

Speaker 1: 00:03 Welcome to the same side selling podcast dedicated to modern sales and marketing innovation and leadership. Here's your host, Ian Altman.

Ian Altman: 00:15 Hey, it's Ian Altman. Welcome to the same side selling podcast. My guest this week is Christine Schlonski. Christine is the host of the heart sells podcast and she works with entrepreneurs who are heart-centered impact driven and love what they do, but maybe struggle a little bit with selling. She shows them at a sell with ease, grace, confidence, while being authentic. We're going to talk about the biggest challenges and high pressure sales, how to introduce a little bit of levity into your team and how that mindset can shift results for your organization. It's always a pleasure to talk to Christine Schlonski. Christine Schlonski, welcome to the show.

C. Schlonski: 00:57 Well thank you so much and so happy to be here.

Ian Altman: 01:00 It's a pleasure to have you here. And our audience may not know that, um, that Christine was touring through North America and I get the chance to spend some time with you, as did my wife Debra, as did our dog Sydney's. So that was a, it was a special treat. What's something surprising about you that our audience may not know?

C. Schlonski: 01:20 Well, I am based in Germany. I don't just have the accent. I do live here. And interestingly enough, I'm a huge fan of Argentine tango. Really? Yes.

Ian Altman: 01:35 See, I love that you share that because I did not know that and I feel like I might know you a little bit, so. Yeah. Yeah. So how did, how did you, how did you gain interest in that?

C. Schlonski: 01:45 Yeah, it's interesting. I was, um, I stayed a year in Paris, uh, to learn French and French culture. And on my birthday I saw a movie called tango by Carlos [inaudible]. And in that movie I decided that's something I want to do. So the next day I went out to search, um, a studio and I found this really, really beautiful place called [inaudible] to the dos [inaudible] which is right at the, um, city Capitol. Like how do you say, like the city main place and uh, yeah. Then I had to find a dance partner that was more challenging. But nevertheless, I got started and yeah, a couple of months in, um, my parents picked me up and I surprised them by taking them to a place for everybody, dance, tango and then some stranger coming and asking me to dance and they thought I'm going to totally embarrass myself. But, um, yeah, I just surprised them pretty much.

Ian Altman: 02:45 That's amazing. That's amazing. So, so, and I'm sure there are people in our audience who want to learn more about, um, the tango and it's something that perhaps in the heart that sells podcast that you'll, you will cover in depth in a, in a part series on the [inaudible].

C. Schlonski: 03:02 Well, I actually teach as, and that's really sales related, um, is like tango is, it's like selling. So somebody has got to have the lead. Yeah. And the other person following, usually the woman in the setting needs to be the muse, uh, and really needs to have the space so that both can perform this amazing dance. Because an Argentine tango, if it's not a choreography, you as a woman don't really know what comes, what comes next. Like what kind of stuff. So yeah, it's like the same as sales and I used to teach that to my sales teams, um, to understand better how to listen, how to feel into the conversation so they could do the right move at the right time.

Ian Altman: 03:48 That's fascinating. We may circle back to that in this conversation because the big thing that, that I wanted to get your insight into today is what's the greatest misconception that, that you think people have when it comes to working in these high pressure, high demanding sales and buyers?

C. Schlonski: 04:07 Yeah, I think for a lot of people it's really difficult to understand that it's not just the high pressure, it's obviously they're at sales so you need to hit some numbers. That's the whole goal. Sure. But they think they have to be like really, really serious. Like when I started my sales career, I didn't love, I was like doing my pitch and I start like asking for money, you know, I can't have fun with the clients. On the phone because that's something really, really serious. Yup. So, and I feel like lots of people starting out have the same misconception.

Ian Altman: 04:45 Yep. So and, and so in, in your career and in how you help people today, I know that, that you take a different approach to this. So what are some things that you learned over the years that you found instrumental that really helped people overcome that stuffiness, if you will, to actually end up achieving better results and actually enjoying what they're doing?

C. Schlonski: 05:07 Yeah. Well, surprisingly it is when you allow yourself to be you and to be authentic, all of a sudden you will figure out not everybody likes you, but that's the case anyway. And you will probably double or even triple your sales because now you gave yourself permission to be who you are. And personality just sells because people buy your energy, your personality first, and then the product is more or less the add on that comes in handy. But if they don't connect with you, they probably not going to buy.

Ian Altman: 05:48 Yeah. So, so, and, and that may be something that's easier said than done. So people would say, okay, yeah, so you should be more yourself. And in the meantime, the what the sales professional is thinking is, but I have to remember all these things I've rehearsed and I have to remember all this information on our products and here's our methodology and here's our process. And then they immediately fall back into this kind of robotic mode where they're devoid of personalities. So what, what are some of the things that you found make a difference to let people tap into that and maybe you loosen up a little bit and enjoy what they're doing.

C. Schlonski: 06:24 Yeah. Well giving yourself enough time and space in the conversation and just relax. If you don't close the next sale, you're going to stay alive. The world is not gonna explode just because you didn't get that deal. Just play with it. Be natural, have some fun, connect to the human on the phone. Sure. In the conversation.

Ian Altman: 06:50 And there's some things that, that you and I have discussed in the past about different ways that you injected humor into your teams that really stimulated the dialogue, got them more engaged and actually boosted their performance. Can you share a little bit of that?

C. Schlonski: 07:05 Yeah, I'd love to. So, um, especially after lunch right when we just ate, when we're tired, when you know, the blood is not really in our brains. Um, I had like the 10 minute session with my team and we told each other jokes and the challenge was that nobody was really good at telling jokes. Nobody really knew jokes very hard. He was funny. Yeah. Like, you know, mostly all German. So we started Googling jokes. You have like all these pages and then we were just reading jokes to each other. Um, and you know, it really helped getting that energy up, putting a smile on people's faces and research shows that when you have a smile on your face that your body will adjust. So you will put out those happy hormones even though you might not really feel happy at the moment. And you might think, well, smiling doesn't make any sense because I don't feel happy, I'm a bit tired. Um, it looks like a lot of pressure. So just relax, put a smile on your face, read some jokes and um, yeah. And then after a couple of minutes you will feel differently. And from there you can go and have a conversation where you are energized, where you enjoy the conversation and hopefully where you can give yourself permission to just be you.

Ian Altman: 08:30 And, and, and what sort of results did you see when you implemented that? I mean, it says, you know, I'm sure people are sitting there thinking, well, but what if the jokes aren't that good? And from our discussion, what you said is most of them weren't. So most of the jokes were not funny. And in fact you

were just reading them and then a couple of people would laugh, but then it almost became, the joke became how bad the jokes were.

C. Schlonski: 08:52 Exactly. Yeah. You know, just give a, the opportunity to, to Google some jokes, even if they're really, really bad. Probably will wonder and laugh about how bad jokes can be. Um, if that's not your strong field and you're not a comedian, then you got to help yourself with other tools and Google is a pretty good one in this case.

Ian Altman: 09:14 Sure. And so what's, what sort of results would you see in your team as a result of this? Of what I will call the post lunch comedy hour with Christine?

C. Schlonski: 09:25 Yeah. Well it wasn't the whole hour, but a, that's a really great name for it. Yeah. I would see like the energy shifted and I could feel it within myself. Um, I was happier seeing that my, my teams seem to be happier. So after, you know, after every body, um, went back to, to that desk, it was easier for them to just die the next number. Yeah. Because you know, sometimes you still had a smile on your face or maybe, you know, you had some other small discussion around some pretty dumb jokes and it just helped to uplift the whole team and it made the, the environment just a bit friendlier and more fun. And that reflected back into the conversations.

Ian Altman: 10:11 Okay. And, and, and do you start to see a difference in sales performance through that and retention?

C. Schlonski: 10:18 Yeah, I think so because, you know, you, everybody was more energized. Everybody was able and willing to give more in the conversation and to not be the next boring sales person just saying their pitch and, you know, born the boring the prospect. It was a different um, yeah, a different energy and um, just way more fun. And at the end of the day I would say it produced different results because, you know, happy people make people happy. So when you call from that place, um, your prospect will enjoy you much more than when you just the next sales person for the next pitch.

Ian Altman: 10:58 Yeah. I mean, let's, let's face it, we've all been in a situation where we're interfacing with somebody who's job is supposed to be, to make you feel welcomed. It's supposed to be someone who's supporting you and you can tell that they're really not happy doing their work and we don't want to interface with those people. No, we don't. And, and, and, and sales people say, Oh, my job is hard. I had a tough week. You know, here's a newsflash, nobody cares. Nobody cares that you're going through that. Maybe, maybe your loved ones care, but that's about it. Maybe some of your friends care, but you know, in your, your pets, your dog would be sympathetic but probably wouldn't care your dog and say, Oh, it's

unfortunate. Now throw the ball. My dog would say. And so, so the idea is that what I want, what I want to make sure the audience is picking up on is this isn't just about, well how do I feel better?

Ian Altman: 11:53 Although that's certainly important. This isn't just about how do I feel better about my job, which is also important. But if we want to make an impact for somebody else, we have to connect in a way that they think to themselves. You know, I'd really like to speak to that person. Yeah. I mean it's a, it, let's face it, you've got an energy such that anytime Christine reaches out, my inclination is of course like, how do you say no to Christina? She is one of the nicest people in the world. Right? But it's just, but, and I know if, if you and I are talking over the phone, I know that you're smiling.

C. Schlonski: 12:27 Yeah.

Ian Altman: 12:28 And our customers know that too. So, so, uh, what, what are some of the tips that you have for people when maybe they've had a rough week, maybe they had a rough day, maybe they didn't sleep well last night. What should they do if they still are coming in and their job is to hit their quota and, and serve their customers, what do they do?

C. Schlonski: 12:49 Well, what I like best about sales that you can have or make a different decision every single second. Just because you didn't hit your quota last week or yesterday or this morning, doesn't mean you have to stay in this space, right. You just have to decide and really decide that enough is enough. And with the next person you're calling, you're just going to have a ton of fun. Yeah. And when they want what you offer, great. If not while you just have a great time and then you go on a call the next person.

Ian Altman: 13:24 Yeah. You know, and I, I love that perspective of, look, I think too often what happens is in high pressure situations, people say, ah, I didn't get this deal and it was a terrible failure. Instead of you can have fun with it, even if it doesn't end up in a sale for you. Yeah, you can have a good conversation. And if you do, if the, if the, if the person doesn't buy from you, but it says, you know what, I really enjoy talking to them. There's a pretty good chance they'll take your call next week or next month to see if anything's changed. But if you're a miserable human being to talk to their probably not going to say, Oh, you know what, let me carve out time to talk to this person because you know, I just haven't been miserable enough and I'm hoping that they can push me over the head.

C. Schlonski: 14:09 Yeah, totally. Yeah. They might give you a referral, right? They might say, well, you know what, it's not the right time. It's not the right fit. Call me back in five

months. But you know, Mr. Smith from company X Y that they might appreciate your call.

Ian Altman: 14:25 Yeah, exactly. And so that's, that's another key element. And, and so what was the reaction of your, of your colleagues, the people on your team when you initially introduced this idea of, okay, we're going to tell jokes for five or 10 minutes before we hit the phones?

C. Schlonski: 14:42 Yeah. Well I thought they, I think they were a little bit suspicious like, huh, what kind of technique is that? What's this for? But then, you know, after a while everybody enjoyed it. And interestingly, um, sometimes when I would forget, they would remind me, they were like, Oh, we're going to tell jokes. I was like, Oh yeah, it's already like lunch break is going to be over. So I bet a Google some jokes.

Ian Altman: 15:08 Yeah. I, I've had, I've had drew Tarvin been on the podcast and drew is a, is a humorist and it's great speaker and drew talks about how to use comedy in business and how to use humor in business. And he's a guy who's got an engineering background. You would think as an engineer, how exciting is that going to be? And is that the, he's got this clever, clever sense of humor that's very cerebral. And so in a business context it's, it's, it's fascinating. Absolutely works great. And people think, well, gee, you know, you have to be serious. And to your point, you don't have to be serious. Like people just cause you have a serious issue doesn't mean you can't have fun with it.

C. Schlonski: 15:50 Yeah, totally. And interestingly enough, when we, when we have fun, when we are more relaxed, we find better solutions because you know, it's approved, it's proven. Um, and for example, the CIA, they use it right when, when they want to get information out of you, they put you under stress. So people under stress use the potential for creative solution finding. So when you have fun in sales, often is creative solution finding, like catching on to what the person said and helping, you know, to find a path that those can walk along to realize, um, the cooperation, the deal. So the more fun you have, the more you dare to ask for stuff. And to see where you can lead that conversation to, um, the better it will be at the end and, and hopefully create a win win situation instead of a stressful one where both parties hang up and the frustrated.

Ian Altman: 16:50 Yeah. And it's funny because I think it also triggers a collaborative rather than an adversarial dialogue. So if all of a sudden we're having fun with somebody and the client says, well, I mean, we don't want to pay anything extra for that. If you're, if you're having a friendly conversation, you can say, well that's funny. I mean, you don't expect us to do that for free, do you? And it becomes almost a joke and they go, yeah, of

course not. And you just negotiated something and everybody feels good about it as opposed to, well, that's not something we want to pay for it. Well we expect you to pay for that. And it's this back and forth that now is like a cage fight instead of two people telling jokes to each other.

C. Schlonski: 17:31 Yeah, totally. So I like when I had fun and conversations and people would say, well, can you do something on that price? I would say, yeah, for sure. Um, I can make it higher. You're exactly right. And all of a sudden everybody's laughing. Well, no, we don't want to go there. I'm was like, okay, then we're fine.

Ian Altman: 17:48 And who it could be, look, I could do something but I don't know that it's going to work for you. We'll try it on me. Okay, well the only other option is 20% higher. I just, most people don't like it, but I mean we're getting along well enough. Maybe you're okay paying 20% more, but most people say no, they want the lower price. How about for you? And then it's just something that is, if we get people laughing, then their mind is open. Then they're looking for looking for opportunities to work with us. There's a, there's another guy I've had on the podcast run tight and run tight is a brilliant speaker and author. And one of the comments he talks about is that with humor, oftentimes you can introduce something funny and then, and then your audience is listening to what comes next because they think, Oh, I wonder if that's going to be funny too.

Ian Altman: 18:35 And so we have to be careful not to say things that we think are funny to the detriment of somebody else, um, that that becomes attacking to somebody. But if we say something that's kind of funny, your brain automatically is listening for the next thing that person says to say, Oh, I wonder if that's going to be entertaining too. Yeah, totally. And so it peaks their interest. I think it changes that dynamic a little bit in terms of, um, in terms of how things work. So, so aside from just Googling jokes, what are some things that people can do with their teams to kind of loosen things up a little bit, especially if they're selling in high pressure environments. If they're selling an environments where there is a lot of pressure, what are some things they can do to make a difference?

C. Schlonski: 19:20 Well, you know, you could just have a coffee with your team, like everybody together. Like if it's not a huge team, right. You don't want to go with 200 people for coffee at the same time probably. But if you have like smaller teams just loosen up. Um, go. I sometimes I used to go just outside, so we went in the middle of Berlin, um, just, you know, go around the block so to speak, just um, half walk together, half fresh air change environment, getting away from the PC and the phone. Um, and then going back and starting you.

Ian Altman: 19:56 Yep. And I just think, I think that

notion of, it's funny, in, in my, in my prior business, I'd sometimes get people to come in and say, Oh, this terrible thing happened last night. I didn't get a good night's sleep. I have all this stress going on, but I have to get on the phone. And I would say, well, so, so are there any movies you want to see? They'll look at me like, what do you mean? I said, go see a movie, get your head out of wherever it is. Because if you're in a bad mood, that's not a good time to reach out to a good potential customer if your, if your mood isn't right, you either need to fix that mood or you need to kind of stay away from customers at that moment in time because if you're cranky, they're not going to want to deal with you and they don't know that, that you're, you're, you have a newborn who was up all night, they don't know that, that you had an auto accident and now you've got an issue to deal with. They just, their own issues. They don't want to deal with your issues. So that notion of how do we get in the right mindset. I just think it's so important, especially from your viewpoint where you're always talking about how do you serve other people and how are, how are you serving people from the heart, not necessarily just from your brain.

C. Schlonski: 21:04 Yeah, totally. Yeah. What, what, what they also could do. Like, I mean if you feel weird, then just go to the bathroom, close the door and put on a shoot smile and just stay there and wait what happens? Or make some faces in the mural just to loosen up and really get your brain out of that fun where you stuck and where you feel bad about yourself because you're not going to serve from that space and you're just gonna make your day even more complicated than it might be already.

Ian Altman: 21:35 Yeah. And, and this, this idea of coping with stress and getting in the right mindset is something that we very often get where I get inquires from people that say, well, you know, these are high stress environments. What can people do to cope? And I think that you've given people some specific ideas on things they can do to just, and you're not talking about you. At no point did you suggest that they invest \$1 million in something that accomplishes this. It's just be human with each other and lighten up. I mean, it's, you know, coming from Germany, the notion of, Hey, lighten up, I think is, you know, that, that's, that that's an interesting fact in and of itself.

C. Schlonski: 22:13 Yeah. I mean, Germans can be funny and friendly for sure, but I think in comparison to, to the U S like the fun factor is not as present. Uh, maybe it's changing at the moment. I don't know. But, um, yeah,

Ian Altman: 22:29 I think, I mean, I think it changes through you, but, but stereotypically, I mean, the, the, the interesting thing about stereotypes is there's usually some threat of truth to a stereotype. So, you know, and we also know that most

stereotypes aren't accurate, but it's just one, you know, it's, it's taking, taking something to the extreme. But, but I, I love these ideas on how people can actually change the way they, they shift their mindset and loosen up, have a little bit more fun, actually enjoy what they're doing and miraculously generate better results along the way.

C. Schlonski: 23:03 Totally. Yeah. Yeah. And I, I think for every, for everybody, if it's a business, if you, if you interact with other people, um, everybody's going to win when you come with a much better attitude.

Ian Altman: 23:15 Yeah, that's perfect. Christine, what's the best way for people to connect with you? Learn more about what you're doing and to find the heart cells podcast as well.

C. Schlonski: 23:23 Yeah, just to hop on over to Christine Schlonsky's dot com and there are different tabs. One is a podcast tab and a there people can listen to a heart sells, uh, where I have amazing guest features. Um, for example, one is you, it was a wonderful interviews and uh, yeah, just a check out the page,

Ian Altman: 23:46 connect on Facebook, like social media. Um, and I'm happy to have a conversation. Fantastic. And I encourage people to reach out to Christine. She is absolutely delightful and it's always a pleasure to talk to you. So thanks so much for sharing your wisdom with our audience.

C. Schlonski: 24:01 Thank you so much for having me. So much fun.

Ian Altman: 24:03 Sure. Let me give you a quick 32nd recap of the key information I think he can use and apply to your business right away. Remember, nobody wants to speak with grumpy people, so if you're one of those people, you need to change your mindset a little bit. Now, you can do that by introducing levity or humor, and I love Christine's idea of just people were Googling jokes and telling them to each other and it made people laugh and it made him smile. And remember, just like you can tell if someone on the other end of the phone is reading a script, you can also tell if they're smiling and having a good time. And if you're not smiling when you're dialing, guess what? You're probably hurting your case, not helping you. Remember, this show gets this direction from you, the listener. If there's a topic I should cover or a guest you'd like me to have on the program, just drop me a note to ian@ianaltman.com have an amazing week. Add value and grow revenue in a way everybody can embrace, especially your customer. [inaudible].