

EPISODE 771

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:34.6]

FT: For some people, the idea of selling a product or service can feel like selling out or maybe selling your soul but our guest today has a technique for selling with integrity and winning every time. Welcome back to So Money everyone, I'm your host Farnoosh Torabi, we are welcoming Moe Bunnell to the show, he leads the Bunnell Idea Group whose trademarked GrowBig Integrated System has helped companies grow their business faster and in the right way.

He also helps professionals get focused and efficient in business development, I know a lot of us are not running big companies but I love that Moe's advice really does relate to everyday people as we work in our careers, as we start our side hustles, as we run small teams. He has a new book out later in September called *The Snowball System, How to win More Business and Turn Clients Into Raving Fans*, our discussion turns to many facets including his Give To Get technique.

We also talk about some short hand for calculating what your time is worth as well as most Moe's So Money accomplishment which was finally purchasing a horse farm near the heart of Atlanta and it was on his family's bucket list for years. Two websites I'd like to share with you before we get started to learn more about The snowball System, head over to snowballsystem.com as well as createdemandcourse.com.

Here we go, here is Moe Bunnell.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:05.5]

FT: Moe Bunnell, welcome to So Money, it's great to connect with you, thanks for coming on the show.

[0:02:10.6]

MB: Hey, thanks Farnoosh, I'm really excited about it.

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FT: It's an exciting time for you, you have a book launch coming out September 11th, *The Snowball System* and this is a book that's going to give us all powerful and proven tools for business development. Now our So Money nation listeners were not all necessarily running fortune 500 companies but what I like about your book is that it really applies to any size business and some of us who have side hustles, you know, how we can best leverage what we've got going on to grow because we all are interested in growth.

Your system is really what's great too is it's science based, talk a little bit about how you arrived at The Snowball System, why is it called The Snowball System?

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MB: That's a great question. Well, if you think about relationships and growing your influence, you know, whether you're on that side hustle and you're worried about that part of your life or you're even hearty on your business. Whether you're somebody that's in a really big organization, you know, you can be in an internal department like finance or HR, IT or anything.

Everybody's got a core craft and what we can teach folks through *The Snowball System* is how do you then bolt on to that core craft the ability to influence and help others? And to get to your exact answer, the idea of Snowball System came because when you're always treating other people with helpfulness and with grace and with trying to find ways to help them but also try and figure out the craft of strategically being helpful to others.

Then, as you start to do that, more and more and more, it's sort of like that snowball rolling downhill where it gets easier and easier to impact others at higher and more prestigious levels. How does that resonate? Does that make sense?

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FT: My gosh, completely, I mean, I've heard it before too that there is a practice philosophy of just give give give give give because that is always going to be a win win situation. I think that sometimes we fall into the trap of wanting to receive, you know, because we need to pay the bills, you want to make that sale and we don't have the patience to just sort of give, well, how much – what's a good measure for like how much you should really give and like the kindness that you exude and the patience like, before you feel like you're just being taken advantage of or it's not being reciprocated.

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MB: Gosh, that's a great question. We've got a technique called Give To Get and it just parlays right from what you are saying. The idea of the Give To Get is to try to think, what strategically do you want out of a relationship and sort of begin with that end in mind and then pull it back to say, "what's the first half hour, one hour that I could do for somebody and be helpful to them that's in the direction of how I want to leave the relationship."

We're going to begin with that in mind, you know, if you were in a business development role, it might be, "I would like to win a million dollars with this clients" and then you might think, "what's the first hour I could do on my dime that would be helpful to them but start us in that direction."

You could do similar things internally in an organization, maybe you'd like to get promoted to vice president and the person in charge of that is struggling with a particular issue, you could think, "well, what does the vice president role do and what's that first one or two hours I could do out of just my own kindness of my own heart to start helping the person with that particular issue and they start seeing me as somebody who solves those kinds of issue so I'm more likely to get promoted to vice president."

The Give To Get model sort of gets to, what's the first hour or two I might do with the individual I want to influence and be helpful to. Sort of slopping – lapping it off there and sort of stopping at

an hour or two so that you can start in that direction and then typically the path reveals itself from there, it's helpful to them and helpful to you.

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FT: This concept of feeling like a sellout is something that you address in your book and you teach us how to sell ourselves without selling our souls? How do we do that?

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MB: Yeah. Well, it's about being authentic and so many people are really proud of what they do and are excited about it but they're afraid to talk about it to others and we have to shift that mindset and realize that we're actually being helpful to others when we're striving to solve their problems. What we teach people is how do you remove the barrier of worried about talking about yourself and just focus on being helpful and then you're actually rolling up your sleeves and starting to be helpful as supposed to talking about you being helpful and it's in the action of serving that helps that happen. Is that helpful?

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FT: Yes, absolutely. Just having that mindset of service is so key. You wanted to write this book and wanted to have it come out in 2018, what is it about today's current business climate where this book is absolutely needed? Why now?

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MB: I think the world is sort of flooded with these kind of make you want to take a shower, manipulative sales techniques kind of methods and they're just not authentic and a lot of people might – maybe they feel like “wow, I need to expand my influence, I'll read this book” and they sort of read the book and realize, “this just isn't me” and then they quit. I think what I'm hearing is the world is really excited about an approach that's authentic and genuine you know, we keep saying the word helpful but I think it's relevant here.

The world needs a whole system that they can say “okay, I’ve worked really hard, I become really great at something. Now, how do I learn how to be really great at helping others see that I can be helpful to them.” Back to that, how to sell yourself without selling your soul line that you talked about.

Boy are we hearing just an amazing resonance in the community out there that people want a model like that, that they can feel good about doing development work in a way that helps them and helps others.

[0:08:16.3]

FT: What you’re preaching is, I’ll say it, harder than maybe putting out some sort of mass marketing, whatever you want to call it, just being inauthentic. It’s easier to be inauthentic than it is to be authentic, in some ways because what you’re suggesting and I do this too, I try to do to really give people that one on one attention which is hard when you’re trying to scale but like, I’m telling listeners, you can go to Instagram and you can direct message me there and I will get back to you, I’m sending people personal videos of my answers to their money questions because –

Well, it’s easy for me because I’m on the go all the time but I feel like it’s a little bit of effort on my end and I think hopefully it’s being welcomed exponentially more than you know, maybe like a canned response to one of their questions. I’ll tell you, it’s more time for me but I get so much gratitude out of it because I feel like I’m also developing more of a connection to my tribe, it’s not just about them, it’s about me too.

[0:09:14.7]

MB: That’s exactly right and what I love about what you said is you’re being very strategic about your time. You’ve done a great job of building your brand and I think of it sort of like a capital T shape breath. You’re scaling because you’ve got this awesome podcast, you have this whole community that loves you to death. When I was just talking about coming on this show, I had so many people, my gosh, I listen to that podcast, I follow her. The top of the T is scale where you can, you know, you’re in a position where you’re influencing hundreds of thousands of people

but the vertical part of the T is where you're picking the few people that you think you can be helpful to and they can have a big return to you as well and you're going particularly deep with those folks and the book teaches both aspects of the T.

Part of it's scale, you know, got to find methods to get your message out and get and position your brand uniquely but you also probably have relatively few folks that can have this disproportionate amount of impact on you and those, this is what the book teach us.

How do you prioritize those people, how do you get introduced to them, how do you find a way to be helpful and how do you continue that relationship in a way that deepens both sides.

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FT: Speaking of relationships, I was reading up about you and your family and you have a farm in Atlanta which is So Money.

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MB: You know, we found, gosh, this is a whole – we could do a whole podcast on it.

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FT: We're transitioning now, can you tell?

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MB: We are. We found this dream, we actually called it The Dream Property for 10 years and it's 11 acres in the heart of Atlanta, I'm five minutes from work in mid-town and I can let my wife do a therapeutic writing and she's a therapeutic writing instructor and she can help little kids with disabilities in our backyard in a way that I can – if I work from home, I can look out my office window and see her help kids walk that couldn't walk before.

So I think money is one of those things that it provides you freedom or it shackles you and I'd much rather be the one that it provides freedom to. An ability to have a lifestyle like this is just so important for me and my family.

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FT: It's very consciences, it wasn't, this was not a splurge or an impulse purchase rather, the farming land, this was something you guys have really been focused on for a while.

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MB: The prior owners lived here 38 years and it took me about two years for the prior owner to even meet with me and talk about it because the home wasn't on the market and they're just absolutely wonderful people that I look up to, to this day and even after getting the first meeting, it took us another year to sort of design a sales process that would make sense for them and make sense for us.

This was three years of very intentional effort and to make this kind of thing happen.

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FT: If you had to summarize your financial philosophy and how you spend in a way that aligns with your values, what would you say is that declaration, that philosophy, that motto.

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MB: I think money provides you freedom and it's not necessarily anything helpful in above itself except that it helps you do three big things, it helps you strategically work on the meaningful work you want to work on, it helps you do the day to day things that you really like to do and outsource the other things, sort of the details if you will.

It helps you help the people that you want to help, whether it's through a direct financial gift or the fact that because you're not worried about money, you have the time to help other people

and I think that's strategic and sort of planned for and human mystic components, those three things. I think that's a – if you have more than you need financially, that's what helps you do those things and I think that's so so important in today's world.

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FT: How did you arrive at these principles around money? Is it something that you feel like it's been ingrained in you since childhood or you arrived at it more in your adult life, our sponsor is Chase Slate and they did this great survey recently and found that a majority of families have had a money conversation with their children. When you were a kid, do you remember a money memory?

[0:13:35.7]

MB: I do. Many of them. My favorite is I grew up in a small town in Indiana and when I say small, I mean like 80 or a hundred people, we just had a two way stop sign, not a four way stop sign, that tells you how small it was. And there are two businesses down, one was a grain elevator where the farmers would take and sell their grain at harvest time and the other was this little tiny restaurant and my family owned it.

From 5th grade until even the summers when I was in college, I worked in that restaurant and I saw my parents just work so hard and the restaurant itself wasn't super successful in a financial sense by any means, I could go on and on about that but I saw my dad in particular do what he loved and for him being behind that bar and being an entertainer and being the hub of that community wasn't work for him, it was fun.

He was always helping people have a great time, he was always the center of the stage, it was a show in that bar and people came in and they stayed longer if he was there. He could measure that and I can remember not only just working hard on my own, washing dishes or waiting tables and making \$2 an hour and I had a sense of financial freedom because I had more money than I need even at that age because I was working so many hours in the back of the restaurant but I also saw my dad do what he wanted and loved it. I think that was really cool.

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FT: That does echo a lot of the studies that have been done around parents and work and the impact on children so – I know there's a lot of guilt that we associate with leaving home to work and spending time away from children but I mean, this case you had a front row seat to your dad's career but for kids who don't have that access.

Studies show it's really important for parents to emphasize the positives of their careers and their jobs, even if you had a really bad day. It is very, it leaves a huge impact on your kids as far as what they grow up to feel like work should mean, what the possibilities of work are and so your dad, in many ways was really setting you up for success.

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MB: Yup, and that's exactly right. In a way, my dad was sort of the business developer if you will because he was the heart of all these conversations on things and then what I learned from my mom is she was sort of the expert. If we sort of teach experts how to sell if you will, if you think of the good version of the word sell. My dad was the sales person, he was the business developer, he was the person someone trusts with their problems and then my mom was the expert.

She taught school in the same school for about 40 years and just kept getting better and better at it. It was really need to see that dichotomy and that's what I think I came away with, you know, how can I become an expert in a way that deeply helps people.

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FT: What would you say was your greatest money lesson learned, a hard lesson.

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MB: Boy, it's a tough one. My – soon after I started our business and we have started Bunnell Idea Group and we had at this point maybe train like a thousand people or something like that,

we're just getting started to get it ago, I sort of went back to my roots and remembered a mantra that people in Indiana, rural Indiana would say which is, "you don't want a mortgage." I paid off a huge amount of our mortgage and unfortunately, that was in September of 2008.

You can imagine how this one ends. You know, literally like three weeks later, the financial crisis happened, all the equity in our home got locked up and I had – I didn't have any reason I had to do that, I just did because that's in air quotes, "what you did," nothing to do with the things I learned as a child in rural America and I calculate, I did a spreadsheet that weekend and Farnoosh I calculated ahead about three months of cash left.

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FT: Oh no.

[0:17:43.9]

MB: Boy, I will remember that lesson for a very long time. I had to double down and hustle and I mean, hustle in a great way, you know, figure out how to grow the business very quickly in a horrible environment and we made it out fine. But let me tell you, those couple of months after that were very difficult and stressful.

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FT: Looking back, would you also say that trying to grow or build a business during a recession is an advantageous time because the barriers to entry are low. They're first of all, everyone's running into the forest, the cost to rent supplies or buy equipment for your business is at a discount, you can negotiate everything and so in retrospect, did those benefits surface for you?

[0:18:33.5]

MB: They did and in a way, another one which was just even more important. The fact that we were positioned as a trainer to help people grow their business, that alone -

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FT: There you go, yeah.

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MB: Pulled us through and I had so many of our big clients that said, you know, “listen, we cut our training budget by half but we’re giving you all of it.” Things like that. We actually got quite – you know, we got through that scary time. But we actually had tremendous growth over the next couple of years because while training budgets went really down at our big corporate clients, the good news was they were putting all of it with us so we could help them grow during a tough time.

[0:19:14.9]

FT: I’m glad that worked out for you and you know, so inspiring because we talk about the financial crisis as if it were this while ago but it was just less than 10 years ago or maybe 11, depending for you when the crash started. For me it was 2009 when I got laid off that’s when it really hit home. For you it was 2008 when you paid off your mortgage.

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MB: Yeah not very smart by the way.

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FT: Yeah but just to show what you can, you can completely reinvent and rebound exponentially in a decade and thank you for sharing that. That is really inspiring.

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MB: Yeah.

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FT: Moe, what is a practice that you – what is a habit, excuse me, what is a habit that you practice, a financial habit that really helps you and your partner or just you yourself as an entrepreneur stay on the right financial track.

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MB: You know I started my career as an actuary, do you know what that is?

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FT: Yes, you are someone who is tasked with the very difficult job of predicting risk, right?

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MB: Yeah, so I haven't practiced in actuary since 1998 or something so it's been almost 20 years but I started my career there and I took all of those exams. It takes eight years to get through all of those and the thing that being an actuary teaches you is how to think long term all the time. Like you are always playing the long game because you are taught how to forecast things not in a few years but 80 years, a 100 years.

You know if you think about all the work actuaries do with pension plans or things like that, life insurance and I have gone through all of that training and I swear I think that actuarial mind taught me to teach people great through relationships because you are always playing a long game and that's what's flowing through the book, *The Snowball System* and I think the habit I've got around that with that context is I've got one spreadsheet.

That has all my financial stuff in it, everything, it has tabs for insurance, it has tabs for networks, it has tabs for budgeting and things like that and look, I have very specific rituals on our quarterly and annual basis where I go and look at that and I revisit network and cash flow and things like that and the one metric I am always worried about is and I have done this since the mid-90's, is what is my effective hourly rate and how I calculate that is I look at, say on an

annual basis, look at how many dollars did I make and I divide it by how many hours did I work and I could do that back when I was a full-time employee at a consulting firm, I can do it today as an entrepreneur with a company that has 350 clients and through that tracking of that, it always keeps it front of mind. Am I doing things today that are going to help me earn more money a year from today and thus give me more freedom in those three ways we talked about.

And I think that discipline of doing that over 20 or 25 years has always pushed me outside my comfort zone. It always pushed me to invest in myself in ways that I think can help that metric and thus help others. How does that resonate with you?

[0:22:31.5]

FT: Yeah, so I have heard there is a short hand for figuring out your effective hourly rate and it's I think Tim Ferris covers it in his 4-Hour Workweek but it's like you take your annual salary or annual income, you knock off the last three zeros and then you divide what's left by two and that is your hourly rate. So if you get \$50,000 a year, that's 50 divided by two, \$25 an hour and that's a good way to measure:

"Okay is it better for me to perform a task because this is what it would cost me to use my time or better to outsource it" and if it is cheaper to outsource, if it is \$18 to pay someone to clean your house per hour then that's what you can do. I like that rule of thumb.

[0:23:16.3]

MB: You nailed it.

[0:23:17.3]

FT: Yeah, all right. See I am paying attention.

[0:23:20.1]

MB: That's it and I will tell you, I think when I've helped others do that, what does that help them make those simple decisions just like you're saying because now, you've got a metric. What should I lap off and what should I continue to do?

[0:23:32.7]

FT: All right Moe, let's do some So Money fill-in-the-blanks. This is when I start a sentence and then you just finish it first thing that comes to mind.

[0:23:39.4]

MB: I'm ready.

[0:23:41.2]

FT: All right, cool. If I won the lottery tomorrow, the first thing I would do is?

[0:23:45.8]

MB: It's for me, I would keep doing what I'm doing now. I love impacting these 12,000 people you've trained and I want to keep doing that.

[0:23:54.8]

FT: I love it, stay on the horse farm and everything.

[0:23:57.9]

MB: Yeah, I wouldn't change a thing.

[0:23:59.6]

FT: Cool, one thing I spend on that makes my life easier or better is?

[0:24:04.6]

MB: Oh you know what? I outsource everything I can around maintenance of the property and the cleaning of the house and things like that. I hate that stuff and I don't want to do it. It makes me frustrated when I do it so I outsource it all.

[0:24:19.8]

FT: Yes, I also like the idea of having a farm but not actually running a farm.

[0:24:25.4]

MB: Exactly.

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FT: Or managing a farm.

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MB: Yeah, we do some of the stuff we like, like the feeding and I mean my wife does a lot of these too but I don't like cutting the lawn let's just say. That doesn't work.

[0:24:35.8]

FT: Oh yeah, I totally get that. All right, when I donate I like to give to "blank" because?

[0:24:41.9]

MB: My fraternity, I was in in college, that was a huge instrumental part on my career and I try to give back to them.

[0:24:50.1]

FT: Fantastic which fraternity? I went to Penn State so the biggest Greek system in the country.

[0:24:54.8]

MB: Oh man, I was a Delta Phi Delta.

[0:24:57.2]

FT: I don't know what that means but I don't want to say that I went to Penn State and we have a ton of fraternities and sororities. I was never a part of the Greek system, surprisingly I think because when you go to Penn State there's two things you are expected to love, the Greek system and football. I didn't participate in any of those two activities or even in the stands but still had a great time though.

[0:25:19.8]

MB: It worked out okay, yes. It worked out well for you. I think you're good, yeah.

[0:25:21.3]

FT: All went well. I would do it again. I would go back to Penn State and I am a big donor now and I am on the board there and I am just really a proud Penn Stater. All right and last but not the least, I'm Moe Bunnell, I am So Money because?

[0:25:34.9]

MB: Because I focus on money, yeah, I focus on that effective hourly rate. I always think about ways I can improve it and then how do I give back to the people who helped me.

[0:25:46.5]

FT: Living a life of service, thank you so much Moe. Congratulations on *The Snowball System* and hope you have a great rest of your year.

[0:25:54.2]

MB: Hey, thanks Farnoosh. I love being apart of the program, thank you.

[END]