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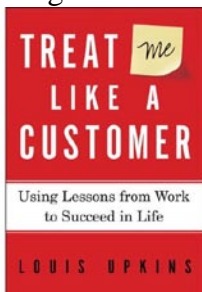
## Treat Me Like a Customer

*Renowned entrepreneur shares the secret to a thriving marriage and successful career*

*“Upkins reminds us of the skills we all use at work, our businesses and then shows us how to use them at home...Reading this book is like sitting down with a close friend and having a conversation.”*

*--Bob Buford*

Author and entrepreneur, Louis Upkins, has collaborated with some of the biggest and brightest names in sports and entertainment. He has rubbed shoulders with star-studded



brand names like Oprah, Starbucks, and Whitney Houston, and yet he is certain that his greatest achievement is what he does at home. In his first book, *Treat Me Like a Customer: Using Lessons from Work to Succeed in Life* (Zondervan, 2010), Upkins shares his secrets to success as a father, husband and business person, challenging readers to take their roles as a spouse or parent to a deeper, more fulfilling level by treating their loved ones like their prized customers.

A self-proclaimed “born optimist,” Upkins is honest with readers, showcasing his successes and failures. He acknowledges the difficulty of serving one’s family and doing so in a way that will leave a true legacy, but he offers his wisdom on the subject, lessons gleaned from life and mentors about how to be successful at home and at work.

Compelling and genuine, Upkins’ thoughts and observations drive readers to evaluate their own actions. “Could you imagine *not* smiling when greeting a customer? Snapping at him when he asks you something?” Upkins writes. “Of course not! You could have the worst headache and ten things that have gone wrong that day, but when a customer calls, you put your happy face on and ignore whatever problems you are having. Is that so hard to do for your family?”

The concept of treating one’s spouse “like a customer” derives from a plea one wife had for her husband. She grew weary of the disconnect between her distracted husband at home and the same devoted and focused man at the office. In today’s society, clients get the best of our attentiveness, respect and patience, while those closest to us often get the scraps that are left – often barely more than a weary hello and a Blackberry-accompanied

dinner. *Treat Me Like a Customer* is a book of revival and hope for those who are tired of receiving only leftovers from their spouse and a wake-up call to those dishing them out.

Alarmed by the number of successful, brilliant men who seem to “have it all,” but admit they are anything *but* happy, Upkins writes as a passionate advocate for the redemption of marriage. While countless marriages end in divorce, they are also falling prey to a less-evident malaise through complacency and neglect. Viewing divorce as only one way to quit in a marriage, Upkins suggest couples can still be married but emotionally resigned to “settling for a relationship that is far from what it could be...accepting the distance that is inevitable if you don’t work at things like communication, compatibility and romance.”

Upkins takes the successful business concepts and guidelines he’s learned working with hundreds of clients over the years and applies them to daily marital and family relationships. Practical and fun ideas that work, such as:

- Build and maintain a trusting relationship with every member of your family
- Fight the “right way”.
- Remember that balance is vital. It’s ok to pursue a successful career, just don’t abandon your family to do it.
- Take risks. Don’t get stuck in a rut. Enjoy the moment and don’t let an opportunity pass you by that could be a chance to have fun or strengthen your marriage. Change up your routine sometimes.
- Work at your marriage. Pay close attention to it and use your time and attention to find ways to make it better.

The time seems right for this brand of practicality and wisdom. Half of all marriages end in divorce, and many of the other half are in disarray. Upkins advice to treat our spouses and children like our most important customers couldn’t come at a better time.

**Louis Upkins, Jr.** lives in Franklin, Tennessee with his wife, Charita; son, Caleb; and daughter, Zoé. He is an entrepreneur widely known in the corporate world for successfully creating beneficial strategic alliances and partnerships with Fortune 500 companies, sports and entertainment industries.

**Treat Me Like a Customer: Using Lessons from Work to Succeed in Life**

**By Louis Upkins**

**Zondervan**

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**224 Pages**

**\$16.99**

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## Story Ideas for: *Treat Me Like a Customer*

### **No More Dining in Silence: How to Provide and Thrive**

The scene is familiar – you're on your Blackberry at dinner and your spouse is objecting to it. The irony is, you work in order for your family to survive. Does anyone realize you're doing this to provide for the family? This story will focus on the subtle pattern and downward spiral that can take effect in the early years of dating and marriage, as you begin to try and provide for your spouse. Often unable to resist the accumulation of more – more money, more stuff, more status – many marriages fall prey to the slow creep downwards. This story will focus on ways to identify these poisonous tendencies early on and tips on getting out of a materialistic mentality, if it has already taken hold.

### **The Client You Sleep With**

Those we love the most see us at our worst – it's the nature of relationship and oftentimes it's our spouse who gets to enjoy our grouchy days. The problem comes when that's the only side of us they see. We give everything we have to our clients, the new account at work, upper management. But the minute our car pulls into the garage, we're tired and drained and more than a little annoyed that dinner is late. We shoot an annoyed glance at our spouse and snap at the child clinging to our knee, day in and day out. This story could focus on easy ways to turn our attitudes around, with Upkins sharing the concept of treating our spouse like a customer.

### **Risky Business: Becoming the One They Want to Hire**

Today's job market is dismal, to say the least. A veteran in the work world, Upkins holds vast experience in risk-taking, as well as working with a variety of people, from celebrities and CEOs to ordinary, working-class people. Drawing from his own experiences failures and victories, this story would center on ways to think outside the box, whether you're looking for a job, trying to keep a job, or working to be recognized in your job. Upkins could give the top characteristics and distinctions he values in his clients and those he works with as well as out-of-the-box concepts and ideas he has seen executed by individuals.

### **Infidelity: It Could Be You**

With growing reports of infidelity and resignations coming out among politicians, church leaders and countless celebrities, it's clear that something is going wrong in marital relationships. This story would present Upkins' top observations on why marriages today are challenged, as well as ways to help save marriages and relationships that are dangerously close to falling apart.

### **Marriage: Where the Fun Never Ends**

In these trying economic times, it's vital to pause, laugh and relish the gift of life. However, as Upkins notes, many couples no longer take risks in their relationships or marriages, resulting in something that's safe yet stagnant. Centering on ways to infuse risk-taking back into a couple's relationship, this story would involve Upkins giving ideas to step outside the same old routine and bring the fun back into relationships.

**Possible Interview Questions for Louis Upkins**  
**Author of *Treat Me Like a Customer: Using Lessons from Work to Succeed in Life***

1. When did you decide to write *Treat Me Like a Customer*? Why is it an important book for readers?
2. What is the concept behind the name of the book?
3. In the preface of the book, you write that you've "written this book with men in mind, primarily because...women who work outside the home seem to be doing a better job of balancing work and family than men." Why does this generally happen?
4. Suppose a single male or female picked up this book. What could they learn from its content?
5. You write that "no one sets out to put his work ahead of his family." What is generally the first mistake men make, leading to a downward spiral?
6. How could *Treat Me Like a Customer* influence couples who are burnt out in their marriages?
7. In what ways could *Treat Me Like a Customer* contribute to lowering the divorce rate?
8. You have worked with an impressive client list, outlets like Oprah, Whitney Houston, Starbucks and the Olympic Games. What prompted you to change directions in your career?
9. While you have a remarkable number of accomplishments in the apparel, marketing and entertainment industries, what accredits you to write a book on marital and family relationships?
10. You encourage readers to create a "family plan." Can you explain the purpose and structure of a family plan? How has your family benefitted from this approach?
11. In *Treat Me Like a Customer*, you speak of integrity and full disclosure in one's marriage. To what extreme do spouses need to disclose their conversations and whereabouts to each other?
12. You are a huge advocate of keeping the fun in marriages and families, suggesting principles like "make a fool of yourself" and "live a dream." What are small ways couples can begin to infuse some of these principles into their marriages and family life?

13. *Treat Me Like a Customer* is full of guidelines and suggestions for a healthier, fuller marriage and life. How do readers keep from becoming overwhelmed? What are the most important concepts to consider?
14. What are the top lessons an everyday parent or business leader can take away from *Treat Me Like a Customer*?
15. Does one have to have wealth and achieve great success for these principles to apply?
16. What organizations do you see that couple best benefit from this book?
17. Can you give a couple corporate examples of great customer service?

### **Excerpts from *Treat Me Like a Customer* by Louis Upkins**

“I will show you how you will have a better marriage and family by treating your wife and kids as if they were your customers... Your wife and kids are *so* much more than your customers, right?...do *they* know that and do you show that? Do you go out of your way to please them like you do your colleagues and customers at work?” (10)

“You had learned early on that money doesn’t grow on trees, idle hands are the devil’s tools, the early bird gets the worm, when the going gets tough, the tough get going—all those good nuggets of wisdom we use to rationalize the long hours that sometimes get between us and those we love.” (27)

“Success is to men as the moon is to tides. Its pull is relentless, and eventually even the most well-intentioned man finds himself swept up in it.” (29)

“It’s the rare individual who can turn down a big raise even when it means our personal lives will suffer, and in my opinion, money is not the driving force behind a man’s decision to work so hard. Rather, we want to do the right thing.” (29)

“Could you imagine *not* smiling when greeting a customer? Snapping at him when he asks you something? Of course not! You could have the worst headache and ten things that have gone wrong that day, but when a customer calls, you put your happy face on and ignore whatever problems you are having. Is that so hard to do with your best friend?” (111)

“At the end of the day, your biggest competitor is not your children, your wife’s job, her girlfriends, or any other man. Your biggest competitor is yourself. Many people are so self-serving that they can’t serve others. We make ourselves number one, putting our needs ahead of everyone else’s.” (125)

“To use business terminology, you are the number one vendor to your wife and children. They look to you to provide a great product at a fair price and to keep them coming back with great service.” (126)

“Marriage is work—sometimes hard work—and some of us just don’t want to exert ourselves too much when it comes to marriage.” (150)

“I have to say that every time I’ve taken big risks—even when I’ve failed—I have learned great lessons in the process. Stepping out of your comfort zone is worth all the extra work and even neutralizes the disappointment if you don’t quite get the job done.” (161)

“Marriages that are stuck on autopilot are good, but not great, and I believe God intended marriage to be great. Happy enough happens when we tip the scales in favor of security. Great will happen when we bring adventure back into the balance, and that can only happen if we’re willing to take a few risks now and then.” (163)

“I like the sameness that comes with marriage...But I know how easily that can evolve into a false sense of security that leads us to take each other and our blessings for granted. I know how being loved and treated with respect becomes an entitlement rather than something that needs to be earned and reaffirmed regularly.” (166-167)

“Too many couples settle for ‘happy enough.’” (167)

“Win-win at work means growing your business by helping your customers succeed. It means resolving conflicts so that both you and your customer gain a mutually positive experience. At home, win-win means enabling your wife and children to be as successful as you are, being willing to sacrifice some of what’s important to you in favor of what’s important to them.” (173)

“Individuals leave legacy brands too. Your legacy brand is what you leave behind, what you are remembered for...someday I will be gone and I don’t want to leave behind just some money and a few possessions. I want to leave a legacy—an enduring brand recognition—and I think you do too.” (202)

“I wrote this book because I believe marriage should be far more rewarding than it is for most people and turning good marriages into great marriages is within our reach. I have seen too many men and women squander the skills that made them so successful at work by giving their leftovers to people who matter most in their lives.” (207)



## Biography

**Louis Upkins, Jr.** is a proud husband and father. He resides in Franklin, TN with his wife, Charita; son, Caleb; and daughter, Zoé. He is an entrepreneur having spent most of his career in branding and marketing. Committed to bringing ideas to life, Upkins has worked with some of the largest names in a variety of industries, across the board, from large sports and entertainment outlets and personalities to Fortune 500 companies and celebrities.

Oprah, Starbucks, Israel and New Breed, The Olympic Games, Darrell Waltrip, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, Luther Vandross, UPS, Cracker Barrel, Brian McKnight, BeBe and CeCe Winans, Mary Mary, Boyz II Men, Luis Palau Nashville Cityfest, Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, O'Charley's, Burger King, Staffmark, McDonalds, The Athletes Foot, Dental Bliss, Feed the Children, Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, The Kings of Comedy Tour (Steve Harvey, Cedric the Entertainer and Bernie Mac) and a host of Hollywood celebrities are a few of the clients who have called on Upkins' expertise.

His products have been featured in many prominent, influential national publications such as *Time*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *People*.

Upkins' diverse experience includes working with Grammy Award winning artist BeBe Winans on the theme song for the 40-time Emmy-award-winning Oprah show and conceptualizing an exclusive deal between Oprah, BeBe & Starbucks to distribute BeBe's holiday album *My Christmas Prayer* (Hidden Beach); contributing to the movie soundtracks of *The Bodyguard* (worldwide sales in excess of 42 million, one of the top 100 grossing movies of all time) and *Waiting to Exhale*; creating merchandise for the award-winning, best-selling DVD, *The Bible Experience*; and devising branding initiatives for Fleetguard – the leading filter manufacturer in the world.

A visionary leader with a savvy marketing skillset, Upkins excels at a unique art form – idea creation, innovation and manifestation. He is widely known for being relationally strong in the corporate world and for creating mutually beneficial strategic alliances and partnerships that result in win/win situations for all involved parties. He is a strategic advisor and utilizes his gift of mentoring through speaking engagements on leadership development.

Upkins is the founder of Leadership Sports, which marries the worlds of the professional athletes to the corporate space, and currently serves on the advisory boards of the Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, 100 Black Men of Middle Tennessee, Leadership Middle Tennessee and New Hope Academy (a school President Bush referred to as “a model school for the nation to follow” during a visit to Nashville).

In May 2007, Upkins served as Co-Chairman of the highly successful Luis Palau

Nashville Cityfest, which was attended by nearly 100,000. He worked with NASCAR legend and current Fox commentator Darrell Waltrip, who served as Honorary Chairman.