



21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling

Ellen Rohr and [Jeffrey Gitomer](#)

Ellen: Hey it's Ellen Rohr, the Plumber's Wife, turned business makeover expert and welcome to Business Makeover 2014. By makeover I mean make better, make more profitable, make more sales, have more fun, make more love now is the time. This is your opportunity to make this year your best year yet; 21 experts, 21 days and some surprises.

So thanks for joining me today. You and me we're going to commit. This is our personal and business development time, so get here, get present and let's go. You know this whole exercise has been a selfish endeavor on my part, because I've invited my favorite people to talk to me and my favorite is Jeffrey Gitomer, who is our guest today. Hello Jeffrey.

Jeffrey: How are you Ellen?

Ellen: I'm great. Your latest book *21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling* is our official topic for today. I want to brag on you for a bit for those who have been under a rock for the last so many years and don't know who you are.

A couple of milestones in your career, you've had dozens of books, all my favorites and all dog-eared, including *The Sales Bible*, *Little Red Book of Selling*, *Little Black Book of Connections*, *Little Gold Book of Yes*. You do over 100 presentations a year and I'm happy to have attended several of them. You have a blueblood list of corporate customers, including Coca Cola, Caterpillar, D R Horton, BMW, Ferguson, Hilton, Enterprise and more.

You can read all about Jeffrey, because at BusinessMakeover2014.com/gitomer is his official page with the inside scoop and info to learn more about Jeffrey. For today let's talk live and in person. Jeffrey, welcome to the call.

Jeffrey: Thank you.

Ellen: Are you misunderstood, because if anyone saw you in person, you have what some would consider a brash personality. I know you're originally from Philadelphia but you have quite a traveled history also. **Are there misconceptions about you?** It seems to me your message is all about love, although your delivery message can sometimes be kind of tough.

Jeffrey: I've found that when I'm talking to an audience of salespeople that if I'm not straightforward they may not get it. Unfortunately in the training world in general, it's way too politically correct straight up and down and people try to be professional. I teach people to be engaging, emotional and friendly, because that's what the customer really wants.

Yes, I'm a bit assertive about it. I try to draw the line between aggressiveness and assertiveness. I try to be more on the assertive side, rather than the aggressive side and I try to teach assertive

selling rather than aggressive selling. The difference being that aggressive people are after the sale and assertive people are after the customer. Aggressive people talk and assertive people ask. So I try to make that subtle difference when I give a talk, but in general, if I'm not a little pushy in my talk salespeople won't get it. They're going to think this doesn't apply to me because I'm real good at it and I say really, you suck at it.

Ellen: I love that. It hits you right between the eyes, but you're a master of language and in fact, you studied language right?

Jeffrey: I did. The bottom line is this, if a salesperson is not willing to admit their own weaknesses, their own frailty's then it's going to be a problem in me trying to transfer my message and them getting better, because they already know everything. The problem is they don't do it.

Ellen: There's that. Many of the people in my community are plumbing, heating, cooling and electrical contractors and so often the boss is the salesperson and the boss sucks at sales, and yet is unwilling to release that position or help someone else get good at it or get good at it themselves.

Jeffrey: I think every person has to make their own determination as to how good they are or are not, and today with all the recording devices available, probably the best thing anyone can do who's in sales is to hit the record button on the iPhone or iPad and record while you're giving a sales presentation and then listen to it, because you probably aren't that good.

Ellen: That's a great tip. I suggest to people that they tag along and shut up and watch their salespeople in action, but that record button, you can do that any time. It is a cringe-worthy moment when you listen back to yourself sometimes.

Jeffrey: The hardest thing for anyone to do is to view themselves. Some people won't look at themselves in the mirror. Some won't videotape themselves and watch it. Some people don't like to hear their own voice, that kind of thing, so it's up to the individual to determine how much courage they have to be able to see themselves.

Ellen: Yeah and a lot of times I'll talk to someone and they'll say something like, I went halfway across the state on a free estimate and the person was talking about price and they didn't like the minimum dispatch fee and I'll say let's back up a little. Have you ever taken a sales training class? Have you ever gone to Gitomer.com? Not realizing that so many business problems really stem from not being able to sell in the first place.

Let me ask you this, what caused you to pick up sales training as your business? What was that piece of your life story? Is there a plan?

Jeffrey: No plan. I sold in New York City and the people I sold against were not that good. They didn't use creativity. There was very little pre-planning. They talked about themselves, not about the customer and I saw an opportunity. Fast forward a decade, I moved to Charlotte and had the opportunity to write about what my expertise was and it became evident that's what I was supposed to do. It was never a goal. It was never where I said, boy I sure hope one day I can do this. It just happened so I took advantage of it.

Ellen: **What is it about sales that makes so many people's skin crawl?** Maybe it's just because I'm in this world, but in the home service contracting world I often hear, I don't want to sell anybody anything. It's like that would be akin to pouring boiling oil on the top of their head. Where does that come from?

Jeffrey: Look at it this way. You have to look at the reputation of the industry that you're in. If you're in the home sales business, you have to overcome a heck of a lot of barriers before you get to the first level, whether it's home improvement or a plumbing thing. People go to your home and try to sell you the \$295 deal, the \$558 deal or the \$2800 deal and the customer is a one call close. Literally, there are very few be-backs in anything mechanical.

Sometimes if it's a roof or add-on you might want to get a proposal, but you certainly don't want to look at it from the standpoint of, this is a sales job, you're trying to make your home better, put in a new dishwasher or garbage disposal, fix the leak in the roof or sink before it comes a flood. It's all about helping the other person and in your niche, if anyone would recognize that all they have to do is walk in and help other people then they're going to win, plain and simple.

Ellen: They are going to win because the customer doesn't want to call eight people they really want you to be their guy.

Jeffrey: That's correct. You're in their living room, how much more of a shot could you want?

Ellen: Where does the fear come from? Is it fear is that what holds people up? Why is there resistance?

Jeffrey: People just don't want to be rejected. I don't think there's a fear factor or reluctance factor. I think there's a rejection factor. You're going to be less forceful if they fear rejection and what they have to do is build their self-confidence, build their belief system and make that the transferable part of their sale. Here's the deal... everybody has some kind of a smart phone in today's world, Android, iPhone, something. When they leave a job they should film the customer and say hey, how'd you like it?

Ellen: Absolutely.

Jeffrey: Was I clean? Was it good? Did your kid get their little booties? Use that. They could walk in with laryngitis and still make a sale.

Ellen: That's so true. One of the greatest sales presentations and sales calls I went on was with a guy who stuttered really badly and he used pictures. He drew what he was going to do and maybe said five tortured words and \$2800 and a soft problem later we were off to the races. You don't really have to over talk. You embrace technology and I like what you said about the cell phones and how we have all these cool tools. I don't know anyone who embraces technology like you do. No disrespect, but you're an old fart and you're all in.

Jeffrey: Ellen, I'm more vintage than old. I'm renaissance.

Ellen: You are. You're quite a layered person, but you embrace it and use it in more ways than anyone else I know.

Jeffrey: You have to. If you don't you're not in this world.

Ellen: So you never resisted you were all in and you could see that this is a way that you could be of service.

Jeffrey: That's correct. I decided that I would deal with anything that's new.

Ellen: Before we get off the phone I'll ask you for more sales tips because that's your area of expertise, but you're also a businessperson and this event is about makeover. I thought about this year looming in front of us.

How do we make this our best year yet?

How do we drop the stuff that doesn't work and embrace new thoughts and actions?

Have you ever felt in your business like you were on the treadmill, needed a reboot and what did you do?

Jeffrey: I tried to elect a new president.

Ellen: A new president of your company?

Jeffrey: No, of the United States.

Ellen: Tell me more about that.

Jeffrey: Our economy is still pretty upside down. Everyone's real estate is pretty much upside down, so what you have to do is rather than piss and moan about it, you vote in your election and then you get back to work. The people who groan about the fact that their real estate is upside down or there's less business out there, they're admitting defeat. The best thing you can do is figure out an action plan, create a game plan, talk to your existing customers to find out what they want, find out who they know and find out why they do business with you. Get your social media up to speed and start spreading the word about you, either in your community, your marketplace or in your region.

Ellen: It really doesn't matter who the president is does it? I know companies that have blossomed over the past few years in the same industries where their competitors are saying it's all about the economy.

Jeffrey: Any lying idiot can be president of the United States.

Ellen: But that won't determine your success.

Jeffrey: If you tell the truth you have a problem in politics. If you take responsibility you have a problem in politics. Most politicians blame other people for what didn't happen rather than taking responsibility for what they couldn't make happen. If you want to learn about how to succeed in business, look at a politician and do exactly the opposite.

Ellen: I feel the same way about businesspeople who try to blame others for their lack of success. **It doesn't really matter who's in office, to you does it aren't you going to be successful no matter what?**

Jeffrey: I have a drive about me and a belief and I wake up with that everyday. I know where I'm headed. I know where my market is headed. I study enough about it and I have self-confidence. It's not that I've been there and done that it's that I continue to do that.

Ellen: **So, do you cultivate that in yourself or were you always like that or maybe a combination?**

Jeffrey: Good question, I'm not sure, I think I've always done it.

Ellen: You recently wrote in your sales caffeine, an inspiring blog about being on the beach and looking at the lighthouse. You seem to be one who's willing to have the big questions. I like the big questions. I like there to be a bigger purpose to things than selling whatever it is I'm selling, what's the point of all this? **What do you want to share about your time spent at the lighthouse?**

Jeffrey: When I finish something, like I just finished a book, then it's time to reflect. People who get up and reflect everyday waste their time.

Ellen: I love that. There are moments for reflect, but not all the time. **What did you learn this time around that you had not discovered before, and what was a recent insight from that moment?**

Jeffrey: I realized that I worked hard and I had completed something major. You don't just write a book you birth a book and I wanted to talk about what that meant in the overall scheme of things to myself. I don't write for other people I write for myself, other people just happen to be the beneficiaries of it. I wanted to find out what it really was and the best way to do it is to walk on the beach and hear the waves crashing and thinking about it, especially if you love the beach.

Ellen: I know. **Did that moment springboard you to your next great thing?**

Jeffrey: No.

Ellen: **Did you have something else in mind?**

Jeffrey: It didn't it just reaffirmed that I was on the right path. It reaffirmed my belief in what I'm doing and the direction in which I'm going. That's what it did more than anything.

Ellen: You are not unlike a lot of folks I know who are listening to this call. You've reached a point in your life and career where you could mail it in, but you are really ambitious or it appears to be.

Jeffrey: I'll tell you about a real episode. I was in Palm Desert two and a half weeks ago and walking through the hotel at the Marriott resort they have a real estate office. So I was curious what properties in Palm Desert were selling for. I walked in and started looking at all the for sale properties and they were pretty cheap, all things considered. Some old man, like 80, snuck up behind me and says are you thinking about retiring here in Palm Desert? I said no. Were you looking to buy a piece of real estate? I said no, it's too hot here I'm not coming here. He said what are you going to do when you retire? I said die.

I'm not going to retire. I'll put my head down on the keyboard or take the elevator to the Eiffel Tower and die. There's no reason to stop working.

Ellen: I totally agree with that. That completely resonates with me, because people I know, including my dad, the day that he didn't have work to do anymore he got old and boring and sick. What's the point in that?

Jeffrey: You go to the library, get a haircut and go to the hardware store, that's retirement and they're so busy they can't get it all done. They have to wait until tomorrow to do all this stuff.

Ellen: And if what I learned in your seminar is true, you have a lot of family members that are depending on you. I've seen the books we have to buy to keep those kids growing.

Jeffrey: Yes, but they can depend on themselves. I'm not working to support other people I'm working because I love to work. If there's ever a day that I don't love it anymore then I'll just quit, but for the moment it's fun. If it gets to the point where it's not fun then that'll be my last day. Oh this isn't fun anymore so let me go find something that's more fun.

Ellen: Speaking of family, one of the things that intrigues me as the wife of a plumber and with many of the clients I've had, even though they know what to do sometimes, family issues can get in the way of their business. You all work together, you have a family business where family members who work in your business with you. **Do you have any tips or suggestion for how to make it work that you've discovered from that?**

Jeffrey: Don't be mean to anybody even if you're familiar with them.

Ellen: Because we tend to brutalize our family members.

Jeffrey: People who have their kids at work tend to treat them like they were kids in high school. That's not how they want to be treated. Start by asking questions rather than making commands and treat everyone equally, even if they're more equal than others. You have to make sure that they're special people and that everyone is a special person not just your kids.

Ellen: Start by asking questions, because until they know how much you care about them or that you're interested in their goals...

Jeffrey: Yes, if something goes wrong ask them how that happened rather than starting their reprimand.

Ellen: That applies to everyone.

Jeffrey: Right.

Ellen: See that's what I love about you, you have the tough candy shell but you're cream cheese frosting. You are all about the love and that comes across in your approach to sales. Even if you don't make a sale could you make a human connection?

Jeffrey: Sure. To me, making the human connection is just as important because you never know who they live next door to. You never know where they worked before that they might be talking to somebody over dinner. There are all kinds of things that happen in the world and the more positive and nicer you are to everybody you meet the easier it is for you to be able to get that word of mouth going.

Ellen: A lot of what you share, like you said people know this stuff, it's not necessarily the content that is earth-shaking. I think what's really fun about what you do is how fresh, lively and approachable you make solid sales basics. You also add a new twist. I really like, and I have *21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling* on my Kindle app and I love number one. Cold calls sucks, to just try and start the sales conversation with someone you don't know is ridiculous, but you give some of the best ideas for how to cultivate relationships and a lot of them have to do with technology and social media, as well as shaking hands with people and looking them in the eye.

Jeffrey: Here's the deal. The more friendly you are, the more approachable people feel you are, the more comfortable they'll be with you and the more open and truthful they're going to be with you. If you pull out your deck of slides and start talking about the history of your company you'll lose to someone who's friendly. You'll lose to someone who's engaging. I try to find out information about my customers and talk to them about them and it's the easiest thing on the planet to do, because they love to hear about themselves. They love talking about themselves.

Ellen: Is there anything in all your studies, because you've written a lot of books on the topic, that you just discovered about sales? **Have you had a recent epiphany about sales?**

Jeffrey: The one thing that has evolved over the past several years in sales is that the cold call is finally and officially dead and that people who sit on their butts lose. The yellow pages lost. The daily newspapers lost. The Blackberry lost. Not because they were old technology but because they didn't keep up with technology and they felt they were fine. They didn't keep up with the marketplace and innovate. So sales takes innovation from every company no matter what and it takes people that are involved socially or they'll lose.

I don't tweet because of this or that, you know what you're a fool if you don't. Look at the innovative things that happen on a daily basis. Why did Facebook buy Instagram for a billion dollars? Why did Facebook pay 11 kids in San Francisco a billion dollars where up to that point in their lives they'd never made a dime? The answer is they were losing all their kids to Instagram. Facebook was losing 150k people a week to Instagram and now they can brag about the fact that Instagram just picked up 150k people.

The key, Ellen, is to keep your eyes open for what's new. There isn't going to be anything earth shattering, but every little thing accounts for a person's ability to keep current in a marketplace.

Ellen: So you just pay attention.

Jeffrey: All the time.

Ellen: **When you wake up in the morning what are some of the things you do, some of your success habits or disciplines you have to make sure you stay relevant?**

Jeffrey: I read and write. I don't watch television. I don't care about what happened last night in the news at all. I'm always thinking about a new idea, like if I give 75 seminars a year to major corporations and my mind is whirring about what creative ideas I can come up with. What can I create for that person that's a new idea for their company that they haven't thought of and their company is 75 years old?

Ellen: I just got goosebumps, that is so exciting.

Jeffrey: Thank you. The bottom line is that sometimes it's so obvious... recently I did a seminar for a hotel sales team in Philadelphia and I brought in Philadelphia soft pretzels to the meeting. I said this is a hotel in Philly and you don't even tell me about Philly food. Why isn't the soft pretzel in my room? Why don't you give it out like Double Tree gives out a cookie?

Ellen: That's ruining, I love it.

Jeffrey: They sit on their hands. They're more worried about what a chicken dinner costs than they are about exciting a customer.

Ellen: Because Philly food, c'mon. Gino's cheese steaks... my mom is from Philadelphia. I love that. Let me ask, because I know when people have a bad day that's part of it. **Do you want to share a tough sales story or something that happened to you or someone else that could give someone hope that they can recover?**

Jeffrey: Let me give you a general answer. Bad days are self-inflicted first. If you get rejected for a sale that's part of selling. If you can't take rejection in sales than today would be the last day you want to be in sales, you want to be something else like a dog catcher or something, because

they already don't like you and it will be much easier for you to be a success at dog catching. What you have to recognize is that in sales you're just not helping people enough and that's why they're rejecting you.

You can't blame the customer you have to take responsibility for what happened and what didn't happen. The easiest thing to do at the end of a tough day is to go back and review what you did and then don't do that again.

Ellen: And your choice as to whether or not that's going to wind you up or collapse you is up to you.

Jeffrey: Yes, or you can go home and have a beer and say oh crap and lose. The people who go home and drink a beer or glass of wine to relax or unwind, those people are fools.

Ellen: I hear you about that, because at that point...

Jeffrey: Then you start turning into two glasses, five glasses and then they're drunk.

Ellen: I'm clean and sober for 20 years so you're speaking my language. I just have to make choices and what I've found is that for me that was the end of the day, the day part was over as soon as that happened, so what was the point for me. I don't want to be preachy but I relate to that because you have choices to make, so even at the end of the day what are you going to do that's going to help you recharge or reflect and then go back in with inspiration and fun?

Does it drive you crazy when you have a crappy sales experience?

I remember when I was a restaurant manager. For a while I was challenged to enjoy the dining experience because I was so hypercritical of it. When you have a tough customer service experience how do you handle it? Do you make a teaching moment of it? My son cringes because I'm always looking for ways to set this 15-year olds life on track with my response to their bad customer service. **How do you respond to stuff like that?**

Jeffrey: One thing is you figure out what you would have done. One of the reasons that I'm as successful as I am is because I look at people's stupidity and I figure out a smarter way. For example, I'm walking through the hotel lobby and the coffee shop closed at 11:00 o'clock, it was 11:45 and I wanted a cup of coffee. I stop a woman who works at the hotel and she says there's a Starbucks a couple blocks down the street. She could have said there's a Starbucks two blocks down the street, let me go get you a cup, but she chose to be a Philly person and say, go get it yourself.

Think about it. I would have blogged about her. I would have written about her. I would have bally-hooed about her but she was way too busy to think about serving others. She was simply serving herself. Stupid!

Ellen: Did you point that out to her or do you just reflect on it or is it a mix?

Jeffrey: Well here's the deal. I was in a meeting with their staff and one of the women said did you get her name? I said it doesn't matter what her name is, first the person that trained her.

Ellen: Yes, and if it's her it has to be somebody else.

Jeffrey: She was only doing what she was told to do. Tell people where stuff is, not go help them and be memorable, they don't put that in the equation. They don't specifically tell you how.

Ellen: Have you been delighted by a sales experience recently?

Jeffrey: No. I don't mark down the episodes. I go to buy things and if I'm happy with buying, what I try to do is be friendly with people when I walk in the door and they'll always give you extra or do whatever you want, always.

Ellen: I learned something from Wayne Dyer once upon a time and I use it a lot when I'm on the road, because sometimes on the road you can get wound up or you can make it your shining hour or at least a time for reflection and personal development. Wayne says when he approaches the counter he thinks in terms of, how can I help this person have a really great day? It engages them so you benefit. It's a selfish thing to do because I'm going to get a better experience.

Jeffrey: Listen, don't think about how you can make someone else have a great day, think about being friendly. Wayne Dyer and I have one thing not in common and that is I wear shoes. I'm not a benevolent soul, I help other people and I'll perform random acts of kindness but that's not my driving force. My driving force is to be happy and friendly. My driving force is to be engaging. My driving force is to be a value provider.

I don't want to save the world. I want to make sure my mortgage is paid. I'm saving my own butt.

Ellen: But you started with be happy because once that's settled the other stuff gets easier doesn't it?

Jeffrey: Exactly. So I'm walking in to have fun I'm not walking in to help the other person have the best day of their life that's BS. I'm walking in to have a good time. By the way, anybody who says that is full of it.

Ellen: Because at least you'll have a story out of it no matter what happens.

Jeffrey: I'm going to go into a clothing store and make this person have the best day they've ever had. That's a bunch of crap I want some sweater that's in the window.

Ellen: I may be misquoting Wayne too, but that's an interesting approach. I love this.

Jeffrey: I have a book called *Yes Attitude*, get that book and make sure everyone buys *The Little Gold Book of Yes Attitude*. That will teach you how to be a happy person forever.

Ellen: That's number two right?

Jeffrey: It has nothing to do with helping other people but has everything to do with helping yourself first.

Ellen: Paradox is one of my favorite words, because that's not a concept that's mutually exclusive with being of service to someone else, and in fact, it enhances it.

Jeffrey: I don't mind being of service to someone else because I'm a happy person, but I won't dedicate my life to serving other people, it's not going to happen. I'm going to dedicate my life to serving myself and other people will benefit as a result of it.

Ellen: Therein lies the paradox. You are awesome! I knew I would love this conversation.

Jeffrey: Thank you.

Ellen: Very selfishly I just dragged you here and you were kind enough to show up. Thank you so much.

Jeffrey: My pleasure Ellen. We'll talk again soon. My people will call your people.

Ellen: I know I love it and I love Rebecca, she's been darling, so shout out to her for setting this up. I wish you love, peace, prosperity, happiness...

Jeffrey: Thank you, Ellen.

Ellen: Thanks to you and to everyone, talk to you later.