

Robert Middleton Interviews Christian Mickelsen

Robert: Welcome, everyone. This is Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing. I'm here with my friend and business associate, Christian Mickelson. Welcome, Christian to this interview.

Christian: Thank you very much. I'm super happy to be here.

Robert: Let me tell the listeners a little bit about you.

Christian Mickelson is the author of *How to Quickly Get Started in Professional Coaching: The Surprising Truth About What it Really Takes*.

Christian has extensive experience as a small business coach and life coach. He has been seen in *Forbes*, *MSN*, *Yahoo Finance* and *The Boston Globe*. He spent two years on the board of directors of the International Association of Coaching. He has developed numerous support programs to help coaches become financially successful.

On a more personal note, Christian was my business coach for a full year. He was instrumental in getting my Marketing Action groups off the ground a few years ago. Christian and I now co-coach each other and brainstorm business ideas on a regular basis. This interview came out of one of those brainstorming sessions.

Christian has put a huge amount of time and work into cracking the code on how to offer free sessions that sell your services. In this interview, we're going to get into the nitty gritty of what it takes to offer free sessions as a powerful marketing and selling tool to attract more clients.

That pretty much sums it up. By the way, Christian used a free session with me a few years ago to get me as a client. It definitely worked. He's perfected this methodology.

Christian, let's get right into this. Why should people offer a free session of their services, whether they're a consultant, a coach or some other independent professional?

Christian: That's a great question. Big companies are doing all kinds of things to try to get appointments with prospective customers. You have IBM and Xerox making cold calls. They're doing all sorts of things to try to have a conversation with a potential customer.

We have a unique ability as coaches and consultants to be able to offer something that has value, but also gives us a chance to potentially sell what it is that we have to offer to our prospective clients.

Robert: You're doing two things in one. One is you're giving away some real value.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: You mentioned big companies. One of the most effective ways to sell services or products for big companies is through sampling. "Here's a sample. Check it out. Take it home. Give it a test drive."

Christian: Yes.

Robert: This has been used forever in marketing and advertising. It works just as well if you're selling your services one-to-one or business-to-business. What happens out of offering free services? What results have you seen? Does it really work?

Christian: It works if you do it in a way that works. A lot of times people try something, it doesn't work and they think that thing doesn't work.

Robert: “I gave a free session once and they didn’t become a client,” right?

Christian: Right. Or even if they did it 10 or 20 times, which I know a lot of coaches and other professionals do. Even though it may not be working, it’s not that giving out the sessions isn’t working. It may be what you’re doing in the session isn’t working.

Robert: Yes, and we’ll get into that more. What exactly are people doing that doesn’t work? How do people structure a free session that isn’t going to result in a client most of the time?

Christian: You mentioned giving out samples. What a lot of coaches do is have a potential client pick an issue to be coached on.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: They just coach them on it. They may even get them to a resolution on that particular thing. Then they think, “Look, I just proved how good of a coach I am and how valuable I am.”

They haven’t connected the dots between what the potential client wants in the big picture, what their challenges are in the big picture and how they as a coach can help them get what they want by overcoming those challenges.

Robert: At the end of a session like that, there’s no place to go because you don’t have a path to turn that person into a client.

Christian: Exactly.

Robert: I've seen this before. It's exactly what you said, "Here's a free session." You do the free session and they say, "Thank you very much." Maybe they just wanted to get a free coaching session and had no interest in working with you.

Christian: Before I ever became a coach, I had a coach for myself for nine months. Then about six months later I was at a networking event with another coach. She offered me a sample session. I had that session with her. Basically, in her session she helped me with a values clarification process.

I thought, "Okay, that's nice." It was all well and good, but it didn't do anything to make me want to hire her.

Robert: Right, because there was no clear step.

There are a lot of people that haven't even tried free sessions, but they avoid doing them. Why don't people offer more free sessions if it's so effective?

Christian: There are two things. We mentioned some of the challenges, like people may be doing them, but not getting good results. The other is that people may be offering them and not getting people take them up on the offer.

Robert: "I offer them all the time. No one bites," right?

Christian: Yes.

Robert: We're going to talk about how to get people to bite on them.

Christian: Yes. The other reason people don't make a lot of offers is usually fear of some sort. It could be fear of being intrusive, fear of being pushy or somehow a fear that you're going to do something that's going to make people think badly of you in some way.

Robert: Right. And when we have a fear about something like that, we simply don't do anything. We're passive. There's no action.

Christian: Exactly.

Robert: We wait for something to happen. We wait for people to discover us. If someone tells someone else, "This person is a great coach. They can help you," then someone calls you. That's great as well. Sometimes that can take a heck of a long time to kick in, right?

Christian: Way too long.

Robert: Maybe after you've been coaching for a few years and have gotten a lot of successes, you can start getting great word-of-mouth. That's a wonderful way to get clients, but why not be more proactive to begin with?

Christian: Exactly.

Robert: If you offer this in the right way, you're saying people are going to see it as a value and they're going to take you up on it.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: Something else that I've noticed is people have this belief that if you give anything away for free, it's worthless. Part of the structure is to give something away, yet make it feel like there's real value there, right?

Christian: Not only make it feel like there's real value, but actually have there be real value. Sometimes it could be of real value, but the perception is that there's no value. Sometimes you could make it seem like it's valuable, but it doesn't actually have value. We want to do both.

Robert: Or you're giving away a lot of value but again, you haven't connected the dots so it doesn't turn into anything. People say, "People just took my ideas and nothing happened."

Christian: Yes.

Robert: There's something missing here. That's what I want to emphasize before we get into the technique. I want to encourage people to follow along with this and actually give it a shot.

For the most part, we're doing so many marketing activities that we're just missing some of the key pieces. It's like a little machine or recipe. If you leave out a piece of the recipe, the cake doesn't rise. It doesn't work. The effort that you're making isn't going to produce the result you want.

Something that Christian and I have in common is tweaking these little marketing recipes or techniques so that they produce results consistently.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: Free sessions definitely do work if you do them right and understand the process. Now that we've established that, how do you go about offering a free session in the first place?

You're at a networking event. You connect with someone and you say, "Hey, would you like a free session?" Is that a way to do it?

What are some of the ways that you can get people to say, "Yes, I'd like a free session," and how do you get good, qualified people to sign up for those sessions?

Christian: Okay. First, let me just touch on what a lot of people do that doesn't work very well.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: They just put on their website somewhere, "I offer 30-minute complimentary sessions."

Robert: And that's it. They don't say anything about it, what it consists of or what you'll get.

Christian: Right. They just do that, and usually that's it. They might send out newsletters, they might network and they might give presentations.

Robert: What's wrong with that? Why wouldn't people take you up on that free session?

Christian: There are a couple things. First, if it's always just sitting on your website as something they can have at any time, it doesn't seem as enticing. It just seems like, "Maybe they're just going to try to sell me something. Maybe it's not that valuable anyway."

Robert: Yes. It doesn't show up as very valuable. It's totally generic, right?

Christian: Yes.

Robert: What's going to happen? I found that people don't respond to it.

Christian: Absolutely. Some people offer an hour-long free session. Some people think, "I can make it more valuable by making it longer." I had somebody offering me a three-hour session that she apparently sells. She offered it to me probably three different times.

Robert: It's almost too much value, right?

Christian: It's too much time for me to take up.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: And if I'm going to take up that much time, I'd better see some huge, huge payoffs for it. I haven't been able to see what that is.

Robert: Right. That's an example of how not to do it.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Don't offer something so overwhelmingly big. "Come to my place of business for three sessions or three hours."

Christian: Yes.

Robert: I would never do that.

Christian: Some people do a whole month of coaching for free.

Robert: Really?

Christian: Yes.

Robert: The idea is, "I'll give you so much value you'll be hooked."

Christian: Right.

Robert: That's a lot to give away.

Christian: Yes. It's too much to give away, plus a lot of people still may not take you up on that.

Robert: Yes. The other thing is it's risky. If you do several of those sessions that don't turn into clients, you've wasted a lot of your time as a coach or consultant.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: Unless you have some technique at the end of that to turn people into big, high-paying clients, it's a pretty dangerous strategy. That doesn't work. What are some of the other things you've seen people do that don't work?

Christian: You mentioned meeting somebody at a networking event and offering the free session right there. There are a lot of good ways that you can offer a free session at a networking event, but there are a lot of ways you wouldn't want to do it.

If you just meet someone and say, "Hey, would you like a free coaching session?" That's usually not a good way. I'd rather recommend something else to give them for free to get them on the email list.

Robert: Why wouldn't that work?

Christian: It's too much too soon. I'm not saying it can't work. It could work.

Robert: You haven't made much of a connection with people. You've talked and exchanged business cards. If you haven't had much of a conversation about their issues and they haven't shown much interest in what you're offering, why would they want a free session?

Christian: Yes. They still don't know who you are. They don't understand. They're going to feel like you're trying to sell them something.

Robert: Yes, too soon. I talk about these stages. First of all, you have affiliation with somebody. That is, you belong to a group or association where people are connected. Through those affiliations, like networking organizations, you get people's attention by talking about what you do.

You don't pounce on them and try to get an appointment right away. There are still a few other stages.

The other stages are familiarity and information. They want to feel a bit familiar and get more information.

Basically, you're saying you can follow up later and give more information about this, but right then is a little too sudden. It feels a little too pushy.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Unless you just happen to get into a great conversation and learn more.

Christian: Exactly.

Robert: Then you might say, "Hey, something I offer is a complimentary session. I'll send you information on it."

Christian: Or, "From time to time I offer it," or, "For certain people," you can frame it in that sort of way.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: If you were going to do this at a networking event, the other way that it does work is if it's a closed group networking situation.

Robert: Like a leads type of group.

Christian: Either a leads group or through a Chamber of Commerce.

I used to belong to a sales and marketing forum. People would meet on a regular basis. There would be all sorts of businesses. People became regulars. I became known within that circle. Not every single person there knew me, but a lot of them did.

One day after having networked there for a while I said, “This month I’m offering a complimentary session.” I made the offer and said, “If you’re interested just pass your business card along this way. I’ll have somebody get in touch with you to set up the session.”

Robert: Yes.

Christian: If it’s circles you run in already, then that would be a way that could work.

Robert: In some of these leads groups, everyone stands up every week and says, “This is what I do.”

Christian: Yes.

Robert: That can be an offer you make. You could say, “I want to give people a better sense of what I do, so I’m offering this complimentary session,” and get the cards.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: You’ve already gone past affiliation and information. You were already in familiarity. Now you’re giving more information about what the next step is.

Christian: Exactly.

Robert: You’re not jumping ahead. Those are some of the mistakes we make as we try to jump too soon and offer it before people know about us.

Let's talk about some of the things that actually work. What do you say? What information do you send? You're going to be sharing some ideas that can get dozens of people immediately that want to meet with you and do a free session. It can go from starvation to abundance. Let's talk about some of those things.

Christian: Yes. Absolutely.

I remember talking to somebody that had given 50 presentations over the last year, but wasn't getting clients. It's because he wasn't doing what we're about to cover.

Robert: He wasn't following up and he wasn't making an offer of any sort.

Christian: Right. Exactly.

Robert: It was still very passive.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Even though he'd gotten a lot of familiarity and built a certain amount of currency that he could leverage.

Christian: Yes. Maybe if he had set up a system, which is a lot of what you teach.

Robert: Yes. You give a whole bunch of talks. You get as many cards as you can. You ask them to be on the ezine list. You give people information over time. That gives you permission then to offer things like this, because you've been giving good information in a written format.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: I send emails to my list every once in a while. I say, “Here’s a new program,” such as this program. People take advantage of it because of that familiarity and relationship.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: That’s a foundation. Everything you are doing, you should be doing some of that forever in your business.

Christian: You can make offers at presentations you give because you’ve already spent an hour with them educating them. They got to know you. They like you and trust you. They understand that you know something about whatever it is that you are teaching.

My first month as a coach, I happened to be lucky enough to have two presentations. One was for the Chamber of Commerce and one was for a Toastmasters semi-annual conference. I did a little breakout session.

I offered a free session to both of those groups. It was nowhere near as good of a free session offer as what we’re going to be covering here. I still had people who wanted to have a session with me. I got six clients in my first month as a coach.

Robert: Not bad.

Christian: Yes. And if I were to do the same thing to the same group with these techniques that we’re going to be talking about, the numbers would probably be much, much higher.

Robert: Right. Okay.

Christian: Okay. There are three essential pieces to making a great free session offer.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: The first thing is we want to have a name for the free session.

Robert: Why is that important?

Christian: Because coaching and maybe other sorts of consulting are very vague. People don't get what coaching is or how it helps them. They might get that it can help with anything, which is generic.

Robert: If I say "free coaching session," the benefit is not obvious.

Christian: Exactly.

Robert: And it's all about benefits and reasons why.

Christian: Exactly. We want a name that's enticing and benefit driven, that makes it more concrete. If you are a relationship coach, you might have a "Free 25-minute Relationship Rescue Coaching Session."

Robert: That sounds a lot more interesting.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: If I was a marketing consultant helping people market themselves better, what might I call it?

Christian: You might call it a "Marketing Makeover Coaching Session."

Robert: If I help people with the compensation for their employees, what might I call it?

Christian: A "Compensation Analysis Session."

Robert: It's pretty simple, right?

Christian: Yes.

Robert: You just make it into something and put a name on it that has a built-in benefit.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: It could be a "Free Home decoration Review Session."

Christian: Sure.

Robert: It could be anything like that that gives people a reason to think, "Will I get some value from that?"

Christian: Yes. "That's the result I want. My relationship is about to go to hell. I need a relationship rescue."

Robert: "I have a complementary Relationship Rescue Session. In that session, we get to the heart of what you need to do to turn your relationship around."

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Okay. Good.

Christian: Yes. That's the first part. Have a name for it. That's pretty obvious and easy. I haven't seen a lot of people not even doing that part.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: But even those who do that usually miss a lot of the other stuff.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: The second thing we want to have is a bulleted list of benefits of that session.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: People are going to leave that session with _____.

Robert: Okay. Actual outcomes, benefits, results or whatever you want to call them.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: How many? A half a dozen or more?

Christian: As many as you can. Three is good. Five is better.

Robert: Sure.

Christian: Five is good.

Robert: Fifteen is too many?

Christian: Fifteen is definitely too many!

Robert: You want a handful, the main things. After all, you're only spending an hour.

Christian: In the free sessions that I teach on how to actually do the free session, there are several things that people walk away with. Those are the deliverables.

Everybody can come up with their own list of deliverables or benefits. You're certainly welcome to borrow some of the ideas I'll share with you here.

Robert: Okay. Go ahead.

Christian: One of the things that everybody walks away from my sessions with is clarity.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: One of the sessions I offered was at end of last year. I offered a “2007 Business Breakthrough Planning and Goal Setting Session.”

Robert: Okay.

Christian: It said, “You can get a personal session one-on-one with one of our business advisors, where we will work together to clarify your vision for 2007.”

Robert: Okay.

Christian: If you’re a relationship coach, you’re not going to say, “Clarify your vision for 2007.” You might say, “Clarify the ultimate relationship,” or “Clarify what a successful relationship means to you.”

Robert: “Get clear about what you want your relationship to be like in the following year.”

Christian: Yes. I recommend that people create several of these free session offers. If you’re a relationship coach, you might offer a “Relationship Rescue Coaching” one time.

Robert: Another time you might offer a “Romance Enhancement Session.”

Christian: Exactly. I like that. As a business coach, I’ve done a “Profitability Booster Coaching Session.” I’ve done a “Double Your Business Coaching Session.” I’ve had tons of different ones.

Robert: And as you try different ones, you're going to discover what gets the best response and what works best. Ultimately, you might find a niche of the one that works best for you.

Christian: Yes. That's definitely one great outcome from having several different ones. Depending on how hungry you are for sessions, you might send out a free session offer once a month. You would want a different free session offer each time.

Robert: Yes. We'll get into the techniques of that in a few minutes.

Christian: Okay.

Robert: Okay. You have your bulleted list. Do you want to give me a few more bullets?

Christian: Yes. We have, "Clarify your vision for 2007." Then you want to identify key strategic milestone objectives. Those would be sub-goals. They are some things that would have to happen in order for them to get where they want to go.

For example, let's say you wanted to grow your business from \$100,000 to \$300,000 a year. A strategic milestone objective would be, "What are some of the things you would need to do to get there?"

Robert: Okay.

Christian: It's the same thing for relationships or anything else. You can identify some milestone objectives that are going to be important for you to get to the ultimate outcome you want.

Robert: I want to recommend anyone who is listening to this, you might even want to stop right now and start writing down a few of those objectives. This is the heart of it. It's the

primary marketing communication you use to get these free sessions. As your mind starts whizzing around with these ideas, start writing some of them down.

Christian: Right.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Let's keep going through these bullet points.

Robert: Yes. Keep going.

Christian: The next one is to "Uncover hidden challenges and blind spots that could be sabotaging your success."

Robert: That's always a good one. Anything around discovering the mistakes you're making, why you're losing money, why this isn't working and what's not happening.

Christian: Exactly.

Robert: Those are good ones.

Christian: Next, "Create a three-stage long-term plan and next-step action plan."

Robert: That wraps it up nicely.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Finally, "Leave this session renewed, inspired and reenergized about your business."

Robert: Wow. So then you throw in the emotional component as well.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: And again, that applies to anything. If you were a health coach, you could say, “Leave the session renewed, inspired and reenergized about having the kind of body you’ve always wanted,” or, “with the energy you’d like to have.”

Robert: If you’re a marketing coach like me it could be, “You’ll leave this feeling excited, and you’ll see the possibilities of marketing that you never saw before.”

Christian: Yes, “You’ll leave loving marketing.”

Robert: I’m not sure I could promise that. At least you can reenergize people!

Christian: Yes.

Robert: They can have a new perspective. It’s amazing.

I’ve noticed what can happen in a short conversation that’s really focused. People’s perspective can change dramatically. That can be the gateway to something bigger that can change their whole business or life.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: Don’t underestimate what you can do in a session.

Christian: Absolutely. Most people will never have someone that is totally objective, unbiased, that is a great listener, that will ask you a few questions, where you can actually speak and share your business dreams or personal dreams.

You can actually talk about what it is that you want and what your challenges are, and have the focus of the conversation be 100% on you. Very few people will ever get that, even one time in their life.

Robert: It's a rarity. Something that is rare is valuable.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: By putting these bullet points in of what they'll get, you cover the past, the present and the future. There's progression from getting clear to knowing what to do to having a plan to feeling great about it.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: That's a great progression. It's true, not even your wife or husband is often good at doing that.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: "How was your day, dear?" It's rare for someone to really listen, focus in and ask those questions.

Christian: Most coaches do the sample session, which is basically, "What's an issue you'd like to be coached on?" and then coach them on that. Often, jumping in to try to coach somebody and help them solve their problem doesn't give them the space to just talk about what it is they're dealing with.

Robert: Right.

Christian: The free session process actually creates so much space for them to get out what needs to get out. They can actually see their vision much more clearly. They can feel the weight of those challenges and see what they are.

I'm jumping ahead to the free session process, but it's good to touch on them both here. What we're putting into the marketing piece for the free session we actually need to deliver on.

Robert:

Absolutely. Okay. We have our bullet points. Let me list them again here:

1. Clarify your vision for... (year, project, etc.)
2. Identify key strategic milestone objectives.
3. Uncover hidden challenges and blind spots that could be sabotaging your success.
4. Create a three-stage long-term plan and next-step action plan.
5. Leave this session renewed, inspired and reenergized about your business.

What's the other main thing you have to have?

Christian:

There are a few other things that are going to be important. One of them is we want to position it for value, or frame the offer so it has value.

One of the things I did in this particular session offer is I said, "During the month of January, we're offering a special zero cost business breakthrough planning and goal setting session for a limited number of business owners. Here's the scoop:"

Then I described the session and gave the bullet points. Then I said, "If you would like to be one of the few business owners to have one of these special sessions, please click 'reply' and fill in the answers to the questions below."

I'm not saying the number of sessions or how limited it is. Those things could probably create more of a sense of value for it.

Robert: It is limited. There's only a certain number you can do given your schedule.

Christian: Sure.

Robert: Once you have a zillion of them, you have to say, "Stop. I can't do any more right now."

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: Offering a limited number is a good basic marketing tool.

Christian: Yes. I want to be honest about anything I write. If there is a limit, there is a real reason for it.

Robert: If it's 10 sessions, it really is 10 sessions.

Christian: Yes. It was for a few business owners. First of all, not everybody is going to reply and want one. Second, I want to qualify people before I have a free session with them. That's why I have the little questionnaire on here.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: One other thing you can do to make the free session even more valuable is create a little checklist of areas that they most need help with.

On here I have, "Check off the areas that you most want help with right now.

- Creating a business plan.
- Developing your overall marketing strategy.

- Sales skills.
- Time management.
- Cash flow management.
- Leadership team development.
- Systemizing your business.”

This is for business owners. If you were going to create a checklist like this if you were a relationship coach, you might have _____.

Robert: “Dealing with conflict. Being more romantic.” We’re struggling to come up with these, but you get the idea.

Think about what the things are that you already help your clients with. There are usually a number of areas of common things. For me it would be, “Getting your marketing message together. Getting your marketing materials together. Developing a website.”

Christian: Yes.

Robert: When you send the invitation by email, they send it back. They’d check off those things, so you’d know right away, “We need to focus more on that.”

Christian: Yes. Now I want to be clear. If they check off three or four things, there’s no way you can cover all of those things in the session. It’s not about helping them solve every single problem in one session.

Robert: No.

Christian: It’s about helping them see that this is what the focus of the call can be about. It’s about their business and the things that they most need help with. They can see, “Okay. This is me. This is what I have going on.” They can relate to that.

The difference is night and day between this and the, “I offer free complimentary sessions,” that’s just sitting on your website.

Robert: Right. It is. You want to go deep, not wide. You don’t want to cover 50 topics. You want to cover two topics and go deeper into those topics. That gets someone more involved emotionally in it.

Christian: The free session is a very valuable process that will help get them in touch with what they want. It will clarify what they want and uncover what’s standing in the way of what they want.

Robert: Yes. That is going deep, in my definition.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Tell us more what this would actually look like. We have all these pieces. We have a name and bullet points. I’m actually holding in my hand a sample email that you could send to people. We’re going to include that sample, below the link for the audio. This will be one of the resources for this session.

It says, “Here’s an email I wrote up and sent to my email list of small business owners. You can create something similar to send to your particular target market. Notice the key elements—the bulleted list, the questionnaire, the checklist and the easy, quick reply process. I hope you realize this is pure gold.”

We’re not just giving you general ideas. You can take this and use it as a basic template for your business. You can change the specifics for your business and you’ll have something to send out.

How do you send this out? What are some ways you can get this into the hands of people who would like free sessions? Let's just spam the whole world, right?

Christian: That would be one way, probably not the best way!

Robert: No.

Christian: There's one other thing I wanted to mention you could do on a free session offer to make it even more enticing. This one was a timely thing based on sending it out at the beginning of the year. A lot of people are wanting to make changes in January because of New Year's Eve. It's a whole new year.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: I made it timely based on that, so it's still a good piece. But if I were going to do a relationship rescue coaching session, or a poor profitability analysis coaching session, I might do a little preamble to the name of it and the bulleted list.

I might say something like, "Are you struggling with profitability? Are sales good, but profitability is still low? Are you actually struggling to make enough sales? If so, I'd like to offer you a complimentary, 'Skyrocket Your Profitability Coaching Session,'" then go from there.

Robert: In other words, using my concept of Marketing Syntax in which you put things in a certain order, you start out with a problem or challenge. That is more likely to get their attention.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: You talked about, "Here are the problems and challenges you might be facing. Would you like it to be better? Would

you like a better outcome from that? We're offering this. This is what is included."

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Starting with a problem, issue, challenge, concern, pain or predicament is often good if you can zero in where your clients are struggling in some way and have a few sentences about that to start.

Christian: Absolutely. If we have all of those pieces together, the response to this versus the other thing is dramatic. If you have been doing a lot of things to grow your business but haven't been doing this yet, I don't know what kind of response rate you're going to get, but it could be pretty good.

Robert: It could be great compared to other things.

What do you think about putting this basic communication right on a web page, with a little form at the bottom where they can check stuff off and send it in? Have you ever done that?

Christian: I have done that. I like it a little bit, but I don't love having the free session offer available to everybody at all times.

Robert: I see, because then it's a little too common.

Christian: It waters down the value. It makes it seem like, "Well, I can get it any time. What's the hurry? Why get it now? What's the catch? Why are they offering it all the time?"

Robert: After all, someone coming to your website is often a stranger. They're looking at it for the very first time.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Someone could sign up for an ezine in which you're giving away a free article, and then they get on the ezine list. Then you have a few automatic autoresponders. The third or fourth one after a few weeks or a month could be this.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: Everyone ultimately gets it after they have a few ezines and autoresponders. It's personalized automatically. You say, "Now that you've been a subscriber for a few weeks, I'd like to extend something special to you." There's your basic offer. You can plug this in a lot of ways.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Let's talk about the more common way, which is just sending it by email to selected people.

Christian: Yes. You could send it once a month, once a quarter, around holidays or however you want to do it. It's going to depend on how hungry you are for clients. I would caution anybody against sending it more often than once a month. That would probably hurt you.

Robert: That would be overkill.

Christian: That would ruin the offer so that people don't see it as special. If you do offer one each month, I would definitely change it so that it has a slightly different focus.

Robert: Right.

Christian: As a business coach, profitability might be one time. Marketing might be another time. Sales might be a different time.

Robert: Right.

Christian: The free session itself is going to be pretty much the same exact thing each time, but the way that you are marketing it is going to be a little bit different each time.

Robert: I just got an idea about this that might work for some people. You could target past clients who aren't working with you anymore.

Christian: For sure.

Robert: This could work for consulting. You've could send an email saying, "I've been thinking about your project. There's something that I'm offering to people that have gotten to this stage," and then you offer the free session on that.

They already know you and have an experience with you. There's a high percentage that you're likely to take advantage of that. It gives you an opportunity to sell more services without calling them and saying, "Hey, do you need any more help?"

Christian: Yes.

Robert: This is often what consultants call "marketing calls." What's a marketing call? It's bugging past clients to give you more work! Instead, you give them some real value. You already know them and you can just plug them right into this system and offer them a complimentary session to take them to the next step.

Christian: That's a brilliant idea. I love it.

Robert: Another thing you can do is if you sell online products, you can send an email just to people that bought a particular product.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: I could send it to anyone who bought the *InfoGuro Manual* or the Website Toolkit and say, “You’ve done this and this. By the way, we’re offering to anyone who purchased that this complimentary thing just for you.”

Christian: Yes.

Robert: You can be very targeted and specific and say, “The reason why we’re sending it to you, not everybody else.” That will almost always increase response.

Christian: Definitely.

Robert: In fact, if you have too many names, you might worry about too much response.

Christian: That’s very true. You want to be careful when you do this. It’s like letting the genie out of the bottle. There are people who speak a lot, blog a lot or do a lot of things to grow their email list, but don’t necessarily have a lot of clients.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: Whatever your teleclass response is, it might be similar to that. It could be a little higher or lower.

Robert: I’ve had as many as 500 people respond to a teleclass. In some ways, you want to perhaps provide a few hurdles for people to go over so they are very qualified.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: By asking these questions and having people check things off, or even by saying, “This is only for you if you’re ready to _____,” you contest those kinds of things. Maybe

send it to just a portion of your list instead of your whole list. See what it works like and then go from there.

Another idea popped up. Someone calls you and says, “Hey, Christian, a friend of mine is using your services. He likes what you do and he says you offer this complimentary service.” What would you do then?

Christian: I might ask them some qualifying questions to see if they’d be a good client for me. To be honest with you, I would probably just start taking them through the free session process right on the phone at that moment if I had the time.

Robert: Or you could set up another time to do it.

Christian: I could set up an appointment to have that session. If somebody is coming to you from a referral, you don’t even have to call it a free session. You don’t have to frame it or do any of that stuff.

If people are calling you from a referral, you could just say, “Why don’t we set up a time to talk a little bit more about what you have going on? Then if you’re interested, I could tell you a little bit about what I do.”

Robert: You just go right into the free session process. These people are already predisposed to working with you because of a strong referral.

Christian: Yes. One of the things we’re talking about here is how open you want the floodgates to be. If you don’t have a lot of clients right now, then you want your floodgates to be open. You want to take on as many free sessions as you possibly can. Basically, your qualification is a human being with credit card.

Robert: Yes. He breathes. He’s alive!

Christian: Yes. He can fog up a mirror and has a credit card. He qualifies. ☺

Robert: People get the sense of that. We should get into the free session now.

Christian: I just want to touch on one last thing.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: If you wanted to qualify people more, you could create a list of qualifying questions that people have to fill out. You can only offer the free session to certain segments of your list, like you mentioned.

The other thing is you can actually tell people how much you charge. I normally would never recommend doing that unless your floodgates are pretty tight, where you wouldn't want to have a session with somebody unless it was pretty likely that they'd be ready to buy.

Robert: Right. When you're busy with a lot of clients, you make the opening a lot tighter.

Christian: Absolutely. Some people even charge for that initial session. It does have tremendous value and you could sell it. Maybe I will sell it at some point. I do know people who have charged \$500 or \$700 for that initial session.

Robert: No kidding?

Christian: Yes.

Robert: As they say, "The bigger the bait, the bigger the fish." Sometimes that would be good for a higher-end client.

Christian: Definitely.

Robert: Okay. We've covered a lot of useful information here. Essentially what we want you to get out of this part is all the pieces so you can put together this email invitation for the complimentary free session, then have different ways to get it out to people.

Now you've sent it out. You're starting to get response. People are saying, "I want a free session." Do you get back to them by email and set up a time by email?

Christian: That's a great way to do it. If you have an email list of 1,000 people or more, I would definitely be ready.

There's one more piece to it. Do you have a strong connection to your list? Are you emailing them regularly? Do you give them great value often? I sent out a free session offer a few years back to a list of only 500 people. About 60 people wanted that session.

Robert: That's more than 10%. That could fill your practice.

Christian: Definitely.

Robert: We're not talking about a piddly marketing tool here. It's extraordinarily powerful. It's so simple when you start to think about it.

Are you ready to get into the structure of the free session?

Christian: Sure.

Robert: Okay. I've set up the appointment. I've called the person back. What are the steps?

Christian: One last thing I wanted to say about the other topic is you might have an assistant handle your schedule for you.

Robert: Sure.

Christian: If I was giving a presentation or if I met someone at a networking event and they wanted a session, I would say, “My assistant will get back to you and schedule that.”

Robert: If you have an assistant, it’s not a bad idea.

Christian: And if you don’t, have your sister, friend or buddy set your appointments for you. Just give them times you’re available and let them book them.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Those are some great ways to handle that, especially if you are getting a lot of response and you don’t have a ton of time to waste on that sort of thing.

Robert: Okay. What’s the first step in the “Free Sessions that Sell” process?

Christian: You have the appointment time. I recommend that you have them call you instead of you calling them. There’s something powerful about that.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: You know that when they call you they’re ready to talk to you, versus you calling them and you’re two minutes before they’re ready, they’re on another call or they forgot about it. Now you’re calling them and they forgot. They’re going to feel embarrassed about it. I recommend you have them call you.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Let’s say the phone rings. They call me up. The first thing we want to do is get a little bit of rapport.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Just connect with them. If you know them a little, you can do that just by saying, “Hi. How are you doing?” If they’re a stranger, then you could just ask them a little about whatever it is.

Robert: Of course, you have the thing they sent back to you that you can mention something about.

Christian: Yes. “I see here you are an interior decorator. Tell me how long you’ve been in interior decorating.”

I want to caution people, if you ask a question, keep it short. Let’s say you’re a relationship coach. If you say, “Tell me about your relationship,” it could get huge.

Robert: That could be a two-hour conversation.

Christian: You might say something like, “How long have you been in your relationship?” Keep it a little tighter.

Robert: Get some basic facts. Okay.

Christian: Just a couple of things to get the conversation going.

Another thing that you can do is sometimes it’s good to let people know what’s going to happen in the free session.

Robert: Sure.

Christian: You might say, “During this session, we’re going to help you get clear on your vision for a healthy relationship. We’re going to uncover hidden challenges that could be sabotaging your relationship.”

Robert: You’re going down the bullet points.

- Christian:** Yes.
- Robert:** It's just to remind them of those.
- Christian:** Yes.
- Robert:** Okay. Good.
- Christian:** Then you could just move right into Step 2, which is to find out what they really want.
- Robert:** Okay.
- Christian:** You can just ask them, "What would you really want in a relationship? What would your ideal relationship be like? If you could wave a realistic magic wand, where would you like your relationship to be six months for now?"
- Robert:** Okay. Give us a business example.
- Christian:** "If you could wave a realistic magic wand, where would you like your business to be in the next 12 months?"
- Robert:** When you're talking about what you really, really want, you're talking about future objectives of some sort.
- Christian:** Yes.
- Robert:** Okay. That idea of waving your magic wand gives people reign to their imagination and free reign to just say, "I'd like to double my business in the next two years. That would be making \$5 million a year," or whatever the heck it is.
- Christian:** By finding out what people really, really want, you can also just keep asking them, "What else would you want in your business?"

Robert: Yes. It's not just one thing necessarily.

Christian: Right.

Robert: It might be a list, and you probably want to take some notes at that point.

Christian: Yes. Definitely. I almost always do.

Robert: Okay. That's Step 2.

Christian: Step 3 is to find out what impact it's going to have for them to have that.

Robert: Okay. If you make it to \$5 million a year, what difference is that going to make to you?

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Because money doesn't do anything for you unless you do something with it.

Christian: Yes. A good question is, "If you had that in the way you'd like to have it, what would that do for you?"

Robert: "Well, I'd buy this great house."

Christian: "Great. And what would be the best part about that?"

Robert: You can question into that.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: I'd like to have a place where I could have people come and do retreats and conferences. I always wanted to do that and never had the space to do it. If I made more

money and had the space, it would be the business of my dreams.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: I don't know where that came from, Christian!

Christian: I wonder if there's a grain of truth to that for you.

Robert: Yes. I love the idea of that, actually. My house is a little too small right now.

Christian: There may have been a grain of truth to that for you but even if there wasn't, your energy went way up as you were talking about it.

Robert: Yes, because when you ask what they're going to get out of the goals, you tap into the excitement, the emotion and the underlying thing. Then people are much more with you because now they're excited.

Christian: Yes. And there are a lot of different kinds of questions you can ask. You can ask intensifiers to help intensify the excitement.

Robert: Give us a quick example of one of those.

Christian: One of them is, "What's the best part about having that?" Then you can ask, "Why?" You could say, "Why would that be the best part?"

Robert: Yes. Okay. Then I could just get into the excitement of having these people and these conferences.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: It's a great place to do my certification programs instead of at a hotel. Gee whiz! We're just talking about this and

it's becoming real. I hope everyone who is listening is thinking, "How would I do that for my people and dig deep? What do they really, really want?" This is powerful.

Okay. What's Step 4?

Christian: Okay. I have a quick side note. My girlfriend was at a two-day live event called Coaching Business Rocket Launcher. I taught some of this process there. She's considering getting into coaching. We were driving back to my dad's house and she said, "Can I practice the free session process with you?"

Robert: Okay.

Christian: I haven't actually had anybody take me through this process in years and years.

Robert: She learned the process you taught and then did it on you. I love that.

Christian: I swear, if she wasn't my girlfriend I would have hired her. It just kept opening my mind thinking about the possibilities of what I wanted. Things are so good in my business right now that you would think, "You're doing really well. What are you going to be able to come up with?"

Step 4 is to find out what their challenges are. My business was going well. When she asked me what the challenges were, my instant thought was, "I'm not going to have any." Then as I thought about it and she asked it, I thought, "Oh my gosh, I actually have a lot of challenges."

Robert: Challenges can be abilities, skills, resources, limitations, external things and all kinds of stuff, right?

Christian: Yes. There are actually five main categories of things that can hold us back.

Robert: Okay. Give us those quickly.

Christian: No. 1 is not being clear on what you want.

No. 2 is not having a good strategy for what you want.

No. 3 is skills. It could be some skills you don't have yet.

No. 4 could be an environmental thing. It could be people who are always bringing you down.

Let's say you're trying to lose weight and you had very little self control, like myself, when it comes to chocolate. Having chocolate in my house is not good for my environment. I would want to eliminate chocolate.

A few years ago, I unplugged my television so that it is only connected through the DVD player. I couldn't flip through channels. My business doubled when I did that.

Robert: There's an extra free tip for everybody! Unplug your TV.

Christian: No. 5 is your psychology. That's fears, doubts, limiting beliefs and thinking.

Those are the five things. I actually have a coach training program where I train people on those five things. I teach how to help clients clarify their vision or their desires, strategize their actions, upgrade their skills, optimize their environment and master their psychology.

Those are the five main things we can do as coaches to support people.

Robert: Great. You get into some of those challenges.

- Christian:** A good question to ask is, “What do you think could be slowing you down, standing in your way or stopping you from getting what you want?”
- Robert:** Okay. Good. You could spend the whole call on this, so you don’t want to dig too deep with this.
- Christian:** Actually, you do. You want to dig up as much as you can.
- Robert:** Okay.
- Christian:** This is why people are going to hire us.
- Robert:** This is probably one of the most important ones, in other words.
- Christian:** Absolutely. In fact, I ask that question over and over, “What else could be slowing you down, standing in the way or stopping you? Is there anything else you think can be slowing you down?”
- This is how you build the case for them hiring you. They are having all these challenges. That’s what you’re going to be working on if they hire you anyway.
- Robert:** Right.
- Christian:** You’re going to help them get what they want and you’re going to be helping them overcome whatever these challenges are. You want to get as many as you can.
- Robert:** Very good. It’s very powerful.
- Christian:** Step 5 is to help them see the impact that these challenges are having on them. Just like we wanted them to see what it would do for them if they achieve their goal, we want them to realize what these challenges are doing to them.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: There are a lot of different angles you can take with this. You can just ask, “What impact are these challenges having on your relationship?”

Robert: “What impact on your business? What impact on your bottom line?”

Christian: Sure. Then you can take it back in time and say, “How long have you had this challenge? How long has this been impacting you?” You can monetize it with, “How much has this been costing you financially?”

Robert: Okay.

Christian: You can have them do a 360 and look at how it impacts other areas of their life. There are a lot of things you can do with this.

Robert: Okay. Good.

Christian: A lot of times people have a hard time with this because they feel like, “I don’t want to make someone feel bad. I don’t want them to have to suffer.”

Robert: But they’re suffering anyway. It’s there anyway. They’re just not aware of it and the implications on reaching their goals.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: You’re the person who brings it out.

Christian: Yes. All we’re doing is surfacing it so it can be dealt with.

Robert: Right. Someone once said, “Before you help people, you have to hurt them.”

Christian: Yes. It’s not that we’re hurting them. We’re just showing them the hurt that is there so it can then be healed or handled in whatever way, shape or form.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: This particular piece may not make people feel renewed and inspired. The truth is that a lot of times people aren’t consciously aware of all those challenges.

Robert: Sure.

Christian: They’re just stuck somehow.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: They may think it’s just this one thing that’s sticking for them, when it’s actually all this stuff. That is often one of the most valuable parts of the session. They think, “Oh my gosh, I didn’t realize the enormity of this!”

I believe sales and marketing are beneficial in and of themselves. Even if people don’t ever hire us, our marketing materials can inspire people. This free session process can absolutely get people motivated on their own.

The best thing for them would be to hire you. Even if they don’t hire you, they’ll at least think, “Holy cow! I have to get this thing handled. I have to get this taken care of right now.” They’re definitely going to be motivated to make change, because they can see the implications of it and they can feel it.

Robert: Right. Ultimately, that kind of thing can come back to you because they say, “For whatever reason, I didn’t work with them, but you should talk to this guy.”

Christian: Yes. That happens, too.

Robert: What’s Step 6? We’ve talked about the impact of the challenges and how deep that can go.

Christian: Okay. Get them to see what it would be like to overcome these challenges and get what they want.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: A simple question would be, “If you could overcome these challenges and flow freely toward your goals, what would that do for you?”

Robert: Okay. I like your phrase. It’s nice. Say that one more time.

Christian: “If you could overcome these challenges and flow freely toward your goals, what would that do for you?”

Robert: Wow. Okay. I’m imagining this house with the conference. We’ve talked about all the challenges. Then I imagine, “Wow, if I could do that it would be magical, powerful, exciting and the fulfillment of my dreams. It would make such a difference to people. It would be the most amazing thing I could imagine right now!”

Christian: Yes.

Robert: People get excited when they talk about that.

Christian: Yes. I’ve taught this before and some people say, “I feel like I’m asking them again what they want and what it would do for them.” They feel like they’ve asked them that already.

The truth is, you've taken them on a ride. Now they see, "Holy cow, I have all these challenges." Overcoming these challenges and achieving their goals is different than just achieving their goals. Now it's relief from all these challenges. Now it's new strengths.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: It's new freedom to now overcome these challenges and also have what you want.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: Occasionally you'll get some people who feel like, "Didn't we ask that?" I get that very, very seldom. Most of the time, it's a much different response.

I just did this at one of my live events in Atlanta. I demoed this on stage. As we kept going through this process, her vision for what she wanted kept expanding. "Oh wow, if I could overcome all of those things, then not only could I have that, but I could have all this other stuff too."

Robert: Right. The motivation is building internally as you're doing this very simple process.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Very good.

Christian: You can actually ask some of those intensifier questions we mentioned before, "What impact would that have? What would be the best part about it? Why?"

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Step 7 is to see if they'd like to hear about your program.

Robert: Okay. How would you say that?

Christian: I might just check in and say, “What have you found to be most valuable about our time together so far?”

Robert: Okay. Good.

Christian: That way, you just check in. It reinforces that there has been value. They can tell you what the value is. So far, it’s been coaching them.

Robert: Sure. It’s all about clarity, focus, what they want, what’s in the way and what’s beyond that.

Christian: Yes. You’ve been helping them get motivated.

Robert: Great.

Christian: Step 7 is now we want to see if they’d like to hear about our coaching programs. You might say, “What did you find most valuable?” They say, “This, this and this.”

Then you say, “Okay. Well, I just wanted to let you know that the challenges you mentioned are very common. I’ve helped a lot of people with similar challenges overcome them and achieve these sorts of goals.”

Robert: Okay.

Christian: “I actually have a program that’s designed specifically for people in the same kind of situation you’re in with these XYZ challenges and these sorts of goals. Would you like to hear a little bit about it?”

Robert: How can I say no at that point? I’m also in a place of excitement and interest because I’ve created my own future. Now you’re throwing me a life preserver and

saying, “I have something that will help you get that. Would you like to hear about it?”

Christian: Yes.

Robert: You’re not forcing it down my throat. You’re asking for permission to talk about it.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: I would say, “Okay. How does it work? What’s it about?”

Christian: Great. Then what we need to do is Step 8, which is explain what you do and how it will help them overcome those challenges and achieve their goals.

Robert: Okay. That could be a lot. How much do you spend on that part? You give a basic explanation like, “This is the program. This is how it works. This is what happens.”

Christian: I use that same five-part methodology that I explained earlier. I go through each of those things and say, “These are the things we would work on together. These are the things I help clients do.”

“The first thing I help them do is get clear on their vision and help them to know where they’re going so they know exactly where they’re headed and what their goals are.” We’ve already done a lot of that in this session, but sometimes that can change over time. Sometimes there can be even more clarity.

Then I might check in and say, “Does that sound like it would be valuable to you?”

Robert: Right.

Christian: Then I would mention the second part of the methodology, “I help people strategize their actions. This way, they have a plan for getting where they want to go. We’ll customize that to your own strengths.”

There’s a lot more you can say about each of these things.

Robert: You have clarity, strategy or plan, skills, environment and psychology. Those are the main things.

Now other people’s programs might be somewhat different, but you want to run through not just, “We coach you once a week,” and get into what really happens in those sessions.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: It’s very outcome related.

Christian: Whatever it is you do when you work with clients, even if you’re a consultant. This could definitely work well for most consultants.

Robert: I could see it working for my basic Seven-Step Marketing Plan.

No. 1, we get you very clear about what the game of marketing is, how it works and clarity about where you’re going.

No. 2, we actually do the psychology part next, which is your marketing mindset.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Then we talk about your strategies and skills, and then setting it up and being supported in actually implementing it.

Going into this, you better know what your service is, how you work it and how you produce results. It can't be, "We just meet once a week for 45 minutes. Do you want to do it?"

Christian: "We hope something good happens."

Robert: That isn't enough. For many people, this is something you have to work on. What is the structure? What are they going to get? What's the value that you're offering? You want to do this very concisely. You don't want to take hours doing this, either.

Christian: Exactly. The key things here are not necessarily what those points are, but that they make sense to the people you're talking to. The other key is you relate them to what you already uncovered.

Robert: Right.

Christian: For example, you say, "The fifth thing we help people do is master their psychology." If they said one of the things standing in their way is fear of public speaking, I would say, "One of the things I'll help you do is master your psychology so we can get you to a place where you can feel comfortable speaking in public."

Robert: Yes. Good. Then you check in and get agreement with each of those. "Would that be valuable to you?"

Christian: Yes. "Does that sound good?"

Robert: Yes. People are giving you incremental yeses. "I want that, that and that. Sounds good to me."

Christian: Yes. Then I would explain how my coaching works, which would be, "We work weekly for a year." I tell people, "I

work with clients for a year at a time. This is what we would work on during our coaching. This is how often we would meet.”

Robert: The basic structure and how-to of the program.

Christian: We actually moved into Step 9. Step 8 was to explain how whatever you do will help them overcome their challenges and achieve their goals.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: That’s where I use the five-part methodology.

I want to let everybody know, you’re welcome to use my five-part methodology. You’re welcome to take my free session offer verbatim if you’d like to.

Robert: Usually, you’re going to want to adapt it to your particular business. Take some time to do that.

Christian: For coaching, I haven’t found a better way to explain it than the five-part methodology. I know for consultants, there are definitely going to be some differences. Some things in this five-part methodology, some people will feel comfortable doing while others won’t.

Robert: Okay. Let’s get into Steps 9 and 10.

Christian: Step 9 is to explain your guarantees and your price options.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: I recommend that people have a guarantee, even for services. A lot of times people think, “I don’t want to have a guarantee. What if I spend all this time and then they want their money back?”

Robert: Sure.

Christian: In eight years of coaching, I've had two people want their money back.

Robert: That's all?

Christian: That's all. How many more wouldn't have hired me, but did, because of the guarantee? I don't know what that number is.

Robert: You're not opening yourself up to a lot of risk by offering a guarantee. You're reducing the risk to them, though.

Christian: Yes. The guarantee I recommend, at least for coaches, is a "30-day unconditional happiness guarantee."

That means if they don't absolutely love the work we're doing and they don't see it's going to help them get the results faster than anything else they could be doing, then not only do they not have to continue, but they can have a full refund of every penny they paid.

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This way, they have a month to try it out.

Robert: They're going to pay, but they get to test drive it. You would return their money if they were not happy.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: I would always give the guarantee first. Then talk about the pricing.

Also, as much as possible I want them to ask me how much it is before I'll ever explain it. How does this sound? Do you have any questions about this?"

Robert: You're asking them to ask you to close.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: They say, "This sounds great. So, what is this going to cost?"

Christian: "Great. I'm so glad you asked. The first thing I want to let you know is that everything I offer comes with a 30-day unconditional happiness guarantee, including my coaching."

I explain the guarantee. Then I tell them how much the coaching costs.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: A lot of people will price their coaching or consulting in different tiered offerings. I don't recommend that. If people want to do that, it's okay. I don't recommend that because most people wouldn't understand what the different offerings would be at this point.

Robert: It's better to keep it simple.

Christian: It's better to keep it simple. Have one thing that you offer.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Some people who are coaches might offer, "It's X dollars a month for four sessions a month. It's Y dollars a month for three sessions a month. It's Z dollars for two sessions a month." I don't like that.

Have one thing and say, “I have two pricing options. One is if you pay monthly for our six months of coaching, it’s \$1,997 a month. If you pay in full for the whole year, then it would be \$1,797 a month.”

Robert: Paid in advance.

Christian: Paid in advance. Yes.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: Basically, that’s it.

When it comes to coaches I recommend that you enroll people into at least six months of coaching, if not a year. It has to be at least however long it’s going to take for them to get the results they want.

Robert: You’ve given that clearly. “Here’s what our price is.” What’s the closing question you ask them?

Christian: I don’t ask a closing question. I basically just tell them the prices and then wait to hear what they have to say.

Robert: Yes. One that I’ve used successfully is, “How does that work for your budget right now?” It’s actually been very successful. People either say, “That’s fine,” or “It doesn’t work for my budget, but I have to do it anyway.” Or someone says, “I could never pay that in a million years.”

Christian: “Okay. Good day.”

Robert: At least you find out. It’s not, “Would you like to work with me?” It’s, “Here’s the fee. How does that work with your budget?” That’s one possibility. Or as you say, “Here’s the fee,” and you just shut up. Then they say, “Okay.” They might ask you a question about it.

Christian: Exactly. It leaves them space to ask questions. It leaves them space to tell you, “This sounds good, but I can’t afford it,” or “Let me talk to my wife.”

Usually, depending on how wide the floodgates are, if you are just having sessions with anybody who breathes and has a credit card, your coaching fee could be a surprise to people.

Robert: Sure.

Christian: The whole budget part is a good question. For some people, it’s going to be a big shock anyway. I wouldn’t want them thinking about their budget. Their budget would be based in their current constraints about their current life and thinking, versus, “Does that sound good to you? Would you like to try this out?”

Robert: As with all of these things, you have to fine-tune for yourself.

Christian: Absolutely. I recommend you try it three times with different practice buddies before you do this with an actual prospect, unless you already have prospects coming in and wanting a session with you. In that case, just go ahead and do it with regular people.

Robert: Do the role-playing with somebody to work through all of these. Then you’re going to feel more confident to do it.

Christian: Yes. I recommend you do it three times practicing, then five times with real people before you start modifying it. Sometimes people try to change it too soon.

Robert: Good.

Christian: A side note is I know of four cases where people got a practice buddy to try the free session with, with no

expectation of trying to enroll them. They were just practicing it.

Robert: And they sold them anyway.

Christian: And they signed up anyway.

Robert: That's amazing. It goes to show how powerful this process can be.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: The final thing is just arrange for payment, right?

Christian: Step 10 is to accept payment. I highly recommend everybody accept credit cards.

Robert: Some people don't want to do that. They'll send you a check. That's fine if they want to.

Christian: I don't even let clients not pay by credit card.

Robert: You don't? Okay.

Christian: Yes. It keeps things simple.

Robert: For those of you who don't have that, you have to go to something like www.PracticePaySolutions.com and get a merchant account so that you can accept credit cards.

Christian: Sure, or even do [PayPal](https://www.paypal.com). One way or another, accept credit cards. It's so important. When it comes to paying for something with a check versus credit card, people think, "Oh my gosh, it has to come out of my bank account," versus, "It just goes on that Discover Card bill."

Robert: Okay.

Christian: When you set up a recurring monthly payment, which I recommend, people don't have to keep thinking every month, "Here's my next check. Is this really working for me?"

Robert: Right. It's automatic and easy. We can't get into the details of how to do that, but you have to figure out how to do automatic payments on a monthly basis.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: That wraps up the process. We have covered a lot. There is so much value here. You have really laid it out. I'm excited about this.

So many people are going to get value out of this. It's going to change some people's business dramatically in a very short time. I know it is. This is one of the best sessions we've ever done.

Just to wrap it up, any final things you'd like to share with us about this whole process?

Christian: Many people are sales-phobic. We haven't even said the word "sales" very much this whole time. It's "Free Sessions That Sell."

Robert: Yes.

Christian: I developed this process because I found coaching and selling were twin brothers separated at birth. If you want to be a great sales professional, you ought to learn coaching. If you want to be a great coach, you ought to learn sales, too.

A lot of great coaches do a sample of coaching and don't get clients. By building in this stuff, I found that people

got much more value out of this type of free session than a regular sample.

Robert: “Here’s an issue you’re dealing with. Let’s do it.” This sets the foundation for your coaching.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: Without doing this, you don’t know what their goals and big things are, where they’re going and what’s important to them. Then you can start in the process of, “Okay. We know your goals and have a little more clarity.” Then you can get into the actual coaching.

If you give them a free coaching session, you’re starting too far along in the process.

Christian: Yes.

Robert: We have a lot of misconceptions about selling. Most people look at this and say, “This doesn’t look like selling.”

Christian: No.

Robert: Real selling is about finding out people’s need and showing them a way that you can help them get it. It’s not about shoving something down their throat.

People often start the selling process at Step 7, “See if they’d like to hear about your program.”

Christian: Yes.

Robert: That doesn’t work because you haven’t found out who they are, what they need, where they’re going and what’s in the way. We don’t do the selling process well at all. I wouldn’t call that selling if you’re starting at Step 7. That’s just offensive.

Christian: Yes. I agree.

Robert: You're on the call, "Nice to hear from you. Let me tell you how our service works." That's like a doctor saying, "Your knee hurts. Let me tell you about all the different operations we offer," instead of, "Where does it hurt? How long has it been hurting?"

You diagnose first.

Christian: The word "coach" is such a non-concrete sort of thing that I hardly ever use the word when I promote myself. I use a good 30-second commercial that talks about the pains, problems and challenges they have.

I don't talk about coaching until they're having a free session with me.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: I might occasionally use the words "business coach" for myself. I might put in there, "Free 25-minute coaching session. Relationship rescue coaching session," or something like that. Very little do I use the word "coaching." I wait until they come all the way in and get to have this free session with me. That's when I explain.

The only time to explain coaching is right there at Step 7.

Robert: Yes. They just see you as someone who can help them with X problem and produce XY results. You want to do that without the label if at all possible.

Christian, we could talk for hours on this, but it's not possible. I recommend everyone go over the information and get into this as quickly as possible. You're going to have some big breakthroughs in your business.

Christian, you have a more in-depth program on this. It's hard to imagine going more in-depth, but you do. We offered this to our subscribers a month or two ago and got a great response.

I wanted to do this to do an affordable program to give people the essence of it. What's included in your more in-depth program?

Christian: My program is called "Free Sessions that Sell: The Client Enrollment Process." You guys got the skeleton of it so far today.

It's about three-and-a-half to four hours covering what we just covered. We go a lot more in depth. We reinforce the value of each piece of what we're doing and how it impacts the client.

There are just little nuances about it. If you're trying to enroll them into 12 months of coaching, you'd ask them, "Where would you like your business to be in 12-months?" If you're going to enroll them into six months, you might ask them, "Where would you like your relationship to be in six months?"

Robert: You go into even more depth. I had to say, "We have to move on to the next one." You could have taken almost 20 minutes or more for each of these points.

Christian: For sure.

Robert: For people that want the more detail, more guidance, more step-by-step holding your hand through it, it might be a good choice for you.

You offer a whole bunch of bonuses that come with it. This comes on a set of how many CDs?

Christian: There are 12 CDs.

Robert: Any printed material?

Christian: There are transcripts of the main call that are PDFs. You can print them out or just read them online.

Robert: You have all of that as well. Then you have bonuses. You have some actual recorded sessions of you doing this with people, right?

Christian: I'll just take you through a list of what comes with this.

Robert: Okay.

Christian: You have, "How to Skyrocket Your Confidence as a Coach." I found that two of the biggest things holding people back were confidence and not having the free session process. There are actually 12 ways to skyrocket your confidence as a coach. It's two CDs.

Then there's a follow-up Q & A session, where after I taught this I let people ask follow-up questions. That's two CDs as well.

Then I have a role-play audio recording, which is two coaches role-playing it with each other. You'll get to see a lot of the mistakes that are made, and a lot of new nuances and subtle distinctions that came up.

There are things you might have been thinking would be good to say, but you'll hear that it made the prospective client's defenses go up. As they were role-playing it, I would stop and ask, "Did this bring you in or did it close you down?"

Robert: They're role-playing and you're coaching the role-play as it goes. You're fine-tuning this whole thing and showing what works and what doesn't.

Christian: Absolutely.

Robert: It sounds great.

Christian: So many subtle things came through from the role-play that I didn't necessarily realize the extent of or how important it was. Sometimes you just do some of these things naturally. You don't think about how other people might do it. A lot of things came up.

We had somebody who was very willing to make a lot of mistakes playing the part of the coach. We had somebody who was very open about her situation. It was totally true to how the potential client goes through that process.

Robert: That's great. Listening to role-plays like that with coaching is an incredibly valuable training tool.

There's more, right?

Christian: There are two more things. I helped a client I coached grow his coaching business from zero to six figures in 90 days. That's one CD.

We have another CD, "How to Increase Your Income with Group Coaching." Sometimes people just can't afford your coaching services. Group coaching is a Plan B.

This talks about how to enroll people from the free session if they don't sign up with you for one-on-one coaching because money is an issue. The group coaching is a great Plan B. If people don't sign up for one-on-one coaching, you can offer group coaching.

If you sign up a couple of people for group coaching but you don't have a group yet, where can you get a bunch of other people to join your group? The best way to do it is when you're at Robert's level and you've grown an email list. You can just write a sales letter and let it enroll people into a group coaching program.

Robert: Yes.

Christian: Many people starting out don't have that. I didn't for a long, long time.

I recommend that you price your group coaching at about 50% of what your one-on-one coaching is. If you get six people into a group coaching program, you're actually going to be making more money an hour than you would be one-on-one coaching.

Robert: Yes. I was doing group coaching programs that had 16 people in them. I had two going at the same time. That's all I was doing for a while.

You have a ton of information on that. Anything else?

Christian: That's what you get in the package that's mailed to you. There are actually a lot of resources available to you online. Every class has an outline. Every class has an MP3 version for those people who have iPods.

There's also a community of people who have purchased this program that you can connect with and practice the free session process. Since they've learned it, they can coach you on it. You can buddy coach each other and take your free session process to a new level.

Robert: Great.

Christian: Finally, there's a field guide. It's basically training wheels for the program. You can print it out. It's a list of the core questions to ask in order and a place to take notes for the clients you're working with. It makes it very easy for anybody to learn and do a great job with this.

Robert: It sounds comprehensive. There's a link on the page where you downloaded this audio. That will take you to the more detailed information about the extensive package on how to use free sessions to sell your services.

With that, thank you very much for this interview. It's been exciting. I know it's going to make a big difference to a lot of people.

Christian: Absolutely. It's been my pleasure to be here. I'm on a mission. I believe in the power of coaching. Whether you're a coach or a consultant, our services make a difference in the world.

I'm on a mission to help more people get coached. My rally cry is, "Let's get people coached." We can generalize that by saying, "Let's get people help." There are people out there starving for what we have to offer. There are people who need the solutions we provide.

This isn't about trying to manipulate people or push things on them they don't want. This is about connecting people with where they are, helping them solve the challenges they have and achieving the results they want. This is about helping people.

Robert: I absolutely agree. Christian, thank you very much.

Christian: My pleasure. Take care.

Here is the link for the more in-depth program outlined above. If you purchase this, you'll automatically receive \$29.00 off your purchase price.

[Click here.](#)