BOOK 1 OF 3

THE GYM OWNER'S SALES PLAYBOOK

How to price, how to close, and how to raise cash from people who already trust you.

ANTHONY AMEN.

Accountability is leverage.

READ THIS PART OR SKIP THE BOOK

Most gym owners think they have a lead problem. Almost none of them do.

You have a price problem, a follow up problem, and a decision problem, and all three of them live inside about forty minutes of conversation you are probably running badly. Fix those forty minutes and the same number of leads you already get pays you two or three times more. Buy more leads without fixing them and you just pay to fail faster.

I know this because I did it backwards for nine years. I priced so low during COVID that I could not pay my mortgage or buy groceries for my family. I called that generous. It was not generous, it was cowardice with a nice story attached, and it cost me everything except the building.

So here is the whole book in five lines.

The discount is the selfish move. Get the yes or the no before you show the price. The follow up is worth more than the pitch. The sale is not done at yes, it is done at day thirty. And you cannot hit a goal, you can only do the reps that produce it.

Everything after this is the mechanism.

HOW TO USE THIS

Every section has four parts, in the same order, every time.

The belief is what the industry runs on. **The receipt** is what happened to me when I tested it with my own money. **The break point** is where the belief stops being true, because anything that is true everywhere is not a real idea. **The moves** are what you do this week, plus a template you can copy tonight.

If a section did not have a number and a thing to do, I cut it. There are pages missing from this book on purpose, and I tell you which ones and why, because padding is what made the last version thin.

PART 1

PRICE

1.1 THE DISCOUNT IS THE SELFISH MOVE

The belief this industry runs on. A low price is generous. Loyal clients deserve a discount. You raise prices when you have earned the right.

The receipt. I priced so low during COVID that I could not pay my mortgage or buy food for my family. I was subsidizing strangers with my own kids' groceries and calling it kindness. And it got worse in a way I did not see coming. Low prices meant low pay, low pay meant I could only afford weak trainers, weak trainers meant a weak product, and a weak product meant I deserved the low price. The discount built the exact gym that justified it.

The turn was ugly and fast. I raised prices in January and raised them again in April. New clients went up three to four times. Legacy clients went up once, and then once a year, forever. I raised prices and I helped more people, because the money bought better trainers and a better product. The discount was never a gift to the client. It was a tax on my family and a ceiling on my quality.

The break point. This breaks if you raise legacy clients hard and all at once. That reads as betrayal and it triggers cancels, and the owner who tries it once gets scared and never raises again. The fix is not to freeze legacy clients at their old rate, which is what most owners do and it is why they are trapped. The fix is a small increase every single year, forever, on a set date, so nobody ever gets a shock and the number always climbs.

The second break point is more uncomfortable. If your product is genuinely bad, raising the price does not make it good, it makes you a bad product at a high price and you will churn out inside ninety days. Price first only works if you spend the money on the product. If you raise the price and pocket all of it, you have not run this play, you have just gotten expensive.

The moves.

1. **New clients pay today's number, full stop.** Every new signup resets to the real price, not last year's price, not the price you are comfortable saying out loud.
2. **Legacy clients get a small lift once a year, on a set date, forever.** Loyalty does not earn a discount. It earns a smaller raise than everyone else.
3. **Show your prices.** The stronger the brand, the more openly it posts price. Hiding price is a weak brand tell and every prospect reads it as expensive without the confidence.
4. **Three options, not sixteen.** Fewer choices read as premium. Sixteen options is insecurity wearing a menu.
5. **Never negotiate.** The price is the price. The second one client learns another paid less, you have lost both of them. A discount is a red flag you are pointing at yourself.
6. **Spend the increase on the floor.** Better trainers, better equipment, better everything, and say so out loud when you raise. The raise has to be visible or it is just a raise.

Steal this: the once a year legacy increase letter.

> Hi [name], a quick heads up. Once a year I make a small adjustment to keep the gym at the standard you signed up for, better trainers, better equipment, better everything. Starting [date] your rate moves from [old] to [new]. It is the smallest increase I give anyone, because you have been here the longest and that matters to me. Nothing changes on your end, same schedule, same team. See you [day].

Small, expected, annual, framed as the standard being protected. Send it by name, not as a mass blast. Send it at least thirty days before it hits. And do not apologize inside it, because an apology tells them the number is negotiable.

1.2 BUILD THE LADDER BEFORE YOU NEED IT

The belief. More options means more people can say yes.

The receipt. I offer three. Not because three is a magic number, but because the moment you offer more than three, the prospect stops choosing a program and starts comparing prices, and a person comparing prices is a person who has stopped buying. My model runs about one point two five million a year per site on private one on one. That is not built on a menu. It is built on a small number of clear options where the expensive one makes the middle one look reasonable.

The break point. The ladder fails when you build it to maximize the first check instead of the fit. Sell someone the top option they cannot sustain and you get a bigger first payment and a cancel in month two, which is worse than the smaller sale in every way that matters, because you also lose the referral and the review.

The moves.

1. **Build exactly three.** An entry option, the one you actually want them in, and a premium one above it.
2. **Make the middle one the obvious choice.** It should be the best value on its face, not because you argue for it.
3. **The top option exists to price the middle one.** Some people will buy it. That is a bonus, not the plan.
4. **Every option has to be a real product.** A fake top tier that nobody has ever bought gets sniffed out fast.
5. **Recommend the fit, out loud.** Say "based on what you just told me, this is the one." Trust now beats a bigger check and a fast cancel.

Steal this: the three option frame.

	WHAT IT IS FOR	WHAT IS IN IT	WHO IT IS FOR
Entry	Prove it works, build the habit	The minimum real dose, not a trial	Someone testing whether they will show up
Core	**The result they told you they wanted**	**The full system, the frequency that actually works**	**Most people. This is the one you steer to.**
Premium	Speed and access	Core plus the things only some people need	Someone with a deadline or a specific problem

Fill this in for your own gym before you take another consult. If you cannot fill it in, you do not have a price problem, you have a product problem, and no close will fix that.

PART 2

THE CONSULT

2.1 SPEED TO LEAD IS THE CHEAPEST ADVANTAGE YOU WILL EVER BUY

The belief. A good lead will wait. If they are serious they will call back.

The receipt. They will not. A person who fills in a form at nine at night is at peak motivation at nine at night and at a normal, uninterested level of motivation by lunch tomorrow. You are not selling to a person, you are selling to a mood, and the mood decays fast. Every owner I know who fixed one thing in their intake fixed this one, and it did not cost them a dollar in ad spend.

The break point. Speed with no substance is spam. Contacting someone in ninety seconds with a generic "thanks for your interest" text is fast and useless. What has to be fast is the first human, specific thing. The goal is not to touch the lead, it is to get a time on a calendar.

The moves.

1. **Set a hard standard and write it on the wall.** Every new lead gets a real human contact inside a set number of minutes during business hours. Pick the number and hold it.
2. **Call first, then text, then message.** The call is what gets the appointment. The text is the safety net.
3. **The first message asks for a time, not for interest.** Never ask "are you still interested." You are handing them a free exit.
4. **Make one person accountable for it.** If speed to lead is everybody's job it is nobody's job, and it will be slow within two weeks.
5. **Track the contact rate weekly.** Leads contacted divided by leads received. If you do not know this number today, that is your first job this week.

Steal this: the first touch text.

> Hey [name], Anthony from [gym]. Saw you reached out about [the exact thing they asked about]. I have [day] at [time] or [day] at [time] open to sit down for twenty minutes and figure out if we are the right fit. Which one works?

Two options, not an open calendar. A specific reference to what they asked about, so it does not read like a robot. And a question they can answer with one word.

Steal this: the follow up cadence for a lead who does not answer.

WHEN	WHAT	CHANNEL
Inside minutes	Call, then the text above if no answer	Phone, then text
Same day, evening	One short text, different angle	Text
Day 2	Call, no voicemail	Phone
Day 3	Message where they came from, DM if it was Instagram	Their channel
Day 5	One value message, no ask	Text
Day 7	The takeaway. See below.	Text

Then stop chasing and move them to the long list. Seven touches, then out. Most owners do two and think they were persistent.

Steal this: the takeaway message.

> Hey [name], I do not want to keep bugging you. I am going to assume the timing is not right and stop reaching out. If that changes, you know where I am. Door is open.

This one converts more than anything above it, because it removes the pressure and hands the decision back. Send it and mean it.

2.2 THE ROOM DOES HALF THE CLOSING

The belief. The consult is a conversation. Where it happens does not matter much.

The receipt. You have about three seconds to make someone decide what you are worth. I walk into my own gym every day and fix anything I can see that is not premium, down to a dust spot on a mirror, because a single visible flaw devalues the entire price I am about to say out loud. Nobody pays a premium price in a room that looks average. The environment is not decoration, it is the first half of the argument.

The break point. Expensive is not the same as premium. You do not need new equipment, you need a room that is obviously cared for. A clean, well lit, quiet space with older equipment beats a messy space with new equipment every single time, and it costs you nothing but the standard you hold.

The moves.

1. **Do the three second walk in every morning.** Walk in your own front door like a stranger. Fix the first thing you see. Every day.
2. **Have a set place you do consults.** Not the middle of the floor, not standing at the desk. Sitting down, side by side or across a table, where you both can see a screen or a sheet.
3. **They fill in something before you talk price.** A short intake gets them to state their own why in writing, which means you get to read it back to them later in their own words.
4. **Remove the interruptions.** No trainers walking up, no phone face up, no music you have to talk over.
5. **Have the price ready in a form you can show, not recite.** Reading a number off a page is calm. Saying it out loud from memory sounds like you are testing it.

Steal this: the pre consult intake sheet.

> 1. What made you reach out now, specifically this week?
> 2. What have you tried before, and what happened?
> 3. If nothing changes in twelve months, what does that look like?
> 4. What does success look like six months from now? Be specific.
> 5. Who else does this decision affect?
> 6. On a scale of one to ten, how ready are you to start?

Question one and question three do most of the work. Question five surfaces the spouse before the spouse becomes the objection. Question six gives you a number you can play back at them in step seven of the close.

2.3 THE NINE STEP CLOSE, WHERE THEY SELL THEMSELVES

The belief. Closing is pressure, urgency, and overcoming objections.

The receipt. Front end I pull roughly two to one on acquisition cost, and lifetime value runs about four to one. That does not come from pressure. It comes from a sequence where the prospect convinces themselves and I mostly get out of the way. The maybe only survives when you allow it to survive.

The break point. The weak version of this is a script you recite. The strong version is a sequence of questions where they do almost all of the talking. If you are talking more than they are, you are selling. If they are talking more than you, they are buying. The nine steps are the order, not the words, and the moment it sounds like a script you have lost the room.

The moves. The nine steps, in order.

1. Get the why. Ask it at least three times. The first answer is the surface answer, usually a weight or a doctor. The second is closer. The third is the real, emotional one, and it is almost never about the body. You cannot sell to a reason they have not admitted to themselves yet, so you keep going until you hear it. "Why does that matter to you?" three times, in a warm voice, is the whole technique.

2. Explain how you help, in short words. Not your life story, not your certifications. One or two lines on exactly how you solve the thing they just told you. If it takes you more than thirty seconds you do not understand your own product.

3. Ask why us. "Why did you come to us specifically?" Now they start listing the reasons you are the right choice. They are building your case for you, and people believe their own arguments in a way they will never believe yours.

4. Ask where they see themselves in six months. They paint the picture. The gap between today and that picture is now sitting in the room, and it is doing the work instead of you.

5. Negative frame. "If you do not start, what will you do instead?" Then be quiet. Let the cost of doing nothing sit there for a second. This is the only pressure in the entire sequence and it is coming from their own mouth.

6. Accountability is a two way street. You will show up for them. They show up for themselves. Say it out loud and get agreement, before money is mentioned. You are setting the standard while it is still free, so it is normal on day forty when they want to skip.

7. The pre price frame. This is the whole close. Before you show any number: "Before I show you pricing, I need a yes or a no today. There is no maybe. Is that fair?" They almost always say yes, because it sounds completely reasonable. And the moment they agree that fair means deciding today, the think about it is dead. It has nowhere to live.

8. Pick the program that fits, not the priciest. Recommend the one that matches the why from step one, and say why. If the fit is the entry option, sell the entry option. You are buying the next four years, not this check.

9. Ask for the sale. Directly. "So do you want to get started?" You already earned the yes in step seven. Now collect it. Do not talk after you ask. The first person to speak loses, and it should not be you.

Steal this: the one line to memorize word for word.

> Before I show you the price, I need a yes or a no today. Not a maybe, there is no maybe. Is that fair?

That single line is worth more than every discount you will ever offer. Say it in the same tone you would use to confirm an appointment time. The calmness is what makes it land.

2.4 THE FIVE OBJECTIONS AND WHAT YOU ACTUALLY SAY

The belief. Objections are obstacles to overcome with a clever answer.

The receipt. Nearly every objection you hear is one of two things. It is a real constraint, in which case a clever answer is an insult. Or it is the polite version of a fear they have not said out loud, in which case a clever answer skips over the actual problem and you lose them anyway. The job is not to beat the objection. It is to find out which of the two it is.

And here is the honest part. If you ran step seven properly, you will hear far fewer of these. Most objections are not objections. They are what happens when you skipped the pre price frame.

The break point. There is a version of this where you handle objections so well that you talk someone into a purchase they cannot afford. They cancel in six weeks, they tell people, and you paid for the acquisition twice. A close you had to win is often a client you are about to lose. Learn to hear the difference and let some people go.

The moves. The five you will hear, and the shape of the response.

"I need to think about it." This should not reach you if you ran step seven. If it does, go back to it. "I hear you, and I want to hold you to what we agreed a minute ago, that today is a yes or a no. So let me ask it differently. What specifically do you need to think about?" Whatever they say next is the real objection. Handle that one.

"I need to talk to my spouse." This is legitimate and you should have caught it on the intake sheet at question five. "Totally fair, that is a real conversation. Two things. What are you going to tell them, and what do you think they will say?" If they cannot articulate the pitch, they are not sold, and you go back to the why. If they can, offer to get the spouse on the phone right now, because a decision that leaves the room dies in the car.

"It is too expensive." Never defend the price and never drop it. Find out which sentence they actually mean. "When you say expensive, do you mean it is more than you expected, or more than you can do right now?" More than expected is a value conversation, so go back to step four and the six month picture. More than they can do is a real constraint, so move them to the entry option or let them go with the door open. Both are honest. Discounting is not.

"I have tried this before and it did not work." This is the easiest one and most owners fumble it by getting defensive. "Good. Tell me exactly what happened." Then listen, and connect their failure to the specific thing you do differently. This objection is a gift, because they just told you what your product has to solve.

"I want to start after [the holiday, the trip, the new year]." "What is going to be different then?" Almost always nothing is different then, and they know it. Then give them the real reason to start now, which is not urgency, it is that the version of them that starts in January is built by the version of them that starts today.

Steal this: the objection sorter.

Before you respond to anything, ask yourself one question. Is this a constraint or a fear.

A constraint is money, time, or a person who is not in the room. You solve constraints with a different option or an honest goodbye.

A fear is "it will not work," "I will quit again," "I will look stupid." You solve fear by going back to the why and the six month picture, never by arguing about price.

Answer the wrong one and you lose either way.

PART 3

CASH

3.1 THE EMERGENCY CASH PLAY, OR HOW I RAISED SIXTY THOUSAND IN TEN DAYS

The belief. When cash gets tight you cut, you borrow, or you panic.

The receipt. When I caught a sales manager embezzling around one hundred thousand dollars, I had ten days to raise sixty thousand or miss payroll. Miss payroll once and you can kiss your employees goodbye, and losing the staff loses the gym, so this was not a cash flow problem, it was an existence problem. I did not borrow it. I ran a paid in full sale to the clients I already had, and that is where the sixty thousand came from. Your current audience is the fastest money you will ever raise and most owners never think to ask them.

The break point. This is a fire extinguisher, not a business model. Every dollar you pull forward is a dollar that is not there next month, so run this twice a year and you will build a beautiful looking quarter and a hole behind it. Use it for a genuine emergency or a genuine expansion. Never use it to paper over a leak you are refusing to fix, because the leak will still be there and now you have less runway.

The moves. Five steps.

1. **Pick a real window.** Twelve weeks upfront is the offer. One time, closing in a set number of days.
2. **Give a reason that is true.** Not a fake holiday, not a made up deadline. "I am investing in the gym and I am opening a small paid in full window to fund it." Truth outsells a countdown gimmick and it does not cost you your credibility.
3. **Make the math obvious.** Twelve weeks upfront gets an honest saving versus month to month, or a bonus that costs you little and reads as a lot. Extra sessions and blocks of small group are the cheapest thing you own.
4. **Go to current clients first, in person and by direct message.** Never a mass blast. These people already trust you, and that trust is the entire reason this works. A mass email converts this offer at a fraction of the rate and burns it for everyone.
5. **Cap it, and mean the cap.** Real scarcity converts. Fake scarcity gets caught, and in a gym everybody talks to everybody.

Steal this: the paid in full message to a current client.

> Hey [name], quick one. I am opening a small paid in full window this week to fund some upgrades to the gym. Twelve weeks upfront, and you get [the honest saving or the bonus]. I am only opening [number] of these and I am going to my current members first because you are the reason I can do it. Want me to hold one for you, yes or no?

Look at the close. Yes or no. Not "let me know your thoughts," which is how you turn a decision into a chore. It is the same tool as step seven, because it is the same tool everywhere.

3.2 GOALS DO NOT GET HIT, ACTIVITY DOES

The belief. Set a big goal, stay focused on it, and chase it.

The receipt. You cannot do a goal. A goal is an output and outputs are not actions. The only thing you can actually do is the activity that produces it, and for a gym that activity is conversations. Once I know my close rate, I know exactly how many conversations equal one signup, and the goal stops being a wish and becomes a countable number of reps I either did or did not do this week.

The break point. This turns toxic if you count activity that is not really activity. Two hundred conversations where you never ask for the sale is not two hundred reps, it is two hundred chats, and you will hit your activity number and miss your goal and conclude the system is broken. The unit is a real conversation with a real ask in it. Count those and nothing else.

The moves. Work backwards.

1. Take the yearly goal in new members. Divide by twelve, then by four. Now you have a weekly number.
2. Find your real close rate. Not what you think it is, what your last fifty conversations actually did.
3. Divide the weekly members needed by the close rate. That is your conversation number.
4. That number is your job this week. Everything else is noise.

Steal this: the activity calculator.

> Yearly goal, in new members: ______ Divided by 52, members needed per week: ______ My close rate, signups per conversation: ______ Conversations needed per week, weekly members divided by close rate: ______
>
> That number is your job this week.

If you close one in a hundred and you need one member a week, you owe yourself a hundred conversations. Need two, have two hundred. It is not motivating and it is not supposed to be. It is just true.

The goal is the output. The reps are the input. Fall in love with the reps.

PART 4

AFTER THE YES

4.1 THE SALE IS NOT DONE UNTIL DAY THIRTY

The belief. The sale ends when the card goes through.

The receipt. The most expensive cancels are not the ones at month eight. They are the ones at week three, from people who never really started, and every one of those is an onboarding failure being blamed on the client. You paid full acquisition cost for a person who never got to the point where the product works. That is not churn, that is a refund with extra steps.

The break point. Onboarding that is all enthusiasm and no structure creates a huge first week and a cliff in week three. The point of the first thirty days is not to impress them. It is to get them to the moment where the habit is theirs and they no longer need you to be exciting.

The moves.

1. **Day one is booked before they leave the room.** Not "we will reach out." An actual session on an actual calendar, in front of them.
2. **Somebody who is not you welcomes them in the first twenty four hours.** It tells them the business cares, not just the person who sold them.
3. **Week one has a fixed shape.** Same steps for everybody. The assessment, the plan, the introduction to the floor, the first small win.
4. **Introduce them to a second trainer inside the first two weeks.** This is not admin, it is the moat. No client should belong to one person, because the day that person leaves is the day you find out who owned the relationship.
5. **Day thirty is a scheduled sit down, not a hallway question.** Fifteen minutes. What is working, what is not, what changes. This is where you catch the cancel four weeks before it happens.
6. **Ask for the referral at the first real win, not at day one.** The ask lands when they have something to say.

Steal this: the first thirty days checklist.

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	WHO OWNS IT
Before they leave	First session booked on the calendar	Whoever closed
Within 24 hours	Welcome contact from someone else on the team	Ops or front desk
Session 1	Assessment, plan explained in their own words from the intake	Their trainer
Week 1	One deliberate early win, small and real	Their trainer
Week 2	Session with a second trainer	Ops
Day 30	Fifteen minute sit down, three questions	Owner or manager
First real win	The referral ask	Their trainer

Print it. Put a name in the owner column. A checklist with no name on it is a wish.

Steal this: the day thirty three questions.

> 1. What has been better than you expected?
> 2. What has been harder than you expected?
> 3. If you were going to quit in the next month, what would be the reason?

Question three is the one. People will answer it honestly because you gave them permission, and they will hand you the cancel reason a month before the cancel. Fix what they say and you keep them for years.

4.2 RETENTION IS A RELATIONSHIP, NOT A CONTRACT

The belief. Contracts protect your revenue.

The receipt. I have no contracts. Every gym locks people in and it always felt slimy to me, because it is the business's job to serve the client, not the client's job to serve the business. A contract is a business admitting out loud that it cannot keep you on merit. With no contract, anybody can walk on any day, and that is the only thing that forces me to level up the product every single week. People do not walk away from relationships they value.

The break point. No contracts is not a marketing position you can adopt on Monday. If your product is average, removing the contract just lets you find out faster. The contract was never protecting your revenue, it was hiding your retention problem, and killing it does not fix the problem, it reveals it. Which is the point, but go in with your eyes open.

The moves.

1. **Kill the contract.** It will terrify you and it will make your product better within a quarter.
2. **Make the relationship the retention engine.** Names, lives, milestones, real coaching. Not a keycard and a bill.
3. **Track why people stay the way you track money.** If you cannot say why a specific client stays, you are one bad month from finding out you were wrong.
4. **Rotate clients across trainers on purpose.** No client belongs to one person. Ask yourself what happens if your best trainer quits tomorrow and tries to take clients. If the honest answer is "a lot," you do not own your business, your best employee does.

SECTION

WHAT IS NOT IN THIS BOOK, AND WHY

I said at the start that some pages are missing on purpose. Here they are, because a book that pretends to be complete is worse than one that tells you where it stops.

Real conversion benchmarks. I have not put my show rate, close rate, or average length of stay in here as a number for you to aim at, and you should be suspicious of anyone who does. Their number is a function of their market, their price, and their lead source, and it will tell you nothing useful about yours. What matters is your number this month against your number last month. The activity calculator in 3.2 works off your close rate, not mine, and that is the correct design.

Where the leads come from. This is a sales book. It starts when the lead exists. Everything upstream of that, the channels, the ads, the offer, the referral system, is a different book and it deserves its own one.

The team side. How you hire the people who run these consults, what you pay them, how you know within four minutes that one of them has to go, and what a healthy payroll percentage actually looks like. Also a different book.

Those two are coming. This one is the forty minutes that decides everything.

THE ONE LINE UNDER ALL OF IT

Accountability is leverage.

Not a slogan, the operating system. You cannot blame the market, the economy, the leads, or the client, because the only thing in this entire book that you can actually change is your own behavior. The price you are afraid to say out loud. The lead you did not call back for six hours. The pre price question you keep skipping because it feels awkward. The follow up you stopped at touch two. The day thirty conversation you have never once had.

All of it is yours. The market did not do this to you, and it is not coming to fix it either.

Go find your close rate. Then go have the conversations.

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