behavior associated with the goals in a relationship" (Weitz & Bradford, 1999). In the literature of sales and sales training the idea of conflict has traditionally been framed around the term "objections," meaning that before the prospective customer makes a favorable buying decision, the sales representative is presented with one or more objections as to why the prospect is not moving forward. These objections are then overcome by presenting various techniques in manipulation, using appropriate words, third-party references, or examples to refute any negative perceptions, and then the sale is closed (Gitomer, 2003; Hopkins, 1982; Rackham, 1988).

The definition of conflict juxtaposed with the idea of the complex sale warrants further examination. The operative word here is "goals." A party in this complex relationship could be anybody that holds a stake in the decisions being made and as such can run interference in the process. The interests of all parties are at stake, and discerning those interests is the task of the sales representative. Many times decisions are lost to competition because of undisclosed interests. It is the task of the sales representatives to know the interests of all parties involved so that to solutions can be proposed that satisfy those interests.

Thomas (1976) has proposed five ways of dealing with conflict in a buyer-seller relationship. The first is avoidance. Avoidance is defined as behaviors that ignore or fail to consider the conflict between the two parties. These behaviors are characterized by low levels of assertiveness and even lower levels of cooperation. The second approach is
accommodation. The seller gives into the concerns of the buyer. Very low levels of assertiveness and high levels of cooperation characterize this approach. The third approach is confrontation. This approach is emphasizes the perspective of the seller to the exclusion of the buyer. The confrontational approach involves high levels of assertiveness and low levels of cooperation. The fourth approach is compromise characterized by high levels of assertiveness and cooperation, the compromise approach is defined by behaviors related to the buyer and seller reaching agreement by a series of concessions to one another. The final approach is collaboration, characterized by high levels of cooperation and assertiveness whereby the buyer and seller reach agreement by exchanging information and working together to find integrative solutions. These five methods of dealing with conflict address the relationship between the sales representative and the buyer. However, the relationships within the sales representative’s organization are not addressed but as important.

2.4 Navigating the Organization

Sales representatives navigate around their organization to gain knowledge of the people and their activities. The first set of activities of the successful sales representative involves what has been termed "exploratory navigation." This is the “extent to which salespeople engage in activities which help them gain a generalized understanding of their own organization, its capabilities, and its resources" (Plouffe & Barclay, 2007). Exploratory navigation involves seeking new and unfamiliar departments, personnel, or other resources that may lead to future gains that at the present are most likely undefined. This activity includes but is not be limited to keeping up with new hires, promotions and other changes in the personnel, sitting in on production meetings with manufacturing
personnel, keeping up with the company's internet and intranet sites, tracking development with other sales teams and sales organizations within the company, riding with delivery or service personnel, and stopping by the warehouse. This is aimed at the establishment of relationships with other people in the organization for future benefit.

In addition to the more generalized activity of exploring the organization, specific activity driven at specific sales cycles within one's organization is important to one’s success. To “make sales happen,” specific resources within the selling organization must be employed. This behavior can be considered "entrepreneurial" because sales representatives must behave as entrepreneurs to improve their success in sales (Duncan et al., 1988). This entrepreneurial activity emphasizes the need to move beyond formal organizational charts and hierarchies to identify salient human resources and policies to maximize job performance. Navigation is specific to the sales cycle and moving specific sales through the process of eventually reaching an agreement with the organization. In examining this role of the successful salesperson, one must bear in mind that others within the organization are aware that a sales representative is attempting to make a sale and that the rewards for that person are high. This immediately can lead to others in the organization having a sense of power because if they don’t agree with the sales representative this can delay or even kill the opportunity for that sales representative. A simple example of this can be the need to get approval from the service department to place a specific printer at a customer's location where space may be constrained. If the location has limited space, the service department may need to approve the location because they require room to service the printer. There may be a procedure for requesting approval from the service department whereby the sales representative contacts the
service manager and the service manager asks a service technician to go out to the customer location and inspect the site. If the service representative has service calls to make then the site inspection can be delayed in the interest of servicing current customers, and the service representative will try to make it only when his schedule permits. Meanwhile, with the end of the month approaching the sales representative needs the sale to attain his quota. The sale cannot happen without the approval of the service representative or his manager. Normal procedures can be complicated: the request is submitted to the service manager, it is forwarded to the service representative, the service representative puts it on his schedule and goes out to the location to examine the site. He then reports back to the service manager and finally obtains the appropriate approval to the sales manager or the salesperson. The month could end during the process and the sales representative misses his quota. However, if sales representatives have an existing favorable relationship with their service manager, they may be able to eliminate the service-representative step and measure the space themselves, taking the measurements to the service manager and obtaining approval immediately, enabling them to close the sale, and make their sales quota.

Navigation of the organization does little for salespeople other than it increases their knowledge of the organization (Tsoukas, 1996). The knowledge gained by such navigation must be transformed into action from coworkers because they are providing the sales representative with resources and support. The need to influence others to take specific actions becomes of primary importance to the sales representative to achieve the desired results for them, the sales manager, and the sales organization. As the Plouffe and
Barclay (2007) stated, "As social exchange theory explicates, the ultimate goal of exchange partners is typically to steer key others to do as they wish and/or need" (p. 533).

The importance of influencing internal human resources becomes just as important as influencing the potential customer. The outcomes of such influence are too numerous to give an exhaustive list. However, some examples of these resources are those related to marketing, finance, laws, contracting, pricing, and service (Marshall et al., 2003). This list may be extended to include those involved with the production and inventory. While in a perfect environment the sales representative may have an infinite supply of inventory, oftentimes a sales representative is faced with situations in which certain products may be limited and times to delivery may be extended. The ability of the sales representative to expedite his or her orders becomes important in meeting customer deadlines or, more often, to receiving credit for a sale in a given time frame to meet sales quotas. According to Plouffe and Barclay (2007), "the more inventory a salesperson can garner, the better his or her sales performance" (p. 534). The relationship with order-fulfillment, warehousing, and supply-chain personnel becomes extremely important because of requirement to meet management and customer demands.

There are other less apparent benefits that stem from relationships one has within one's organization. The most obvious of these is the sales assignment itself. Sales workloads vary as do the potential of sales territories (Cravens, Woodriff, & Stamper, 1972; Ryans & Weinberg, 1979). Territories are designed using a variety of means some of which are arbitrary (Deutscher, Burgoyne, Grundman, & Marshal, 1982). Therefore, sales representatives are in competition for premium assignments, territories and specific accounts. The assignments and territories are often not decided by the first-line sales
managers. Regardless of what the sales representative is told (e.g., "it's not the territory, it's the sales rep") the assignment has considerable impact on the sales representative's performance. Therefore, the relationship that representatives have with their manager has much to do with their sales volume.

The sales representative’s alignment with specific sales managers can also result in benefits. High-performing salespeople attempt to align themselves with top-performing managers. A top-performing manager is more likely to give guidance and coaching that suits the individual sales representative in a fashion that enables him or her to succeed. A supervisor that enables the representative to perform at his best is also an important factor in the success of a sales representative (Rasmussen, 1999). The relationship with other managers and one's own manager also determines the success of the sales representative. The managing of the politics of getting reassigned to another sales manager to improve one’s lot can be extremely complex.

One of the most interesting and important findings predicting success is the sales representative’s ability" to get key others in their organization to bend and/or break formal and informal rules, policies and procedures in their favor" (Plouffe & Barclay, 2007, p. 534) leads to better performance. The number and quality of the relationships one has with those in a position to make exceptions becomes one of the most important indicators of performance and ability.

Sales is Rhetorical

The recurring theme in sales is the central role played by persuasion. Tom Hopkins (1982) in his introduction to *How to Master the Art of Selling* uses the word *persuade* as a synonym for the word *sell*. His book is designed to help salespeople
persuade others to buy or, as the author likes to say, own the product or service that the salesperson is selling. Hopkins (1982) illuminates the trade by using techniques designed to lead the prospect down the path of getting him or her to say yes. He covers every aspect of the sale, from prospecting, the initial meeting, the presentation, and demonstration to closing and then asking for referrals and following up with the customer for repeat business. Hopkins and many others in the sales-training business have written countless books and created countless audio and videotapes aimed at teaching the ability to persuade others (Gitomer, 2003; Hopkins, 1982; Thull, 2010).

**Traditional sales techniques.** The successful sales person has many techniques for getting the customer down a path from not knowing who you are or what you offer to actually procuring your goods or services. The steps in the typical sales cycle (with related techniques) are shown in Table 2.1 and include: (a) interest, (b) awareness, (c) conviction, (d) desire, and (e) action.

*Interest* is capturing the attention of a prospective customer and gathering his or her interest in your goods or services. This involves prospecting, which includes networking, cold calling, trade shows, or using whatever means you can to get the attention of the prospective buyer. The techniques used in this stage include various scripts to use while phoning prospective customers, writing letters that have interesting wording and whom to send the letters to within the companies you are trying to sell to, and then how to follow up on those prospecting letters. These are all designed to garner interest in the salesperson’s offering and are based on appealing to either the prospect’s ego or their business interest. Interest involves prospecting and using the proper techniques to get into an account.
Awareness occurs after the prospective customer has an interest in the product or service that you offer. The sales representative must make the company aware of the specific offering and the benefits of doing business with that specific company. This is accomplished by setting up an appointment with the necessary people at the prospective organization and then establishing rapport, gaining acceptance, garnering more interest and establishing credibility with the prospective customer. Again, there are numerous ways to establish rapport and techniques that can help the sales representative to do so quickly. Likewise there are techniques that can be used to help gain more interest. These involve questioning techniques designed to get the prospect to open up to the salesperson and to instantly like the salesperson. All of these steps are necessary and are a part of establishing credibility with the customer. Usually the sales representative will attempt to get the prospective customer to talk about themselves and their philosophies of business and life. The more they speak about themselves, the more they tend to like the salesperson. If the salesperson can successfully establish credibility and create a rapport with the prospect, then he or she is in a better position to find out if the customer is a good prospect. The Awareness phase involves setting the appointment and asking the appropriate questions at that meeting and qualifying the prospect as a valid prospect.

Conviction is the phase of the sales cycle that takes place after the prospect is interested in the product or service and is aware of the selling company and its offering. At this point the sales representative must convince the prospect to do business with his company rather than the competitor. This involves a series of presentations, demonstrations and conversations all related to the benefits associated with doing business with your company. If the salesperson does his or her job correctly they have
established themselves as the best solution for the customer’s problems. The salesperson has identified the customer’s problem and has suggested how the customer’s company can solve those problems using the salesperson’s product or service. The presentation involves identifying benefits, which can be technological, financial, and/or operational, all of which appeal to the prospect on a rational, business, factual basis. The good salesperson will also appeal to personal benefits by appealing to emotions or the prospect for better evaluations by superiors. The salesperson can also establish credibility by referring to third-party references, personal connections, or others in their organization.

Desire involves getting the customer to want to do business with the salesperson and his or her organization. At this point in the sales cycle, the customer has established what he or she wants and he or she is convinced that the salesperson and his or her product or service can deliver. Getting the customer to want to do business is accomplished by maintaining and creating more credibility, establishing a comprehensive list of the benefits of doing business with the firm, and making sure that all of the possible contingencies are mapped out and dealt with accordingly. This includes overcoming any objections the customer may have. Contemporary authors offer many techniques for overcoming objections, such as “feel-felt-found.” When a customer offers up a reason why he or she does not want to buy your product now, the sales representative would say “I understand how you feel”, and Bob at xyz company felt the same way, but he found that going with the program immediately offered him a way to save over $x in the first two months of implementation.

Action is the stage of the sales cycle in which the sales representative asks the prospect to take a course of action. This action unusually involves closing the sale by
asking the customer for the order or to take the necessary steps to close the order, such as
make the final recommendation to the board or take it to the necessary people for
signature. Here more than anywhere else in the sales cycle, the customer must make the
appropriate emotional and rational appeals to the prospect so that something happens.
Again, contemporary authors provide a myriad of closing techniques that will allow for
success for the sales representative. This step involves negotiating techniques and saying
the right things at the right time. Table 2.1 summarizes the previous discussion.

Table 2.1

Sales Cycle Stages with Associated Activities and Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in Sales Cycle</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Prospecting</td>
<td>Cold Calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Appointments</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviction</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Demonstrating, Presenting, Questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Appeals to financial logic and emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ROI</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action-Close</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Appeals to emotion, logic, credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Credibility</td>
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</table>

Cialdini (1993), a social psychologist, has examined the techniques used by sales
professionals from a social scientific perspective. He refers to salespeople as "compliance
professionals." Posing as a salesman, Cialdini combined experimental studies with his
own immersion into the world of compliance professionals. He observed that sales people
used six basic techniques to get the prospect to say yes. The techniques are consistency,
reciprocation, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity. While his approach posing as a
sales person is unusual, the techniques he identified have face validity and support the
premise that sales is rhetorical.
Hopkins (1982) would most assuredly argue that the approaches Cialdini identifies are more complex. While much of the sales literature is based in the social sciences, the underlying motive in selling is to persuade. As such, the better framework for understanding sales would appear to come from the tradition of rhetoric rather than social psychology.

While rhetoric is more than mere persuasion, it is closely related to the study of persuasion and "at times been understood simply as the study of persuasion" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990). Because salespeople are responsible for quotas, managing relationships and the conflicts associated with those relationships, and getting the resources, positions, and affiliations needed to be successful in sales, persuasion becomes essential in the execution a sale and the practice of selling. Kennedy (1999) defined rhetoric as "the energy inherent in emotion and thought, transmitted through a system of signs, including language, to others to influence their decisions and actions" (p. 7). According to Herrick (2001), "When we express emotions and thoughts to other people with the goal of influencing (persuading) them we are engaged in rhetoric" (p. 5).

### 2.5 Aristotle and the Rhetoric of Sales

Aristotle's treatment of rhetoric can be applied the conduct of selling. Aristotle (1991) considered rhetoric as a way to use one’s faculty in persuading other people. This recognizes that the rhetoric investigates systematically what he or she is presented and the resources available for handling the given situation. Aristotle’s (1991) classification of speech as determined by the situation has relevance for sales: (a) deliberative or political oratory, intended to recommend a future course of action; (b) epideictic or ceremonial oratory, intended to praise or blame a current state of affairs; and (c) forensic
or legal oratory, intended to provoke judgment concerning a past action. The first two books of rhetoric deal with the rhetor’s ability to organize knowledge and to structure arguments. This process can be guided by formal processes called heuristics, such as the "common topics" or topoi. Bizzell and Herzberg (1990) wrote,

Aristotle conceptualized these as "places to look" for arguments. We would think of them more as structural devices. For example, a topic might be a comparison (here is how A is like B or unlike B) or greater or lesser (here is how A is greater than B or less than B). The rhetor should also consider his audience, in terms of both their particular cultural predilections and their individual emotions, which are conditioned by age and social class. To this end, Aristotle pioneered the study of what we call psychology, of the individual and the social group. Book III of the Rhetoric considers how to place the content of the speech in effective order—which argument to make first and so on. Then the rhetor polishes his style and prepares to deliver the speech, planning his gestures, dress, and other nonverbal means of enhancing his message. (pp. 30-31)

**Techne, sales, and rhetoric.** Rhetoric has a robust history. Plato equated rhetoric with cookery and disliked the subject as taught by the ancient sophists. The developments of the mid fourth century, changed the course for rhetoric as a basis of learning. According to Aristotle (1991), “Socrates and others had established rhetoric as a legitimate basis for further education and in so doing they were setting a trend that was to last for a millennium” (p. 15). Aristotle’s work on rhetoric gives us a manual of persuasion based on a highly philosophical conception of rhetoric and has been the basis of rhetorical education ever since. In this work Aristotle puts rhetoric alongside of the other arts and sciences to which the platonic tradition assigned greater significance. According to Crisp (2000), “this task is achieved by rhetoric as a techne. For Aristotle, the word techne has a specific significance. The concept of techne is correlated with that of an epistome: what an epistome is in the field of theoretical speculation, a techne is in the domain of practical reasoning” (p. 15).
According to Crisp (2000), Aristotle discussed the ways the soul expresses or attains truth. While he does not limit himself to only five ways by which the human does this, he does list five faculties in the soul. Crisp (2000) identified these five faculties of the soul: (a) art, (b) scientific knowledge, (c) practical wisdom, (d) philosophic wisdom, and (e) intuitive reason.

_Epistome_ is scientific knowledge that is demonstrable either visually or through argumentation. In other words, it is knowledge showing how you arrived at your conclusion. Epistome involves showing that your claims are true based on valid reasoning from starting points that are believed to be true (e.g., mathematical theorems based on proofs).

_Techne_ is art or applied science or skill (Crisp, 2000). Aristotle called techne a “trained ability of rationally producing” that is, the ability to produce something reliably under variable conditions based on reason. This means that one must have some knowledge of the principles one relies upon to accomplish the task of producing. For example, carpentry relies on geometric principles to produce reliable results, consistently.

_Rhetoric_, no field to rely upon, is its own domain. It relies on the subject matter at hand for us to use all the given faculties of persuasion.

The whole function of rhetoric can be divined by reflection on its central purpose. This we are told at the start, is the detection in any given subject matter of its persuasive aspects. It is this universality of rhetoric that gives it its affinity with dialectic, as opposed to an affinity with poetry or drama… Although a science of persuasion aspects might initially seem hopelessly general, it turns out, fortuitously, that there are in fact only three kinds of proof available to the rhetorician. These three kinds of proof are those achieved by argument, those by character and those by emotion and this trichotomy dominates much of the work.” (Aristotle, 1991, p. 15).
So the orator (or the salesperson in our case) must be both a logician and a psychologist as he or she is making arguments of character, rational thought, and emotions.

Psychology is indeed the science of both character and emotion and it is convenient that these two areas of proof fall under the same discipline. Argumentation, however, though essentially logical is also greatly characterized by the subject matter that it concerns. Hence, there cannot for the rhetorician be a general science of argument in the way that can be a general science of emotion and character, namely psychology. The character of a rhetorical argument will be determined by the character of the persuasion that is being essayed…the tasks therefore, of the orator are to find aspects of the subject that can be employed in arguments designed to establish the features that need to be stressed and that can be used to induce the appropriate emotional state in the listener and to create the appropriate impression of character. (Aristotle, 1991, p.17)

While the subject matter may be open, the principles of rhetorical theory are always in play, which is consistent with sales. The object of sales is to render action that is favorable to the sales representative and the company that he or she represents. This is done by establishing credibility with the prospective customer (ethos) appealing to those emotive characteristics that matter to the prospect (pathos) and establishing a credible financial, technological and functional (logos) argument to enable the prospective customer to act. This is an art. The art of sales is practiced using proven techniques to make arguments from the standpoint of credibility, logic, and emotion.

2. 6 Characteristics of Rhetorical Discourse

The characteristics of rhetorical discourse help to enlighten our view of sales as rhetorical. There are five characteristics of rhetorical discourse that require discourse to be: “1) planned, 2) adapted to an audience, 3) shaped by human motives, 4) responsive to a situation, 5) persuasion seeking” (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 35). Reflecting on the requirement to plan, traditional sales training literature is emphatic about preparation.
Countless books and articles aimed at improving the sales professional’s performance stress the importance of doing the homework necessary to make a persuasive presentation, an introductory sales call, and a product demonstration. Thull has devoted much of his writing to the importance of preparation in identifying the appropriate prospect and engaging a prospect. He (Thull, 2010) writes, "Successful salespeople take the time to prepare for the initial conversation with potential customers" (p. 83). He continued:

By completing the work, sales professionals lay the groundwork for a successful initial conversation. They create a basis for engagement that enables them to speak with customers using the customer's language, frame the initial conversation around issues of importance to their customers, and build a perception of professionalism in the customer's minds that clearly differentiates them from their competition. (p. 84)

This is exactly the role of rhetorical discourse as Thull (2010) states:

Regardless of the goal at which it aims, rhetorical discourse involves forethought or planning.... Issues that arise in planning a message include: Which arguments will I advance? Which evidence best supports my point? How will I order and arrange my arguments and evidence? What aesthetic resources are available to me, given my topic and audience. (p. 8)

The idea of planning has always been a defining characteristic of both sales and rhetoric. Another characteristic shared by both sales and rhetoric is the notion that both are adapted to an audience. Planning is done with a particular audience in mind. The audience of a salesperson is the customer or prospective customer, the internal stakeholders of the company, coworkers, and management. While many rhetors must guess whom their audience is, the salesperson is to know the audience intimately, so that messages may be sent for which definitive action can be taken. Essential to rhetorical discourse, as well as the salesperson’s discourse, is "forging a link between the rhetor's views and those of an audience. This means attending to an audience's values,
experiences, beliefs, social status, and aspirations" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958). Persuasion, the principle goal of rhetoric, depends on the common ground between the speaker and the audience. For salespeople this is common ground between the prospect or customer or internal stakeholder and themselves. The Aristotelian (1991) notion of enthymeme, "an argument built from values, beliefs, or knowledge held in common by a speaker and an audience," applies (p. 121). When adapting the message to a particular audience those values and beliefs must be considered. In fact, the audience’s primarily responsibility is assessing the quality of the orator’s argument as well as his behavior (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958). As such, the audience must demand well-reasoned, ethically-based rhetoric. The ancient idea of caveat emptor (let the buyer beware) takes on a fresh dimension when we consider that the audience itself demands rhetoric of well-reasoned argumentation.

The third characteristic of rhetorical discourse, human motive, is closely related to sales. Rhetorical actors behave in such a way that commitments, desires, objectives, and purpose leads to action. This resonates well with the salesperson, because any presentation, proposal, product demonstration, or communication with a customer or prospective customer leads to engaging with the sales representative's company by buying or moving toward buying (Hopkins, 1982; Gitomer, 2003; Thull, 2010). By aligning their own motives with the purposes, goals, and motives of their audience, the rhetorical actor and the salesperson can evoke favorable action to accomplish mutually beneficial outcomes. Rhetorical idea of revealing human motives also has significant meaning in the relationships that salespeople have with all of the subjects in the customer's firm and within the company he or she represents. The motives of sales
peoples’ managers, upper management, coworkers and other sales people, and all stakeholders are revealed in their rhetoric and actions. Sales representatives must listen closely to the words, be attentive to all actions of every stakeholder in every given communication, and be aware of the interests of the stakeholders in that given situation to make sure that the salesperson’s interests at least appear to be in alignment with that stakeholder’s needs and requirements. Sales representatives can find themselves in very unfavorable situations very quickly if these motives are taken lightly or if they do not pay attention to the motives of those around them. Motives have a moral quality because there are good and bad motives. Motives may be clearly evident or they may be hidden or disguised. Upon examination and reflection, however, if the interests and position of the actor are taken into consideration, one can discern the motives and intentions of the actor. Sale representatives must act according to their own interests at the same time. In a perfect world, the sales representative’s motives are similar to all of the stakeholders with whom they interact (i.e., the prospect, the manager, the other sales representatives in the office, and upper management). Oftentimes hidden agendas and disguised motives turn the sales representative into a pawn of a disguised chess game (Dorsey & O'Keefe, 1994).

The fourth characteristic of rhetorical discourse is that rhetoric is responsive. Typically the discourse of rhetoric is in response to a given situation or to a given rhetorical statement. Any statement once advanced is an invitation to respond. Bitzer (1992) explained, "Rhetorical discourse, I shall argue obtains its character as rhetorical from the situation which generates it." He calls rhetoric "a mode of altering reality... by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (Bitzer, 1992, p. 7). Bitzer goes on to discuss the rhetorical situation as defined by
three elements: the audience, the exigence, and the constraints. The exigence is defined by Bitzer (1992) as “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (p. 4). That being said, not all exigencies contribute to the rhetorical situation at hand; the particular exigency must be able to be modified by discourse. The fact that there has been a hurricane cannot be modified by discourse; however, the reaction to the disaster by federal agencies can be altered by effective discourse. The audience for Bitzer is one that can act in response to the discourse described. The third feature of Bitzer’s (1992) definition is constraint: "besides exigence and audience, every rhetorical situation contains a set of constraints made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (p. 8). Bitzer (1992) goes on to argue that a given rhetorical situation actually prescribes the response appropriate to the given situation: "If it makes sense to say that situation invites a fitting response, the situation must somehow prescribe the response which fits" (p. 10). Having assessed the given situation in light of the audience, its exigence and its constraints, the rhetor discovers the limits of what can properly be stated to improve the situation and then utters the rhetoric that is dictated by those three elements (Bitzer, 1992). This rhetorical situation that Bitzer is alluding to translates well to the sales representative’s situation of involvement in a given sales situation. The sales representative is consistently looking for the favorable response from all stakeholders.

The fifth characteristic of rhetorical discourse and arguably the most salient characteristic for purposes of this research is that rhetorical discourse seeks persuasion.
Many authors and scholars are concerned with the nature of rhetoric as persuasion because the very roots of the art state as much. Rhetoric is defined by Aristotle (1991) as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (p. 21).

Aristotle (1991) states:

No; things that are true and things that are better are, by their nature, practically always easier to prove and easier to believe in. Again, it is absurd to hold that a man ought to be ashamed of being unable to defend himself with his limbs, but not of being unable to defend himself with speech and reason, when the use of rational speech is more distinctive of a human being than the use of his limbs. And if it be objected that one who uses such power of speech unjustly might do great harm, that is a charge which may be made in common against all good things except virtue, and above all against the things that are most useful, as strength, health, wealth, generalship. A man can confer the greatest of benefits by the right use of these, and inflict the greatest of injuries by using them wrongly. (p. 23)

**The ethos, pathos, and logos of sales.** Aristotle (1991) named three means of persuading an audience to favorable action; ethos, pathos, and logos, which are also means to the favorable end for the sales representative. According to Aristotle (1991) ethos refers to the character of the speaker. When the speaker is perceived as having credibility by other people, his power of persuasion increases. The tradition of rhetoric is rich with the methods of persuasion. The need for persuasion in the life of a sales representative is a necessity.

Bizzell and Hertzberg (199) summarized the rationale underlying why sales belongs in the field of rhetoric and why concepts in rhetoric would fit well into a manual for salespeople:

The arguments that one discovers or invents should appeal to reason (logos), emotion about the subject under discussion (pathos), and trust in the speakers character (ethos). For Aristotle, the appeal to reason was by far the most important...sometimes conveying the idea that he would prefer to conduct persuasion by reason alone. His treatment of ethos and pathos, however, shows that he realized that these more emotional elements were also usually necessary.
for persuasion. The pathetic appeal seeks to align the audience's emotions with the speaker's position (for example, arousing the audience's anger against an enemy's nation one wishes to attack). The ethical appeal evokes the speaker's moral authority ("I am old and wise and of a noble family") or the shared concerns of a speaker and audience. Even rational appeals are not devoid of ethical and pathetic elements, for they rely upon either the enthymeme, a syllogism that takes its major premise from received wisdom, which the audience has been conditioned to respect, or the example, an illustration that must be recognizable and meaningful to audience members as a part of their own cultural history. Thus assent is gained to truth that must be only provisional or probable, not certain, such truths being the usual domain of rhetoric. (p. 31)

That Aristotle puts emphasis on the rational argument in persuading is intriguing. Traditional resources on sales have put more emphasis on the emotional argument to persuade. Hopkins (1982) tells the salesperson, "Don't sell logic—arouse emotions" (p. 44). Just as Aristotle recognized the need for ethical and pathetic appeals, Hopkins recognizes the need for rational appeals to persuade. For Hopkins (1982), selling involves a triangle with three sides being equally important: the first side is selling skills or knowledge of the techniques used to elicit a favorable response, the second side is product knowledge or knowledge of the applications of the product or service, and the third side involves the work ethic. With the evolution of the roles and responsibilities discussed previously, the move from psychology to rhetoric makes sense not only from a persuasive perspective but also because of the increasing role of the relationship manager.

2.7 Establishing Credibility with Customers

Hopkins (1982), Gitomer (2003), and other authors in sales wrote about the need to establish credibility with the customer. There are various techniques provided in the literature, including reiterating the company's narrative, providing third-party proof sources, and referring to ancient wisdom to distinguish the salesperson as one who speaks
the truth. For the sales person to make a persuasive statement action impelling, the sales representative must first establish credibility with the customer.

The sales representative’s role is increasingly becoming more centered on long-term relationships within and outside the firm. Relationships in business are an ancient concept. Since before open markets relationships have existed for the purpose of exchanging goods and making a profit. In sales, relationships become ever more important. Many a merger has begun with the relationship between the sales representative and the buyer. The partnering aspect of sales demands that such relationships exist and thrive. Relationships can be problematic. For the salesperson, the idea of a relationship can be especially troubling because the long-term relationships with customers, managers, and other stakeholders grow and evolve, causing the business relationship to feel more and more like a personal relationship.

These problems are illustrated in The Force (Dorsey & O'Keefe, 1994), about a year in the life of Fred Thomas, a successful sales representative for the Xerox Corporation. The work focuses on the relationships that Thomas has with his customers, other sales representatives, his manager, and others involved within the sales community in which he works. One relationship described in this book is of particular interest because it demonstrates the problems Thomas and his representative had in dealing with his representative’s customer. Collins (1995) commented that:

Diane, one of Thomas's sales reps has become best friends with Libby, one of her customers. Thomas is uncomfortable with this relationship because Diane is reluctant to force Libby to approve a subsidiary's purchase of a Xerox copier that is of questionable value to the firm. Thomas unsuccessfully offers Libby a $10,000 credit for approving the subsidiary's purchase. In December, Libby aids Diane by ordering ten Xerox copiers for her firm, which are the equivalent value to the one Xerox copier Thomas wants to sell the subsidiary. This sale puts Diane at 120% of budget, thus making president's club. As a result of Thomas's
continuous sales pressure, Libby ends her friendship with Diane and Thomas takes her off of the account. (p. 347)

Collins talked about this relationship as a deal that is closed by Thomas to accomplish his sales objectives for the year. For Collins this is ethically reprehensible because of the manipulation of a relationship to accomplish those ends. However, this may represent a naive position on the part of Collins and possibly the position of the other representative, Diane.

The first thing that comes to mind in discussing this relationship between Diane and Libby is the description that Diane and Libby have become "best friends." This is a personal relationship based on a business relationship, one in which interests of the parties involved must be taken into consideration and one in which the interests of the parties involves a profit. So why the astonishment when the relationship is exhausted of mutual benefit? The idea of friendship and relationship gets somewhat confusing when discussing business relationships that extend over longer periods. A discussion of friendship may help to clarify the situation.

Aristotle (1991) discussed friendship using texts from over two thousand years ago may help to clarify the idea of building and maintaining business relationships. The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People touches on the integrity needed to have such relationships (Covey, 2004). However, Covey never makes the distinction between business and personal relationships. There is a tension between business relationships and personal relationships, implying that in business anything is acceptable. Just like The Godfather, ordering a longtime associate to be killed for the business interest excusing it with the phrase “it's nothing personal, it's business.” Likewise, a manager can fire a
representative uttering the same, or a sales representative can ask for an order—and
everybody can call salespeople unethical for doing so.

Aristotle discussed three types of friendship. There are friendships of utility,
friendships of pleasure, and friendships of a higher degree, which Aristotle refers to as
perfect friendship:

There are therefore three kinds of friendship, equal in number to the things that
are loveable; for with respect to each there is a mutual and recognized love, and
those who love each other wish well to each other in that respect in which they
love one another. Now those who love each other for their utility do not love each
other for themselves but in virtue of some good, which they get from each other.
So too with those who love for the sake of pleasure; it is not for their character
that men love ready witted people, but because they find them pleasant. Therefore
those who love for the sake of utility love for the sake of what is good for
themselves, and those who love for the sake of pleasure do so for the sake of what
is pleasant to themselves, and not in so far as the other is the person loved but in
so far as he is useful or pleasant. And thus these friendships are only incidental;
for it is not as being the man he is that the loved person is loved, but as providing
some good or pleasure. Such friendships, then, are easily dissolved, if the parties
do not remain like themselves; for if the one party is no longer pleasant or useful
the other ceases to love him. (Aristotle, 1991, p. VIII)

The author is speaking of the type of friendship one enjoys on a daily basis, the
business friends that we see on a daily basis. We would not be in relationship with any of
the stakeholders inside or outside of our company without the primary reason of making a
profit or turning revenue. These relationships can grow and become more pleasant over
time as people become more familiar with one another as pleasantries are exchanged over
a matter of years. Most people in the workplace do not make the distinction between
friendships of utility and pleasure and the good, they simply understand that the
friendships they have with people they grew up with are different than the friendships
they share with people they know from work. This does not mean that people do not
become involved with others from the workplace and attend weddings, graduations,
funerals, and the like or even that the godfather of one employee's son works alongside of the other employee.

Finding a friendship in the workplace that reflects the perfect friendship that Aristotle spoke of is extremely rare. These lines blur even more when a culture at the office is framed by metaphors of family, home, and other warm, familiar connotations. There is a difference between having a pleasant work environment and one's home. In a sense, all relationships from the perspective of the sales representative are friendships of utility in that these relationships are entered into on the basis of generating benefit for the sales representative, their manager, and their company. These are not family relationships, regardless of the closeness one may feel towards others in the workplace; the relationships are based on utility and as such can be dissolved when the utility of such a relationship no longer exists (Alpern, 1983).

2.8 The Prevalence and Implications of Deceit

This distinction between friendships of utility and pleasure and the friendship based on virtue is often the source of perceived ethical violations by salespeople. There is a perception of sales and salespeople of dishonesty. The belief that salespeople are dishonest is nothing new. Jacob selling bread and pottage to Esau in Genesis can mark the start of a long history of dishonest sales. The market in ancient Rome had signs posted saying *caveat emptor* (let the buyer beware). Exaggerated claims if not outright lying by salespeople is a part of the tradition of sales that can be traced back to the markets themselves. Additionally, the 1990 Gallop Poll reported that the American public perceived salespeople as having less of a sense of ethics than the rest of the public (Collins, 1995). This perception is further noted by Bok (1978) when she states, "It is
simply a fact, for instance, that one behaves differently toward a trusted associate and toward a devious, aggressive salesman" (p. 127). The popular literature is full of stories of exaggerated claims and outright lies by salespeople. According to *Sales and Marketing Management* (Cummings, 2001), the sixth biggest complaint by buyers is that representatives mislead clients. Cummings (2001) wrote that deception is rampant not just in sales, making the problem difficult to address. Deception among salespeople is a significant problem because unethical behaviors put a bad reflection in the entire company.

The typical salesperson is paid based on the production of revenue and or profit, whether that be a base salary plus commissions or bonus or straight commission, the incentive system has been shown to increase the likelihood of ethical shortfalls. Bok (1978) illustrates this point well when she states, "In every kind of selling and advocacy—wherever the opportunities for deception abound, rewards are high, and time for considering alternatives often short—the danger of the formation of deceptive habits is much greater than in other kinds of work" (p. 121). She (Bok, 1978) also points to part of the sales problem when she states, "Their professions, moreover, reward competition and unusual achievement. Cutting corners may be one way to such achievements, and if perception is pervasive and rarely punished, then it will be all the more likely to spread" (p. 120). As we have discussed, the rewards for achievement in sales are high and dictated by time. The means by which the salesperson can deceive are bountiful.

Collins (1995) illustrates the point when he comments on a series of lies and deceptions that allowed Fred Thomas to meet and exceed the quotas set upon him by Xerox. There is no dispute that lies and deception were used by the salesperson to
achieve the ends, and, as Collins (1995) and other authors have pointed out, salespeople lie and deceive because it is part of life.

There are legal implications for a company when a sales representative lies, exaggerates the effectiveness of his or her product, or belittles competition. These actions can cost the company millions in fines and judgments (Boedecker et al., 1991). Beyond the legal implications there is the cost in capital of dealing with customers and prospects. According to Dwyer et al. (1987), pursuing short-term goals can affect long-term goals such as developing a positive ongoing relationship with customers. This juxtaposition of goals can be manifested in several ways. For example, a salesperson "stretching the truth" in an effort to sell might alienate prospects and others who become aware of that behavior, yet would be rewarded if quotas are met (Boedecker et al., 1991).

Boedecker et al. (1991) identified five legal issues when examining legal consequences of faulty salesmanship: creation of unintended warranties, dilution of warning effectiveness, disparagement of competitive offerings, misrepresentation of the offerings, and tortuous interference with business relationships. The authors explain the creation of unintended warranties through an illustration of two cases, the first of which is Lindemann v. Eli Lilly (1987). In this case, the salesperson unintentionally overstated the technical capabilities of a chemical product and $6,000 or the original cost of the product was awarded to the plaintiff. The second case cited is Carpetland v. Payne (1989). In this case the salesperson verbally promised a one-year warranty for the carpet he sold, even though the written agreement expressly denied any warranties. The plaintiff here was awarded $2,388 or the price of the product.
The next type of legal issue that Boedecker et al. (1991) discuss is a dilution of warning effectiveness. The first case cited is *In re First Commodity* (1987). In this case the sales representative lied when he told customers that the warnings in the prospectus were unimportant. This resulted in class action suits that paid up to $3M. In *Stevens v. Parke Davis* (1973) salespeople promoted a pharmaceutical without mentioning warnings, and the plaintiff was awarded $400,000 in a wrongful death suit.

The list goes on to discuss a sales person’s lies about product capability or disparaging remarks about competition, resulting in high monetary judgments against the salesperson's company. The result of lying can have devastating consequences legally and upon relationships with customers and prospective customers. Deceit and lies are pervasive in sales as they are in other endeavors involving human beings.

Ethics codes of conduct are in place at the majority of sales companies and ethical behavior is usually encouraged (Belizzi & Hite, 1989; Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1991; Strutton et al., 1997). However, the boundary-spanning solitude and conflict-managing roles common to most sales positions present opportunities for misbehavior and these problems are difficult to address with any single corporate code of ethics. Even more problematic is that salespeople rarely agree on what constitutes unethical sales behavior (Chonko & Hunt, 1985; DeConnick, 1992).

### 2.9 Conclusions

The evolution of the sales representative’s role from simply meeting the demands of the public with his or her wares to partnering with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders puts the representative at the forefront of the economic activity. While the tradition of sales is rooted the social sciences (e.g., psychology, sociology), so too can
this field be informed by the rhetorical tradition aimed at the creating good for society and mankind.

The Aristotelian tradition of rhetorical discourse relates to the act of selling. The sales representative’s task is intertwined with the Aristotelian notion of rhetoric as “the use of any available means of persuasion.” Without a doubt, the tradition of sales as practiced owes a great deal to the art of rhetoric and to the ideas of relationships as set forth by Aristotle.
CHAPTER THREE

THE PRACTICE OF SALES

The notion of practice as it relates to professional conduct has often been associated with professions such as medicine, accounting, and law rather than the field of sales. Entry into professional practice typically implies years of educational preparation followed by internships or apprenticeships, successful passage of examinations certifying competency and domain knowledge, and eventual licensing by the state or relevant professional board, followed by continuous education to remain current in the practice. Given these requirements for entry into other professional practices, how can one propose sales as a professional practice, particularly given the ease of entry? That a person can enter the sales profession by submitting nothing more than an employment application implies that sales is neither a profession nor a practice.

Kimball (1995) traced the history and profession and provided a notion of professional ideal. From this notion of professional ideal, Kimball defined profession as “a dignified occupation espousing an ethic of service, organized into an association, and practicing functional science” (p. 17). These three key features were noted by Kimball (1995) as the enduring characteristics of professions. Moreover, professions involve a level of prestige and power that members are able to enjoy as part of the society (Sullivan, 2005).

Goode (as cited Larson, 1977) provided eight characteristics of professions. These characteristics include having a distinct identity, membership in a community of practice that is continuous, shared values, a role definition that is accepted both by members and non-members, a common language, recognized authority over the members, clear social
membership boundaries, and being able to socialize new members into the profession. In the past, professions tend to enjoy a significant level of autonomy; however, contemporary professions tend to be situated within an organizational setting (Kimball, 1995). Bridging this gap in of the past and the contemporary conceptualizations of professions, the enduring features of professions are relative autonomy and the presence of professional ethics.

According to Kimball (1995), one of the defining features of a profession is that the accomplishments of every profession contribute to the betterment of the world at large. Professions are social constructions that aim for some form of positive results that will benefit the society at large (May, 2011). The expected positive results involve benefits to productivity, place as an institution, other people, and the profession itself (Sennett, 2008).

The telos or purpose of every profession tends to be general, primarily serving as the foundation for more specific goals (Kimball, 1995). In order to achieve these goals, professions often have to prescribe a set of virtues that are expected to be upheld by the members of the profession. The possession of these virtues is instrumental in the fulfillment of the purpose of every profession.

Kimball (1995) described profession as a tradition that has endured over time. From a historical perspective of profession, cultural ideals and values usually form the foundation of professions. From these cultural values and ideals, expectations from the profession as a whole are generated, often referred to as professional ethics. The concept of profession as a tradition of practice will be discussed next, specifically within the professional context of sales.
3.1 Practice Defined

Outside capital sales is more than the application of manipulative techniques and psychological tricks that enable one person to coerce another into spending money on a given product or service that he or she really does not want. In fact, becoming an expert in the area of sales takes years of training and experience. In that regard, capital sales can be considered a practice as interpreted by some, including Aristotle. In *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* practice is considered both a noun and a verb. As a verb, its meaning is:

1…c : to be professionally engaged in *practice medicine*> 2 a : to perform or work at repeatedly so as to become proficient *practice the act*> b : to train by repeated exercises *practice pupils in penmanship*>.

And as a noun its meaning is:

2  a : systematic exercise for proficiency *practice makes perfect*> b : the condition of being proficient through systematic exercise *get in practice*> 3 a : the continuous exercise of a profession b : a professional business; especially : one constituting an incorporeal property.

3.2 Characteristics of Practice

These definitions are not limited to the practice of law or medicine nor does it mandate that practice require a license. The term, however, is associated with extensive training. The definition differs from the vernacular use of the term in another way. When we speak of professional practice in a given field, we often do not associate that form of practice with the same form of practice required to play a musical instrument proficiently or to master a given sport. However, it is not out of the question to apply the same definition for both because hours and years are required to master a musical instrument, sport, or applied field of endeavor such as sales.
**Deep practice.** Coyle (2009) described the ingredients necessary to make a champion by examining the dynamic growth of talent in unexpected locations around the world. He calls these places “hotbeds.” Coyle distinguishes what these special professionals do that average professionals do not. He describes methods employed for deep practice in which an exercise is broken down into manageable chunks whereby each motion can be studied and analyzed and then once mastered executed at any rate of speed. Through repetition of the proper motions, mastery can be gained. The masters of any profession have an innate intuition that allows them to sense when practice is off, spot mistakes before they happen, and correct mistakes quickly, often while in motion. Coyle notes with particular attention the drive a champion must have—the passion the individual must have to take the arduous steps over and over again that are necessary to achieve the level of expertise of a champion. Coyle (2009) wrote,

> Where deep practice is all about staggering baby steps, ignition is about a set of signals and subconscious forces that create our identity, the moments that lead us to say that is who I want to be. We usually think of passion as an inner quality. But the more I visited hotbeds, the more I saw it as something that came from the outside world. (p. 101)

Identifying oneself as a virtuoso musician or a world-class tennis player or, for that matter, a superb sales professional plays a large part in the level of proficiency and perfection in one exhibits. This concept underlies the level of commitment one has to one’s sport, instrument, or knowledge domain or profession.

**Commitment.** McPherson (1997) isolated the distinguishing feature possessed by successful music students as compared to their less successful counterparts. He analyzed data on intelligence, aural sensitivity, mathematical ability, sensory rhythm, and income levels. None distinguished successful from less successful music students. In addition,
prior to the students’ first music lessons, he collected data on how long they thought they would play their instrument. The responses were categorized as short-term commitment, medium-term commitment, or long-term commitment. As it turned out, success at music was significantly influenced by the child’s level of commitment to his instrument before starting the lessons. With the same amount of practice, the long-term-commitment group outperformed musically the short-term-commitment group by 400 percent. McPherson attributed much of their success to their perception of self and a crystallizing experience very early on in the process in which they thought, “I am a musician.”

The concept of commitment to success in a profession is also useful in an examination of sales. The perception that sales is fallback work for people looking for another position is contrasted with that of sales as a position actively sought by highly-competent individuals. Commitment distinguishes these two views. Most certainly, many people enter sales to gain the experience with which to leap to other higher-level positions. Just as Collins sold religious articles for a brief period, many sell until something better comes along. If one pursues a sales position in such a manner, as is illustrated by McPherson’s (1997) music success study, then a sincere pursuit of perfection in the field does not logically follow.

**The master coach.** A third component in the making of a champion, according to Coyle (2009), is the master coach, a person who inspires the student to work with passion and engage in deep practice. The coach recognizes the passion of individual students, knows the subject matter, and knows the students and what motivates them. The traits Coyle attributes to the master coach are not necessarily great knowledge of the subject,
but the coach’s ability to instill the student’s trust in him or her and the passion the coach himself or herself has for the art of instruction.

Coyle’s deep practice and its notion of excellence harkens to the habituation of excellence attributed to Aristotle (1991) in *Nicomachean Ethics*:

Again, it is from the same causes and by the same means that every virtue is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art; for it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre-players are produced. And the corresponding statement is true of builders and of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly. For if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher, but all men would have been born good or bad at their craft. This, then, is the case with the virtues also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances. Thus, in one word, states of character arise out of like activities. This is why the activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the states of character correspond to the differences between these. It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference. (Book 11, Ch. 1).

Excellence in any endeavor, be it selling, playing tennis, or playing the lyre, is a matter of habit. Whether we do those activities well is in accordance with the practice and practices associated with that given endeavor included is the practice of sales. Therefore excellence in sales requires the disciplines and rigor to develop good sales habits. Without a commitment to the right kind of activities, excellence will not be achieved. If our activities are not of the right kind, it follows that excellence in practice will not be achieved. Characteristics develop from corresponding activities. For Aristotle, the end goal in any activity is happiness. If excellence or virtue comes from men doing virtuous acts, then some may say that men are virtuous by performing virtuous acts, just as people may be musical if they play an instrument or salespeople may be professional because
they sold something. However, if we find a person who speaks and writes correctly, without having any knowledge of the rules of grammar, it is not possible to consider that person well-versed in the in grammar. Aristotle (1991) continues:

The case of the arts and that of the virtues are not similar; for the products of the arts have their goodness in themselves, so that it is enough that they should have a certain character, but if the acts that are in accordance with the virtues have themselves a certain character it does not follow that they are done justly or temperately. The agent also must be in a certain condition when he does them; in the first place, he must have knowledge, secondly, he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly, his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character. These are not reckoned in as conditions of the possession of the arts, except the bare knowledge; but as a condition of the possession of the virtues knowledge has little or no weight, while the other conditions count not for a little but for everything, i.e. the very conditions which result from often doing just and temperate acts (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2, Chapter 4).

From this, we must look at practices outlined by Aristotle that make an action part of the virtue that one is attempting to fulfill. The actor must perform those actions in a certain spirit or frame of mind and act according to the character expressed. There are requirements that must be met to act virtuously. The first of these is that the actors must be fully aware of what they are doing, with knowledge of why the action is taking place. The second of these is that they must choose deliberately the action, and it must be chosen for its own sake. Finally, the action must be an outcome of the actor’s moral disposition. While Aristotle is speaking of moral virtuous action, the same can be said if the action is done in the name of a professional practice. If salespeople make a sale and don’t know not why they were successful, they have not participated in the excellence of selling. If the salesperson is successful and understands why they are successful and the actions were taken deliberately with forethought and preparation, they then participate in the profession of selling.
To relate sales to the concept of practice and convincingly apply the idea of virtue and excellence to the art of selling, we want a contemporary interpretation of Aristotelian practice. MacIntyre (1984) applies Aristotle’s virtues and interprets it within a contemporary framework as:

Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (p. 187)

**Complexity, internal goods, and standards of excellence.** MacIntyre (1984) described three criteria with which to judge an activity as a practice. These are complexity, goods that are internal to the activity, and standards of excellence. Accordingly, we see that the lawyer and the physician are taking part in practices. Likewise, the accountant and the football coach are involved in a practice. McIntyre (1984) provides three examples of practices: football, chess, and farming. These examples meet the first and third criteria because they can be complex and standards of excellence have been established through the tradition of the activity. There are clearly good and bad football coaches, and determining the good from the bad has nothing to do with personal preferences. If, for example, we refer to Vince Lombardi or Tom Landry as a bad coach, it reveals that we have little knowledge of the game of football. The practice of football implies certain objective standards of excellence. The standards have evolved historically based on the tradition of the game, and the practitioners themselves can engage in changing the standards of excellence.

What about the second criterion: internal goods? What are internal goods? If we examine the example of football, there are two classes of goods gained by engaging in the
practice of coaching football. If one is successful at coaching football, one may gain fame, money, and perhaps power. These are considered to be external goods. They are not specific to the sport of football for there are many ways to gain fame, money, and power. There are, however, goods that are specific to the practice of football. In coaching or playing football, one can gain a specific sort of competitiveness, drive, and confidence, an eye for imaginative strategy, and some particular analytical skills. These are internal goods.

**Virtue as an element of practice.** Virtues are an integral element in the definition of *practice*. *Virtue* is “an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods” (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 191).

Therefore, without virtue, one cannot engage in practice. The virtues that MacIntyre (1984) cites are justice, courage, and honesty. He argues that for internal goods to be realized in any practice these virtues must be present. Turning back to the practice of football, why does one need to be just in realizing the internal goods of football? The answer lies in the fact that one must give other practitioners what is deserved. If they treat their opponents differently because of certain preconceived notions, thereby not giving them their deserved respect, they are treating these opponents unjustly. The virtues of justice and honesty are linked. When engaging in practice, one must realize fully the standards of excellence that are in place and honestly acknowledge their own shortcomings in relation not only to other practitioners, but also to those standards of excellence. Just as honesty requires acknowledging the superiority of others,
it also demands courage to face harsh criticism from superiors. MacIntyre considers the problem that we cannot easily make choices to resolve conflicts between our practice of coaching football and the practice of rearing a family. The different practices do not provide the resources for ordering the conflicting claims. It appears that individuals must decide between the claims of different practices based on personal preference. MacIntyre asks us to conceive of human existence as unity. MacIntyre (1984) views the role playing that we may perform in these situations as reflecting skill more than virtue:

At the same time liquidation of the self into a set of demarcated areas of role-playing allows no scope for the exercise of dispositions which could genuinely be accounted virtues in any sense remotely Aristotelian. For a virtue is not a disposition that makes for success only in some one particular type of situation. What are spoken of as the virtues of a good committee man or of a good administrator or of a gambler or a pool hustler are professional skills professionally deployed in those situations where they can be effective, not virtues. Someone who genuinely possesses a virtue can be expected to manifest it in very different types of situation, many of them situations where the practice of a virtue cannot be expected to be effective in the way that we expect a professional skill to be…. And the unity of a virtue in someone’s life is intelligible only as a characteristic of a unitary life, a life that can be conceived and evaluated as a whole. (p. 205)

This is not to say that a virtuous salesperson does not have professional skills, quite the opposite; the salesperson involved in the practice of sales will master the skills necessary to be very proficient at his or her craft. These activities are a part of human existence and must be considered in the life of the practitioner as a whole. The salesperson is also a mother, father, daughter or son. The virtuous practitioner is virtuous in all of their actions, as a part of their overall narrative.

**Narrative**

MacIntyre (1984) promotes the narrative as a way to understand human actions. This enables us to understand all activity in terms of intentions. We can explain one
activity as cleaning the house or getting exercise or pleasing one’s spouse. While all of these describe one and the same activity, they also all imply a history. To explain the activity as pleasing one’s spouse situates the explanation in the history of that particular relationship and marriage; by doing so it has implications for the larger institution of marriage. The explanation only makes sense through the lens of that history. MacIntyre (1984) drew conclusions from these observations:

We identify a particular action only by invoking two kinds of context, implicitly if not explicitly. We place the agent’s intentions, I have suggested, in causal and temporal order with reference to their role in his or her history; and we also place them with reference to their role in the history and setting or settings to which they belong. In doing this, in determining what causal efficacy the agent’s intentions had in one or more directions and how his short term intentions succeeded or failed to be constitutive of long term intentions, we ourselves write a further part of these histories. Narrative history of a certain kind turns out to be the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions. (p. 208)

For MacIntyre (1984) human activity must be understood as a narrative. He turns to the individual in that context:

I am someone’s son or daughter, someone else’s cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be good for one who inhabits these roles. (p. 220)

Therefore, the answer to the question of what people ought to do depends on knowing the narratives to which they belong and what roles they play in those narratives and the demands these roles have for these people. So the idea of what is good for a person lies embedded in that person’s narrative and history. This can bring about the unity of life of which the author writes. A life so unified in this sense is in essence a lifelong journey of striving for the good. Where Aristotle sees the good as the virtuous activity of the soul, MacIntyre (1984) comments:
Some conception of the good for man is required. Whence is such a conception to be drawn? Precisely from those questions which led us to attempt to transcend that limited conception of the virtues which is available in and through practices. It is in looking for a conception of the good which will enable us to order other goods…. It is in the course of the quest and only through encountering and coping with the various particular harms, dangers, temptations, and distractions which provide any quest with its episodes and incidents that the goal of the quest is finally to be understood. A quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge. (p. 219)

The self is embedded in its own narrative and history and as such is part of a larger tradition. For our purposes, the self is participating in a practice that has its own history and narrative as well as its own tradition. MacIntyre (1984) writes,

A living tradition then is an historically extended, socially embodied argument and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations, sometimes through many generations. Hence the individual’s search for his or her goods is generally and characteristically conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual’s life is a part, and this is true both of those goods which are internal to practices and of the goods of a single life. (p. 222)

The sales profession has standards of excellence. However, the standards of excellence have always concentrated on the goods themselves rather than the practice of sales—revenues (sales) and profit (sales net expenses). So what goods are internal to the profession? First, by placing sales in the tradition of rhetoric, the tradition of sales has a long history. We can argue that the practice of sales goes back to Abraham negotiating with the seller the price of a plot in which to bury his wife. Moreover, the tradition has goods internal to it such as communication in a civil manner and presenting arguments persuasively and with confidence to solve problems in various situations. Another good internal to the practice of sales is an acquired strategic mindset for the purpose of gaining approval and finding solutions to given problems. One can also gain a competitive spirit not found in many other environments. The most important internal good, however, is the
ability to communicate on many different levels, to many different people and to establish long-lasting, fruitful relationships.

Standards of excellence must also be considered. The sales indoctrination process has centered around goods external to the sales process—primarily money and wealth. Very rarely are virtues discussed and when they are it is around the concept of honesty, which is quickly forgotten when the sales representative is faced with demands from superiors or customers. The institution focuses on goods that are external—primarily sales, profits, and costs. Anyone can get into the profession of sales and tell enough lies to be successful in the short term. But to enter into a practice of sales requires dedication and passion that requires greater personal investments to remain honest, ethical, moral, virtuous, and in compliance with the law. Some can go into sales and remain in it throughout their entire lives, yet not be in the practice of sales. Sadly, many in the profession do exactly that. Nevertheless, sales can still be a practice according to the characteristics considered here.

3.3 The Mentor

Many people entering into sales look for guidance from their immediate supervisors at various junctures in their careers. Drake, Meckler, and Stephens (2002) note, “Transitions are a pervasive part of life and occur throughout individual, group, and organizational histories” (p. 141). Mentors can provide guidance in how to navigate these transitions. Drake et al. (2002) go on to say that those entering into an organization “are not mature adults,” and that some employees view their supervisors as “parental figures who would help them grow up” (p. 141). In contrast, an ideal mentor realizes that we are mature adults and that we understand the importance of results. While the immediate
supervisor can be an excellent source of information about the organization and the processes and people involved in the organization, the coach or mentor we seek ideally is most likely not the supervisor, as they are most likely not practicing sales in a manner we are describing, as they are most likely concerned only with the goods external to sales.

Mentoring has been a subject research over the last fifteen years. Fagnenson (1989), Colarri and Bishop (1990), and Scandura (1992) have shown that in comparisons of non-mentored and mentored individuals the results are consistent: individuals with informal mentors report greater career satisfaction, career commitment, greater career mobility, and more positive job attitudes (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000).

The concept of mentoring involves a senior person taking an active interest in guiding the career of a more junior person (Kram, 1985). The idea is named for a character in Homer’s *The Odyssey* who looked after Odysseus’s son, Telemachus. According to Moberg and Valasquez (2004), “mentoring is a process that has been used for centuries as a means of handing down tradition, supporting talent, and securing future leadership” (p. 95). The mentoring process initiated the ideas of apprenticeship. Throughout history we can find examples of great leaders all of whom had great mentors. Aristotle mentored Alexander the Great. Gertrude Stein sponsored Hemingway, Thurgood Marshall had a mentor in Charles Hamilton and master salesman John Patterson mentored IBM founder Thomas Watson (Moberg & Valasquez, 2004, p. 95).

Because the mentoring process has been so successful many organizations have instituted formal mentoring programs designed to keep and develop upcoming talent (Moberg & Valanquez, 2004; Ragins et al., 2000). Firms that have had formal programs include Kodak, Xerox, Exxon, Motorola, Johnson and Johnson, Lucent Technology,
Pitney Bowes, GM, and AT&T (Benabou, 2000). While the research shows that mentoring is helpful to both the mentor and the protégé, a number of ethical concerns arise in formal programs.

### 3.4 Problems with Mentoring

Indictments of formal mentoring programs include ethical concerns such as favoritism or empire building. Indeed, some consider that mentoring is exclusionary to women and African Americans and maintains the status quo in terms of power and conflict (Moberg & Valanquez, 2004). Additionally, mistreatment has been reported by protégés including political sabotage, revenge, and harassment.

Conversely, mentors have complained about backstabbing and instances of trickery by their protégés. In response to these criticisms, some companies have established programs that are structured and more formal (Bauer, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1991). Such formal programs have problems, too. Complaints from protégés have included mismatches in values, work style, or personality between the protégé and the mentor. Another common complaint is mentor neglect, self-absorption, and intentional exclusion. Petty tyranny, politicking, and various other forms of manipulative behavior have cited as concerns as well as mentor incompetence.

From the mentor’s perspective the amount of time that the protégé demands from the mentor, the protégé’s dependence on the mentor, deceit and deception are issues (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Scandura, 1998; Valasquez & Moberg, 2004). Mentoring does not imply a friendship because mentoring is not a bond grounded on affection. Mentorship is more one-directional in nature because the mentor’s job is to develop his or her protégé.
Indeed, the literature suggests that mentoring relationships should not be conceptualized as a contractual relationship because of the inherent inequality and power struggles within the relationship. Nor is it to be conceived of as a gift-giving relationship, because the mentee is formally assigned to senior members of the organization. Additionally, if a mentor is formally assigned by the organization, there are no guarantees that that individual assigned to the mentor role is involved with the practice of sales nor is there a guarantee that that person espouses the virtues for which the practice demands.

This is not to say that there is no value in a formal mentoring program. Moberg and Valasquez (2004) suggest that the formal mentor is to provide three key benefits to the protégé: knowledge, wisdom, and developmental support. Applying knowledge functions as key in the formal process. The mentor imparts to the mentee the knowledge of how the organization works. In the partnering era of sales, knowledge of one’s own organization is critical. To marshal the resources necessary for success one must have a key understanding of the organization and its functions. Who are the key players? Who can get things done? Who can bend the rules when necessary? Thus the formal mentor within one’s own organization may be extremely helpful in establishing the relationships necessary to transact business. For this reason alone, participation in a formal mentoring process is advised. Providing wisdom and development, the second function of a mentor, are of a different class that cannot be given by people who are not themselves in the practice of sales. One the reasons that the profession of sales has a reputation for unethical behavior is because the tradition of deceit and manipulation through stimulus and response and the development of how to deceive and take advantage of human nature have been passed on from one generation of sales representatives to the next. Certainly,
the practitioner should take the useful advice of the mentor, but any wisdom or advice should be measured according to the virtues and qualities necessary to participate ethically in the practice of sales. In most organizations there are those who possess and practice some of the qualities that we seek in the ideal mentor.

3. 5 The Ideal Mentor for the Practitioner of Sales

So who is the ideal mentor for the practitioner of sales? What qualities does the mentor have and what virtues does this person espouse? Coyle (2009) refers to the master coach, one that inspires the student to pursue the forces of passion and deep practice. The coach is one who recognizes the passion of individual students, knows the subject matter (but may not be an expert), and knows the students and what motivates them. We want to find a coach or mentor who him- or herself engages habitually in the day-to-day activities related to sales honestly, ethically, morally, legally, and virtuously.

Ideal mentors would first of all be passionate about what they do and top performers. Top performers are alleged to possess certain attributes including: (a) not take rejection personally, (b) accountable for their results, (c) ambitious, (d) determined to succeed and have a sense of urgency, (e) able to empathize, (f) able to communicate effectively with others they have not previously met, (g) have a strong ego that is motivated by successful results, and (h) have the courage to continue their work even after losing an opportunity.

These traits are also common among successful business people (Basis International, 2002; Greenberg & Greenberg, 1983). However, they do not make business people practitioners of sales. It is interesting to note that these authors do not broach topics of integrity or virtues. Gitomer (2003) in his list of characteristics does identify
unyielding personal values and ethics, but does not explain his meaning. People’s values may be good external to the practice of sales as opposed to those that are internal to the practice of sales and a unified life. It is here that our pursuit of a mentor takes a turn. If a top performer is found that has these characteristics they very well could espouse the values of the institution more than the values displayed by the virtues.

3.6 The Ideal Virtues for the Practice of Sales

The Aristotelian virtues that belong to the practice of sales include the virtues of truthfulness, ambition, friendliness, wittiness and tact, courage, and justice. Aristotle’s account of the virtues stems from *Nicomachean Ethics*. In this work, the author states that all human activity is aimed at some goal or *telos* that is the good. However, what Aristotle means by the good can be translated many different ways. The good is defined as the virtuous activity of the soul. MacIntyre (1984) takes this as being a unified life, whereby individuals can be proud of their lifelong pursuits and in pursuing the good, make the right choices to achieve the desired ends. Aristotle, according to MacIntyre (1984) also emphasizes that the good of which we speak is not identifiable with material wealth or with undue honor or pleasure. It is a state of peacefulness, prosperity, or blessedness. One gains this happiness by the exercise of virtuous action over a lifetime and the development of wisdom. Wisdom itself is developed in the search for theoretical wisdom. For this, one must have external goods to ensure health, some leisure, and the opportunity to act virtuously.

Virtue, according to Aristotle (1991), is a relative mean between extremes. This mean is between excess and deficiency in characteristic traits; it is moderation in all things. Action then is an adherence to moral principles, guided by reason. This is gained
by the knowledge of the principles and the traits, of which we speak, the habitual practice of the proper reasoning and action, and the disciplined application of this reasoning and action. To exercise virtue then is an action resulting from the choices a person makes. That person then is responsible and accountable for these actions resulting from the choices made. This is not a theoretical concern; this is action in a social environment. For people to reach their full potential, they must act virtuously (MacIntyre, 1984).

Aristotle’s account of the virtues then can be stated in a way that uses the virtues as a means to the end, the end being a unified life leading to this state of peacefulness. As this relates to the practice of sales, the following virtues will help us in our model. The first of these virtues is truthfulness. The excess of expression beyond truth is considered to be boastfulness and the deficiency, or less than expressing the truth, is considered to be self-depreciation. Truthful people do not exaggerate claims nor do they feign modesty. They state things as they are in life and in deed. For Aristotle, this goes directly to the character of a person, wherein falsehood is considered mean. This holds true for the person of such character even when monetary gain is at stake, because such a person will have the character to avoid falsehood. Aristotle states that those who lie do so because of the enjoyment of the lie. Those who exaggerate for honor are to be tolerated, but those who do so for money are not only to be avoided, but to be disdained, as this is a true mark of their character.

The second of the virtues that are useful in the practice of sales is wittiness and tact. It is in leisurely conversation that people reveal a lot of themselves, their background, experience, education, knowledge, and ultimately their worldview. It is in this commentary that Aristotle looks at the idea of a well-defined sense of humor and
timing. The two extremes of this virtue are buffoonery on the excessive side and boorishness on the other. Aristotle warns of the buffoon, getting a laugh at any cost including being vulgar, and of the boor, laughing at nothing or perhaps not being able to find the humor out of ignorance of the subject matter. This virtue of tact, however, can be taken to an extreme in cautiousness about appropriate times to speak, to keep a sense of dignity and avoid embarrassment. The successful sales representative finds a way to say things at the right time and in the right manner.

Closely related to the virtue of tact is that of friendliness. It is here that Aristotle speaks of human relations. The author here means all relationships whether they be business, recreational, political, casual acquaintances, or simply common. Simply stated, this is the virtue of being polite, courteous, and considerate. The person acts towards others appropriately, not giving pain where it is undue, and always tries to do what is beneficial and noble. No affection is necessary.

The next virtue that is appropriate for the model of the practice of sales is that dealing with ambition. While ambition and the lack of ambition are the extremes of a virtue that Aristotle does not name, the proper proportion of this characteristic is of some importance. Where Aristotle defines ambition as desiring more honor than that which is due, the proper ambition is defined as honor in the right amount, in the right manner, for the right reason, and at the right time. Likewise, the ambitious person wants no honor or recognition at any time. If anything, the sales pursuit has far too much recognition for achieving the goods external to the practice of sales and nothing further. Sales gives honor to goods external to the practice of sales and nothing more. One should be wary of the ambitious in this context related to sales, simply because we have no way of knowing
if the person receiving honor has any idea pertaining to the goods internal to the practice of sales.

The next virtue that is included as being integral to the practice of sales is that of justice. It is here that Aristotle speaks of our business dealings with others and the appropriate behavior necessary to conduct business virtuously. The concept of justice is defined by Aristotle as that which is lawful and that which is fair and equal, wherein just is both lawful and fair. The virtue of justice is in relation to one’s neighbor. It is easy to exercise virtuous activity in relation to oneself, but to exercise this activity towards one’s neighbor requires the utmost in fortitude. According to Aristotle (1991), exercising virtue towards other people is more difficult than exercising virtue to oneself. The author maintains that grasping for money and other goods results in wickedness and injustice. Just persons have an attitude and a disposition that demands that they choose action that is proportionally fair and equal to themselves and all other stakeholders in all areas of life. Salespersons in the practice of sales will possess the virtue of justice in their dealings with all of the stakeholders involved. For Aristotle, justice involves fair proportion, equitable distribution, and a balance in all things. Justice incorporates all of the other virtues; just behavior is virtuous behavior. Justice involves all people getting what they deserved whereas injustice involves people getting too little or too much of something.

While the virtue of justice incorporates all of the other virtues, all virtuous activity cannot be realized without the virtue of courage. Aristotle (1991) begins his entire discussion of the virtues in *Nicomachean Ethics* with the subject of courage. He believes that the brave person does not fear, but a brave person fears for the right reason in the
right proportion to the danger. Courage, for Aristotle is putting aside that which one fears in order to realize other virtue (e.g., honor).

C. S. Lewis (1942, restored 1996) gives us great insight to the virtue of courage in *The Screwtape Letters*: “Courage is not one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at its testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality. A chastity or honesty or mercy which yields to danger will be chaste or honest or merciful only on conditions. Pilate was merciful till it became risky” (pp. 161-162). This illustrates that mere virtue is fine in and of itself, and one can speak of the virtues and being virtuous, but until virtue is tested and courage is needed to face the consequences of an act, we do not know if a person is truly virtuous.

In the world of sales, people often make excuses for behaving unethically or dishonestly, such as upholding the demands of their superiors or their customers. At one point in time or another, sales representatives will face a situation where it may be easier and safer, and appear in the short term to be better for their career to act unethically. Without the courage to face the consequences of saying no to those goods that are external to the practice of sales by acting unethically, they can fall into the trap of deceit so common to the field. However, the salespeople should not be entrapped into having courage. In other words, salespersons can avoid a lot of these situations by being above their quota and have a solid reputation within and outside of their own organization as being an ethical person and a solid producer.

### 3.7 Relevant Traits for the Practice of Sales

It is at this point that the ideas proposed for entering into a practice of sales can be defined and idealized; however, the practice can be misinterpreted. When the practice of
sales is tested, individuals may turn to a bastardized version of practice and follow the rules outlined by Machiavelli in *The Prince* (trans. 1961) rather than the virtues outlined by Aristotle and MacIntyre (1984). However, to follow such principles, would not lead to a unified life of integrity. The practitioner of sales will possess and display these virtues, as will the practitioner’s mentor. To witness these virtues is more difficult, in fact, we may search for years for such a person. The competent mentor is somewhat difficult to find. Without relationships, friendly relationships with fellow salespeople, finding a sales representative for this mentor role is difficult because the mentor could not give the gift of these virtuous practices if they could not be in a friendly relationship and have mutual respect for the protégé. Such a relationship might not be given by a mere random assignment by management. The early practitioner would be well-advised to form solid friendships with the sales representatives with whom they work. These friendships in the marketplace, as we are describing them, need not be friendships of the highest degree that Aristotle speaks. However, they are friendships of mutual utility or friendships of mutual pleasure. There is nothing wrong with such relationships because they are mutually profitable, enjoyable, or both. The practitioner, however, must realize that no matter how such relationships appear on the surface, they are not friendships of the higher order; they are established in the workplace for business reasons. For the vast majority of the time they will remain business relationships or friendships of pleasure; for when they cease being pleasurable or profitable, they will dissolve.

The qualities that we have discussed in the practitioner of sales and the sales mentor are similar to the qualities of leadership. Warren Bennis (1989) has examined the traits of leadership and gives us insight into the similarities of leadership and the practice
of sales. Bennis (1989) equated the stages of leadership to Shakespeare’s seven ages of man in his play, *As You Like It*. Bennis (1989) supported the idea that the successful leader and practitioner will seek out a mentor. Bennis believed that the best mentors are recruited by the mentee, and not the other way around.

In the second stage of leadership, the author says that the newcomer, in our case the newcomer to the practice of sales, makes a non-intrusive low-key entry into the position. The advantages of such an entry allow the newcomer to observe the culture, habits, and behaviors of others in the workplace. It also allows the new practitioner time to form relationships wisely. Additionally, newcomers can demonstrate that they are willing to listen to others and learn from them as they observe them demonstrate their knowledge and experience. From the perspective of the practitioner of sales it is at this point that we can also observe the virtuous activity of others in the workplace or their lack of virtuous activity. In this process, one is not attempting to change the organization or judge others, but rather it is a process of data collection and observation.

Bennis (1989) then turns to the idea of friendship as it relates to leadership, and he points directly to the fact that relationships formed in the market are friendships of pleasure and utility. Bennis describes his third stage of leadership as “the lover, with a woeful ballad” which characterizes leaders when they move up the ranks of an organization to have former peers now answering directly to them. He elaborated that when a person is promoted, the relationship with other people may change. While Bennis (1989) is speaking of a person promoted within the ranks, such relationships are evident among salespeople who are striving for better territories, accounts, managers, and resources. A person’s friendships change when financial and professional interests are
involved. The following is an example. Salesperson X, let’s call him Frank, works with salesperson Y, let’s call him Pete, and have worked side by side selling solutions widgets for a period of 36 months. Frank and Pete are considered veterans in the sales organization because the average turnover in the organization is around 50 percent per year. They are the only two left from their orientation meeting and have seen many others come and go. They have had lunch together two or three times a month, played racquetball together on a weekly basis, had drinks together, and have closed the bar together on a couple of occasions. Pete and Frank confide in one another on different matters, more often than not, about account sales strategy and other business matters. But they also have grown close because they confide with one another on other matters such as parenting issues and how to be better fathers and husbands. Pete and Frank have attended each other’s family picnics, kids’ birthday parties, and other big occasions.

There is an opportunity for both of them to take over a huge account that can equate to tens of thousands of additional annual income based on the potential sales coming up the following year. They both want the account and are both qualified to handle the intricacies of the account and have both expressed interest in the account to the regional VP, let’s call her Lynn. During the interview process Frank states that he is qualified for the position, has been loyal to the company, and has made his quota repeatedly in the last three years. Pete does the same thing but proceeds to tell Lynn that he does not think that Frank can do the job based on his lack of knowledge of the business world. He also gives Lynn the perception that Frank has relied entirely too much on the service department to take care of his problems and brings up as an example an account that she is familiar with and did have problems the year before. Although faced
with the same circumstances, Pete would have done the same thing, but he was not faced
with those circumstances in the past, or, if he was, Lynn did not know about it. Lynn
makes the decision to give the account to Pete, citing to Frank that he needs to develop
his skills in ways that he does not have to be so dependent on the resources provided by
other departments. Frank asks Lynn what she is basing her perception on, and she
mentions the account that had a problem the previous year. This is not brought up in the
interview with Frank, but after her subsequent meetings with other candidates for the
position, and Lynn is not going to say that she is basing this on what Pete said. Pete takes
the account, makes a lot of money, and Frank now has a perception problem with upper
management.

This relationship is illustrative of the problems inherent with the idea of
friendship in the workplace. These types of relationships exist to such a degree that you
actually see supervisors who must discharge their godson’s parent. This is not to say that
personal friendships on the third level of Aristotle’s continuum cannot form and exist in
the marketplace or in the same workspace; however, they are very rare. Ultimately, the
pursuit of the external goods that the institution wants, and the salespersons need or
thinks they need, will survive almost any friendship in the marketplace or workplace. The
job as a practitioner is to take a mature attitude and realize that these relationships, just as
most high-school dating relationships, will end in pursuit of personal interests. They will
dissolve when the utility or the pleasure is exhausted.

This is also where the practice of sales differs from the ideas of leadership. The
literature about leadership speaks of relationships and friendships. However, it does not
go so far as to specify the type of relationship or the nature of relationship in such candid
terms. The ignorance about such relationships brings nothing but resentment and bitterness when they end. If we enter into such relationships with full knowledge of the type and nature of the relationship, such naïve disappointments will not set us back but help us to learn the importance of such relationships and how important they are in developing a professional career.

Putnam (2000) in *Bowling Alone* writes of the need to build relationships in a community for the health of such a community stating that as social capital theory implies social networks have value. While stressing the importance of virtue among the individuals in society, Putnam (2000) is careful to pay attention to the idea that being virtuous is a necessity in professional and personal relationships. He stresses that being virtuous in isolation does very little to add to productivity. Putnam notes that social capital is important in moving ahead in one’s career, based on the principle of reciprocity and trustworthiness. He examines the nature of reciprocity as being ingrained in our American society. Basically, Putnam sees reciprocity as embedded in all relationships: if I do this for you now then at some time you will do something for me. For Putnam, social capital is a two part concept: bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital involves common interests that bond people together. These tend to be “inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Examples of bonding social capital groups include ethnic fraternal organizations, church based … groups, and fashionable country clubs” (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). These groups help one another through the nature of membership in that particular group. They tend to do business with one another or hire from one another. This type of social capital tends to be exclusive and can alienate others in society and can actually antagonize other people.
outside of these groups. Bridging social capital, the second form of social capital, is most likely more important to the practitioner of sales. Whereas bonding social capital is referred to as *exclusive*, bridging social capital is *inclusive*. It is this type of social capital that allows us to diffuse information and can help to secure resources outside of one’s inner circles. Both are import to the sales practitioner. Putnam (2000) states,

> A growing body of research suggests that where trust and social networks flourish, individuals, firms, neighborhoods, and even nations prosper…. At the individual level, social connections affect one’s life’s chances. People who grow up in…families with economically valuable social ties are more likely to succeed in the economic marketplace, not merely because they tend to be richer and better educated, but also because they can and will ply their connections. Conversely, individuals who grow up in socially isolated rural and inner city areas are held back, not merely because they tend to be financially and educationally deprived, but also because they are relatively poor in social ties that can provide a “hand up”. (p. 319)

Putnam (2000) alludes that in the practice of sales we may be hired for our ability to form and maintain relationships on this level:

> Social capital matters because our networks, if they are extensive enough connect us to potential economic partners, provide high quality information, and vouch for us. Moreover for many white-collar jobs, our connections—our access to other people and institutions—is what our employer is hiring us for. In short, social networks have undeniable monetary value. (p. 321)

Granovetter (1973) studied relationships from the standpoint of strong and weak ties, where strong ties are close friends and relatives and weak ties are classified as work relationships and acquaintances. He found that weak ties can be more valuable in many pursuits than the strong ties. Granovetter (1973) examined the differences between weak ties and strong ties and found that strong ties, while extremely valuable, are with people whose interests are similar. People with strong ties are more likely to know the same people and their knowledgebase is similar. Bridging to other networks of ties allows a person access to others’ knowledge bases and therefore can open up other opportunities.
The value of all ties equates to finding opportunity and capitalizing on those opportunities.

In addition to networks in the marketplace, the sales practitioner seeks among his peers, people who can help professional development, which is closely tied with personal development. A person can have an endless number of relationships; however, without the bonds of trust, these relationships are of little or no value. These relationships must be relationships that can foster the influence of others to allow the sales practitioner to accomplish the desired ends of a fruitful career. Mere association with unscrupulous fellows at times can prove to be detrimental to a career.

The properties necessary for successful practice of sales and those which he or she seeks in a mentor are similar to the pattern in influential people in our American society. Keller and Berry (2003) have spent their careers studying influential people in our society and the qualities possess in those people. They point out that one in ten people in our society forms decisions for the other nine. These influential people have a set of characteristics that are relevant to the traits the mentor and the practitioner should espouse. The first of these characteristics is that influential persons clearly see what “matters.” They have “a sense that some things are simply important and warrant attention, participation, and commitment” (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 81). They decide to act on these priorities and have a vision that allows them to get over hurdles and around obstacles associated with many projects. One simple example is overcoming a fear of public speaking. Influential people are also more optimistic than the average citizen. It is here that these authors invoke the ideas of Aristotle’s mean and rational decision-making: “Influentials do not come off as Pollyannas. They don’t look at the world through rose-
colored glasses. Rather, they are selective and discriminating, able to see cause for confidence when it’s appropriate but skeptical when the facts warrant skepticism and able to accept nuances to make a smart, informed decision” (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 82)

Another similarity between the influentials of which Keller and Berry speak and the Aristotelian ideal is that the influentials have an eye on the greater good for American society:

Sometimes the influentials seem to be the keepers of the flame for the ideas that are central to the larger society. In learning about the influentials’ values, we also learn about the values of the nation, the ideas that resonate with the public generally, but that most people don’t think about that much (relying on the influentials to do it for them). (p. 82)

Like Aristotle, the influentials also have a sense of the good life. They are more likely to have “certain aspirations than the public as a whole: interesting, enjoyable work that contributes to the greater society; the opportunity for people to pursue their dreams; freedom to choose the life you want to lead; college education, particularly for one’s children; and technologies that help them accomplish more” (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 87). While the influentials are more likely to attend church every week, they are not as likely to observe their religion strictly. In fact, many are uncomfortable with organized religion. They also view life’s necessities a little differently than most. They look at luxuries from a practical standpoint. In other words, they decide if the value contained in a thing allows them to enjoy life more, and if it does, then it can become important.

The influentials also have an internal locus of control because they feel that they can effect change in their lives and that their destiny is tied to their activity or their lack of activity. They can control how things go in their lives by how they react to change. There is a certain amount of pragmatism in their stance: “That utilitarian, pragmatic
mindset at work again -- changing an unhappy life into a happy one; taking responsibility for one’s decisions; experiencing more in life; looking forward to the tangible changes that the future will bring; addressing problems in the community; and influencing decisions and making a contribution through their work” (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 95).

The influential’s personality is the balancing of community and self. Keller and Berry (2003) quote Tocqueville when speaking of virtue in our society:

Tocqueville’s contribution to the understanding of America was the ability of the Americans to see the connection between their self-interest and the interests of the community. Tocqueville believed this concept, which he called “self-interest properly understood,” to be the country’s main defense against individualism run amok. Whereas Europeans preached “the beauties of virtue” for its own sake, he thought the more practical Americans saw that a better reason to act in the interest of the community was that “virtue is useful.” “By serving his fellow man,” Tocqueville said, “the American serves himself.” Among Americans, there was hardly any talk of virtue for its own sake; rather it gives them pleasure to point out that decisions to “give part of their time and wealth” for the common good benefited them through better, more stable communities and a generally “orderly, temperate, moderate, careful, and self-controlled” citizenry. (p. 100)

We see a connection here among the writing of authors Putnam, Keller and Berry. This idea of interconnectedness between self and community is noted consistently throughout both of the works. The influentials definitely see themselves as being able to contribute to the society at large through their conscious decisions to act within the community. In fact the influentials feel that they “have responsibilities to [their] neighbors and community beyond what is required by law” (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 101).

While community is important to the influential, family comes first. The next characteristic noted is that family and engagement comes first. Their idea of success is “being a good spouse and parent, being true to God, being true to themselves and having friends who respect them” (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 103). Their relationship with their
friends, God, and themselves is more important than goods external such as wealth or power. The authors list a set of values that the influentials have. It is surprisingly similar to the virtues we are seeking in the practitioner and the mentor: “protecting the family… honesty… freedom… authenticity… enduring love… stable personal relationships, knowledge, justice… learning… faith, self-esteem and friendship” (Keller & Berry, 2003, p. 105). Influentials place more value on these traits than do others in our society. Influentials are idiosyncratic. Their personality traits lend themselves to what some may consider an element of unpredictability. The influential is a free thinker and as such formulates opinions on issues through careful thought and deliberation and as such the outcome of individual thought leads to different actions on different issues.

These personality traits are consistent with the traits that we seek in a sales practitioner—the ability to prioritize what matters, manage and embrace change, balance between community and self while emphasizing relationships within the community; the focus on family; and active engagement in life as it presents itself. These traits match up well with the Aristotelian virtues of truthfulness, ambition, friendliness, wittiness, tact, courage, and justice.

3. 8 Chapter Conclusions

Sales is a practice in the sense that MacIntyre speaks. It consists of complexity, goods internal to the practice, and its own standards of excellence. The successful practitioner of sales embodies passion, a lifelong commitment to excellence, and the virtues of honesty, ambition, friendliness, wittiness and tact, justice, and courage. To accomplish the practitioner’s personal narrative must be consistent with this view of sales and the character formed by the habitual display of the virtues must fit into the practice of
sales. In addition, the commitment and passion for sales must be congruent with one’s narrative to be in the practice. Practitioners of sales must learn the nuances of the companies that they represent. They must develop the knowledge of sales techniques, negotiation techniques, and overall knowledge of the business. Identifying and engaging the assistance of formal and informal mentors with integrity accelerates this learning.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRACTICAL WISDOM AND THE PRACTITIONER OF SALES

The practitioner of sales is seeking *phronesis* or a practical wisdom. In so doing, the practitioner is also seeking a mentor with the similar characteristic. In discussing practical wisdom, we again turn to Aristotle (1991) in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI (trans. date). In this work, the author begins by discussing the nature of the virtues. The virtues are divided between virtues of the soul, virtues of character, and others of intellect. We have previously noted that Aristotle’s idea of happiness is the virtuous activity of the soul. The soul, it is further noted in Book II, is divided into two different parts, one being driven by the senses or non-rational and the other, by reasoning or the rational. Within the rational part of the soul, Aristotle divides this part into two more parts, “one by which we contemplate the kind of things whose originative causes are invariable, and one by which we contemplate variable things” (Aristotle, 1991, p. 1139a).

Aristotle also sees the virtue as pertaining to thinking or to character. Character refers to the manner in which we arrive at having our emotions or appetites and how we behave in light of the pleasures and pains associated with those emotions and appetites. Our disposition is simply a compilation over time of the characteristic choices that we make and with those choices the actions that we take. Our choices are made to achieve desired ends. In order to make the right choices, that is, virtuous choices, we must have the capacity for right reason. In order to make these decisions we must be able to maintain a mean between the excess of passion and the deficiency of passion that may distort our ability to act appropriately in a given particular situation. The proper action is bound by practical wisdom or *phronesis*: “In all states of character, we have mentioned,
as in all other matters, there is a mark to which the man who has the rule looks and heightens or relaxes his activity accordingly, and there is a standard which determines the mean states which we say are intermediate between excess and defect, being in accordance with right rule” (p. 1138b). Moral “virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it” (Aristotle, 1991, p. 1107a). *Phronesis* is part of the good. It is central in Book VI as one of the most important of intellectual virtues.

In order to more fully examine the idea of practical wisdom, it is helpful to look at its origins. Plato in *The Republic* acknowledged that the philosopher king would indeed be able to rule through a sense of knowing. *Epistome*, which is a sort of knowing that is eternal, true, and universal, would come to the philosopher king over years of study and understanding. Halverson (2002) in his dissertation, helps us to examine these origins:

Our ability to apprehend *episteme* is grounded in reason, but since we are not born with the ability to reason clearly, our souls must be cultivated to become receptive to the subtle forms in which *episteme* is manifested in the sensible world of change. This process of cultivation or education forms the core of the political program of *The Republic*. *The Republic* describes how, after over fifty years of training, public service, and teaching, the reasoning capacity of the leader may be adequately trained to appreciate the nature of the good, and be able to exercise political leadership in accordance with this understanding (c.f. *Republic* 473d-e). These leaders or philosopher-kings are marked by the twin ability to know and do the good for themselves and for their community. However, Plato’s account of the training of the philosopher-king focuses more on the acquisition than the exercise of their knowledge. The description offered of the education of the philosopher-kings relies heavily on cultivating the ability to understand abstract thought and engage in dialectical interchange (c.f. *Republic* 521-541). Plato offers little about the specifics of how this knowledge translates to a resolution of the inevitable issues of the state that fall to real statesmen. Plato seems to acknowledge that, given the temporal and imperfect nature of our grasp upon ideas, human society will always drift toward imperfection (c.f. *Republic* 546-7). Plato seems to recognize that the specifics of this drift might arise not in our misunderstanding of the good, but in the imprecision of the application, in our inability to discern the
appropriate exercise of the good in the world (Republic 546). Given the competing claims for action that characterize statesmanship, the kings’ knowledge of the good quickly demands that the practice of leadership be transformed into a matter of implementation. Plato’s conception of wisdom provides an account of the nature of principled knowledge without sufficient attention paid to its exercise. (pp. 39-40)

In an effort to further examine the idea of practical wisdom it is helpful to turn to its philosophical cousin, the idea of cunning intelligence. This is steeped in Greek tradition, starting with the Homeric novel, The Iliad. It is here that we find the idea of metis or cunning intelligence. The term comes from the name of Zeus’s first wife, Metis, who is the daughter of Ocean and the mother of Athena. As soon as she gives birth to Athena, Zeus swallows her and in so doing takes on her traits, making her a part of himself. Zeus was the king of the gods, and in order to stay in his position of prestige, he had to fend off any would-be assassins.

The successful businessman as well as a number of other professionals is marked by a sense of intelligence that is not by necessity marked by education, as we all know of the success of hundreds of people who have very little education. The vernacular term often used is “street smarts” or what is referred to as a sense of cunning. This is the ability to make the right moves, say the right things, and position oneself in a way that brings about the desirable outcome. More often than not, the successful outcome is to close the sale, land the promotion, or simply to make money. This has become an integral part of being successful in sales. We have already discussed the need to be able to maneuver inside the organization, to gain access to the right people who can help overcome bureaucracy in helping to bend rules, and to give the proper approvals when necessary. We have discussed the politicking that happens to get the right manager, the right territory, the right list of accounts in order to have success in sales. The “street
"smarts" of which we speak are nothing new; in ancient Greek culture it is known by the term *metis* or cunning intelligence. According to Detienne and Vernant (1972),

There is no doubt that metis is a type of intelligence and of thought, a way of knowing; it implies a complex but very coherent body of mental attitudes and intellectual behavior which combine flair, wisdom, forethought, subtlety of mind, deception, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism, various skills, and experience acquired over the years. It is applied to situations which are transient, shifting, disconcerting and ambiguous, situations which do not lend themselves to precise measurement, exact calculation or rigorous logic. (p. 3)

The idea of cunning intelligence is very appealing to business persons, because they would always want to know how to gain favor in order to gain a competitive advantage over their adversary in any given situation. Cunning intelligence, it can be argued, is indeed the trait of the successful salesperson and a form of intelligence that comes with experience and knowledge.

This is exemplified by the more recent interest by business professionals in examining *The Prince*, by Nicolo Machiavelli (1961). In this work, the author enumerates a number of qualities that a good leader should appear to possess: “He should appear to be compassionate, faithful to his word, kind, guileless, and devout. And indeed he should be so” (p. 56). Machiavelli points to the virtues and states that the good leader should exemplify the virtues and appear to be a virtuous character. However, the author clearly believes, as is exemplified by history, that in this human condition and in competitive situations,

His disposition should be such that, if he needs to be the opposite, he knows how. You must realize this: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things which give men a reputation for virtue, because in order to maintain his state he is often forced to act in defiance of good faith, of charity, of kindness, of religion. And so he should have a flexible disposition, varying as fortune and circumstances dictate. As I said above, he should not deviate from what is good, if that is possible, but he should know how to do evil, if that is necessary. (Machiavelli, 1961, p. 56)
It would appear that Machiavelli’s advice to the prince makes perfect sense to the salesperson of today, and it is this type of metic intelligence that is so often associated with the profession of sales. One often hears the expression in justifying such metic action as “it is not personal, it is business.” This is fine for sales professionals that are not committed to the practice of sales or are interested merely in the goods external to the practice of sales. However, our quest is seeking the practice of sales, the goods internal to the practice of sales that incorporate the integrated career through virtuous action over a lifetime. Phronesis, rather than metis, is the tool we should be using here.

According to Alisdair MacIntyre (1981), practical reasoning, or phronesis, has several key features: “The first is that Aristotle takes the conclusion to a practical syllogism to be a particular kind of action” (p. 161). This action should be consistent with the syllogism if it is to be intelligible to those in observation of that action and if we are to be in relationship with the actor. In other words, if a person says one thing and does another, then that person becomes unintelligible and difficult to understand. In MacIntyre’s (1981) view, “Aristotle’s account of the practical syllogism can be construed as providing a statement of the necessary conditions for intelligible human action and as doing so in a way that must hold for any recognizable human culture” (p. 161). The author further explains the four essential elements of practical reasoning, following the deductive logic of Aristotle. MacIntyre (1981) states that the first element has to do with the wants and goals of the agent presupposed by but not expressed in his reasoning. Without these there would be no context for the reasoning, and the major and the minor premises could not adequately determine what kind of thing the agent is to do. The second element is the major premise, an assertion to the effect that doing or having or seeking such-and-such is the type of thing that is good for or needed by a so-and-so (where the agent uttering the syllogism falls under the latter description). The third element is the minor premise wherein the
agent, relying on a perceptual judgment, asserts that this is an instance or occasion of the requisite kind. The conclusion… is the action. (pp. 161-162)

This is where the practice of sales comes to the fore in our discussion of *phronesis*. Practical reasoning is closely related to the practice of virtuous activity. MacIntyre (1981) writes, “For the judgments which provide the agent’s practical reasoning with premises will include judgments as to what is good for someone like him to do and be and an agent’s capacity to make and to act upon such judgments will depend on what intellectual and moral virtues and vices compose his or her character” (p. 162). Without the character and a disposition for the virtues, then, the agent may be disposed to pursue the passions. Aristotle, including others throughout the history who emphasized practical reasoning, mandates that the passions be subservient to reasoning. According to MacIntyre (1981), “For the education of the passions into conformity with pursuit of what theoretical reasoning identifies as the *telos* and practical reasoning as the right action to do in each particular time and place is what ethics is about” (p. 162).

This statement also relates to sales as a practice or the possibility of the profession of sales being a practice. People can be in the profession of sales following the social scientific stimulus response theories, manipulating prospective customers into making decisions that benefit themselves and their company, without regard for the customer. And one can practice the *metis* intelligence espoused in *The Prince* without regard for an integrated, virtue-based existence. Lisa Raphals (1992), in her work, *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Tradition of China and Greece*, has stated the difference between *metis* and *phronesis* as “*Metic* intelligence operates with a peculiar twist, the unexpressed premise that both reality and language cannot be understood (or manipulated) in straightforward ‘rational’ terms but must be approached by subtlety,
indirection, and even cunning. By contrast, *phronesis* is practical but not inherently oblique, devious, or indirect (p. 5). The difference, then, between *metis* and *phronesis* is that the *phronesis* of Aristotle is aimed at the good, which fits into an integrated life, whereas *metis* is simply aimed at the end in mind, winning, getting what the agent wants regardless of the means employed.

MacIntyre (1981) related well to our purpose in using *phronesis* rather than *metis*, and he reinforces the profession of sales as belonging to the field of rhetoric rather than psychology when he states:

The difference between a human relationship uninformed by morality and one so informed is precisely the difference between one in which each person treats the other primarily as a means to his or her ends and one in which each treats the other as an end. To treat someone else as an end is to offer them what I take to be good reasons for acting in one way rather than another, but to leave it to them to evaluate those reasons. It is to be unwilling to influence another except by reasons which that other he or she judges to be good. It is to appeal to impersonal criteria of the validity of which each rational agent must be his or her own judge. By contrast, to treat someone else as a means is to seek to make him or her an instrument of my purposes by adducing whatever influences or considerations will in fact be effective on this or that occasion. The generalizations of sociology or psychology of persuasion are what I shall need to guide me, not the standards of normative rationality. (pp. 23-24)

Reputation comes to the fore. Johannes Horner (2002) has shown how reputation is generated in competitive situations by behavior demonstrated repeatedly in competitive environments. This is also demonstrated in *Nicomachean Ethic* when Aristotle stated that people are who they are based on their habits.

### 4.1 The Work Ethic and Capitalism

The idea of unscrupulous business people is nothing new. For as long as there has been a market, there have been human beings that would be more than willing to take an unfair advantage (Weber, 1930, p. 22). Max Weber (1930) adds to our discussion of
reputation and character with his term *lebensfurung*, which is translated in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* as the “conduct of life” or the “manner of leading one’s life.” In our quest to find the ultimate mentor in the practice of sales and to find the ethic necessary to enter into the practice of sales, we now turn to the origins of the North American market and that of capitalism. Max Weber (1930) in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* outlines his thoughts about the nature of capitalism and the underlying attitudes associated with capitalism and its origins. Weber is attempting to account for how a new type of “bourgeois capitalism based on rational action had emerged” (Carr, 2003, p. 12). The author describes capitalism in its earlier form of a shorter workday, five or six hours, with wages moderate but high enough to lead a life that could sustain a comfortable living. The competitive landscape was a bit more cordial as the business person might meet at the local tavern for a drink or two at the end of the day. This activity was capitalistic in that capital was employed and there was rational bookkeeping and the idea of the accumulation of wealth was most likely limited to the entrepreneur: “The traditional rate of profit, the traditional amount of work, the traditional manner of regulating the relationships with labour, and the essentially traditional circle of customers and the manner of attracting new ones. All these dominated the conduct of business, were at the basis, one may say, of the ethos of this group of business men” (Weber, 1930, p. 67).

With the advent of mechanized techniques and modern equipment and factory, the traditional leisurely pace of business was altered by the new spirit of capitalism. Weber (1930) writes:

> Where it appears and is able to work itself out, it produces its own capital and monetary supplies as the means to its ends, but the reverse is not true. Its entry on
the scene was not generally peaceful. A flood of mistrust, sometimes of hatred, above all of moral indignation, regularly opposed itself to the first innovator… it is very easy not to recognize that only an unusually strong character could save an entrepreneur of this new type from the loss of his temperate self-control and from both moral and economic shipwreck. (p. 69)

These businessmen were brought up in the school of hard knocks, being willing to calculate risks while being temperate, consistently reliable, and consistent in not spending money carelessly or excessively (Carr, 2003, p. 12).

Weber (1930) adds to our discussion in three ways. First of all, he accounts for a rational approach to capitalism and the “spirit” of capitalism that allows a moral person to accumulate modest wealth. The “spirit of capitalism” for Weber (1930) centers around the accumulation of wealth: “Man is dominated by the making of money, by acqisitions the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs” (p. 18). Here, we see Weber claim that the reason we work has changed from mere subsistence to the accumulation of wealth, and he helps us to rationalize the accumulation of wealth by making it a moral obligation.

This brings us to the second of Weber’s contributions to our discussion. While the accumulation of wealth, according to Weber (1930), has become the focus of men, he combines this with a religious asceticism, whereby one can accumulate wealth: it is a moral obligation to have the rigorous self-discipline which demands a certain frugality. Weber ascribes this ethic to religion, in particular the Calvinist Puritan sects of the seventeenth century (Carr, 2003).

Weber (1930) is “interested in…the influence of those psychological sanctions which, originating in religious belief and the practice of religion, gave a direction to
The practical conduct of the Puritan, according to Weber (1930), is done for the glorification of God:

The world exists to serve the glorification of God and for that purpose alone. The elected Christian is in the world only to increase this glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability. But God requires social achievement of the Christian because He wills that social life shall be organized according to His commandments, in accordance with that purpose. The social activity of the Christian in the world is solely activity in majorem glorian Dei. (p. 64)

With the establishment of all activity being conducted according to the Will of God, including social activity, the idea of a calling comes to the fore:

This character is hence shared by labour in a calling which serves the mundane life of the community. Even in Luther we find specialized labour in callings justified in terms of brotherly love. But what for him remained an uncertain, became for Calvinists a characteristic element in their ethical system. Brotherly love, since it may only be practiced for the glory of God and not in the service of the flesh, is expressed in the first place in the fulfillment of daily tasks given by lex nature and in the process this fulfillment assumes a peculiarly objective and impersonal character, that of service in the interest of rational organization of our social environment. For the wonderfully purposeful organization and arrangement of this cosmos is, according to both the revelation of the Bible and to natural intuition, evidently designed by God to serve the utility of the human race. This makes labour in the service of impersonal social usefulness appear to promote the glory of God and hence to be willed by Him. (Weber, 1930, p. 64)

The conduct of the human being shifted to a religious perspective of justification, wherein good works for the Puritan sects were not enough for salvation but rather a life lived in faith as manifested through good works, of which attention to daily tasks belongs. Weber wrote (1930), “God…demanded of his believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a unified system…. The moral conduct of the average man was thus deprived of its planless and unsystematic character and subjected to a consistent method for conduct as a whole” (p. 72). Weber brings the idea of asceticism to practical everyday application of ideals of the ascetic of the middle ages. In other words, Weber takes the monastic idea of a life dedicated to God and brings it to the
practical every day application of the ascetic to the average human being in their daily work. Along with the practice of the religious ideals comes the benefit of getting paid to take care of everyday tasks that are now done for the glory of God. For “God has blessed His chosen ones through the success of their labours” (Weber, 1930, p. 84).

Along with the idea of asceticism, comes the idea of a calling in the worldly life for the Puritan. Weber (1930) examines the idea of a calling through English Puritanism derived from Calvinism (p. 102). He examines the writings of Richard Baxter, “because of his eminently practical and realistic attitude and, at the same time, because of the universal recognition accorded to his works” (Weber, 1930, p. 103). Weber (1930) examines this work and the discussion of wealth:

Wealth as such is a great danger; its temptations never end, and its pursuit is not only senseless as compared with the dominating importance of the Kingdom of God, but it is morally suspect….The real moral objection is to relaxation in the security of possession, the enjoyment of wealth with the consequence of idleness and the temptations of the flesh, above all of distraction from the pursuit of religious life. In fact, it is only because possession involves this danger of relaxation that it is objectionable at all…not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God, according to the manifestations of his will…Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. (p. 104)

At this point Weber brings to the fore the Protestant idea of the obligation of labor through the work of Baxter: “Thus inactive contemplation is also valueless or even directly reprehensible if it is at the expense of one’s daily work. For it is less pleasing to God than the active performance of His will in a calling. Besides, Sunday is provided for that, and, according to Baxter, it is always those who are not diligent in their callings who have no time for God when the occasion demands it” (Weber, 1930, pp. 104-105). Weber points out the sin of not working hard. He brings out that work is ascetic and has been in
the Western church’s history, and he points to the writings of Saint Paul to support his claims.

Weber (1930) continues his discussion on the treatment of wealth, which as we have discussed, comes from labor: “Wealth does not exempt anyone from the unconditional command. Even the wealthy shall not eat without working, for even though they do not need to labour to support their own needs, there is God’s commandment which they, like the poor, must obey. For everyone, without exception, God’s providence has prepared a calling, which he should profess and in which he should labour” (p. 106). The idea of a calling fits well with the division of labor, because every person has a calling and may be limited by God’s providence to a certain calling. Weber (1930) states that more than one calling is acceptable, so long as it does no harm, and moving from one calling to the next is acceptable as well:

In a similar way the providential interpretation of profit-making justified the activities of the business man…. It has the highest ethical appreciation of the sober, middle-class, self-made man. “God blesseth his trade” is a stock remark about those good men who had successfully followed divine hints. The whole power of the God of the Old Testament, who rewards his people for their obedience in this life, necessarily exercised a similar influence on the Puritan who, following Baxter’s advice, compared his own state of grace with that of the heroes of the Bible, and in the process interpreted the statements of the Scriptures as the articles of a book of statutes. (p. 109)

The wealth and accumulation of assets was not only acceptable, but now has become divinely inspired, according to Weber. However, this wealth must be accounted for and used wisely: “Man is only a trustee of the goods which have come to him through God’s Grace. He must, like the servant in the parable, give an account of every penny entrusted to him, and it is at least hazardous to spend any of it for a purpose which does not serve the glory of God but only one’s enjoyment” (Weber, 1930, p. 115). Weber
states that at this point one must hold this capital and work daily at increasing it for the glory of God. One has an ethical foundation for making money and increasing its value. The influence of this ethical imperative is obviously significant for the development of capitalism (Weber, 1930, p. 115). Asceticism did not condemn the accumulation of wealth through labor in a calling; it did, however, condemn the accumulation of wealth for its own sake. This was viewed as covetousness. Also condemned by the Puritan sects was “dishonesty and impulsive avarice,” and Weber (1930) writes, “For, in conformity with the Old Testament and in analogy to the ethical valuation of good works, asceticism looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible, but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God’s blessing.” This is for Weber “The spirit of Capitalism” (p. 116).

Weber (1930) then points to the problem associated with the accumulation of wealth and quotes John Wesley (year) as having the same sentiments:

I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches….So although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this -- this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich” (Wesley qtd in Weber, p. 119).

This sentiment I believe is also Weber’s fear that if religion ultimately is forgotten and abandoned, the spirit of religion will be replaced by this spirit of capitalism void of ethics.

It can be argued, however, that religion has no place in the workplace and that the workplace should be free from preaching, except that of the preaching of goods external
to the practice of industry, i.e. profit and revenue. However, the means-end relationship of which Weber writes is of critical importance in our discussion. Where Weber states that the Puritan sects condemn the pursuit of wealth as its own end, (by any means necessary) and the idea of *lebensfurung* goes directly to the idea of the practice of sales as MacIntyre (1981) defines practice. The Puritan sects also condemn any dishonesty and of course any illegal activity, which also fits our definition of practice. The practitioner of sales would agree with both of these assertions and would condemn any dishonesty as well. Weber (1930) acknowledges that unscrupulous behavior among business people is with us and always has been. So the problems inherent with dishonesty, manipulation, and deceit are nothing new and were faced by the early pioneers of capitalism. Wesley himself points to the temptations for such activity. So how do we find the correct way to navigate the waters of deception, with honesty, ethics, morality and legality?

### 4.2 Deception in Business

Deception is clearly a part of business, as in war, sports, or any competitive environment. We have previously stated that these competitive environments give rise to the establishment of reputation and character (Horner, 2002). Sissela Bok (1978) writes of deceit and lies in her work *Lying, Moral Choices in Public and Private Life*. Bok (1978) gives us the statement of the problem: “Whether to lie, equivocate, be silent, or tell the truth in any given situation is often a hard decision” (p. xxviii). People do not realize the extent of deception until after some reflection on the matter. Most people were taught that lying was wrong and that they should always tell the truth, until a situation arises making it easier to lie, as C.S Lewis presents, when the virtue of courage becomes the great tester of all other virtues. The decision to tell the truth is difficult, according to
Bok (1978): “Duplicity can take so many forms, be present to such different degrees, and have such different purposes and results. Hard also because we know how questions of truth and lying inevitable pervade all that is said or left unspoken within our families, our communities, our working relationships” (p. xxviii).

Deception is taken for granted in many professions or is at the very minimum present in every walk of life and every profession. Bok (1978) writes:

In law and in journalism, in government and in the social sciences, deception is taken for granted when it is felt to be excusable by those who tell lies and who tend also to make the rules. Government officials and those who run for elections often deceive when they can get away with it and when they assume that the true state of affairs is beyond the comprehension of citizens. Social scientists condone deceptive experimentation on the ground that the knowledge gained will be worth having. Lawyers manipulate the truth in court on behalf of their clients. Those in selling, advertising, or any form of advocacy may mislead the public and their competitors in order to achieve their goals… and often have little compunction in using falsehoods to gain the knowledge they seek. Existing deceptive practices and competitive stress can make it difficult not to conform. Guidance is hard to come by, and few are encouraged to consider such choices in schools and colleges or in their working life. (p. xxix)

The project taken on by Sissela Bok seeks to bridge a gap between the philosophical and the practical when it comes to lying and deception. Following the perspective of the practical nature of deception, Bok pointed out that lying is merely a part of deception. A lie is defined by Bok (1978) as “any intentionally deceptive message which is stated” (p. 13). She is very quick to point out that the definition is met by many people with adverse responses. The idea of mental reservation where a person withholds a qualifying remark in order to make the statement true or where a person may lie to thieves who do not deserve the truth and so on is brought up by the author, who also points out that any rules that are steadfast come up with the inevitable loopholes. Therefore, she adds to her definition: “an intentionally deceptive message in the form of a
statement” (Bok, 1978, p. 15). At this point, Bok (1978) states that there are three factors or filters that alter the way that a message is perceived. These are self-deception, error, and “variations in the actual intention to deceive” (p. 15). So Bok (1978) turns the discussion to “clear cut lies…where the intention to mislead is obvious, where the liar knows that what he is communicating is not what he believes, and where he has not deluded himself into believing his own deceits” (p. 16).

These lies distort information. The lie changes the perception of the deceived as far as their current situation in which they look for alternatives to move them forward. The lie may misinform,

So as to obscure some objective…. It may make the objective seem unattainable or no longer desirable… or even create a new one…. Lies may also eliminate or obscure relevant alternatives…. At other times, a lie may lead to the unnecessary loss of confidence in the best alternative….Finally the degree of uncertainty in how we look at our choices can be manipulated through deception. (Bok, 1978, pp. 19-20)

The preceding elements demonstrate how people with metic intelligence may be lured to the use of deception in gaining the ends that they desire. Such deception, according to Bok (1978) can be coercive and as such can give a sense of power to the liar: “When it succeeds, it can give power to the deceiver—power that all who suffer the consequences of lies would not wish to abdicate” (p. 22). Bok tells us that liars want the benefit of honest society and does not want to be deceived themselves, but want the prerogative to deceive if they can justify such lies.

Upon discovery of falsehoods, the power for those individuals can decrease as their integrity has been compromised: “Once his word is no longer trusted, he will be left with greatly decreased power -- even though a lie often does bring at least a short-term gain in power over those deceived” (Bok, 1978, p. 26). The author is emphatic on the
need for social trust as a good that must be protected: “Trust is a social good to be protected just as much as the air we breathe and the water we drink. When it is damaged, the community as a whole suffers, and when it is destroyed, societies falter and collapse” (Bok, 1978, p. 27).

One community that can suffer from falsehood is the workplace. If a person cannot trust anything stated in the workplace, it can become a hostile environment. The perspective in the workplace can be viewed through a different lens, however, as a competitive environment where a sense of cunning may even be praised. Deception has been “celebrated through the ages when seen from the perspective of the agent, the liar, the forceful man. The hero uses deceit to survive and to conquer. When looked at from this point of view… deceit is portrayed with bravado and exultation. Nietzsche and Machiavelli are their advocates” (Bok, 1978, p. 29).

Bok does not condone lying. She would like to tell us that almost all lies are an abomination and should be ruled out However, she states, “I have to agree that there are at least some circumstances which warrant a lie. And foremost among them are those where innocent lives are at stake and where only a lie can deflect the danger” (Bok, 1978, p. 45).

The deceit of which we speak in the business world rarely if ever relates to situations when innocent lives are at stake. We need not argue that the healthcare field may have some instances where this is the case, but when we speak of selling capital equipment and the relationship between salespeople and their customers, clients, and coworkers, etc., it is hard to come up with a scenario presenting a life and death situation.
Bok surveys many moral systems and maxims. However, she seems to struggle with any system when looking to find the correct answer for when a lie is justifiable. Lies and deception are prevalent and pervasive, especially in instances where there is advocacy. Bok advocates examining the choices people make and the actions they take. This is exactly how Bok fits into our inquiry: to enter into the practice of sales which includes a unified life of a calling, creating a virtuous character by continually taking the correct actions at the appropriate times.

After discussing the different types of white lies that harm no one, the author examines excuses commonly offered for lying. Bok (1978) states:

An excuse seeks to extenuate, sometimes to remove the blame entirely from something which would otherwise be a fault. It can seek to extenuate in three ways. First, it can suggest that what is seen as a fault is not really one. Secondly, it can suggest that, though there has been a fault, the agent is not really blameworthy, because he is not responsible. And finally, it can suggest that, though there has been a fault, and though the agent is responsible, he is not really to blame because he has good reasons to do as he did. (p. 74)

In the world of capital equipment sales one sees all of these excuses for lying almost on a daily basis. In the first instance, lies or deceptions are dismissed as simply being exaggerations. Maybe the liar will state that he was not serious in the discussion or that his statements were simply misunderstood. The second type is probably more common, where the liar simply states that he had no choice but to deceive because he was coerced into telling the lie. In other words, the salesperson was doing his job because his manager told him to tell the customer that the product could do what the customer was asking it to. Or maybe even more common, the manager simply was passing on deception as given from upper management, and, in so doing, the liar is not responsible. The third type of excuse offered by Bok (1978) is “the type of excuse which is most fundamental
for the process of evaluating deliberate lies. In this third type of excuse, the liar admits
the lie, accepts responsibility for it but offers reasons to show that he should be partially
or even wholly cleared of blame” (p. 75). It is here where we see the liar seeking moral
reasons for a lie and why the lie should be allowed. Bok (1978) groups these types of
excuses into four categories: “that of avoiding harm, that of producing benefits, that of
fairness, and that of veracity” (p. 76). The first two of these, harm and benefit, are the
most common appeals to justification of lies. This holds true in the game of selling. An
incompetent sales representative may make up an answer on the spot to conceal her own
incompetence and avoid any exposure to management of her incompetence, thus avoiding
harm. The same sales representative may answer a question from a prospective customer
in order to secure a sale or change the perception of the customer in a favorable light,
thus increasing the benefit of moving the sale along or even closing the sale. She may
claim that everybody else tells lies to the customer under those circumstances, so it is
only fair that she gets to lie and follow the same procedure. She may even argue that the
principle of veracity and trustworthiness was being upheld by maintaining confidence in
her company and its management.

According to Bok (1978), “Many lies invoke self-defense -- the avoidance of
harm to oneself -- as an excuse…lies to get out of trouble of all kinds, to save face, to
avoid losing work -- all employ in some form excuses claiming the avoidance of harm to
oneself. Self-defense is also invoked as an excuse for lies on behalf of entire groups” (p.
79). We see this in the world of sales all of the time, when a representative is being
grilled over an activity, territory knowledge and sales managers are having to answer for
a representative to upper management. This can become pervasive throughout an
organization and “self-defensive lies can permeate all one does, so that life turns into living a lie. Professionals involved in collective practices of deceit give up all ordinary assumptions about their own honesty and that of others” (Bok, 1978, p. 79). These lies both avoid harm and bring benefit to the liar.

Altruism is often another excuse for lies. Those told to benefit others are often deemed to be less offensive. The altruistic lie can be justified by people’s intentions because those telling the lie may state that they meant no harm, and he only had good intentions; therefore, the lie could do no harm. The good intentions, in fact, may be to get the sale, thereby increasing the company’s health and welfare. The idea of fairness comes into the discussion in justifying lies. This holds true for our world of sales as well. Bok looks at the excuses invoking fairness in several ways. However, the example of reciprocal lying as being fair and lies to keep confidences are very common in most organizations. Bok (1978) here touches on a very interesting point:

A final category where fairness is invoked is that where people have agreed in advance to a practice involving deception. They have set rules for what is fair, for what can be expected. Anyone who agrees to the rules cannot complain of unfairness when deception is used, so long as the rules permitted it. In a game of poker, for instance, players accept the degree of deception allowed by the rules, just as in football they accept a degree of violence. And in medical experimentation, subjects who are competent and who have agreed to participate in an experiment knowing it will use deception are not being treated unfairly. (p. 83)

This exemplifies the game of sales. Whether one who is in sales who participates in practices of deception is voluntarily, Bok (1978) points out that this is a part of the human condition in business dealings: “It is more often the case that groups… participate involuntarily in practices of deception. They are then forced to plan their strategy knowing that deception is possible or even likely. Should they be the only ones foregoing
the bribe or the lie or the black-market operation, they may not survive in a corrupt community” (p. 83). Lies and deceit are commonly justified by the liar based on the reasoning that they are constantly being lied to, being exploited, and their dishonesty is justified by rectifying these perceived wrongs. The example that comes to mind is a horse race, where every horse is taking some performance enhancing drug. Without giving all the horses the same treatment, individual ones cannot compete, therefore the owners claim to be justified in doing so. The same may hold for some that are engaged in the game of sales. All sales representatives stretch the truth about what their equipment can do; therefore, they may think that they have to engage in the same behavior simply to compete. Bok (1978) writes: “Liars are quicker to argue that honesty will hurt them in practices where ‘everyone else cheats’; they are more easily convinced that a lie which benefits them will harm no one else, and their concern for the effect of deceit on their own character and practices is minimal” (p. 87). This discussion of “mutual deceit” is of critical importance to our discussion of sales and the practice of sales.

First of all, our practice of sales is concerned with the character of the sales representative and the lifelong pursuit of the calling of a sales profession. In entering into the practice of sales, individuals are concerned with the effect that deceit has on their character over a lifetime. Secondly, to deceive is, according to Aristotle, “mean and culpable”. If one merely relies on the tradition of sales and the traditional practices of sales as taught by Tom Hopkins (1982), Frank Pacetta (1995), and the rest of the so-called “gurus” of sales, then one may be forced to believe that deception is merely a part of the game of sales and that one must be comfortable in telling lies consistently and often, using whatever excuses to justify such deception in the meantime.
Indeed, if we were to examine the lives of such gurus, we would find a tradition of stretching the truth. I do not know of any people who pride themselves on being a good liar. However, I have met those who lie constantly to achieve the desired ends of successful selling. I believe that the tension arises in the nature of the sales game. Sales techniques employ the use of mutual deceit at the bargaining table. Bok (1978), herself, alludes to this when she writes,

In certain bargaining situations, we also play such mutually deceptive roles: as buyer and seller... false claims are a convention; to proclaim from the outset one’s honest intention would be madness. If buyers and sellers bargain knowingly and voluntarily, one would be hard put to regard as misleading their exaggerations, false claims to have given their last bid, or words of feigned loss of interest. Both parties have then consented to the rules of the game. (p.131)

Based on my experience in sales and sales management, very rarely are both buyer and seller equally equipped to enter into such a mutually deceptive arrangement, because one side will always be more experienced or understand the limitations of the rules differently than the other. If a representative has six months of experience and is calling on a procurement officer of twenty years of experience, they are not both equipped to understand the rules, and chances are that the procurement officer will take any profit on the transaction and do so in the interests of the company he or she is representing. Likewise, if a sales representative has twenty years of experience and is calling on an office manager of three years’ experience and has never procured anything in her life, chances are that the sales representative will maximize profit and revenue on the transaction in his own interest and the interest of the company he represents, possibly even to the point that may exceed reason. Bok (1978) writes, “Much greater problems arise when one or both parties do not participate voluntarily, or where both parties are not equally aware of the ground rules allowing deception. It is easy for liars to stretch the
analogy of voluntary mutual bargaining to excuse much more questionable practices (p. 131). The author acknowledges that such games do not always involve an equal playing field because the manager and the sales representative hold different positions in the company and, therefore, do not have equal opportunity to deceive. Interpersonal dominance can affect such situations, and, therefore, they are not games of mutual deception -- at least not to the subordinate.

Many issues arise when taking the position that if people are in sales they are automatically entering into a game of mutual deception with the employer and the customers that they are calling on. Numerous deceits are carried out using this justification. And, what Bok (1978) states rings true and sums up the problem well:

These difficulties are intensified for those who spend large portions of their time in deceptive bargaining. They may then lose some ability to discriminate among kinds and degrees of falsehood, and unless the lines between circumstances where the rules allowing deception do and do not apply are very clear, the deceptive tactics may spill over into other relationships. In the end, the participants in deception they take to be mutually understood may end up with coarsened judgment and diminished credibility, even though the original bargaining practice seemed harmless in its own right. Bargaining and salesmanship have a thousand shadings and innumerable lines at which to take a stand or go along with what seems to be the accepted practice. These are the everyday contexts where many test their personal standards. A recent study shows that businessmen are increasingly concerned that their work brings pressure upon these standards by rewarding deception. (p. 132)

The problem, stated so eloquently by Sissela Bok, remains rather puzzling. Are we to accept previous traditions and practices as precedent and, therefore, acceptable by merely conforming to the standards? I do not think that a practice of sales in the fashion we have described would allow for the excuse that “I was told to do so and so” or “I had no other choice but to deceive.” It demands thought and rational decision-making about choosing a correct action. Bok (1978) writes,
The very stress on individualism, on competition, on achieving material success which so marks our society also generates intense pressure to cut corners. To win an election, to increase one’s income, to outsell competitors -- such motives impel many to participate in forms of duplicity they might otherwise resist. The more widespread they judge these practices to be, the stronger will be the pressure to join even compete in deviousness. (p. 244)

Bok tells us that many feel that they are caught up in practices that they cannot change and that many are unaware of any problem in the first place.

The reasons for not conforming to the game of sales as we have described it are numerous. We are looking for an integrated practice of sales that seeks the goods internal to the practice of sales, while the product of which is the goods external to the practice of sales. Virtue is a habit and as such our decisions must reflect virtuous activity throughout our career if we are to claim that we are in the practice of sales. Again, Bok (1978) answers the question:

Individuals, without a doubt, have the power to influence the amount of duplicity in their lives and to shape their speech and action. They can decide to rule out deception wherever honest alternatives exist and become much more adept at thinking up honest ways to deal with problems. They can look with much greater care at the remaining choices where deception seems the only way out…. Finally, they can learn to beware of efforts to dupe them and make clear their preference for honesty even in small things. (p. 243)

This states exactly the idea of practicing sales, and in practicing sales people must make the correct, often painful choices designed at keeping integrity at the fore while continuing to pursue revenue and profits. The responsibility lies with the practitioner to react to fast-paced, given situations that require them to respond in such a way that they maintain integrity. Practitioners must give rational reflection and thought to such decisions before making them and not simply blame the system for their behavior. They cannot cut corners, demeaning their character or their integrity.
Sissela Bok (1978) deals in her work with what she terms “clear cut lies” where the intention and the utterance or statement is designed to deceive. However, in the world in which we live, such deception is common, but the situations are far more complex when using clear cut lies. *Metis* is operating all around us at all times. Bok (1978), herself, alludes to the pervasiveness of deception when she writes:

Clearly intended lies -- the most sharply etched forms of duplicity -- have been in the foreground throughout this book. More marginal forms, such as evasion, euphemism, and exaggeration, have been close at hand, ready to prop up these lies or take their place. And all around have clustered the many kinds of deception intended to mislead without even marginally false statements: the changes of the subject, the disguises, the gestures leading astray, all blending into the background of silence and inaction only sometimes intended to mislead. We lead our lives amidst all these forms of duplicity. (p. 242)

Clearly stated lies are not the standard in business. When Tom Hopkins (1982) asks his sales students to ask their grandmother to say something so that they can later quote their grandmother in a presentation, this act was to avoid a clear cut lie. However, this act remains a form of deception. F.G. Bailey (1991) writes, “Bok centers upon a single category and implicitly assumes, for the sake of argument, that a word or a deed is a thing that either is or is not a clear cut lie” (p. 14). Our lives and our professions are wrapped in relationships with others. These relationships can be described in different ways, but are mostly formed in the spirit of Aristotle’s friendships of utility or of pleasure. They may even be adversarial at times. As these relationships evolve and business transactions happen, the opportunities to deceive one another arise. Bailey (1991), in his work *The Prevalence of Deceit*, outlines the problem on a more pervasive front. Rather than clear cut lies, Bailey (1991) is:

Suggesting a different world, one not of things but of interactions that wait to have labels put on them....The domain of untruth is rich. There are name sets which carry with them formal penalties for deceit: perjury, fraud, libel, slander,
and false witness are examples. Others indicate a notional set of distances from some standard of truth or honesty: hyperbole, exaggeration, circumvention, misrepresentation…. Truth has many inversions: error, deceit, lies, concealment, hypocrisy, convention, propaganda, image-making, fiction, myth, fantasy, and so on. (p. 14)

Bailey (1991) noted that a positivist position work in scientific endeavors, human interaction with nature, and as part of human experience. The truth in dealing with human relationships may change in different cultures, environments, and change with the evolution of a relationship itself. Error in the use of syntax and language itself may be a barrier to understanding another, and, therefore, a person may be misled simply because of a lack of understanding on the part of the receiver of a message. This type of error, of course, can be used by a clever, cunning person in achieving his or her desired ends.

Bailey also points to the idea that deceit is closely linked with power. He points out that those struggling to maintain power may use deceit and those seeking power or more power are more than capable of deceit. He (1991) quotes Machiavelli: “I believe it to be most true that it seldom happens that men rise from low condition to high rank without employing either force or fraud….Nor do I believe that force alone will ever be found to suffice, while it will often be the case that cunning alone serves the purpose” (p. 318). Here Bailey is using Machiavelli to make the point that coercion and deceit are so closely related that they are sometimes seen as equivalent. In the world of sales, practitioners of sales may sometimes see this exercised through the messages sent down from upper management that may not exactly ring true with their experience. What salespersons may be getting into when entering the game of sales and the sales organization may be what Bailey (1991) refers to as “collusive lying.” Similar to games of mutual deception, collusive lying involves “some degree of consent from the people.”
Bailey continues, “This consent is manifested in a collusive disregard for certain known realities, which if recognized, would upset the basis for cooperative activity” (p. 51).

One example of collusive lying is when the salesperson team up with a company that has immense influence. It is deceptive to believe that “at Acme, we are all family” knowing that if that was the case, it would be considered a highly dysfunctional, incestuous family, because all of them have their own interests in mind, and rarely does anyone have another interests in mind when taking action. The lists of such collusive lies in any organization can go on endlessly: our interest rates are comparable to what they can get at the bank; one does not become a VP without earning it; and our service representatives are the best.

As previously noted, relationships, whether they be the sales representatives relationships with their managers and upper management, their fellow salespeople, coworkers and support staff, or customers or prospective customers, they can evolve over time. As friendships of utility, of which most of these relationships are, they can become at times adversarial in that the interests of the sales representatives may compete with the interest of other people in sales. For example, a procurement officer may win points by going to another vendor in the political arena in which she works. The goal is to get the salesperson to make some mistake, thereby, giving the procurement officer the excuse needed to end their relationship. Or more common examples are two salespeople attempting to get assigned to a very lucrative account, competing for a promotion, or attempting to blame one another for losing an account. A manager trying to hide his own incompetence by attempting to blame his representative for his own shortcomings may be
another example. All of these involve struggles for power, either to increase or maintain power over others. Bailey (1991) sums up the situation well when he states:

Public affairs are guided by people of influence, who manipulate each other and ordinary people by controlling information, dispensing lies and other forms of deception as needed. Machiavelli’s princes do not owe truth to their subjects; they should “confuse men’s brains and not make loyalty their foundation.” Bacon was only slightly less cynical. He invoked trust, but in a backhanded way: do not be caught in a lie because that weakens trust. In all this there is plain recognition of power, of competition for power, and, moreover, of the fact that dominance unusually antagonizes at least some of those dominated. Untruths provide weapons for the weak to resist the strong and for the strong to moderate the antagonism that their dominance provokes from the weak. In this philosophy (certainly Machiavelli’s version of it), political calculations about people run along two unequal dimensions: Friend or enemy or neutral; superior or inferior or equal. The dimensions are unequal because, first, solidarity is subordinate to the second, power. Friendship, for example, is not an end in itself but merely a factor in calculations about power; enmity is significant only because it makes control more difficult. All statuses on the power dimension (including equality) carry with them a right to deceive. The strong use lies (Machiavelli’s fraud) to control the weak, who have no absolute right to know the truth….On the other hand, since it is well known that truthfulness is not owed by a potential victim to a thief, if rulers are thieves of liberty, then they too have no right to truthfulness from subjects….Those who claim to stand above the fray and hold the ring impartially for truth either lie or deceive themselves. Whether they wish it or not, whether they realize it or not, umpires are always drawn into the contest and, if they are to be effective, must, like any other contestant, strive to make their own definition of the situation, their own basic lie, prevail. But, as in the case of truth itself, we shrink from the notion that justice, standing impartial above the fray, may be nothing but a necessary illusion and in reality may either be a deceitful claim made by an interested party or a pretense collusively sustained by all parties because they fear uncertainty. (pp. 66-67)

While the examples of this that follow in Bailey’s work are about matters of political import, they apply well to the world of sales in the aforementioned examples of attempting to gain a promotion, attempting to gain more lucrative accounts, or landing a big renewal in an account. There is always a supposed umpire, that being a manager or upper manager that must make judgments and decisions and must have good, defendable reasons for making such judgments or decisions. Deception is consistently used through
ambiguous language or certainly lies by those who are not in the practice of sales to sway such judgments or decisions. So the strong, (the company, the manager, the upper manager,) lie to the weak and the weak acquiesce to the strong while keeping their own agendas. All of them lie to their enemies or adversaries and feel justified in doing so. From Bailey’s perspective, if we live in isolation, the truth is based on our own unique understanding from that context. However, we do not and, therefore, cannot have such an objective opinion of the truth. We live in relationship with others whose interests sometimes collide with ours and, therefore, we can be subject to many different versions of the truth. It is the cold reality of our human condition that untruths are there: lies and deceit are prevalent. This holds true for the world of business, both the game and practice of sales. This is a political world, and, as such, the search for and the maintenance of power is close to the center of the world of sales. Others will not and do not espouse the same assumptions of what is right and wrong, regardless of statements of values and ruling principles or codes of ethics, or even of what is legal. So how do we navigate these waters when attempting to enter into a practice of sales?
CHAPTER FIVE

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S WORK ETHIC

Max Weber's "spirit of capitalism" is personified through the person of Benjamin Franklin. The idea of the conduct of life is a part of that spirit. Benjamin Franklin gives us a perfect example of a man that built wealth through industry and frugality, (which Weber attributes to Franklin's Puritan ethic). Weber (1930) quotes Franklin extensively from "Necessary Hints to Those Who Would Be Rich" and "Advice to a Young Tradesman":

Remember, that time is money. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labor, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon that the only expense; he has really spent, rather thrown away, five shillings, besides. “Remember, that credit is money. If a man lets his money lie in my hands after it is due, he gives me interest, or so much as I can make of it during that time. This amounts to a considerable sum where a man has good and large credit, and makes good use of it. Remember, that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again it is seven and three pence, and so on, till it becomes a hundred pounds. The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds. Remember this saying, The good paymaster is lord of another man’s purse. He that is known to pay punctually and exactly to the time he promises, may at any time, and on any occasion, raise all the money his friends can spare. This is sometimes of great use. After industry and frugality, nothing contributes more to the raising of a young man in the world than punctuality and justice in all his dealings; therefore, never keep borrowed money an hour beyond the time you promised, lest a disappointment shut up your friend’s purse for ever. The most trifling actions that affect a man’s credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or eight at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer, but if he sees you at a billiard table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day, demands it, before he can receive it, in a lump. It shows, besides, that you are mindful of what you owe; it makes you appear a careful as well as an honest man, and that still increases your credit. Beware of thinking all your own that you possess, and of living accordingly. It is a mistake that many people who have credit fall into. To prevent this, keep an exact account for some time both of your expenses and your income. If you take the pains at
first to mention particulars, it will have this good effect: you will discover how wonderfully small, trifling expenses mount up to large sums, and will discern what might have been, and may for the future be saved, without occasioning any great inconvenience. For six pounds a year you may have the use of one hundred pounds, provided you are a man of known prudence and honesty. He that spends a groat a day idly, spends idly above six pounds a year, which is the price for the use of one hundred pounds. He that wastes idly a groat’s worth of his time per day, one day with another, wastes the privilege of using one hundred pounds each day. He that idly loses five shillings’ worth of time, loses five shillings, and might as prudently throw five shillings into the sea. He that loses five shillings, not only loses that sum, but all the advantage that might be made by turning it in dealing, which by the time that a young man becomes old, will amount to a considerable sum of money. (p. 101)

For Weber, Franklin exceeds the prerequisite of gaining wealth for the sake of gaining it through his conduct of life. This is not a mere code to follow to make money and become rich; it is an ethic of the way in which people should lead their life. It stands above being morally neutral as it "takes on the character of an ethically coloured maxim for the conduct of life" (Weber, 1930, p. 17). Franklin was more than a businessman; he was a well-respected philosopher, scientist, inventor, diplomat, and publisher (Brands, 2000; Isaacson, 2004; Wood, 2004). He fits the Weberian concept of the capitalist in that he succeeds in his callings and is ethically and virtuously informed while doing so. Weber (1930) also points out that while he wants to attribute the work ethic to Franklin's Puritan upbringing, he is void of any religious overtones, having written "a document of that spirit which contains what we are looking for in almost classical purity, and at the same time has the advantage of being free from all direct relationship to religion" (p. 14). Franklin suits our model of the mentor for the practitioner of sales perfectly, because not only did he embrace a non–religious ethic, he espoused all of the virtues and values we have described thus far.
Franklin’s rhetoric is, upon first glance, filled with witty sayings and discourse on the conduct of life as is found in his publication, *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. In fact, his most widely read publication, *The Way to Wealth*, was taken from the twenty-fifth and final edition of that almanac. It is in the almanac that we can find such maxims as “Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” Many of his sayings from *Poor Richard’s Almanac* are now part of American vernacular wisdom. Edmund Morgan (2002) states of the almanac, “These are the source of the pithy injunctions to industry, thrift, earnestness, and humility that gave him his reputation as the patron saint of American businessmen and go-getters generally” (p. 25). John Bogle, in his introduction to Blaine McCormick’s (2005) work entitled *Benjamin Franklin, America’s Original Entrepreneur*, states that Franklin was not only a “great patriot [but also] qualifies as the first American entrepreneur” (p. 10).

While Franklin has been depicted as extremely materialistic by Weber and others, his calling was more focused on public service and doing good for the public. Franklin’s many accomplishments, such as the invention of the lighting rod and the Franklin Stove could have made him a great more amount of money; however, he collected no royalties or monies for these inventions, out of his public-minded spirit. (Isaacson, 2004; McCormick, 2005; Van Doren, 1938; Wood, 2004). Franklin provided the notion of success by getting the American Dream.

Franklin serves Weber’s purpose in identifying and personifying the Spirit of Capitalism. Additionally, Franklin serves us in the current task at hand in personifying a practitioner of sales. Franklin (1790) describes himself as an expert in selling (Franklin, p. 48). He was also able to retire from his first calling as a printer (for the purpose of
making a living) when he was forty-two. He was well-acquainted with the value of all
types of relationships and with rhetoric and sought goods external to the practice in all of
his dealings. Franklin espoused the virtues and virtuous living, and he knew well that
virtue was a habit worth cultivating.

Beyond all of these features, Franklin brings up the notion of representing many
different facets and many different roles throughout his life, including his representation
of the American colonies to the French and English governments during the years up to
and through the conclusion of the American Revolution. Franklin navigates the troubled
waters of business and politics in a non-sectarian fashion that espouses the virtues of
honesty, sincerity, and integrity at all times. Franklin knew how to deceive and was
perfectly capable of doing so he did at times appear to have a *metic* intelligence.

However, I will argue that in the spirit aimed towards the good, Franklin practiced
*phronesis*, a practical wisdom at work throughout his life that afforded him the reputation
that stands today as his being an honest gentleman that founded our country: “He spent
most of his life in public service, not trying to increase his fortune….Defenders claim that
he was gifted at fashioning a self to suit his audience and that he used this ability not to
deceive anyone but to further what he saw as the public good” (Author of Intro, 2005, p. xii).

Franklin looked at industry and frugality as well as all other endeavors through
the lenses of practicality: what use is it to the people and to society. It is noted that even
in his scientific experiments, theory simply takes a back seat, and practical applications
are more important for Franklin. Even in discussing the virtues and virtuous acts of men,
Franklin (1790/2005) states that good behaviors are prescribed to do us good and bad
behaviors are forbidden because they are bad for us. This is explained further in Poor Richard’s Almanac for 1739: “Sin is not hurtful because it is forbidden but it is forbidden because it is hurtful…nor is a Duty beneficial because it is commanded, but it is commanded because it is beneficial” (qtd in Andrews, 1989, p. 99).

Ben Franklin served as an apprentice. An apprenticeship at this time was “more than a simple understanding. Master and apprentice were bound in what was almost a trade sacrament” (Van Doren, 1938, p. 32). Franklin’s father had originally wanted Benjamin to become a clergyman, and he enrolled him at age eight in the grammar school, The Boston Latin School, which was a preparatory school for Harvard (Weinberger, 2005). At that time Franklin could already read, and in his autobiography, he mentions that he could not recall an age that he could not read. However, the prospects of a formal education proved to be too expensive and after being elevated to the next higher class within one year, Franklin was withdrawn from the school to pursue a trade. Franklin then worked in his father’s business for two years cutting wicks and doing labor as needed. He did not like the trade and wanted to go to sea. He writes that his father, Josiah, “had apprehensions that if he did not put me to one more agreeable I should break loose and go to sea…In consequence, he took me to walk with him to see joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers etc. at their work” (1790/2005, p. 9). His father soon found a place for internship among family relations, his cousin, Samuel, in the cutler’s trade. His cousin, Samuel, wanted too high a price and Benjamin was sent back home. It is interesting to note that Samuel was the son of Franklin’s uncle, Benjamin, who had boarded in the home of Josiah Franklin to some extent.
Franklin’s father observed his “bookish inclination,” leading his father to bring him up into the printing trade. Franklin was forced into apprenticeship to his brother because this would keep him from going to sea. Franklin (1790/2005) writes,

I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded and signed the indenture when I was but twelve years old. I was to serve an apprenticeship till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was allowed journeyman’s wages during the last year. (p. 10)

This apprenticeship was longer than the customary seven years and was written as a nine year apprenticeship (Isaacson, 2004). Franklin learned the trade of printing well and became quite an asset to his brother while under this arrangement. Carl Van Doren (1938) states, “Benjamin at seventeen had the best mind in Boston and was the best apprentice in the world” (p. 32).

The business also allowed Franklin access to a wider array of literature to study, which again was his inclination to do. He read a vast array of literature at this time, which included works on rhetoric, logic, religion, and philosophy. Franklin was insatiable in his hunger for knowledge and reading, often crediting reading as the best part of his night.

Through a little coaxing and criticism from his father, young Franklin also worked on his style of writing: “His self-taught style, as befitting a protégé of Addison and Steele, featured a fun and conversational prose that was lacking in poetic flourish but powerful in its directness” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 28).

At this time, his brother had started his own newspaper, The New England Courant. Ben Franklin was “employed to carry the papers to the customers after having worked in composing the types and printing off the sheets” (Franklin, 1790/2005, p. 15). This is also the time that Ben Franklin started his writing career. His brother would not
publish anything that Ben wrote; after all he was only a teenager. Franklin disguised his hand and slipped the letters under the door. These were the famous “Silence Dogood” letters. They were met by Franklin’s brother and his acquaintances with a great deal of respect for the hand, and they were published repeatedly. Ben Franklin at the age of seventeen years was actually named as the publisher of the paper because the British Government had grown tired of James’s political writings against the crown and forbade him from publishing the Courant. Therefore, “On Monday, February 11th, 1723, there appeared atop the Courant Masthead: Printed and Sold by Benjamin Franklin” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 33). It was on this occasion that the elder James Franklin discharged the original apprenticeship and wrote ”secret” papers of indenture for the remaining three years so that Ben could publish the paper. When James resumed publishing the paper, he treated Ben the same as he had done previously, not as a peer but as an apprentice (Isaacson, 2004, p. 33). When he finally divulged the information that he himself had written the Silence Dogood letters, his brother was not pleased. The apprenticeship then took on the characteristics of apprenticeships of today, with some of the same problems that formal mentoring programs have today.

5.1 Apprenticeship and Today’s Mentoring Process

As we have already discussed, some of the indictments of formal mentoring programs that are offered as ethical concerns are favoritism or the exclusion of minorities (Moberg & Valasquez, 2004). Along the lines of criticizing the mentoring process is that it maintains the status quo in terms of power and conflict (Moberg & Valasquez, 2004). Additional concerns have arisen regarding mistreatment reported by protégés, including political sabotage, revenge, and harassment. Mentors have complained about
backstabbing and instances of trickery by the protégés. In response to these criticisms, some companies are establishing programs that are structured and formal (Bauer, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1991).

Such formal programs have led to a long list of concerns regarding ethics, power and abuse, and dysfunction within these relationships (Moberg & Valasquez, 2004). Complaints from protégés have included mismatches in values, work-style, or personality issues between the protégé and the mentor. Other common complaints were mentor neglect, self-absorption, and intentional exclusion. Additional complaints have emerged about forms of manipulative behavior, including petty tyranny, politicking, and various other forms of manipulative behavior. It is interesting to note here that another problem that has arisen is that of mentor incompetence.

From the perspective of the mentor, the list of complaints is not as long. The complaints include the amount of time that the protégé needs is greater than expected and the protégé may be far too dependent. Also there are complaints about deceit and deception (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Moberg & Valasquez, 2004; Scandura 1998). It was this abuse of power that eventually led Franklin to run away to Philadelphia. This was illegal, because he did have a contract to stay as James’s apprentice for another three years. He fled the city of Boston, because James would make sure that his younger brother would not find work in Boston. Ben knew, however, that James would not produce the secret documents. He also knew that he had the knowledge necessary to make it on his own. The formal apprenticeship had served its purpose, because Ben Franklin knew more than most printers at the time about the trade and its operation. This knowledge led him to find work in Philadelphia and in London
and eventually enabled him to enter into his own business and flourish. Franklin also took in apprentices of his own from time to time and eventually set them up in the printing business as well, which also helped in his financial affairs. Knowledge of the trade definitely helped Franklin in securing work upon his arrival at Philadelphia. Beyond the knowledge of the trade, however, his relationships would do far more in helping the young man survive and thrive.

At this point in Franklin’s life he has spoken of a few relationships. The first of which is the admiration for the sensibility of his father, and of the indentured relationship he has had with his brother, James. Throughout his life the relationships that Franklin enters into prove to be the most important aspect of his life. Early in life, Franklin already knew the difference between friendships of utility and those of pleasure. He also was very astute in his knowledge of when utility in a relationship was exhausted, especially in the latter part of his life when he had learned from several relationships in his younger life. Franklin was friendly to others. Joseph Priestly, an English scientist of the time, commented that “strangers sometimes found Franklin reserved, but such reactions were not common enough to evoke frequent comment” (qtd. in Middlekauff, 1996, p. 2).

History has shown that Franklin also had many roles that are not completely understood by everybody (Middlekauff, 1996; Morgan, 2006; Van Doren, 1938; Weinberger, 2005; Wood, 2004). However, complete exposure and openness is not a requisite for friendship, “and Franklin met everyone he was not bound to distrust with directness and honesty. He was a good judge of others and normally brought a friendly and warm spirit to is exchanges with them” (Middlekauff, 1996, p. 2). While his ability to cultivate friendship appears to come naturally to Franklin, like other great salespeople,
it was an acquired characteristic. Franklin (1790/2005) tells us in the *Autobiography* that he was “fond of argument” (p. 11). However, he also tells us that argument can become destructive when arguments lead to disgusts and enmity among people. Because of this recognition about the positive and negative effects of arguments, Franklin began his study to become the “humble inquirer.” He studied grammar, rhetoric, and logic, which led to studying Socratic method.

Franklin liked to win as exemplified by his extreme competitiveness and revelry in victory. He soon realized, however, that winning in this fashion served little purpose because these types of victories were not necessarily convincing and he lost friends because of it. He adjusted his style and made an effort to be modest. In order to express himself in this way, he argued that “well-meaning and sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive assuming manner that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat most of those purposes for which speech has given us” (Franklin, 1790/2005, p. 14).

Franklin gives us some insight into his thoughts of how to persuade others. He was a master at persuasion, as his history will show. This follows the Aristotelian sense of rhetoric, which Franklin himself admits to have done some studying. The method of delivery and style of Franklin with regard to persuasion does not focus on the subject matter. Franklin is merely laying out some of the rules for persuasion that are available to the student, without tackling the implications of relationships for success.

In defiance of the formal obligation to his relationship with his brother and against the will of his father Franklin had to flee Boston in search of better circumstances. He mentions one of his contemporaries in his autobiography, John Collins: “There was
another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted” (Franklin, 1790/2005, p. 11). Franklin had originally traveled to New York. Using his friendship with Collins, Franklin was able to arrange his travel on a boat under the pretense that he had been in the company of a girl of bad character and that her parents were going to make them get married (Franklin, 1790; Isaacson, 2004; Morgan, 2002; Van Doren, 1938; Wood, 2004). Franklin did not think that the formal relationship of master-apprentice to be a favorable one because it was a relationship in which one individual had too much power over another and this was inherently wrong. He suffered many beatings at the hands of his master (who also happened to be his brother) (Franklin, 1790; Isaacson, 2004; Van Doren, 1938).

Franklin valued relationships. Relationships were of great importance to Franklin. The autobiography of Franklin can be described as a long narrative describing the relationships that he established, developed, maintained, or dissolved. The autobiography solidifies Franklin as the prototypical American. The work revealed a revolution of society because his work was based on the insights of a poor worker and not a king or rich man. The work also became a bestseller in the nineteenth century because young men viewed Franklin as a role model.

Of the relationships described in the autobiography, Franklin appears to be extremely fond of the relationship that he had with his father. Franklin describes his father as having sound judgment in important matters, whether public or private matters. He respected his father greatly because he would settle disputes among Benjamin and his brother during the apprenticeship, as well as provide his assistance with his writing skills.
Most of all, however, I believe that Franklin respected his father out of his ability to provide for his large family and ensure that they all were educated in a trade.

This respect is also evident in the autobiography when Franklin points to the assistance that his father had given him when encouraging him to take up the trade of printing which would feed Benjamin’s “bookish inclination” (p. 10). This inclination was noticed by many in the town, because it enabled Franklin the use of many works. He credits the relationships that he established with apprentices with booksellers who would occasionally lend him books overnight: “often I sat up in my chamber reading the greatest part of the night when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned in the morning, lest it be found missing” (p. 10). From that point, Franklin established a relationship with Mr. Matthew Adams, “An ingenious, sensible man… who had a pretty collection of books, frequented our printing office, took notice of me, and invited me to see his library and very kindly proposed to loan me such books as I chose to read” (p. 10). This in turn led to Franklin writing prose which “had been of great use to me in the course of my life and was a principal means of my advancement” (p. 11).

Franklin and John Collins had entered into a friendly argument by way of written correspondence over the education of women. Franklin had written several letters to Collins arguing his point. These letters fell into the hands of his father, and

Without entering the subject of dispute, he took occasion to talk to me about my matter of writing; observed that though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which he attributed to the printing house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method, and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to my manner of writing and determined to endeavor to improve my style. (p. 11)
So it is here that we see Benjamin Franklin giving credit to his father, albeit indirectly for a great deal of his success, through the arrangement of an apprenticeship into the print industry and then through his encouragement in perfecting his writing style, which had proven to be a “principle means of...advancement” (p.11).

This friendship that Franklin describes with his father is what Aristotle would deem a friendship of unequal. Aristotle holds a special place for the relationship between father and son which is exemplified by Franklin’s veneration of his father. Aristotle noted that the love between father and son is different from other kinds of love because,

The virtue and the function of each of these is different and so are the reasons for which they love; the love and the friendship are therefore different also. Each party, then neither gets the same from the other, nor ought to seek it; but when children render what he ought to render those who brought them into the world, and parents render what they should to their children, the friendship of such persons will be abiding and excellent. (p.1066)

Franklin had many other relationships throughout his lifetime, the first of which he describes with some remorse or mistakes in his reflections in the autobiography. The first mistake is his relationship with his brother James. While an apprentice at The New England Courant under his brother James, Franklin wrote several anonymous pieces under a disguised hand. He disguised his writing because he knew that James would not publish anything that Benjamin wrote because he was an apprentice and did not want to serve the younger Franklin’s vanity.

The opportunity to take control presented itself to Ben Franklin when James was censured and imprisoned for political writings that gave offense to the organization. James was ordered not to publish the paper, and he made Benjamin the editor-in-chief. Publicly, the papers of servitude were canceled and new secret papers were drawn up so that Ben would finish his apprenticeship privately: “He contrived and consented that my
old indenture should be returned to me with a discharge on the back of it, to show in case of necessity, and in order to secure to him the benefit of my service, I should sign new indentures for the remainder of my time, which were to be kept private” (p. 17). Ben Franklin seized the opportunity to use this as a means to end his servitude:

At length a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first errata of my life. (p. 17)

Franklin shows some remorse here. However, it is short-lived because in the next sentence he again asserts how unfair his brother was in his treatment of the younger Franklin. Franklin makes an attempt by stating, “Perhaps I was too saucy and provoking” (p. 17). At the age of seventeen, Franklin set out on his own for Philadelphia.

Upon his arrival, Franklin gained employment from an eccentric printer, Samuel Keimer. He also made the acquaintance of Governor William Keith, who presented an opportunity for Franklin to set up his own print shop. The governor wrote a letter to Franklin’s father asking him to financially back his son in the enterprise. His father declined because he thought putting that much in the hands of someone so young would be a mistake. Franklin delivered the letter personally on a trip back to Boston, which served to make some amends to the previous flight from the city. It was on this occasion Franklin makes his second mistake:

Along the way to Philadelphia, he visited his brother John, in Newport Rhode Island, where a friend of John’s, a Mr. Vernon, asked Franklin to recover thirty-five pounds owed to Vernon by a person in Pennsylvania, which Franklin agreed to do and which “afterwards occasioned me a good deal of uneasiness.” In New York he teamed up with his old intellectual friend Collins, who had now become a serious drinker and gambler and had lost all of his money. On the way to Philadelphia Franklin got the money owed to Vernon, and in Philadelphia Collins depended on Franklin to pay his lodging and boarding, which Franklin did with
Vernon’s money. Franklin and Collins then quarreled and Collins left with a promise, never fulfilled to pay the debt to Franklin. (Weinberger, 2005, p. 20)

Of this misjudged action, Franklin (1790/2005) noted that violating the trust of respecting the money of Vernon was a life mistake. It is interesting to note here that Franklin does not show any remorse over his friend Collins other than the fact that Collins never made good on his debt. That relationship was exhausted of any pleasure and as such was dissolved in this process.

The third mistake that Franklin committed involves his relationship with the woman that he would eventually find as his lifetime partner and common law wife, Deborah Read. Governor Keith promised to set Franklin up in business and would finance the endeavor himself. He promised to provide letters of credit to Franklin so that he could procure the necessary equipment in England and bring it back to America. The letters never appeared, and Franklin went to London without any means to stay there or to return. Franklin then got a job in London as a printer and eventually gained the favor of a merchant named Denham who provided a means for him to return to America as well as employment at his shop upon his return. In the meantime, Franklin had been courting the young Deborah Read in Philadelphia. Her mother thought that it would be best for them to wait to marry until his return from England and his settlement in business. Weinberger (2005) noted that Franklin had said that he and Ralph spent a lot of money on watching plays and going to other types of amusement. In the process, Franklin spent all of his money and Ralph forgot his wife and child and Franklin (Weinberger, 2005, p. 21).

Franklin (1790) states, “By degrees [forgot] his engagements with Miss Read, to whom I never wrote more than one letter, and that to let her know I was not likely soon to return.
This was another great errata of my life which I should wish to correct if I were to live it over again” (p. 39).

The next mistake that Franklin made was the mistake of printing *the Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*. He printed this work under Ralph’s name and only a small number of copies were printed while under the employ of Samuel Palmer. Franklin writes, “It occasioned my being more considered by Mr. Palmer as a young man of some ingenuity, though he seriously expostulated with me upon the principles of my pamphlet, which to him appeared abominable” (p. 40). In the same paragraph, as Weinberger (2005) points out, Franklin then describes the benefits of writing the pamphlet because it was the occasion for him to meet William Lyons, a surgeon of great repute that resulted in establishing a relationship with him. Also, the pamphlet caused the surgeon to “take great notice of me, called on me often to converse on those subjects, carried me to the horns, a pale-ale house in --------Lane, Cheapside and introduced me to Dr. Mandeville, author of the *Fable of the Bees* who had a club there of which he was the soul” (p. 40). Weinberger (2005) points to the irony of what Franklin calls a mistake here because it was the occasion to meet some very influential people of the time (p. 22).

The final mistake that Franklin made involves advances made on Mr. Ralph’s girlfriend, Mrs. T.,

Who on [Ralph’s] account having lost her friends and business was often in distresses and used to send for me and borrow what money I could spare to alleviate them. I grew fond of her company, and being at that time under no religious restraint, and taking advantage of my importance to her, I attempted to take some liberties with her (another erratum), which she repulsed with a proper degree of resentment. She wrote to Ralph and acquainted him with my conduct; this occasioned a breach between us, and when he returned to London he let me know he considered all of the obligations he had been under to me as annulled,
from which I concluded I was never to expect his repaying the money I had lent him or that I had advanced for him. (p. 41)

It is here again that Franklin points to the benefit of this mistake: “This, however, was of little consequence as he was totally unable, and by the loss of his friendship I found myself relieved from a heavy burden” (p. 41). Two of these mistakes, according to Franklin, were corrected. Franklin ultimately repaid Vernon what was owed to him plus interest and he ultimately took Deborah Read as his wife on September 1, 1730 (Weinberger, 2005).

From these relationships, however, Franklin learns how useful they can be. One of these most useful relationships comes from Thomas Denham, who was a Quaker from Bristol who came to Philadelphia in 1716. Denham went back to England in 1721, which was the time when he and Franklin met in a ship. Their relationship started out in a more professional setup wherein Franklin was able to be exposed to the mercantile business through Denham. Their relationship eventually grew into friendship.

We see Franklin taking a mentorship from Denham unlike the apprenticeship we see from James Franklin, a more formal relationship that actually taught Benjamin the trade that would allow him to retire from business at the age of forty-two. Denham, a Quaker merchant of great character, had a great influence on the life of Benjamin Franklin. Franklin apparently met Mr. Denham on the ship from America to England. They remained friends “with whom I often spent an hour when I had leisure” (Franklin, 1790/2005, p. 45). Franklin revered Denham’s character as one with integrity. Franklin recalls an entertainment where Denham had invited all of his previous creditors and at the end of the evening repaid them all with the interest accrued. Denham obviously advised Franklin on all subject matters including returning to Philadelphia. Franklin wrote that
Denham offered him a job as a clerk in his store in order for him to be acquainted in the mercantile business. Franklin agreed with the arrangement despite receiving less money from the job. Franklin admired Denham much as he admired his own father. He then sailed back to Philadelphia in the company of Denham.

When both of them returned to Philadelphia from England in 1726, Denham opened a store in Water-street and Franklin became involved in selling goods. This store was also the place where they lodged together. During around 1727, both of them got seriously ill. Franklin recovered quicker than Denham, who endured a more protracted battle with an illness. It was not clear when their relationship ended, but there was an indication that Denham’s illness and eventual death in 1728 ended their professional relationship when Franklin received employment from another merchant.

5.2 The Quaker Work Ethic

It was during this voyage that Franklin set out to model his life on virtue. While he does not credit the relationship and the mentoring of Denham with the turn toward virtue, it is in his company and under his mentorship that his plan comes to reality. This relationship gives Franklin a moral compass to guide the rest of his career. He writes merely a paragraph about Denham; however, the paragraph gives us a great deal of insight to their relationship and great deal more to the reverence paid to Mr. Denham:

Mr. Denham took a store on Water Street, where we opened our goods; I attended the business diligently, studied accounts, and grew in a little time an expert at selling. We lodged and boarded together; he counseled me as a father, having a sincere regard for me. I respected and loved him, and we might have gone on together very happily, but in the beginning of February, 1727, when I had just past my 21st year, we both were taken ill. My distemper was a pleurisy, which very nearly carried me off. I suffered a good deal, gave up the point in my own mind, and was at the time rather disappointed when I found myself recovering; regretting in some degree, that I must now, sometime or other have all that disagreeable work to do over again. I forget what Mr. Denham’s distemper was; it
held him a long time and at length carried him off…. He left me once more to the wide world, for the store was taken into the care of his executors and my employment under him ended. (pp. 47-48)

Little is known of Thomas Denham other than the paragraph that Franklin himself devotes to him in the autobiography. An account book of Denham’s is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s library. However, it does not give us much insight to his life. While the philosophy of Thomas Denham cannot be ascribed specifically to Denham, we have determined that he was a Quaker merchant in the eighteenth century and as such, we can look at the eighteenth century Quaker merchants as a group and their economic philosophies. Frederick Tolles (1947) in his article noted that the Quaker philosophy had a huge impact on the legacy created by Benjamin Franklin.

The Quakers have a long history of being known as shrewd businessmen. George Fox (1891), the Founder of the Society of Friends, stated in his journal that Quakers were great tradesmen. As far back as 1684, people were characterizing Quakers as modest merchants, who exhibit qualities such as punctuality, frugality, and being industrious group of people. This ethic did not change as the Quakers migrated to America. While the Quakers in Philadelphia represented no more than fifteen percent of the population in 1796, they accounted for more than fifty percent of those who paid taxes over L100. In fact, of the seventeen individuals that paid taxes in excess of L500 eight were Quakers and four were members of the Society of Friends. One of the five remaining non-Quakers, William Shippen, inherited his fortune from his Quaker grandfather (Tolles, 1947). Tolles (1947) tells us that the “Fundamental reason for Quaker success in business must be sought in something common to Friends on both sides of the Atlantic… in the religious ethic of Quakerism itself. An intimate relationship existed between
certain of the distinctive ideas of Protestantism and the rise of modern capitalism” (p. 63). This evokes, once again, Weber’s views of the spirit of capitalism, the idea of a calling in one’s work and the Protestant Ethic gave a moral, intellectual, and ethical backbone to the idea that making money and developing wealth for a modest legacy was part of one’s religious duty.

There are other salient features of the Quaker ethic that come to the fore in the discussion, of which no doubt Thomas Denham bestowed upon the young Ben Franklin, the idea of a calling, in which men are summoned by God to dedicate themselves to diligent labor to that task. The idea of stewardship also is part of this ethic. Tolle (1947) writes, “‘Good of mankind’ … represented a positive claim upon his worldly goods, and no doubt the prospect of being able to help those in need actually operated as an incentive to further acquisition. There was a whole side of the Quaker economic ethic which stressed the doctrine of stewardship and the social responsibility of the man of wealth” (p. 65). Other virtues espoused by the Quakers were industry and frugality; idleness simply was evil. Just after Denham died and Franklin went into business, he establishes his reputation. Franklin made an effort to be industrious and frugal, which he practiced by being simple and focused on his business. Thomas Denham was a Quaker merchant who was a mentor to Franklin. Denham helped Franklin in business, and Franklin loved Denham as a father. These features of the Quaker ethic no doubt were taught to Franklin from his father and reinforced by Denham.

5.3 The Importance of Business Relationships

After the passing of Denham, Franklin soon began his employ for a second time with the eccentric printer, Mr. Keimer. While Keimer paid well, Franklin knew that this
job would be one that required him to teach the trade to the younger crew with limited experience, one of which would ultimately be his partner, Hugh Meredith. The others he describes in some detail, and Franklin takes pride in describing them “for they all respected me the more as they found Keimer incapable of instructing them, and that from me they learned something daily” (p. 49). Franklin ultimately worked himself out of the position as the younger crew became better at their given tasks and his wages were too expensive for Keimer to maintain. After a public quarrel with Keimer, Franklin left his employ.

Franklin was extremely knowledgeable of the printing trade. He cast his own types, made his own ink, and did some engravings, something no other printer in town, including Keimer was capable of doing. Hugh Meredith came to Franklin with a proposal to form a partnership whereby Meredith, with help from his father, would provide the equipment and Franklin the skill. In the meantime, there was an opportunity to print paper money for New Jersey, and Franklin, not being able to find work until the equipment arrived from London, went back to work for Keimer: “The New Jersey job was obtained; I contrived a copperplate press for it, the first that had been seen in the country; I cut several ornaments and checks for the bills. We went to Burlington, where I executed the whole to satisfaction, and he received so large a sum for the work as to be enabled thereby to keep himself from ruin” (p. 51).

In Burlington, Franklin was well-received by many principal people in the province, many appointed to the Assembly. He stayed there for nearly three months, making many friends of some repute. We catch a glimpse of Franklin’s notion of
business relationships, those of friendships of utility: “These friends were afterwards of great use to me, as I was occasionally was to some of them” (p. 52).

Other relationships formed as well. Franklin formed a club of like-minded individuals that met on Friday evenings, called the Junto. Franklin begins by describing the members one by one specifically by trade and then by moral faculties and describes their activities and modes of discussing different literature and happenings. Afterwards, he brings to the fore another interest about how the printing business can gain recommendations from other people. One perspective was that the low price and the perception that people are working hard give Franklin’s printing business credibility. Another perspective was that the superior workmanship that Franklin exhibited made the business credible that led to recommendations.

These relationships of Franklin’s were of utmost importance. They secured business for him. He made good use of the apprenticeship under James in gaining the knowledge of the printing industry and of his protégé relationship with Denham, in working the Quaker values into his system. Franklin, in this instance, first of all knew his customers, the Quakers! He knew that they would appreciate the hard work and industry displayed here. Franklin also knew that the best way to secure additional business was through referral and having others speak highly of him in his absence. He was beginning to establish his own network of friends and business relationships that would offer him great return.

He also sheds some light on the nature of these relationships and how they can turn against him, as he describes his encounter with George Webb Webb, who was a member of the Junto, had approached Franklin to come into his shop as a journeyman
printer. Franklin could not hire him at that time and writes: “But I foolishly let him know, as a secret, that I soon intended to begin a newspaper and might have work him” (p. 58).

The hope of Franklin achieving success focused on the printer Bradford, who currently owned a paper that was managed poorly and was not entertaining, yet turned a profit. Webb told Keimer about Franklin, leading to Webb being hired to do the work. Franklin published several articles berating Keimer’s paper until ultimately Keimer sold the paper to Franklin. In any event, Franklin learned a lesson about supposed friendships and keeping secrets, because Keimer followed his own interests and gained employment through that bit of information shared by Franklin.

The relationship with Meredith also became strained due to the poor habits of Meredith. Meredith was often seen drunk in the street, “playing at low games in ale houses.” This gave discredit to the partnership. Meredith’s father could not pay the remaining debt on the equipment. Two friends, says Franklin, “came to me separately, unknown to each other, and, without any application from me offered each of them to advance me all the money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself, if that should be practicable, but they did not like my continuing the partnership with Meredith” (p. 60).

Franklin’s response was important because he shows commitment to his partnership. He writes,

I told them I could not propose a separation while any prospect remained of the Merediths fulfilling their part of our agreement, because I thought myself under great obligations to them for what they had done and would do if they could, but if they finally failed in their performance and our partnership must be dissolved, I should then think myself at liberty to accept the assistance of my friends. (p. 60)
Franklin then takes a very interesting tact on addressing the situation with Hugh Meredith: he does not get angry nor does he bring to the fore the shortcomings of his partner that drinks and gambles, rather, Franklin goes to him in a manner that in no way can put Meredith on the defensive. He approaches Meredith and says, “Perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you. If that is the case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you and go about my business” (p. 60). This allows Meredith to save face to some degree and avoids any accusations about his character, etc. Franklin also knows the truth of the matter and probably knows that Meredith will admit that he is not right for this position, for if he does not admit this, then there will be other plays to be made on another day. Franklin is using one tool here to get what he wants, which in this case, is sole ownership of the establishment. Meredith then admits that he is not fit for the business and that he wants to go back to farming. It costs Franklin a saddle and thirty pounds as well as having to take loans from his friends William Coleman and Robert Grace.

The nature of the negotiation was not clear based on the approach that Franklin used to Meredith. He examined the interests of both of the Merediths and ultimately made Meredith come up with an amiable solution so that they could leave as friends. The utility of this relationship was dissolved, and if the usefulness of the relationship was to be reestablished, then it could be brought back without any issues. So we see Franklin forming friendships of utility and of pleasure that suit him well.

He continues this part of the autobiography by accounting for his successes in business through his ability to write persuasively, and in the publication of his “The
Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency,” a pamphlet written in a rhetorical style that Franklin claims could not be matched by those who opposed the idea of printing more currency. As a result, Franklin states, “The point was carried by a majority in the House. My friends there, who considered I had been of some service, thought fit to reward me by employing me in printing the money; a very profitable job and a great help to me” (p. 62). Franklin attributes other profits to other friends, such as Hamilton. He eventually, through the help of these “friends,” ran Keimer out of business and left Bradford to contend with. Bradford was the postmaster at the time and as such had better opportunities of obtaining news. Bradford could distribute ads through the post and as such made his paper more profitable. Franklin distributed what he could by bribing the riders, a practice over which Franklin had no regrets. Franklin pursued his own interests and the interests of his friends. Franklin understood the importance of recognizing a relationship for what it was and had an understanding of who to trust with his interests. He had been burned on several occasions in his early development by Collins, Ralph, Keith, and, of course, Webb. He learned from his naivety and prospered in his knowing what a friendship of utility was.

Franklin was eventually appointed to the office of the Clerk of the General Assembly. This was most likely a strategic maneuver on his part, because this position not only paid a salary of sorts but “secured to me the business of printing the votes, laws, paper money, and other occasional jobs for the public, that on the whole, were very profitable” (p. 89). Once again, we see Franklin using his influence and friendships to secure work. By today’s standards, such relationship would be deemed illegal through a conflict of interest. However, the same principal of networking applies in business today,
because the printer’s salespersons would need to have a solid relationship with the
councilmen or others within the assembly.

Franklin shows to us another method of securing favor. He tells a story about a
politician who wanted to have a friend of his occupy the office the very next term. This
was a very distinguished gentleman of education and fortune. Over time, the new
member gained considerable influence over the house. Obviously Franklin did not care
for the new member. Franklin, in 1737, acquired another position, that of postmaster,
granted to him from another acquaintance. Franklin writes,

I accepted it readily and found it to be of great advantage; for the salary was
small, it facilitated the correspondence that improved my newspaper, increased
the number demanded, as well as the advertisements to be inserted, so that it came
to afford me a considerable income. My old competitor’s newspaper declined
proportionally, and I was satisfied without retaliating his refusal, while
postmaster, to permit my papers being carried by the riders. (p. 90)

Franklin sees another opportunity in this narrative to teach that punctuality and exactness
of account helps with referrals and new business. Franklin then starts his career as a
public servant. Not only is he a clerk to the assembly, postmaster, he starts the first fire
company in North America, the Union Fire Company. Business continued going well as
he began entering into partnerships that lasted about six years. Franklin would provide
the capital and then take a percentage of the profits until the equipment was paid off.

Then his partner would be set up on his own.

These relationships would serve him well throughout his lifetime. Franklin
ultimately would retire from business at the age of forty-two. He had begun a network of
printers that began in when in the year 1729. Franklin was able to have a successful
printing business from New York to the West Indies (Frasco, 2004). Franklin’s ability to
persuade ultimately allowed him to form not only the first library and the fire company,
but also the militia in Pennsylvania as well as the first academy in Pennsylvania. He was now entering into a life of leisure, studying electricity, which ultimately would make him famous.

With leisure came additional responsibilities. Franklin (1790/2005) tells us “the public, now considering me a man of leisure, laid hold of me for their purposes, every part of our civil government, and almost at the same time, imposing some duty on me” (p. 107). Franklin took offices in the Assembly, became city alderman, etc. He enjoyed entering into the debates of the assembly, which he previously could not enter into as clerk. He also states that “becoming a member would enlarge my power of doing good” (p. 107). Many of Franklin’s appointments in government positions would find him in situations that modern sales representative find today, particularly when Franklin was representing the colonies to the British empire and then representing the colonies to the French in establishing allies to fund the Revolutionary War. While serving in these appointments, Franklin makes many new friends that would last a lifetime as well.

Franklin, after retiring from business, became extremely well-known through his scientific experiments and the discovery that lightning and electricity was, in fact, the same thing. With the fame, Franklin stood out as a leader, and became a politician as previously discussed. He started in Pennsylvania, then in Congress, and then in England and ultimately France. As the correspondence shows, Franklin was immensely charming, “People of all sorts took to him, liked and admired him enormously” (Middlekauff, p. 22). Franklin had many talents and pursued many careers sometimes simultaneously, this inspired admiration among the masses, and of course, Franklin knew how to play the crowds. All of these characteristics made Franklin a broad target for attack and gave
many reasons to dislike him. While Franklin had many friends that “were of great use” to him, he also had his fair share of enemies. Included among these were many prominent figures of the time, such as Thomas Penn, Arthur Lee, Ralph Izard, and John Adams.

In 1701, William Penn issued the Charter of Privileges which provided a constitution for the colony of Pennsylvania. Under the terms of the charter, a governor would represent the proprietors, William Penn and his son Thomas Penn and an assembly would serve as a legislature to represent the inhabitants of the colony. The assembly thought of itself as a parliament and did initiate legislation. However, Thomas and William Penn did not see the assembly as a parliament, hence leading to a conflicted and complex political life. William Penn was a Quaker and attempted to establish Pennsylvania as a refuge for Quakers, and he envisioned Pennsylvania as a society tolerant of all religious beliefs and protective of the civil rights of its citizens. The Quakers always found their interests intertwined and somewhat synonymous with the interests of the colony.

By the time William Penn passed away in 1718, the Quaker party had been extremely powerful and influential in the colony. Some of the idealism of the Quakers was diminished when the proprietary interest in the colony passed to Thomas Penn. In Fact, Thomas Penn married an Anglican and began his membership in the Anglican Church. While William Penn had felt some resistance from local leaders from time to time, he held a common bind with these leaders because they had an understanding of the establishment of the colony as a religious refuge. The Quakers had long agreed to the social and economic purposes of the colony. As previously discussed, the Quakers numbered themselves as the wealthiest in the colony, and, as such, had a great amount of
power and prestige in Pennsylvania. Quakers either held offices in the assembly or had
great influence over those who did hold office. They sat as judges, chief justice, attorney
general, and secretary to the board of property, which served as a steward of the
proprietor’s landholdings. Below that group, the Quakers held offices of judges in lesser
courts, tax assessors and collectors, customs collectors, commodity inspectors, Indian
agents, court recorders, and clerks. They dominated Pennsylvania politics. The
proprietors were now a faction and were separated ideally from the interests of the
Quakers.

This faction led to many disagreements in the latter half of the eighteenth century.
With the growth and prosperity of the colony, a sense of urgency arose from the assembly
as well as a growing distrust of authority. The assembly usually opposed the proprietors
on issues of land, taxation, and public finance. The assembly wanted to become an
autonomous institution that wanted to govern the province (Middlekauff, 1996, pp. 20-
33).

Franklin, undoubtedly shared the sentiments of the assembly. His political views,
however, would prove to be far more complex than this proposition. As Franklin began to
realize how strong the proprietor opposed American demands, the strife between he and
Penn increased sharply. Franklin was very astute to the operations of Pennsylvania
politics. He had served the assembly as their clerk since the time he was thirty years old.
He attended all of the assembly meetings, kept the minutes of the meetings, and
sometimes composed resolutions and messages for the assembly under their guidance. He
knew the business of the assembly and as Middlekauff (1996) writes, “It is not too much
to say that Franklin never missed an opportunity to learn all he could about everything
that came his way” (Middlekauff, p. 33). In addition, Franklin held city posts of councilman and alderman. He attended to local concerns such as fire protection, street lighting, education, and culture. In so doing, he learned even more about politics in Philadelphia. With this political knowledge of Philadelphia and his knowledge of the politics between the assembly and the proprietor, Franklin was well-suited to serve the assembly to which he was elected in 1751.

After William Penn suffered a stroke, his wife attended to the family business and their interests while Thomas was appointed as the Penn’s representative in London. There he would attend to the interests of the family, collecting debts owed, buy supplies, fight off creditors, and the like. He came to Pennsylvania in 1732 and stayed there for nine years. While in Pennsylvania, he looked after the family’s land holdings and some export business. Penn was described as cold and formal, perhaps brought about by his upbringing and that he suffered the loss of four of five children in the years between 1750 and 1760. Pennsylvania became the sole responsibility of Thomas in 1746 when his brother John passed away. With Thomas being away from the colony for an extended period, and the colony growing at a rapid pace, he began to lose the knowledge of the colony that he had once possessed. His attitude toward the colony seemed to be antagonistic, defensive, and somewhat paranoid. He distrusted requests for land grants because he somehow saw these as attempts to rob his family of land. He also distrusted the establishment of an academy in the city of Philadelphia, refusing it on a few occasions in his letters to his governor. He writes that the plan “for the education of youth is much more extensive than ever I had designed, and I think more so than the circumstances of the province require…for the best of our people must be men of
business which I do not think very great public schools or universities render youth fit for” (Middlekauff, 1996, p. 35).

In 1747, with the French and Indian War lurking close by the colony of Pennsylvania, Franklin saw the need for a defense strategy for the colony. The wealthy merchants opposed the raising of an army due to the immense costs involved. The assembly refused to do anything for the defense of the colony, and the governor had left the country to see his physicians in England because he was in poor health.

Franklin, being at a standstill with the government, decided to help with the defense on his own, appealing to the people in his published pamphlet, Plain Truth. He spoke at several meetings of tradesmen and mechanics, merchants, and gentlemen to commence the formation of an association for the defense of the colony. He also used his power of persuasion among the governing body of the city, the Philadelphia Corporation as well as the council. Once again, Franklin, the master salesman gets what he wants for the good of the colony; the plan was endorsed by all to whom he contacted. The council and the city government requested that the proprietor of their agreement ask Penn for cannon and arms for the militia. Franklin had secured over one thousand signatures for the association and they were prepared to start their militia (Van Doren, 1938, p. 184). Franklin then established a lottery to finance the operation, and he then organized the association into a militia. This was quite an accomplishment, because he brought a colony that was led by pacifist leaders to war through private means without coercing anyone or alienating any of the Society of Friends.

Thomas Penn, on the other hand, was not pleased with the formation, even though it protected his interests at no cost to him whatsoever. Penn saw the organization as a
threat to his power and authority. He felt that the people of America were ready to defy their government and were capable now of doing so violently. In his letters to Richard Peters, of the assembly, he expressed his fear of Franklin: “The association is founded on a contempt to Government.’ He could see no other end for it other than ‘anarchy and confusion”’ (Middlekauff, 1996, p. 38).

Penn recognized that people could now act militarily, independent of the British government and the proprietor, and as such he described the action by Franklin as “a little less than treason” (Middlekauff, 1996, p. 38). Penn believed that Franklin was a dangerous man. Penn was threatened by Franklin’s leadership, his accomplishments, and the fact that Franklin could muster support from his people, which happened to be subjects of the British crown. Franklin was acting in the interest of the people of Pennsylvania, whereas Penn was acting out of his own financial interests. These struggles with Penn would continue for years, ultimately leading Franklin to England for a number of years to represent the colony’s interests to the governor and to the crown. While he was away, his political friends made sure that Franklin was elected to the assembly every year, even though he was not present. The rivalry would continue, as their interests collided. Walter Isaacson (2004) sums this up well when he stated that Franklin influenced the destiny of the United States through his anti-authoritarian and populist sentiments, and “his non-patriarchal view of America, and his belief that people could accomplish more when they worked together than when they stood separately” (p. 156).

In January 1757, the members of the assembly decided that they could no longer tolerate the obstinacy of Penn and sent Franklin to London as their representative. Franklin’s goal was to make the proprietors be more accommodating to the assembly.
over these issues of taxation and finance. If that failed, Franklin was to lobby the British Government. Richard Peters, the secretary of the proprietors, wrote to Thomas Penn, concerning Franklin’s views “to effect a change in government, and considering the popularity of his character and the reputation gained by his electricity discoveries, which will introduce him into all sorts of company, he may prove a dangerous enemy” (Letter to Thomas Penn, May 14, 1757).

Franklin was surprised by the attitude of the British towards the subjects of the crown in America, because he had always held that they were subjects of the crown just as those in England were. Lord Granville met with Franklin who told him that “You Americans have the wrong idea of the nature of your constitution” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 183).

Franklin then had several meetings with Thomas Penn starting in August, 1757. These began friendly enough as both parties agreed that they wanted to be reasonable, and the two were acquainted from Penn’s earlier stay in Pennsylvania years before. The proprietor asked for the assembly’s case in writing. Franklin obliged and produced a document entitled “Heads of complaint.” The document did not go over well, as I suspect, Franklin knew would not after his meeting with Granville and knowing that Peters had forewarned Penn of his intentions while there. Franklin offended the Penn through his informal tone in the document, not addressing Penn directly, nor did he use their proper title in the document. Additionally, Franklin used terms in this document that were offensive to the proprietors. He called the proprietors’ demand to be exempt from the taxes that helped defend their land “unjust and cruel.” These offended the proprietor and Franklin was relegated to speak with the Penn’s attorney, which Franklin refused
because he despised the attorney, Ferdinand John Paris. This served the proprietors' interests because Franklin's refusal to meet with him allowed the Penns a year to get legal opinions on the requests.

Franklin then met with Penn again in January, 1758, where he was asking about the right of the proprietor to veto the assembly's appointment of commissioners to deal with the Indians. Isaacson wrote that that Franklin argued in the meeting that Pennsylvania is comparable to the Britain when it comes to the Assembly. Franklin argued that William Penn granted the Pennsylvania Assembly the same rights, but Thomas Penn denied such thing occurred. Franklin argued that the people of Pennsylvania were deceived, but Thomas Penn contended that the people of Pennsylvania were mistaken. The disagreement resulted in the end of Franklin and Penn corresponding with each other. Franklin, rather than resign as a failure in this mission, since he had not obtained his object in swaying the proprietors, suggested that he approach the British government to make the colony a crown colony under the supervision of the king and his ministers. Franklin was successful in keeping his post in England, for the assembly still needed to fight the proprietors.

Franklin then approached the Council and attacked the Penns on three issues. One was the treatment of the Indians in America, alleging that the Penns had taken land from the Delawares unfairly. Nothing happened with the council on these matters; it merely served to sway popular opinion away from the Penns. The second involved a libel case the Pennsylvania Assembly had won against William Smith, the provost of the academy, who was at this time a political adversary of Franklin's. When Smith appealed to the Privy Council in London for a reversal, Franklin attempted to make it a case involving
the assembly’s rights. The Privy Council ruled against Franklin. The third involved the
case of William Denny, who had violated his instruction from the proprietors in
approving bills that taxed the proprietors. The proprietors recalled Denny and had the
bills nullified. On this issue the Privy Council did pass some taxes against the proprietors,
but little was done to further the objective of getting Pennsylvania taken away from the

Once again, Franklin had failed to get what he wanted for the good of the colony.
Franklin stayed in England as the colony’s representative. He enjoyed his fame and
actually was received by David Hume, whom Franklin met with the warmest regard. St.
Andrews awarded Franklin with an honorary doctorate degree; thereafter he was referred
to as Dr. Franklin. In 1762, he was awarded another honorary doctorate from Oxford.
Franklin wanted to return home, as did his traveling companion and son William
Franklin. William had lobbied for some positions in government; however, his father had
pulled a few strings and landed him the position of governor of New Jersey. Once again,
Franklin relies on one of his friends, John Pringle, to help in the task of securing that
appointment. He, therefore, returned to America with mixed results. The Penns were
paying some taxes, but the dispute over colonial governance was still unsettled.

Franklin returned to Philadelphia, where he found that Pennsylvania had a new
governor, John Penn, the nephew of Thomas Penn. Penn soon was found to be rather
disagreeable to Franklin and the two quickly became enemies. Of Penn, Franklin writes,
“All regard for him in the Assembly is lost. All hopes of happiness under a Proprietary
government are at an end” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 213). John Penn writes: “There will never
be any prospect of ease and happiness while that villain has the liberty of spreading about
the poison of that inveterate malice and ill nature which is deeply implanted in his own black heart” (Brands, 2000, p. 256).

Franklin accepted that he did not like the Penns and that the Penns did not like him. He and his friends had control over the assembly, and the Penns were the proprietors and acting as such. Franklin had twenty-six resolutions passed calling for the end of proprietary government, referring to them as “tyrannical and inhuman.” Franklin’s final resolution was to address the citizenry asking them for support in petitioning the king to make Pennsylvania a royal colony. This failed because Franklin and his supporters only gathered three thousand five hundred signatures, as opposed to fifteen thousand signatures opposing the measure (Isaacson, 2004). Franklin’s unbridled speech and his position ultimately cost him his assembly seat in 1764. His faction and his friends remained in control, however. The assembly decided to appoint Franklin to go back to England to present the petition against the proprietors. John Dickenson was vocal about the impending doom of Franklin “because he was hated by the Penns, disdained by the king’s ministers… Chief Justice Allen labeled him ‘the most unpopular and odious name in the province… delirious with rage, disappointment and malice’” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 217).

Franklin was now fully engaged in representing the colonies to the British and his own interests. His interests included, but were not limited to, maintaining his postmaster position, gaining a higher appointment, and possibly gaining a land grant in America, the former of which could gain him great fortune.

Franklin also became involved with the notorious Stamp Act of 1765. This act proposed by Parliament, would levy a tax on every deck of cards, newspaper, legal
document, almanac, and every book in the colonies. Franklin agreed that Parliament could levy tariffs and duties, but was unsure of the right Parliament had to levy on internal taxes such as these, when the colonies had no representation in Parliament. Franklin met with Prime Minister George Granville. Granville explained that the cost of the Indian wars made the taxes necessary. Franklin argued that the tax should be levied in the traditional manner, by which the king would make a request to the various colonial legislatures who had the power to tax the inhabitants of the colony they represented. However, Franklin and the other agents did not have the power to commit to the proper amounts and how they would be divided among the colonies (Isaacson, 2004, p. 222).

Franklin proposed the printing of bills of credit to be issued at six percent interest. Under this plan, the wealthy would be handling most of the notes, and they would be paying the taxes while increasing the currency in America. Granville dismissed the idea, as he was set on the Stamp Act, which passed in March. Franklin appointed his friend, John Hughes, as the collector in Pennsylvania. He told Hughes that while this may make Hughes unpopular, he emphasized that adherence and loyalty to the crown would be the best action to take, since Franklin wanted to remain in the good graces of the royal ministers. He greatly underestimated the reaction of the colonists. They hated the idea and anyone that they thought had anything to do with its passing (Brands, 2000, pp. 360-370). The Penns refused to appoint a collector, as doing so would make them appear to be in support of the tax.

While Franklin wrote letters explaining that he did everything in his power to oppose the Stamp Act, his appeals were not convincing. The people of Philadelphia were outraged and resorted to mob violence. Franklin’s friend, John Hughes, in Philadelphia
responded to one of Franklin’s letters: “A sort of frenzy or madness has got such hold of the people of all ranks that I fancy some lives will be lost before this fire is put out” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 224). Franklin’s printer partner, David Hall, also sent such a warning: “The spirit of the people is so violently against everyone that they think has the least concern with the Stamp law” (Brands, 2000, p. 366). Mob violence did break out and they were going to level Franklin’s new house. Franklin’s friends, the White Oak Company, came to the defense of Deborah Franklin and the estate of Benjamin Franklin.

Politics in America were changing as a result of the tax. They were appearing to be more united against the home country, as Franklin and Hutchinson had proposed ten years earlier with the Albany Plan (Brands, 2000; Isaacson, 2004). In response to the taxation and the riots, the merchants of Philadelphia and New York soon followed with imposing an embargo on all British imports. Franklin was concerned over the riots and the activity regarding the Stamp Act in America. As their representative, remaining patient, calm, and cool, he sought an agreeable compromise to the situation. On the British side, they needed to pay for the Indian wars and defending the colonies, and in their view the colonists should bear some of that cost. From the American colonist perspective, they were being taxed by their mother country while not being represented in the legislatures passing the taxes. Franklin, as many representatives are, was caught in between the colonists that he represented and the mother country, of which he was a subject. He wanted unity between the two. He circulated political cartoons depicting “Britannia dismembered, her legs and arms lying about her as she leaned disconsolately against a globe. The lost limbs were labeled Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and New England; the motto declared, ‘Give a Penny to Belesarius’ referring to a Roman general
who reduced the provinces to Rome’s rule but reduced himself to poverty in old age” (Brands, 2000, p. 373). Franklin warned one British minister that enforcing the Stamp Tax would be “creating a deep-rooted aversion between the two countries laying the foundation of a future total separation” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 228).

Franklin wrote many letters, many anonymously, under the names “Homespun,” “A Traveler,” and “Pacificus Secundus.” He circulated these letters which were comprised of at least thirteen attacks against the Stamp Act. This was to inform the public and gain support for its repeal. Franklin wanted the colonies to be represented in Parliament. Second to that, he wanted funds to be requested in the traditional fashion, as mentioned previously. The third idea that Franklin had was to create the colonies’ own legislature at home.

Franklin was permitted to appear before the House of Commons on February 13, 1766. Franklin knew his audience here and in fact had many friends in the gathering. For “many of the 174 questions directed at him were scripted by leaders of the new Whig ministry of Lord Rockingham, which was sympathetic to the colonies and was looking for a way out of the Stamp Act debacle” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 229). The questions started in a way that let Franklin explain that the colonists are already paying a heavy amount of taxes, and that the stamp tax was an excessive burden on them. Franklin also pointed out that they had funded a great deal of their defense on their own, and their own men not only defended the colonies but funded it as well. The line of questioning also offered an opportunity for Franklin to point out that Parliament lost a great deal of respect from the colonists with the passing of the stamp tax. This was Franklin’s longest oratory in history. He persuaded Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act.
After that session, Franklin was appointed as the agent for Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts; his reputation in Philadelphia was restored (Brands, 2000; Isaacson, 2004; Wood, 2004). Franklin closed this deal in getting the Stamp Act repealed; however, he had failed at prying his colony from the hands of the Penns, and he did not change the structure of his government in order to prevent such events from occurring again. And, with the Townsend duties the taxes were levied again upon the Americans. Franklin again published letters and still encouraged both sides to remain calm.

He was both an American and a Briton; however, he was seen by both sides as being too closely affiliated with the other. His interests in land grants would only come to fruition if he remained on good graces with the ministers in England. While Franklin was granted land in Nova Scotia with twenty three other individuals, he also had hopes of being appointed to an office under Lord Hillsborough overseeing colonial affairs. The latter never came to fruition because he was too much of an American. This led to an altercation with Lord Hillsborough, who not only told Franklin that he would not appoint him to the British office, but he would never consider any petition to remove Pennsylvania from proprietary rule.

He now would turn to be an American patriot, exclusively. He wrote letters against the Townsend duties, because they were taxes levied against a people who had no representation in government, and Franklin felt as if the British looked upon their American subjects as second-class citizens. With these taxes, again the Americans imposed an embargo on British goods, and those who did not follow the embargo were in turn shunned from trade. Things got worse in 1770, when British troops were deployed to Boston, patrolled the streets, and were anchored in the harbor. The soldiers were short on
money and as such looked for work in the town to supplement their shortcomings. They in essence were taking work from Bostonians. This eventually led to the Boston Massacre and a much wider rift between England and the colonies. The Townsend duties were all repealed, except one -- the tea tax. With the killing of Boston citizens the partial repeal did not sit well with the colonists. The embargoes continued. The British felt the financial impact on trade. Franklin wrote about the massacre, siding with Boston, and thereby further alienating himself from the British. He again called for moderation in tactics and reaction.

This brings our discussion to another one of Franklin’s enemies, Arthur Lee, a diplomat correspondent for France and Britain. Lee accused Benjamin Franklin of living extravagantly, which was contrary to the virtues that he championed, concluding that Franklin was not capable of representing the people of Pennsylvania. Lee was disappointed that he was not appointed the agent for Massachusetts, and he was a more radical thinker that did not espouse the moderation for which Franklin called. Lee wrote his friend Sam Adams and blamed Lord Hillsborough’s treachery and not Franklin. Lee asserted that contrary to Franklin’s writings, his interests are personal and not the people that he represented in Pennsylvania:

The possession of a profitable office at will, the having a son in a high post at pleasure, the grand purpose of his residence here being to effect a change in government of Pennsylvania, for which administration must be cultivated and courted, are circumstances which, joined with the temporizing conduct he has all. He was given a series of letters from an unnamed member of parliament that were from Massachusetts governor Thomas Hutchinson. He forwarded the letters to his friend Thomas Cushing asking that they not be made public. They were filled with “advice on how to subdue colonial unrest”. (Isaacson, 2004, p. 272)

Despite Franklin’s request, Sam and John Adams made sure that they were made public. When two men engaged in duels to defend their name because they were accused
of releasing the letters, Franklin stepped forward and stated that he alone had transmitted the letters. In January he was summoned to appear before the Privy Council in a room dubbed “the cockpit.” The official reason for the hearing was to address a petition to remove Hutchinson from the office of Governor of Massachusetts. The questioning quickly followed the lines of how Franklin obtained the private letters. Franklin did not have counsel and asked for three weeks to prepare his case.

In the meantime the Boston Tea Party had happened, and this only served to harm Franklin’s case because it infuriated those in England who were growing short on patience with the colonists. Three weeks passed and on January 29, 1774 Franklin was subjected to an hour long tongue-lashing by Alexander Wedderburn, “a nasty and ambitious prosecutor” (Isaacson, 2004, p. 276). Franklin had been humiliated in this “bull-baiting” and was truly made to look foolish. Franklin eventually returned to Philadelphia, having failed to remove Pennsylvania from proprietary rule, and failing at helping to better the colonies’ position with regard to the amount of control over taxation that they possessed. The subordination of the colonies was not going to change in the eyes of the British Parliament. Independence was the only alternative left.

Franklin, upon his return from England, was elected into the British parliament. Franklin, being twice the age of many of the delegates, sat quietly as others deliberated, and he did not join them for evening meals and festivities. Rather, he went home and spent the evenings with his daughter and grandchildren. The elder brother of Arthur Lee spread rumors of Franklin being a spy for the British in an effort to discredit the older Franklin and turn others against him. Franklin knew of the rumors but did not answer them. When war broke out, the suspicion of Franklin subsided, most likely due to his
reaction to the violence by the British upon the American colonists. Franklin did not enjoy violence, but in this case, he was an advocate for defending the colonies. Franklin was instrumental in uniting the colonies by authoring the Articles of Confederation.

5.4 Franklin and Rhetoric

Benjamin Franklin has been responsible for some rhetoric speeches that have become part of the American history and culture. Some of these speeches will be discussed here to gain insights into Franklin’s philosophy and worldview. Through the examination of these rhetorics, the goal of this section is to provide a brief summary of the speech, followed by a brief critique of its meaning within the framework of understanding Benjamin Franklin.

One of the most famous speeches of Benjamin Franklin occurred in 1787 when he delivered a speech at the Constitutional Convention (Eidenmuller, 2008). Acting as the Governor of the state of Pennsylvania, Franklin addressed the delegates through this speech, which was instigated by the faction that occurred among the different participating states regarding the writing of the Constitution. In the moment of crisis, Benjamin Franklin delivered a speech intended to unite the delegates for a common purpose.

In this speech about the writing of the U.S. constitution, Benjamin Franklin expressed frustration about creating the best constitution for the country (Eidenmuller, 2008). Noting how models from other countries and past history were proven to be not appropriate for the United States, Franklin resorted to personal reflections. He asked for the guidance of God to make the constitution that is appropriate for the United States.
They implored for his consultation, hoping to guide them with all the ideas needed to create the constitution.

This speech shows how the religious beliefs of Franklin dovetailed to his professional work. He was greatly influenced by his religion, contending that God interferes with matters concerning men. Based on this speech, it shows that spiritual beliefs are important to Benjamin Franklin, especially as one of the solutions to a predicament. Engaging in reflection was a way for Franklin to solve a predicament, especially when more reasonable options were exhausted.

Another famous speech was delivered by Benjamin Franklin on September 17, 1787 at the Constitutional Convention. This time, the address occurred during the ratification of the constitution. In this speech by Benjamin Franklin about the contents of the U.S. constitution, Franklin addressed the president regarding his thoughts about the newly created constitution (Eidenmuller, 2008). At first, Franklin expressed some concerns about some of the contents of the constitution that he did not agree. However, he quickly followed this seeming disapproval of the constitution by recognizing his own shortcomings as an individual in the sense that he did not have all the information and intelligence to be categorical about his beliefs. Franklin noted that with time, his own personal opinions will be abated and will appreciate the work that was done to create the best constitution possible for the country. He recognized the work that was put into by a group of wise and intelligent people, urging the people to approve and eventually administer properly the new constitution.

Benjamin Franklin started his speech as a critique that turned into a plea of recommendation and consideration. Based on this speech, it appears that Franklin was not
someone who was stubborn about his personal beliefs. He was willing to listen to others and entertain the possibility that his beliefs were either incorrect or misinformed. He valued the differences in opinion of people, but he also valued consensus. He acknowledged that even if the perfection of the constitution is not apparent to him at the moment, he believed that time will eventually reveal how well-crafted the constitution was created.

Based on these two famous speeches, Benjamin Franklin’s rhetoric exposed his own philosophies about life in general. There seems to be a melding of practical reason and spiritual beliefs in his philosophy in life. He recognized the importance of rationality in coping with problems and predicaments, but he was not above spiritual intervention. It was apparent from these two speeches that God was an important part of his philosophy. Despite being regarded as a man of reason, he seemed to have no problem reconciling religious beliefs and reason. He believed when there is no concrete evidence, reason grounded on previous experience takes precedence over religious and spiritual beliefs, underscoring his propensity towards pragmatism. Benjamin Franklin’s ideas and beliefs on reason and spirituality reflect on his works on virtues and practical wisdom, which will be discussed in the next sections.

5.5 Franklin and Virtue

Benjamin Franklin’s system of virtue consists of 13 qualities, which he developed when he was in Philadelphia (Franklin, 1868). These qualities include temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility. These virtues were intended by Franklin to be
developed in a hierarchical manner, wherein the first virtue was considered the most important.

In each of the discussion of these 13 virtues, Franklin included a maxim to explicate how he viewed these qualities as part of his system of virtues of private moral perfection (Franklin, 1868). These virtues have been influential in the American culture. Each of these virtues will be briefly described in order to understand better the framework wherein Franklin’s system of virtue was created. The corresponding precepts that Benjamin Franklin wrote for each of the 13 virtues will be included in order to see how he originally viewed these virtues.

Temperance (“Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation”) can be regarded as the foundation of the other virtues because temperance is about self-discipline (Franklin, 1868). This self discipline is instrumental in controlling one’s primal desires and indulgences. The theme of temperance seems to be the overarching theme of the other virtues included in the system, which is why this virtue was listed first (Lanctot & Irving, 2007). According to Benjamin Franklin, temperance gives people the clarity and coolness in one’s mental functioning, that would enable people to develop the other virtues such as order and resolution.

Silence (“Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation”) was considered a virtue by Franklin because individuals need to know when to speak up and when to keep their silence. Franklin seems to disdain small talks and gossips. He recognized that conversations need to have substance and purpose; otherwise, silence should be practiced.
Franklin considered order ("Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time") a virtue in the sense that individuals need to fight the natural tendencies of the world to be chaotic and disorganized (Franklin, 1868). He believed that it takes time for things to come into natural order, and some patience is needed for order to materialize.

The virtue of resolution ("Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve") becomes important in the sense that individuals need to finish what they set themselves up to do (Franklin, 1868). People need to keep motivated to finish their goals. Failure is only part of resolution and people need to keep on going until the goal is reached.

Frugality ("Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing") was also part of Franklin’s system of virtue (Franklin, 1868). This virtue underscores the need for people to not waste one’s resources, an only use it for the good of others and oneself. Franklin often emphasized frugality as the important virtue in the accumulation of wealth.

Industry ("Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions") is also important virtue because it emphasizes hard work and to not waste time and to be always productive (Franklin, 1868). Similar to other virtues, he emphasized the importance of only doing what is necessary and refrain from doing that has no purpose.

Franklin also considered sincerity ("Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly") a virtue because of the importance of truth and refraining from engaging in deceitful acts. He noted the importance of being
innocent and being just, possibly underscoring the lack of pretense when engaging with other people.

Justice ("Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty") was also part of Franklin’s system, noting that individuals should not injure other people. People should not be the reason for other people’s omission of benefits (Franklin, 1868).

Moderation ("Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve") was also part of Franklin’s system of virtue, noting that individuals should say away from extremes to live a satisfactory life (Franklin, 1868). This notion seems to be related to the overarching theme of control and balance in Franklin’s system of virtues.

Cleanliness ("Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation"), on the other hand, underscores the virtuosity of being clean in every aspect of one’s life, from physical to spiritual being.

Tranquility ("Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable") is being able to be tranquil and calm despite the disturbances in the world. People should fight the urge to be disturbed by things that do not matter and direct one’s focus in the more important things in life.

Chastity ("Rarely use venery [sexual intercourse] but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another’s peace or reputation") was also included in Franklin’s system of virtues, noting the need to refrain from worldly acts that can be harmful to other people. It appears that Benjamin Franklin viewed sexual
intercourse as a biological need more than any other purpose. Lack of chastity could lead to scandalous results.

Finally, the last virtue was humility ("Imitate Jesus and Socrates"), which is the ability of someone to have quiet confidence. He used both Jesus Christ and Socrates as role models of humility. In a way, this is the culmination when all the preceding virtues were already mastered. When a person has acquired all the ends, such as monetary wealth, he is expected to be humble about these accomplishments.

This system of virtues serves as guidelines for others, but also for himself, who made a conscious and diligent effort to adopt these virtues in his own life. According to Fisher (2001), Benjamin Franklin diligently applied these virtues to himself, with the goal of replacing his bad habits with good habits. He enforced this system of virtues to himself in a 13-week activity wherein for each week, he focused on one virtue. For each week, he worked diligently to achieve and develop the assigned virtue for the entire week. After the week ended, he proceeded to the next virtue in the hierarchy, which Franklin arranged in order.

To administer the system to himself, he used a notebook with a page devoted to each virtue for each week (Fisher, 2001). He drew seven columns to represent the seven days in the week. He then drew horizontal lines and wrote the beginning letters of each of the 13 virtues. For each day, he recorded in the notebook every mistake that he committed for each of the 13 virtues listed, with a specific focus on the assigned virtue for the week.

According to Fisher (2001), Franklin was very strict about monitoring his own behaviors. For every week, he focused on one virtue but still recorded the other
remaining virtues if opportunity arose for those other virtues. However, the focus of his attention was on the assigned virtue for that particular week. After the 13-week period was completed, Franklin went back to the first virtue and started all over again with the process. For example, the first virtue in the system is temperate, and for the first week, his focus is on developing the virtue of being temperate. After week ended, he proceeded to the next virtue in the system, which was silence.

Forbe (1992) noted the criticisms that Franklin himself was not able to master the 13 virtues that he championed. Franklin had the most difficulty in mastering the virtue of “order”, as reflected by his inability to organize his belongings among others. Instead of developing this virtue, he conceded and accepted that he will not be able to master to virtue of order. Moreover, he was criticized for not being humble, which was the culmination of the other virtues.

Benjamin Franklin’s main philosophy in applying the virtues to himself is to develop one virtue at a time, recognizing the difficulty in accomplishing everything at a single time (Fisher, 2001). Most people just like Franklin could only focus on one virtue at a time to be successful. His goal is to remove all the dots, which represented his mistakes, as he progressed into the 13-week activity. By the end, he hoped that he will have a notebook that was free of black dots. According to Teevan, Jones, and Bederson, (2006), Franklin had the most difficulty in developing the virtue of order, such as not being able to organize his belongings.

Overall, this system of virtues was conceptualized by Franklin within the framework of pragmatism in the sense that it is in the best interest of people of rational beings to be virtuous to reach moral perfection (Franklin, 1868). This view of
pragmatism was opposed to other perspectives such as virtues being socially or
transcendentally ordained. Franklin believed that it is in the best interest of people to
virtuous, underscoring the concept of virtues as being means to a greater end. As a result,
Franklin’s life views have been used as a philosophical framework in American
democracy (Forde, 1992).

Benjamin Franklin’s system of virtue can be regarded as more tolerant than the
earlier models of morality during his time (Forde, 1992). This was sometimes
misconstrued as weakness both to the system and to the person who created the system.
Forde (1992) argued that one of the hallmarks of Franklin’s system of virtues is the
“reasonableness” of the system, wherein the limitations of the human condition were
integrated into the system. The system recognizes the imperfections in human beings,
giving certain moral allowances that take into consideration the things that can be
extremely difficult or impossible to achieve.

Forde (1992) noted that Benjamin Franklin used to support dogmatism and was
not always championing rationality. Based on his autobiography, Franklin recounted
how he used to not eat cod when he was 16 because he equated it with murder. However,
he reasoned that since cod also ate fish, he told himself that he could also eat fish. In a
more relevant recount of how Benjamin Franklin developed his rationality, Forde (1992)
noted how Franklin eventually led to the conclusion that moral perfection cannot be
achieved, but that limitation does not automatically mean that human beings cannot be
moral.

According to Lanctot and Irving (2007), Franklin’s system of virtues is primarily
temperance-based. They noted that virtues such as chastity, frugality, moderation, order,
resolution, temperance, and tranquility can all be subsumed to temperance. Conversely, it appears that the system of virtues that Franklin developed lacked virtues pertaining to courage and love. Moreover, his addition of cleanliness cannot be subsumed to any larger category of virtues. It appears that control is one of the salient themes in these virtues, emphasizing his philosophy about controlling the different aspects of one’s life such as spending one’s money or finding the right balance between humility and confidence.

MacIntyre (1981) examined the nature of virtues based on the philosophies of different influential thinkers of the past, which included Homer, Sophocles, Aristotle, Jane Austen, and Benjamin Franklin. According to MacIntyre, Franklin’s conceptualization of virtue includes new qualities from previous Greek thinkers such as the inclusion of cleanliness, silence, and industry. Moreover, MacIntyre noted that Franklin either made major virtues into minor and vice versa, and that some of the meanings were operationalized differently. For example, MacIntyre noted that Franklin defined chastity different from past thinkers, based on this maxim, “Rarely use venery but for health or offspring never to dullness, weakness or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation”.

Franklin’s system of virtues is both teleological and utilitarian (MacIntyre, 1981). It is teleological because virtues are only means to an end; however because virtues are also utilitarian from Franklin’s perspective, virtue should also be useful to majority of the people. MacIntyre (1981) recounted that when Franklin went to Paris, he was appalled by the superfluous display of wealth in the marbled architecture of some of the buildings in Paris. This underscores his belief that even though virtues are only means to ends,
utilitarianism needs to be practiced. In fact, Franklin believes that teleology is secondary to utilitarianism. This suggests that in the pursuance of the ends, he takes into consideration of the importance of how these ends will be achieved in the most utilitarian way possible.

5.6 Franklin and Phronesis

Phronesis is a Greek word that means wisdom, which is often discussed within the context of philosophy. With regard to phronesis of Benjamin Franklin based on his early writings and autobiography, he believed that wisdom can only be achieved when there is freedom in thinking (Franklin, 1868). For Franklin, the ultimate source of wisdom is through a higher power, which underscores the importance of his Presbyterian roots in his own phronesis. This belief in the supremacy of a higher power in wisdom is reflected by his use of proverbs and the Bible to explain his arguments. Moreover, he was somebody who used reflective thinking to solve problems.

Practical wisdom is the specific type of wisdom that Franklin was concerned about when he talked about wisdom in his previous works (Moss, 2013). His work has influenced the American democratic society for the many proverbs that he wrote in his works. Practical wisdom is involved with doing what is good, whether in private or public situations, for the betterment of everybody. This emphasizes the importance that Franklin attributes to utilitarianism in his views. This kind of propensity for practical wisdom is reflected in his numerous proverbs written in his book, Poor Richard’s Almanac. He intended the proverbs in the book to be used across all nations to be wiser about their life.
One example of a proverb that Benjamin Franklin spoke about in his works to impart wisdom included: “He that would thrive / Must ask his Wife”. He used this proverb to recount a story about his wife buying him an expensive china and silver spoon without her telling him. Over the course of the year, the value of the china and silver spoon increased. This story was told by Benjamin Franklin to show the importance of being wise about one’s money and not wasting it on things that do not have value. His beliefs toward frugality and simplicity could reflect his opinions about being rich and accumulating wealth.

Another wisdom that Benjamin Franklin imparted in his works included his opinion on how to save money in times of hard times. Franklin said that when deciding to buy new clothes, check the old clothes to see if they can still be used for another year. He advised if someone plans to buy china or other expensive things, they should put it off until they have the money to buy them. Next, he advised that if people drink two glasses of wine or tea every day, they might need to reduce it to once a day. And if they drink one glass of wine every day, they might need to reduce it to one glass of wine every other day. Finally, Franklin advised that if someone drinks rum, he or she should fill half of the glass with water. He guaranteed that if these recommendations are followed, people will become richer.

The accumulation of wealth through the practice of the 13 virtues was one of the salient themes of Benjamin Franklin’s phronesis. According to Forde (1992), this emphasis on wealth led to some labeling Franklin as materialist. From a teleological perspective, the accumulation of wealth can be regarded as the end in which the practice of virtues will lead. For instance, Forde (1992) noted that virtues that Franklin
championed heavily in his works, such as frugality and industry, were often linked to money-making ends and not in other more morally-based results.

Extending beyond literary output when it comes to practical wisdom, Franklin was involved in numerous projects and activities for the betterment of people (Moss, 2013). For example, Franklin was responsible for instituting the first circulating library in the United States, founding a fire and insurance organization, establishing the American Philosophical Society, and establishing a hospital. Even after his retirement at the age of 42, Franklin remained involved with the betterment of the society by engaging in various civic, social, and scientific activities.

More than science, public service became the focus of Franklin’s life and career, putting into action his own philosophy about the betterment of the society (Moss, 2013). As a public servant, one of his most important contributions in the country was being President of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. One of the most admired qualities of Benjamin Franklin is his sociability, which could explain why he became a successful diplomat and public servant (Forde, 1992). This sociability was natural and easy for Benjamin Franklin to make friends and connect with different kinds of people.

Franklin was aware about this sociability and was able to share the techniques to develop such skills (Forde, 1992). According to Forde, his sociability skills were not an inherent quality of Franklin; instead, it was something that he developed, presumably from his interactions with Socrates. The important lesson that Franklin learned that developed his social skills was the ability to choose words that were less confrontational and contentious. For example, instead of using language such as “certainly”, he used
more neutral words such as “I imagine”. This kind of language made Franklin more pleasant with other people, making him seemed more accommodating than confrontational to the people that he interacted with.

The realization of Benjamin Franklin about the power of speech in sociability also reflected how order can be made (Forde, 1992). When there is conscious effort to be pleasant with other people when conversing, confrontations and other disruptive results can be avoided. Franklin noted that pride can be a barrier to sociability, as reflected in speech that is arrogant to other people. This led to the addition of the last virtue on his system, which emphasized the importance of humility in people. Franklin claimed that he himself has not mastered the virtue of humility, but only appeared to possess this quality from outside appearance.

Benjamin Franklin’s overall philosophy and wisdom, as reflected in his work on virtues and phronesis, has received criticisms in the past. One criticism leveraged against Benjamin Franklin was the quasi-Puritanical nature of his philosophy and world views (Forde, 1992). Another criticism was that he was extremely strict about how he described the virtues that some perceived irrational to achieve by anyone. Conversely, Forde (1992) noted that some believed he was too lax with these virtues. There were also people such as John Adams who thought that Benjamin Franklin’s ideas about virtue were shallow and lacking in real substance. Another criticism pertained to how Benjamin Franklin was not able to master the virtues that he himself championed for other people to develop for themselves. Despite these criticisms, Benjamin Franklin remains influential in the American culture, particularly in terms of the system of virtues that he developed.
5.7 Conclusion

Based on the vast work of Benjamin Franklin, the implications for the world of sales can be significant when applied. Franklin’s rhetorical views suggest the importance of reflection as a way to solve a predicament, especially when more reasonable options were exhausted. The implication in the world of sales is that personal reflection can be useful when stuck in a situation that needs sound decision, especially when sales can be characterized by dilemmas. Franklin’s rhetoric also suggests the importance of being flexible with one’s beliefs, and recognizing the system of work conducted by wise people. The implication to sales of this particular rhetoric is to recognize empirical research and to have enough mental flexibility to assess the different needs of different sales situations.

The 13 virtues (temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility) that Franklin developed have been influential in the American culture and can be applicable to the world of sales. Franklin’s work on the system of virtues underscores the importance for people who work in sales to remain virtuous despite the nature of the work where some form of deceit needs to be made. The implication is that sales people should abide by certain unspoken rules or ethics that will ensure that sales transactions remain grounded in integrity and honesty. These virtues provide some form of professionalism guidelines that sales people can use in their job.

Benjamin Franklin’s phronesis or words of wisdom also provide relevant implication to sales people. Practical wisdom was the specific type of wisdom that Franklin championed, noting that personal reflection is key to gaining practical wisdom.
Through his proverbs, Benjamin Franklin provided insights about the appropriate action when faced with a dilemma. In the world of sales, his practical wisdom provided insights on the accumulation of wealth through the practice of the 13 virtues. Franklin balanced the process of accumulation of wealth with the appropriate ethical practices that sales people can use as a guide. This suggests that sales people do not have to engage in deceitful practices to accumulate wealth in the profession where deceit can be tempting to get ahead.

The work that needs to be done is to make the work of Benjamin Franklin transformed into a system of empirically tested data that can withstand criticism and scrutiny. For instance, an empirical study may be conducted to explore the nature of practices involved in the success of sales people, particularly whether successful people exhibit the 13 virtues that Benjamin Franklin identified as key to successful people. Another empirical study that may be conducted is to examine how Franklin’s practical wisdom fit into the work environment of sales people.

Another work that needs to be done is the creation of an ethics program or course that will explicitly identify the conduct and behaviors expected from sales people. The existence of such system can increase propriety among the profession of sales and decrease the instances of outright fraud and deceit. Benjamin Franklin’s system of virtues and his proverbs can be used as a framework in the development of ethics program intended for sales people.
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