

# **THE COMBUSTION CHRONICLES**

**EPISODE SIXTY-SEVEN  
THE POWER OF GO-GIVING**

**HOST: SHAWN NASON  
GUEST: BOB BURG**

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**Shawn:** Welcome to the sixth season of *The Combustion Chronicles* podcast, where bold leaders combine with big ideas to make life better for all of us. I'm your host, Shawn Nason, CEO and founder of MOFI. As an experience evangelist, I believe the only way to build a sustainable and thriving business is by putting people first.

This season is all about human-obsessed, maverick-minded influencers who are changing the business landscape by standing up for what's right, prioritizing relationships over transactions, and taking a few risks along the way.

Mavericks think differently. And, human-obsessed mavericks take all of that mavericky stuff up a notch. Filled with empathy, these special mavericks put their heads and hearts into action to think bigger and more boldly about changing the world each and every day.

Ready to blow up the status quo and ignite a people-first experience revolution? Yeah, me too. Let's do this.

[00:52]

**Shawn:** On this episode of *The Combustion Chronicles*, I'm speaking with Bob Burg. For over 30 years, Bob has been successfully showing entrepreneurs, leaders, and sales professionals how to communicate their value and accelerate their referral business. Although for years, he was best known for his sales classic, *Endless Referrals*, it's his business parable, *The Go-Giver*, co-authored with John David Mann, that has created a worldwide movement, part of a four-book series, the book has sold more than 1 million copies and been translated into 30 languages. Bob is an advocate, supporter, and defender of the free enterprise system, believing that the amount of money one makes is directly proportional to how many people they serve. Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*, Bob.

**Bob:** Thank you, Shawn, honored to be with you.

**Shawn:** It is so great to have you here. And just a quick brief introduction question here for you, throughout my crazy career, I've met a lot of go-getters, but I'm really, really honored to talk to the man who coined "Go-Giver" on this episode. You spent a lifetime in sales, which can seem like a dog-eat-dog world. So how did you discover the principles you describe in *The Go-Giver*?

**Bob:** Well, I think I was very lucky to have as examples, people that I got to see and people who I read and listened to and watched. What I really saw was that the people who were the most sustainably successful people were the ones who were focused on bringing immense value to the lives of others. Let's face it, there's plenty of people in sales who do things in a way that we would admire and in a way we

wouldn't admire. And there are times that there were people who do things in a less admirable way, and they can still make some sales, and they can still, you know, do fairly well over time, but it's a tough way to make a living that way.

The salespeople who do terrific, both short-term and sustainably long-term, and who are happy with themselves, and who feel good about themselves, and have a fulfilling career, these are people who really have been able to shift their focus off of themselves and place it onto others. And there's nothing about this that is goodie two-shoes, or, you know, unrealistic, or anything.

I often say...when I speak at conferences, I'll say to the audience, "Nobody's going to buy from you because you have a quota to meet." And we'll all laugh because we know that's true. Nobody's going to buy for our reasons, they're buying for their reasons. They're going to buy from us because they believe that they will be better off by doing so than by not doing so. So doesn't it make sense logically, rationally, that that salesperson who could take their focus off of themselves and actually place it on bringing immense value to others, those are the people who create the relationships that lead to sales?

**Shawn:** I love that. But I also love the fact that, Bob, we use this terminology, a maverick mindset. And I'm somebody who likes to swim against that tide. I'm known for showing up in corporate board meetings in a t-shirt and shorts, so I'm a bit of a maverick. So, I have to believe most people would call your "Five Laws of Stratospheric Success" pretty radical, even though you say they're as old as humanity. So I love that. But especially during a time of economic uncertainty right now, how can you tell people that the best way to get ahead is to shift their focus from getting to giving?

**Bob:** First of all, in terms of these laws being, you know, what you'd call from a maverick or a maverick mindset, I think their own meaning, you know, different or counter-intuitive, that's only to the masses. But the people who are the, again, sustainably successful, very top-producing, top money-earning salespeople, there's nothing maverick about it at all. This is how they run their lives and conduct their businesses. They're always looking for ways, you know, to, again, focus on that other person.

But if we look at during times of economic uncertainty, that's the time you have to more than any other time focus on that other person because, during times of economic change or economic uncertainty, people are typically less willing to buy, right? Why? Because they don't have the money to spend, and they're afraid of

taking a chance. And who can blame them? So, that means that that salesperson needs to more than any other time focus on them, focus on making sure that person understands they're safe, you know, that there's a lack of risk, that the salesperson truly has their best interest and well-being in mind.

[05:34]

**Shawn:** That's really an innate understanding that you have that I have because we do have that tendency to be maverick-minded. But I would vouch to say that most people don't have that, and so I hope people are listening to that here. And the listeners are getting what you're giving them here. So, thanks for sharing that. I mean, I think it's really powerful.

Our company, MOFI, we focus our energy on improving like this entire Experience Ecosystem™, we call it, not just fixing the customer experience, but employee experience, all experiences, digital, vendor. But you yourself have created an ecosystem of services around this concept, *The Go-Giver* in your other books. And I love how you created the Go-Giver community. What was burning inside of you to create a community that you could scale up with your coaching business and just letting readers solve their problems by themselves? What was that drive to create that community?

**Bob:** Well, I think it's a belief in the message itself, and a belief that we are bringing value to those, you know, who utilize these principles, and, of course, this is what we do for a living. So, I always consider a person very, very fortunate when what they do for a living is something that they love, and something that can bring value to others, and something that can bring a very nice income. So, you know, there's nothing like doing what you love.

**Shawn:** That's right. So let's shift gears a little bit and talk about conferences because I think you and I both attend those a lot, and I know you've spoken at audiences of 50 but, you know, 15,000 as well. Coming out of this pandemic what do conferences need to do to create better experiences for attendees, vendors, and speakers?

**Bob:** Well, on a macro level, they just have to make it the best experience they can, and one that really good conference producers have handled very well over the years. You know, you go to conferences that people are comfortable, and the program runs on time, and it's a great experience. You go to somewhere the experience isn't as great. So I think it's sort of, you know, the same as it always was in that way.

Now, obviously, as we're coming out of a pandemic, there are different concerns. There are concerns for safety, and there are concerns for, you know, all the other elements that go along with a situation that can lead to someone's getting sick. So, I think conference planners need to be cognizant of different people having different levels of concern. Again, it just continues to go back to, "Are you focusing on your audience? Is that conference promoter or conference producer, are they focusing on what the audience members care about?"

**Shawn:** What I love about what you're saying there, though, Bob, and I think, again, this is a thread that I'm hearing over is bringing value, right? How do you continue to bring value and put others first? That's a whole philosophy that we talk about about humanizing business ecosystems.

So, some people might hear that and think it's a recipe for failure, but in *The Go-Giver*, you say, quote, "A giving spirit is not one of self-sacrifice, codependence, or martyrdom. Placing others' interest before your own doesn't mean negating your own needs and interests." So how do you know where to draw the line? And how much giving is too much?

[08:50]

**Bob:** Yeah. It's an excellent question. So let's look at it on a few different levels. First, what really do we mean by this? So, let's look at what it is and what it is. Being a go-giver simply means understanding that shifting your focus, and this is, again, the key, and as you said, this is what you've seen kind of throughout our conversation, shifting your focus from getting to giving. When we say giving in this context, we simply mean constantly and consistently providing immense value to others, understanding, Shawn, that not only is this a more fulfilling way of conducting business, it is the most financially profitable way as well, not for some way out there, woo-woo magical, mystical type of reasons, but for very logical reasons. When other people know you care about them and have their best interests at heart, they're much more likely to feel good about you, to want to get to know you, to like you, to trust you, and want to do business with you.

Okay. Now, but why is it, you know, placing other people's interests first not self-sacrifice? Well, because...or a giving spirit, if you will. And that's important to know. There is absolutely nothing about being a go-giver that is congruent with being anybody's doormat, or a martyr, or self-sacrificial in any way. It's simply this. It's understanding, just as Joe, the protégé in the story learned from several of the mentors, the golden rule of business of sales, what have you, is that all things being

equal, people will do business with and refer business to those people they know, like, and trust. Well, you know, there's no faster, more powerful, or more effective way to elicit those feelings toward you from others than by genuinely and authentically moving from what we call an "I" focus or "me" focus to what we call an "other" focus, or as Sam, one of the mentors in the story advised Joe, the protégé, it's making your win all about the other person's win.

Okay. So now let's go to your great question about drawing the line, how much is giving too much. And I think really, the gist of that question is, "Aren't I going to be taken advantage of, right, if I operate this way?" Well, the answer is anyone can be taken advantage of. I often say this to people, that if you find yourself being taken advantage of...I'm not talking about, you know, once or twice or three times. I mean, in our lives, unless we never talk to anybody or never trust anyone, well, there are times we're going to get taken advantage of. That's called being human. Okay. And if it happens every so often, well, it happens, but I'm not talking about that. I mean, if you find yourself as a pattern, being constantly and consistently taken advantage of, it's not because you're a nice person. It's not because you're a giving person. It's because you're doing things in a certain way that's creating the environment for you to be taken advantage of. And when that's the case, then they really need to ask themselves, "Why is it that I'm putting myself in this position? Why is it that every time this happens, I'm involved, right? What payoff?" And, yes, payoff because this is unconscious, not necessarily conscious. "What payoff am I receiving by being the victim, right? Is it a punishment to myself because I have worthiness issues? Is it that I don't have the tools to say no when I should say no? Is it that I get some sort of attention from being the victim? Is it that being taken advantage of gives me an excuse to not do the things...?" And again, I'm not saying it is. I'm just saying that there are always reasons why this is the case, and it has nothing to do with being a good person. But you've gotta be able to say no when you should say no.

So, now let's go to the actual question about drawing the line. You draw the line where the line should be drawn, and it's typically not something that is a decision you should be making right there. It's something you should know in advance in terms of principle. Let's just take an example that comes up a lot. I get this with business coaches, okay, who, by the nature of what they do, right, they create a lot of content, or they talk to people, and people ask them questions, they ask them for advice, they're giving them great advice, great coaching because they're figuring, "Well, this person will see the value I'm providing and want to retain me as their

coach," right? But what they find is people just keep coming back to them and asking more questions without offering to actually be a client.

Well, if this is something that's a pattern, this is great because you know it, and you can now work within that. And so what you do is you make the decision to yourself that you're going to have, whether it's, again, in one conversation with someone or ask a couple questions, whatever, but at a certain point, when you feel it's appropriate, you say, "You know, it sounds as though you're receiving some value from our discussions." And they say, "Oh, yeah." Say, "Well, you know, that's fantastic. You know, this is actually what I do as a profession, and if you would like to have a professional relationship with me where I'm your coach, and you're my client, I'd be absolutely honored to do that. Is that what you would like to do, you know, or would you like to go ahead and do that?" You know, the way you're comfortable saying it. Okay. So now that's it. Now the person can say yes or no, or now you can then find out what it is that you can go more into a discovery and find out exactly what this person is looking for, so then you're able to then turn that person into a client, what have you. But again, the whole thing is that since you know this is happening as a pattern, now you're in a position to be able to work within that in a positive, constructive way.

**Shawn:** Thanks immensely. I have to think, though, that right now people that are listening, some are saying, "I can't wait to get started," and others are saying, "I don't know how to get started." So, if you were sitting down right now with a small business owner, what would you tell them to do first to adopt a go-giver mindset? And what would you tell someone who works at a business where the mindset wouldn't be welcome?

[15:07]

**Bob:** Okay. The first one, and let me answer the first one first. You just help that person see first, the first law is all about providing value. You have them begin by seeing how they can best provide value to their target market. Assuming they have a targeted market, they should have a pretty good idea of what their market needs, wants, and desires while also knowing that everyone's an individual. So it's also very important to not assume that everyone in that market wants the same thing, right? So what are the questions that you can ask when you speak with someone to really discover those needs, wants, and desires? You've also gotta understand that values, see, value is different from price. Price is a dollar figure, a dollar amount. Value is the relative worth or desirability of something to the end-user or beholder, in other words, what is it about this thing, your product, service, concept, idea, what have

you, that would bring so much worth or value to someone they would willingly exchange their money for it? Well, what we've gotta understand, the biggest part of that explanation or definition is value is always in the eyes of the beholder. It's not what we think is a value about what we do or what we think they should think is a value about what we do. It's what they think is.

So the first aspect of providing value, giving value to another human being is to understand what that individual finds to be of value. That's the first thing. Now, then the second part is the second law. Law of compensation says your income is determined by how many people you serve and how well you serve them. So you've gotta have a plan to be able to go out there and be able to attract people to you, and to be able to attain referrals and introductions from those people who you're serving so that you can serve more and more and more people. I would start with that first.

**Shawn:** Brilliant. So then what would you tell someone who worked at a business where this mindset wouldn't be welcome?

**Bob:** Okay. So this is very important because, while a person can lead to a certain point from any position within a company...and there's been certainly numerous books on that topic, people like Mark Sanborn and Robin Sharma who have written wonderfully on that. While you can lead from anywhere, for a culture to take on a certain ethos, if you will, okay, there's got to be buy-in from the top because, when it comes to a company culture, it comes from the top and trickles down. If the leader is not invested in that type of culture, it isn't going to happen. Okay. So while you can, to a certain extent, you know, kind of lead those around you and maybe even a level up, you might be fighting a losing battle if the leadership in that company is not going to allow you to work that way. Then, of course, you have a decision to make if this is a company that you should still stay with or if it's something where you need to look for an opportunity with a company who plays by the rules that, you know, feel are right, which...

And by the way, if someone's listening and feeling, "Well, I don't think my company will ever do that. I should quit right now." No, don't do that. You know, you've gotta work within where you are right now. You might still start looking and keeping your eyes open. Don't assume, though, that that is the case. Things can change. Okay. There needs to be buy-in pretty much at the top, or not even pretty much, at the top for this kind of change to take place, if that's just not the company culture.

**Shawn:** Well, we could ask 100 more questions here, Bob, but it has come to that point in this episode where we have come to the Combustion Questions, which are three randomly selected questions that I was just handed that I just saw for the first time, and you haven't seen. Are you ready for your three Combustion Questions?

**Bob:** I cannot genuinely tell you that I am ready, only that I will do my best.

**Shawn:** Awesome. So Combustion Question number one, Bob, is if you won a billion dollars in the lottery, what crazy, fun things would you indulge in?

**Bob:** Oh, I would make sure that every animal cause, every animal rescue cause out there is totally and absolutely funded to the gills. So that would be my fun thing.

**Shawn:** Awesome. I love that. I'm a dog person. So it would probably be dog ones for me, but yes, love it. Combustion Question number two, do you prefer sneakers, sandals, or something else?

**Bob:** Yeah, I usually wear those, I think they're called boat shoes, even though I'm never on a boat. But you know what I mean. They're not sandals. I don't know exactly what they are. And they're not shoes, but they're very comfortable.

**Shawn:** They're boat shoes. And I know exactly what you're talking about.

**Bob:** I guess there are. Okay.

**Shawn:** I absolutely know what you're talking about. All right, Bob, last question. What do you think about power strips?

**Bob:** I think they're great when they serve the purpose they're supposed to serve.

**Shawn:** I told you they'd be fun questions, Bob.

**Bob:** That one kind of took me by surprise. I would not have expected that one ever. I've never been asked before what I thought of power strips.

**Shawn:** Well, now you have been.

**Bob:** Now I have. Thank you, Shawn.

**Shawn:** So, thank you so much, Bob. Hey, how can our audience find out more about you? Where is the best place to reach out to you?

**Bob:** Yeah, best place is my website, which is Burg, and that's burg.com. I like to keep things very simple. And while they're there, they can scroll down and read a

chapter of any of my books that they'd like to see if they like them. They can also check out our Go-Giver Success Alliance online mentorship community if they'd like to do that as well.

**Shawn:** Awesome. Well, Bob, thank you so much, and we look forward to talking to you again.

**Bob:** Thank you. My pleasure. Thank you so much for having me on.

**Shawn:** Thank you so much for listening to this episode of *The Combustion Chronicles*. If you've enjoyed this episode, please take a few minutes to subscribe, rate, and review.

Remember that I'm always looking to meet more big-thinking mavericks, so let's keep the conversation going by connecting on LinkedIn.

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And be sure to check out my book, *Kiss Your Dragons: Radical Relationships, Bold Heartsets, and Changing the World*, available on Amazon. Then head over to [ShawnNason.com](http://ShawnNason.com) to engage resources, a discussion guide, and information about everything from self-paced learning to personal coaching.

As always, stay safe, be well, and keep blowing sh\*t up!