

Thank You For The Opportunity To Sell You This Pen.

By Jami C. Johnson

Wow, I'm so glad you asked this question of me! It has been a good many years (1997, I think?) since I was last asked to sell a pen to someone. I appreciate the opportunity to do this.

First, allow me to take a moment to compile my thoughts for a second. And... I'm done.

I am now ready to sell you this pen.

Let me ask you a question, <your name>. Tell me... how do you feel about pencils?

Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Lead-smearred hands. Chewed-up eraser tips. Calloused fingers. I hear that. I hear *all* of that. I'd tell you a joke about the broken pencil tip, but I'd probably just forget the point.

Anyhoo, I ask that question about pencils for a reason. See, I myself come from a long line of pencil-pushers. Mechanical, sure. Some. But growing up in my family, it's been mostly good old "#2" cedar sticks with a thick graphite insert. My grandfather was a renowned desk jockey from Pennsylvania, and he made a fortune by investing in Ticonderoga stock as a CPA. There's nothing quite like a neat row of yellow Dixons and the smell of wood shavings in the morning.

Am I proud of my family's penchant for pencils? Sure. But you see, I also got into the pen-selling business so I could make a name for myself. You know. Ink out a new future, so to speak.

So, <your name> let's talk about this pen. I wonder, have you ever used a pen like this before? Yeah, I figured as much.

Okay well, what about *this* pen?

No? Huh. That surprises me. Why? Oh, no reason, really. Well, except that you seemed to have pulled it from your desk drawer is all.

Back to the matter at hand. Since you seem to be in the market for a pen, can you tell me what you hope to do with it?

Write? Noice. And what sorts of things do you plan to write?

Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Wow. That's quite the list! I should be writing this down. In fact, can I borrow that pen for a sec? Gee thanks. Hey, have you got a scratch piece of paper, too? Appreciate.

Alrighty now. Oh, shoot... look at that. The ink stopped. Hang on. Gotta shake, shake, shake it out a little. How about now? Nope. Okay, let's try a little scribble on the corner... there we go!

[Sidenote, <your name>: sometimes the ballpoint gets a little dry and sticky, so you have to draw circles to advance the ink... hey, you know what's great? Gel pens! They don't get stuck like ballpoint pens do.]

But uh, you know, this is still a really great pen.

And, let me tell you why.

First, you said <your name> that you like to write things down. You will need a pen to do that, especially since it sounds like you don't care for the hassle and mess of pencils. I mean, who does, Mister!

Second, could there be a more lightweight, easy-handling, free-flowing option than a twist-on ballpoint pen? Imagine the convenience of having a clip-on pen in your pocket or your desk drawer! Imagine the ease of not having to use a slightly gnawed pen like the cheap versions you find in banks and motels!

I mean, if you don't have the ability to remember short or long lists by memory like I don't, ha ha ha, and uh—what was I saying? oh, right!—or if you can't afford an expensive Montblanc rollerball or an Apple watch or an Alexa or an iPhone or laptop or a tablet or an executive assistant, then a ballpoint is really the only way to go.

So, <your name.> Let's talk price.

I'm going to write a number down on this paper, then slide it back to you.

This is what it would cost for you to buy this pen, the very one from your desk.

...

Well, this is an uncomfortable silence.

Is it warm in here, or is it just...

What's that?

Yes. That's the cost. The reason for this price is the sheer amount of value and convenience and benefit you will get from this specific pen.

Here's the thing: not everyone understands the value of a pen. Those people are ding-dongs. Not you, though. You clearly understand value. I'm sensing something from your shifting facial expressions, yet I honestly can't quite put my finger on what that might be or how it relates to a pen's value. So, let's just move on.

Welp. It's about time to close this thing! <your name>, what do you say: **Will you buy this pen from me?**

Okay, that's cool. Cool cool cool cool cool cool cool cool. So, uh, let's do this: I'm going to go now, but I'm going to let you keep that pen—you know, since you provided it in the first place, and thanks for that, by the way.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to try and sell you a pen.

Say, if your ballpoint pen needs change in the future—or pencil needs, for that matter—will you keep me in mind?

Thank you. Again, I appreciate it. So nice meeting you, too, <your name>!