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## Episode 476: Larry Levine: Selling From the Heart

### Air Date: January 4, 2023

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Dori Nugent: The Fitness Business Podcast is back for another year and we have a star studded lineup for 2023. My goal with today's episode is to get everyone selling any type of services or memberships fired up for the new year. We believe here at the fitness business podcast that quality education is the pathway to success. Please stay tuned for wise words and wisdom from our upcoming guest. Is this your first time you've listened to a show?

Dori Nugent: Welcome to the FBP family. I'm excited to have you join us today. There are over 474 episodes, so go to Fitness business Podcast.com and you can listen to our entire catalog of shows. You name it, we have it. If you are a regular listener. Thank you so much. We appreciate you coming back for another. Exciting year with us. Don't forget, if you get any value from our shows, we are grateful in advance for you posting a review on itunes.

Dori Nugent: A very happy New year. Fitness business podcast family. Going into 2023, the Fitness Business Podcast is committed to getting you excited, motivated and refreshed about the fitness industry. I'm your host, Dori Nugent. And to bring us into the new year, author and sales guru Larry Levine will be spreading his whole hearted advice about selling from the heart. Larry's episode will begin in less than two minutes.

Dori Nugent: First, a huge thank you to myZone. MyZone has pioneered unique wearables with talking point technology that makes the difference. Reach more members of your community and keep them engaged for longer through motivation and gamification wherever they choose to work out in the gym, at home or outdoors, we're stronger together. Get in the zone@myzone.org. I love my Myzone family and I guarantee you will too.

Dori Nugent: Check them out at [www.myzone.org](http://www.myzone.org).

Dori Nugent: Get your pen ready now for KeepMe Fitpizpiration. Unpack how to build genuine, authentic relationships with people. Bring meaningful value to the forefront. Understand what it means to bring an inspirational experience and be radically consistent with it. Create habits behind it. Watch what happens if you double down on those. Watch what happens to how you build trust and credibility in a sales world where it's sorely lacking.

Dori Nugent: Allow me to take a second to talk about next week's guest. I interview Jamie Van Cuyk and she gives her expert advice and tips on finding and selecting the right people to join your team. After this week's full interview, I'll introduce you to Jamie and you'll hear why you need to come back and join us next week. Professional facilitation with a group of non competing owners to stay ahead of the industry curve is the USP of Rex Roundtables.

Dori Nugent: To find your local roundtable, go to [rexroundtables.com](http://rexroundtables.com). That's [Rexroundtables.com](http://Rexroundtables.com). Without further delay, let's get started with today's episode. I have a special guest for everybody today. Today we have an author. Actually, not just an author, but a best selling author. Larry Levine joins us. He is the best selling author of *Selling from the Heart*, and he's also the co host of a podcast that is also labeled *Selling from the Heart*.

Dori Nugent: Larry, thank you so much for joining everybody here on the Fitness business podcast.

Larry Levine: You're welcome, Dory. We're going to have a great time together today.

Dori Nugent: We're going to have a great time. And you know what? I knew I was in a meeting with JT. You responded to my email and you were like, I'm coming on. And we were so ecstatic.

Larry Levine: I know. I saw the email come back and he said, Yay. And I go, sorry it took me a while, but we're making it happen, Dory.

Dori Nugent: It's okay. Better late than never. I just really appreciate taking time out of your day, not only to talk to me, but all of our FEP family out there. So many of us are in sales in the fitness industry, and I think you are just a breath of fresh air and a perfect guest for this time of year. At the end of the year, people get busy, but this is a must listen to episode.

Larry Levine: No, it's just awesome. I thank you.

Dori Nugent: So I read that the first day this book was released, it became international bestseller status. So what do you have to do to get that?

Larry Levine: A lot of hard work. And so it was interesting because I had never written a book before. In fact, the podcast came out before the book, which is really interesting. I'll just give you the quick backstory. And the flyover on this is I spent almost 30 years in the copier industry, all in the Los Angeles marketplace. So talk about a competitive marketplace, a dysfunctional sales channel, extremely laggard, extremely commoditized.

Larry Levine: That's what I grew up in. But I made it my own because I brought heart and I brought authenticity, I brought sincerity to the forefront, and I was willing to do things that a lot of sales people just struggled to do and that's bring authentic relationships and meaningful value to the forefront. But something happened along the way, and that something happened occurred at 50 years old. And I'm giving everyone the backstory to how this all came to be.

Larry Levine: At 50 years old, I was fired from an enterprise corporate major account position. First time ever I'd been fired and let go. I could take people back, and not even in high school did I ever get fired. But at 50, I was career adjusted. And I'm a big believer that it's going to happen to people, right? You're going to get that AHA moment, you're going to get that gut punch moment, and you got to figure out what to do.

Larry Levine: Well, that occurred at 50 years old, almost eight years ago as we're recording this podcast right now. And I had to sit back. I cried a lot. I had to figure out what to do with my career. That would have been really easy for me to go back and sell copiers. That's what I knew. It's the only thing I really knew how to do. But there's two people that are near and dear to me who talked me into being an entrepreneur.

Larry Levine: That was my dear wife Robin and my podcast partner Darryl Amy. And they both said, Maybe it's time for you to do something else. I didn't know what that something else was, but they convinced me to go into entrepreneurship to bring to the sales world where authenticity matters. Why? Being true to yourself, get to know who you really are. Bringing your authentic self forward will actually catapult your sales career.

Larry Levine: I had never spoken publicly in front of anyone, never written a book, never started a podcast, never written an article, never did any of this. But I was willing to double down on myself and try new things. And thus, here we are eight years later. Podcast has been going five and a half years. The book has been doing tremendously well. I just finished the rough draft of my second book, and I am just pressing the message that building authentic relationships and bringing meaningful value to the forefront, regardless of what sales channel you operate in, is mission critical to your success.

Dori Nugent: Well, when I was doing my research, should I say, about you and the book and getting prepped for the podcast, I stumbled upon a sentence here that I really like and I'd like to share with everybody. It says, Selling from the Heart serves up practical strategies to build trust, add value, and create deep relationships.

Larry Levine: It's near and dear to me, and there's one key word that you said there is trust. And if we look at this, I'm a sales nerd at Heart. I love everything about sales. And what's completely interesting about all of this dori is, as I was raised, my parents still to this day, they can't stand salespeople, just cannot stand salespeople. And the perception of sales is pretty low. But I want to play on this trust, and this is my whole entire mission here at Selling from the Heart and the movement that we're building.

Larry Levine: I don't care insert name of market research, whether that be Gallup, whether that be Gartner reports, whether those be McKinsey, all these big research companies that are out there, they all talk about where trust sits in the sales world. Trust is at an all time low right now in the sales world. I don't care what you all are selling. And what's really interesting about this is year over year, it happens.

Larry Levine: But year over year, the most trusted profession out there is the nursing profession because they lead with heart and they lead with empathy. So here's what I'd like for salespeople sales managers, general managers, sales leaders, business owners to really think about what would it mean to you and your relationships and your business growth if you led with heart and you led with empathy. And you captured the memories and experiences of all the people that you've helped and packaged. That all up to open up new conversations with new people, to create new opportunities to help rebuild and repair trust that is sorely, sorely lacking in this profession.

Dori Nugent: I worked in sales in the fitness industry for most of my career and it was an easy sale for me because I wholeheartedly believed, how can you not sell fitness? You know what I mean? It's good for you. No matter any way you sell it. Coming to a gym or just getting involved in any type of fitness, whether it's in a gym or even outside of a gym, is good for you. And it always made me feel warm and fuzzy inside that I felt like I was selling a product that was going to benefit somebody without really I mean, it's factual.

Larry Levine: Yeah, but I want to play on that and just push a little bit, just for a moment is because I applaud your thinking on this dory, but unfortunately, it's rare because most people and I had a gym membership forever in a day. My son is a personal trainer and he's a power lifter. So he lives in a gym, he trains people in a gym. I see it, but I've rubbed off on him and he's done really well in this because he plays to the emotions of people and he really unpacks the why and he unpacks why they're coming, what they'd like to accomplish.

Larry Levine: But unfortunately, most people look at it as a means to an end, right? They know somebody's coming in and the whole entire purpose of this is to sell them a gym membership. I don't want people to throw darts at me and speak ill will of me. I'm just speaking what I see and what I observed in the whole time that I was in a gym. And I worked out, they say what they need to say just long enough to get somebody to sign.

Larry Levine: But what are you going to do to capture the why? Why are they coming? What would they like to achieve? Why are they coming to this gym? Where do they see themselves 90 days from now, six months from now? What's transformation like to you? Everyone has a journey to a gym and we really need to unpack that as opposed to looking at the sale before we understand how we can truly help somebody.

Dori Nugent: So let me ask you this, Larry, our listeners out there, if they're in sales and they're like, yeah, I don't do that, I don't sell the why, I'm pretty robotic on my sales pitch. I think I really am just trying to sell a membership. What's your advice on how they can

change that? Is there is it role playing? Is it just writing out a new script? What do you recommend them to do. To try to sell more with heart and empathy?

Larry Levine: Here's what's interesting to her here'd be the first thing, the way you're selling is that the way you'd like to be sold too? And as silly as that sounds, think about it. The way you're selling right now if somebody did that to you, how would that make you feel? And just to get people to think and that's and the reason why I'm bringing this up is what I'm sharing is not rocket science. It's so easy to accomplish yet so difficult for somebody to truly bring to the forefront is I believe this you will make more sales, consistent sales, month over month, quarter over quarter, year over year.

Larry Levine: You can do two things learn how to connect and learn how to relate to somebody. And then I'm going to go down the road of unpacking. Why you must write when we lead with the sale in mind and I talk about it in Selling from the Heart dory you reek and smell a commission breath? People are a lot smarter these days than they were years ago. People have choices. We all know this. Even in the fitness industry, wherever somebody's worked, you're not the only game in town.

Larry Levine: And what I'd like for people to think about is that if they can connect, truly connect to somebody's heart, they will open up. They will soon become comfortable and they will share things about themselves and what they want to accomplish that they're not sharing with other people. It's not just simply asking a bunch of questions on a clipboard and run through those as fast as you can in order to make that sale.

Larry Levine: How can I make a difference in this person's life so that in return they'll go share that and share it and share it with other people. And again, I came out of a commoditized channel. I sold copiers. I sold things that broke. All people wanted was a piece of paper that came out of a copier. Let's think why somebody's going to a gym regardless. This is a major change in or. It's a small independent insert name of city or community you all live in.

Larry Levine: The deciding factor is you and how you treat somebody. And the more comfortable you can make somebody feel, the more comfortable and the more appreciation you can show to somebody, you'll put them at ease. Because if you ask somebody, I mean still to this day, I always ask my friends what's one of the worst things that you can go do besides trying to buy a car from somebody? They go try and buy a gym membership.

Larry Levine: I saw it. I literally have seen it. I've seen it with my own two eyes. It doesn't have to be that way. I'm not saying all people are like that, but here's where I want to just really get people to focus in on. I believe inside of a gym, inside the fitness center, you are selling memories and you're selling experiences. And if you can capture that and really unpack the why. If I just threw the question out and this was a live audience and all that, and if I just said, hey, would you believe that stories sell?

Larry Levine: Everyone's going to unanimously raise their hand and say, stories sell. Well, I believe the best story tellers are story collectors. Now, think about how that plays out in a

gym. You're meeting people constantly, every single day, and they're coming into this gym to do a couple of things. Obviously, they want a healthy lifestyle, but you got to really unpack the why behind this, what's bringing them there, and you got to mean it.

Larry Levine: And we all know this dory, because we've all grown up with it, that there's five senses. We all know what those five senses are. I believe there's a 6th sense that everybody has, and that six senses BS or bullcrap. And the meter is up at a sky high rate right now, and people can smell sincerity mission fast. They can just sense it, but they can also sense BS just as fast, and they can tell when somebody's leaning in and they care or they're being fake and just going through a bunch of questions.

Larry Levine: So they can sell a gym membership as fast as they can. You get where I'm going with this. And I think it's time for right. It's time for salespeople to take a step back and go, what's the end result? And the way I'm selling and the way I'm communicating with people, would that work if it was done unto me?

Dori Nugent: Larry, inside your book, inside all those chapters, tell us what we'll find. So all of our FBP family out there, if they pick up your book, how is it laid out? Is it stories? Is it a how to guide?

Larry Levine: It's laid out in two fashion. So there's two halves of the book. So the subtitles, how your authentic self sells you. And so the first half of the book, I take people on a journey. And that journey is really to uncover who they are. And one of my favorite quotes is to know thyself is to value thyself. And let's just think about that for a minute. Some of this might be touchy feely. Well, it is because until you really understand who your authentic self is, it's hard to really sell from the heart.

Larry Levine: So the first half of the book is about self appreciation. It's about self respect. It's about self reflection. I take people on a journey. There's a self reflection journal that goes along with the book that takes you deeper into each chapter. The last half of the book is all the skills that you really need to become that authentic sales professional. And then it's some tough love. It's a direct message.

Larry Levine: It's a message I believe sorely lacking in the sales world. First half. Again, it's about unpacking who you really are, bringing that to the forefront. I'm a big believer in this and it's regardless of what you all sell, if you struggle as a salesperson to really connect with who you are and why you do the things you do, hands down, you will have a tough time connecting to your clients and your future clients if you cannot connect to yourself.

Larry Levine: That might be heavy for some people to listen to, but I'm here to tell you this. I've learned more about myself in the last eight years than I did in my twenty s, thirty s and forty s combined because I was willing to go there. Sales is a very noble profession, but perception is reality, and perception is reality through the lens of the people who say yes to your products or services. That being your clients and your future clients.

Larry Levine: So we got to know this salespeople, sales leaders, managers, branch managers, we're behind the eight ball already before we ever open our mouths to somebody. They already have their perception of salespeople. But if you can really unpack why you do the things you do and bring your genuine, authentic self to the forefront, and you can connect and relate to people, it will forever change the conversation and will forever change your sales career.

Larry Levine: That's what they'll unpack in the book.

Dori Nugent: Larry, do you believe that selling is a knack, it's a gift that you're born with? Or do you believe selling is a learned skill?

Larry Levine: Great question. I believe it's learned over time. Everybody's selling. Everybody is selling something. But we can all learn how to become better at what we do, and everyone will say, well, he was just born a salesperson. Actually, you were born a human being, and you opted into sales. I wasn't forced into sales, right? I didn't wake up one day at eight or nine years old and say, hey, I think I want to become a professional salesperson, right?

Larry Levine: It just doesn't happen. It's like if you ask most salespeople, they just fell into it. They fell into the career of sales somebody they knew was successful at, and they go, I'll give it a shot. It's like some people say how I was born an athlete. No, you're born a human. You decided that you wanted to become an athlete and you doubled down on yourself. So I would say I believe it's a learnt skill. If you choose that you want to get into the world of sales, then you wake up every day with a learning mindset instead of a know it all mindset.

Larry Levine: We all can become better at sales. I don't think there's someone who says, oh, you got the gift of gab, so you should be in sales. Learn it, learn it, learn it, learn it. Learn every aspect of sales and become better at it every single day.

Dori Nugent: Sales and fitness industry comes with a lot of emotion. You're not selling a physical item, you're selling a membership, but it's not really a physical item. You're really selling a habit when you sold copiers, how did you put an emotional piece when trying to sell a physical item?

Larry Levine: What I sold is the experience. And here's where I'm going with this and I believe people in the gym industry, they could do the exact same thing. Yes, it is an emotional buy, but the faster you get to somebody's heart I've said it again and over and over and over again, the faster you can get to somebody's heart, the faster they will really tell you what's going on. Now, in the copier industry, all I did and I learnt this early on because I'm very inquisitive, I'm a very inquisitive person.

Larry Levine: I love asking a ton of questions. The more questions I asked, the more I can unpack things, the more comfortable I made somebody feel, the more comfortable they would start sharing things. And the only reason why I bring this up is one of the things that I

sold and I believe I did it better than most people out there is. I sold an inspirational experience. This is what you get when you do business with me.

Larry Levine: The only reason I say that is because I interviewed enough customers, interviewed enough people that were going to become customers and I asked them what's a great experience look like, what do you like, what do you don't like about salespeople? Now, this was specific into my industry and I started to build up some knowledge of what people liked, what people wanted and what would be difference makers from salespeople.

Larry Levine: I submit the same thing in the gym industry. It's not somebody's first rodeo when they bought a gym membership. At least I don't think so. But just sit back and just imagine for a moment, let's just think about this is what would it be like as a fitness sales consultant, however they're titled, knowing right up front it's not the first time, regardless of age, that somebody's bought a gym membership.

Larry Levine: Hey, what did you like? What you didn't like, what was a great experience? It was a horrible experience. How'd that make you feel? Why did you come in here? What are you looking to accomplish? But I will tell you this there's always a why behind it. Dory we as salespeople must unpack the why. And the faster I mean, the faster you get to somebody's heart, regardless of age, male or female, they will tell you exactly what's going on.

Larry Levine: When they tell you exactly what's going on and they open up to you, that's where you can come in and you can truly help them. But you got to mean it at selling from the Heart and inside the book. I call it giving a rip. You got to give a rip and today people will understand if you truly give a rip. Are you asking the questions to ask? Are you asking the questions and intently listening and unpacking what you hear to dig in and dig in and dig in and dig in some more.

Dori Nugent: Larry, before we wrap up today, I just would like to ask you what is your favorite part of the book?

Larry Levine: I think the last chapter of Selling from the Heart is about not being an empty suit. And the whole entire book, there's an underlying theme about bringing your authentic self to the forefront. But I leave people thinking at the very end and I leave them thinking if I'm not bringing my authentic self to the forefront, if I'm not educating my clients, if I'm not engaging with my clients, if I'm not exciting them into conversation so they can become better.

0 Larry Levine: If I'm not doing anything different than anybody else, insert name of other salespeople, they're going to view me as being empty. And thus the empty suit. And one of my favorite poems is by Robert Frost. And I leave them at the very end of the book. Was saying, you know what? You can go down that same old road doing the same old thing that every other salesperson is doing, or you can take that road that's less traveled.

0Larry Levine: I decided to take the road less traveled when I got fired at 50. So regardless of whatever sales position you're in, don't act and do and just carry yourself just like every



other salesperson. Otherwise you're going to get labeled as me too. You're going to be in that CS sameness. They're going to view you as being empty. But if you can connect to somebody's heart and bring your heart to the forefront, the faster you do that, the faster they will open up their wallet.

Larry Levine: That's what I want people to really understand.

Dori Nugent: So what did you think of Larry? Doesn't he have great energy? Plus, he is passionate about sales. Follow up questions for Larry head to our show notes. For Larry's contact info. Show notes can be found@fitnessbusinesspodcast.com. And while you're there, hit hit that subscribe button. Well, actually only hit it one time. Once you subscribe, the Show Notes will. Be delivered to you each week through your inbox.

Dori Nugent: Hang tight. In 30 seconds. Our quickfire five segment will feature next week's guest Jamie Van Cuyk.

JT: G'day, it's JT here, and I was talking to Blair McCainy, the CEO of one of our sponsors, MX Metrics, the other day, and I gave him a hard time about his company's tagline defeating Mediocrity. By definition, that means he's excluding the majority of the market, but Blair just wouldn't bunch. He only wants to work with operators who want to punch Mediocrity in the face, really smash it. So I've talked to a few of his customers, like Joe Cheerelli from Gainesville Health and Fitness, and yeah, it's for real.

JT: While Joe is a nice guy, he isn't satisfied with Mediocrity either. He's crushing it as well. So I'm still dubious about selling only to operators who want to defeat Mediocrity. But if this resonates with you, I reckon you should check them out. Go to Mxmetrics.com. But remember, only if you're interested in smashing mediocrity.

Larry Levine: Quickfire five, sponsored by Hapana.

Dori Nugent: Now let's take a listen to our Quickfire Five segment thank you, fitness business. Podcast, for coming back for our Quick Fire Five questions. These are always our fun segment. Here to introduce our upcoming guest and next week we have Jamie Van Kike joining us. She's going to be talking about finding and selecting the right people to join your team. Jamie, thank you for joining us today.

Jamie Van Cuyk: Thanks for having me.

Dori Nugent: Yeah, we're really thrilled that you're coming back next week, but just a little introduction to all of our SAP family out there. I always like to ask a couple of fun questions, and I'll hand the mic over to you so you can pitch your episode. So all of our SCP family joins you next week. So let's hear what your top guilty pleasure is.

Jamie Van Cuyk: Yeah, so my top guilty pleasure is I love scrolling sites like Board Panda and similar ones in the morning before I get out of bed, because I'm the type of person, once I'm out of bed, I hit the ground running. So sometimes it's nice to have that extra time and just get a laugh or something before having to do everything I need to get done for the day.

Dori Nugent: All right, I like that. You just take a few minutes for yourself. I like that. All right. Number two, what is a habit or an action that you do to be productive?

Jamie Van Cuyk: Now, I am a very big list person, but one of the things I started doing that makes me so productive is I start each day with writing down one to three things I must get done that day. So that way, no matter how busy my day goes, I can reflect back to say, well, did I get these things done? And if I did, I'm like, yes, it was a productive day. Maybe there's a million other things I didn't get to today, but I got done what was important, and that kind of motivates me and boosts my productivity for the next day.

Dori Nugent: All right, great advice. Like that very much. Number three, what is an activity that you do that calms you just getting.

Jamie Van Cuyk: Outside and going for a walk? I love being in the fresh air, and it's nice to just take a break, step away from whatever is going on that is either overwhelming or causing me stress.

Dori Nugent: All right. And number four is our classic question here at the FBP podcast. We've been asking this since day one, and that is, could you please recommend a book to all of our FBP family?

Jamie Van Cuyk: The book that I always recommend is Turn the Ship Around by David Mark Kept. It's a book that when I first got it, my husband gave it to me for a gift a few Christmases ago. I was like, Why are you giving me this?

Dori Nugent: I don't want to.

Jamie Van Cuyk: Read a book about a commander in the Navy, and I decided to give it a chance, and I fell in love with it. It is my opinion, one of the best leadership books out there. I recommend it to everybody all the time, and every person I recommend it to says, this is one of the most amazing leadership books they have ever read. It really breaks things down, and it's easy to follow. Fun format.

Dori Nugent: Okay. I like that. I'm a leadership book junkie, so I definitely just made a little note. I have not read that one yet, so thank you. And FBP family will put the link to this book on our Show notes. So, please, you can head to the Show Notes and just click on the link if you want to grab a copy of that. All right, drumroll, please. Here we go. Jamie, are you ready for your 32nd elevator pitch?

Jamie Van Cuyk: I am ready.

Dori Nugent: All right. Take it away.

Jamie Van Cuyk: All right. So, if you want to continue scaling your business or keep the clients you currently have happy, you need to have good staff on your team. You need to hire great employees. But finding those great employees can always be a struggle. So come

back next week where I'll give you tips on how you can hire like a pro so you get the staff that not only keeps you happy, but keeps your clients happy.

Dori Nugent: Is it time to grow or expand your team? If so, tune in next week when owner and lead strategist Jamie Van Kike from Growing Your Team joins us here at the Fitness Business Podcast. Subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast player. Or even better yet, let us do the work, and we'll send you this show [subscribe@fitnessbusinesspodcast.com](mailto:subscribe@fitnessbusinesspodcast.com). A special thank you to our founding partner. Active management or partners keep me, myzone Issa and Hapana, as well as our Advertisers Rex, roundtables MX metrics and paper fresh.

Dori Nugent: We believe what you leave behind is not what's engraved in stone monuments, but woven into the lives of others.

**END OF EPISODE**