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The Canterbury Sales®

Liza's Commitment: In Praise of the Student Embracing Fundamental Change

By Andy Gole

Most of us want material improvement. Yet, are we willing to pay the price?

To achieve exceptional results, we typically need to significantly change our behavior.

This is especially so in selling. To attain exponential sales growth, the sales team usually needs to radically change their selling process and selling behavior.

However, most of us are creatures of habit and prefer "changeless change."

This doesn't happen. And significantly changed behavior can be painful.

A "case study" in radically changed behavior is Liza Doolittle's transformation in *My Fair Lady*. The musical dramatizes a series of triumphant changes – but whose are they, and which endure?

Henry Higgins – the phonetics teacher – performs the impossible. He coaches a common street "flower girl," Liza Doolittle, to speak and act like a lady. Higgins drills Liza endlessly, mercilessly; by contrast, a drill sergeant seems like a holiday.

At times, the musical's sympathies appear to be with Higgins. The chorus sings: "Quit, Professor Higgins." The inference is clear – he has taken on an impossible, Herculean task; he should walk away from the "sunk costs" of time invested. But he is determined to teach Liza. He perseveres.

And so does Liza.

In spite of the bullying, the lack of human sympathy and connection, and the endless hours of drilling, Liza practices and practices.

Finally, Liza undergoes a metamorphosis from flower girl to a lady; she says, and then magnificently sings in celebration: "The Rain in Spain Stays Mainly in the Plain."

It's a triumph. But whose triumph? Whose story are we witnessing?

This is Liza's triumph: *her* choice, *her* commitment, *her* hard work.

Higgins has developed a unique teaching system which produces extraordinary results. For this, he deserves acknowledgment. Consider his system from the perspective of embracing change. By contrast to his student, Higgins *knows* what will happen (with sufficient practice). He has navigated these rapids before.

Liza, on the other hand, is taking a step courageously into the unknown. Her sense of urgency is driven by a picture of what she wants, what she sees as possible. Liza has the courage and commitment to "stick to the program" of fundamental and far reaching change. Her behavior is truly heroic.

This quality – commitment to fundamental change – moves civilization forward, embracing Aristotle's *logic*, Jefferson's

Declaration, Clement Stone's *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude*.

Anyone seeking and embracing fundamental improvement, in the face of great uncertainty, is making *Liza's* choice.

Changing any ingrained behavior – smoking, diet, etc. – is difficult. Particularly difficult is behavioral change involving interpersonal relations.

Selling involves a complex union of both interpersonal and business behavior. This complexity hinders behavioral selling change, and elevates the change process to the heroic level. The successful salesperson must typically undergo metamorphosis, reminiscent of Liza's struggle.

Companies who embrace fundamentally different sales training and commit to a whole new sales process – company leaders as well as salespeople – are heroic. They are making Liza's choice.

The next time you meet a colleague whose company has committed to fundamental change – sales process or otherwise – you might want to acknowledge it. It's a long, difficult road to the "Rain in Spain Stays Mainly in the Plain."



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Andy Gole has taught selling skills for 17 years. He started three businesses and has made approximately 4,000 sales calls, selling both B2B and B2C. He invented a selling process, *Urgency Based Selling®*, with which he can typically help companies double their closing or conversion ratio. Learn more about Andy's method at www.bombadilllc.com or by calling him at 201.415.3447.