



SALES AND MARKETING ROUNDTABLE #282: How to Recharge Your Teams and Reignite Their Purpose with Kathy Parry

Thank you to everyone who attended our latest Sales and Marketing Roundtable! To provide anonymity during the Roundtable discussion, participants and their communities will not be identified.

ABOUT OUR GUEST

This week on Varsity's Roundtable, we were joined by Kathy Parry, a corporate energy expert who helps senior living leaders recharge their teams and reignite their purpose.

Kathy explored how leadership energy directly shapes team culture, trust, and resident experience and why recharging staff is one of the most effective ways to improve engagement and retention.



**“Acknowledgements are the actions that engage
and retain great people.” (Kathy Parry)**



FRESH PERSPECTIVES

- **ENERGY IS BUILT, NOT FOUND — CHECK YOUR WIRING** - Just like faulty circuits, teams lose power when connections are weak or misaligned. Take time to trace where the “wiring” of your organization might be off, including communication gaps, unclear roles, or overloaded batteries (people). Real energy starts with intentional alignment.
- **POSITIVE CHARGES POWER CULTURE** - Listening, fairness, civility, care, and celebration aren’t “soft skills” — they’re electrical currents that keep teams lit. When even one current falters, burnout and frustration follow. Protect these power sources the way you’d guard your team’s electricity.
- **CONFLICT ISN’T FAILURE — IT’S FEEDBACK** - Tension signals that energy isn’t flowing evenly. Instead of avoiding or competing, use conflict as a chance to collaborate and compromise. The goal isn’t to win, it’s to restore balance so everyone can keep moving forward together.
- **CELEBRATION IS AN ENERGY STRATEGY, NOT A NICE-TO-HAVE** - Acknowledgment recharges teams faster than bonuses ever could. From elephant ceremonies to AI-generated songs, creative recognition builds connection, belonging, and loyalty. People don’t burn out because they work hard, they burn out because they feel unseen.
- **SMALL ACTIONS FLIP BIG SWITCHES** - All the “C” principles — listening, conflict resolution, contributing, civility, care, and celebration — only work if you turn them on. Two minutes of intentional action can reignite engagement. Don’t wait for the perfect plan; flip the switch and start the current.

LINKS & CONTACT INFO

Kathy Parry ([Linkedin](#))

Website ([here](#))

kathy@kathyparry.com

COMING UP ON VARSITY'S ROUNDTABLE!

Please join our next Roundtable gathering on Thursday, November 13 at noon ET, 11 a.m. CT and 9 a.m. PT. We'll be joined by Michael Whitlow from Greystone. Michael will be discussing marketing the healthcare end of the continuum.

NEW ON VARSITY'S PODCAST, ROUNDTABLE TALK

Inventing isn't just for the young—or the tech-savvy. Brian Fried, accomplished inventor, author, and founder and CEO of Inventor Smart, proves that creativity and innovation can thrive at any age. With more than 15 patents and nearly 20 years of experience coaching inventors, Brian has built a career helping people turn everyday ideas into real-world success stories.

In this episode of Roundtable Talk, Brian shares what inspires older adults to pursue invention later in life and the satisfaction that comes from seeing their ideas come to life. He discusses the biggest myths about inventing, the power of simple problem-solving, and how digital tools like AI and 3D printing are revolutionizing the process. Check out the [episode here](#) on the Varsity website!



Are You in the DARK?

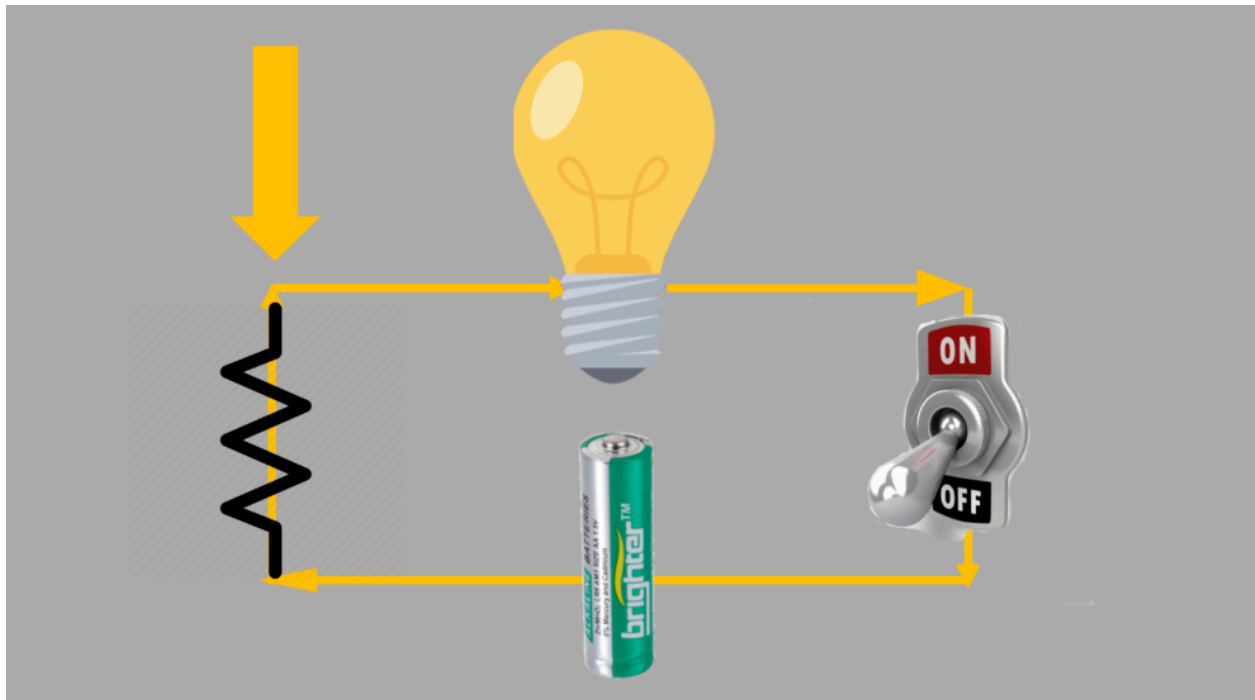
Kathy opens by asking if we've ever felt "in the dark," comparing that lost feeling to waking up in an unfamiliar hotel room. It's a metaphor for how we sometimes feel at work when we're trying to keep our teams energized. Her goal: flip the switch and share a few "power-up" ideas.

Then she tells a funny story about her brother who built a homemade intercom that yelled "No entry!" She jokes he could've invented the Ring doorbell, but what he really taught her was how things get powered up — the perfect analogy for staying motivated and energized.



Kathy Parry Corporate Energy Expert

During a home inspection for Kathy's first house in Cleveland, everything seemed perfect until the basement revealed bad wiring. That discovery was a reminder that when things aren't wired correctly, they burn out. It's the same with teams and organizations — it's worth checking where the energy connections might be off.



Think back to those basic circuits from middle school — the switch, the bulb, and the batteries that make it all work. Each part has to function for the light to shine, and if something's off, the whole system fails. It's the same with teams: energy has to flow from somewhere. Maybe you're the one supplying it, or maybe your team's battery is running low. With endless tasks and "light bulbs" to power, it's easy to feel drained. The key is remembering that you — and the collective energy of your team — are the battery that keeps everything lit.

The C Power Sources to POWER UP Engagement

Concentrated Listening
Conflict Resolution
Contributing
Civility
Care
Celebrating

Batteries can hold both positive and negative charges, just like teams. Some things energize and light everyone up, while others drain the power right out. The focus is on identifying those positive “power sources” and minimizing the negative ones.

Positive charges include concentrated listening, conflict resolution, contributing, civility, care, and celebrating. Concentrated listening builds trust through empathy and transparency, especially crucial in senior care, where trust is everything. Conflict resolution, one of the biggest energy drainers, gets a deeper look because unresolved issues can sap a team fast.

Contribution is another key area: when work doesn’t feel fair or balanced, energy drops. Civility, too, matters more than people realize — small moments of disrespect or unkindness can quietly erode morale. Care means self-care, noticing when people are stressed, burned out, or close to walking away. And finally, celebration – something that often gets overlooked. Simple appreciation can recharge a team’s energy, even when the to-do list is long.

She ends this section by pointing out that conflict usually starts when one person's needs aren't being met and that imbalance can short-circuit a team's energy.

Conflict Resolution NEGATIVE CHARGE

Why Do Conflicts Happen?

Personalities

Competition

Individual Agendas

Project Inequities

Pent Up Frustrations

What Else....

Conflicts happen for all kinds of reasons — clashing personalities, competition for attention or roles, and those unspoken thoughts about who deserves what. Individual agendas can quietly stir tension, and when projects feel unfair, resentment builds. Add in pent-up frustrations that have been simmering for a while, and it's easy for things to boil over.

The key is awareness and communication. Clear, honest, and concise conversations — the kind that include real listening and transparency — can prevent many of these issues before they turn into full-blown conflicts.

Conflict Resolution NEGATIVE CHARGE

Two Negative Strategies for Conflict Resolution



Avoiding



Competing

When conflict pops up, there are two common but unhelpful “negative charge” responses. One is avoidance — hoping problems will just fade on their own or deciding there’s no time to deal with them. The other is competing — letting one side “win” while the other loses. Both might seem easier in the moment, but they drain energy fast and leave issues unresolved.

Conflict Resolution

POSITIVE CHARGE

Two Positive Strategies for Conflict Resolution



Accommodating



Collaborating

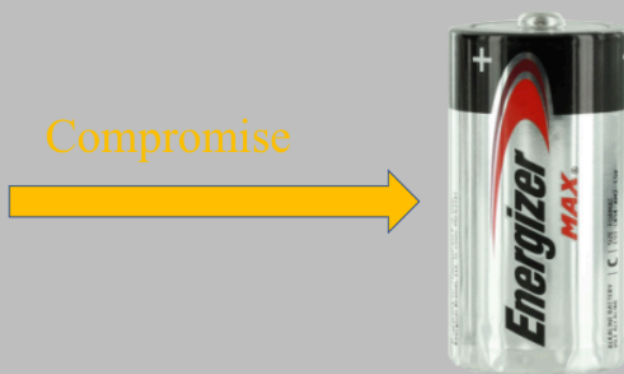
Positive conflict resolution shifts the focus from winning or losing to accommodating everyone's needs. Instead of favoring one side — like always giving someone the weekend off — it's about finding fairness and balance for the whole team.

Compromise often gets a bad rap, but it's actually where some of the best solutions come from. The idea isn't that nobody's happy, but that everyone gives a little to move forward together. In teams, a win-lose mindset drains energy; collaboration builds it. Asking for opinions, ideas, and input from everyone creates a sense of shared ownership.

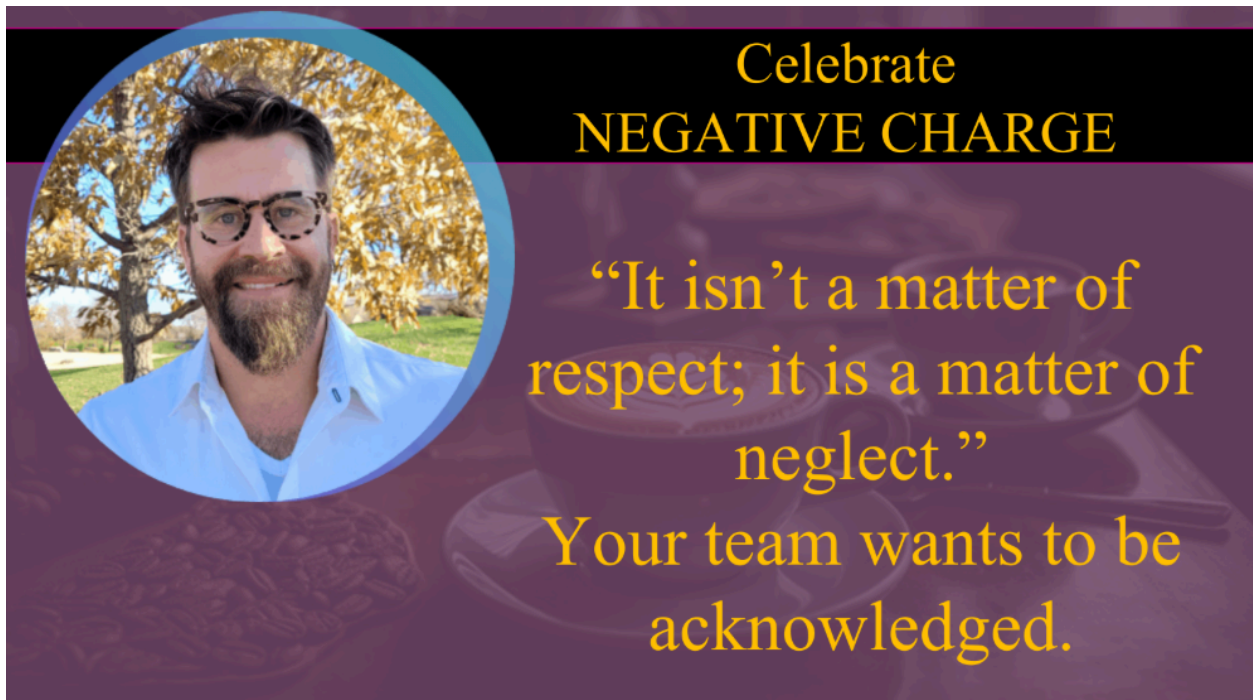
Sometimes, resolving conflict takes creativity. Even the military uses this approach — when someone's frustrated or dissenting, they're asked to come up with their best ideas for fixing the issue. It forces collaboration, encourages problem-solving, and helps turn negative energy into something productive.

Conflict Resolution POWER

At the Center of Negative and Positive is the POWER in
Conflict Resolution



Right in the middle of the positive and negative sits compromise — the key to balancing both sides. It's about creating a culture where everyone understands they won't always get their way, but they'll always work through challenges together to find the best solution. That spirit of collaboration and fairness is the first "power-up" principle: resolving conflict in a way that keeps energy flowing and outcomes positive for the whole team.



The next “C” is celebrate, and it starts with a story that highlights what happens when people *aren’t* celebrated. Peter Murphy Lewis, who went through CNA training to better understand frontline caregiving, shared that during his first two weeks, no one called him by name, no manager spoke to him, and he felt completely unseen. He described it not as a lack of respect, but as *neglect*. If not for the support of one coworker, he said he probably would’ve quit.

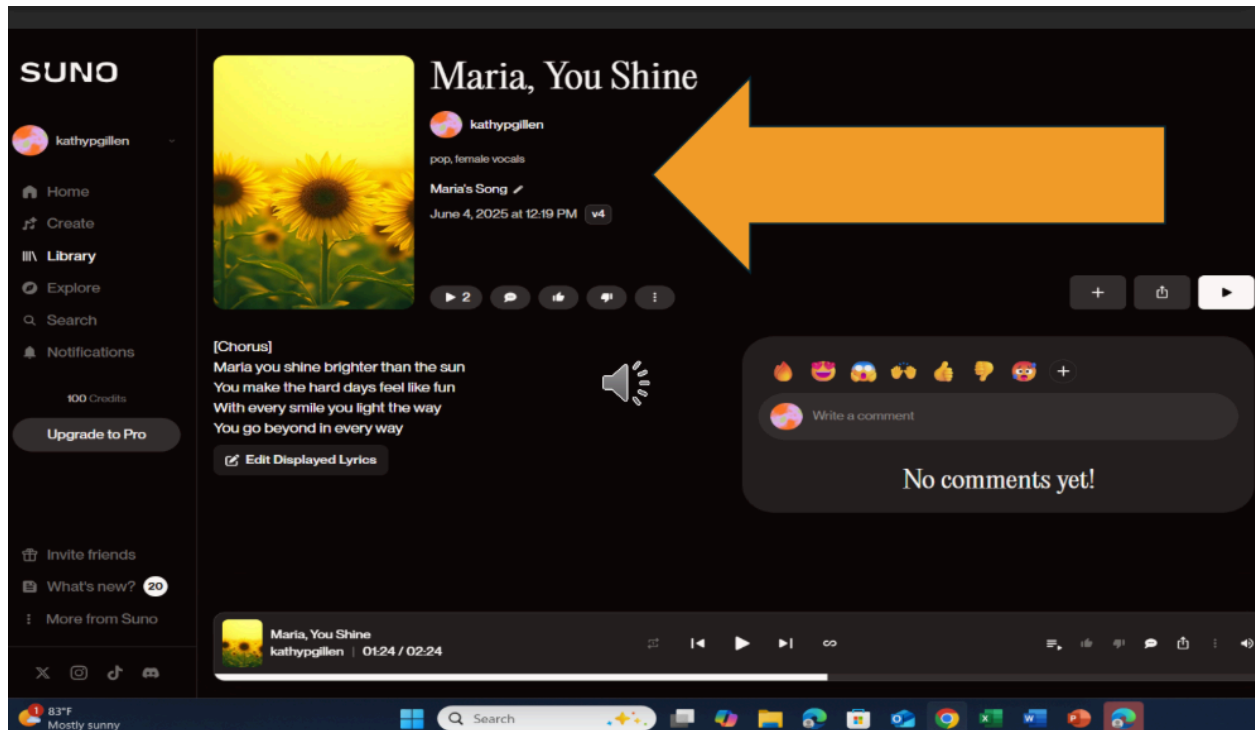
That experience shows how powerful acknowledgment can be. It doesn’t have to be big parties or grand gestures — even small acts matter. Research shows that when a new hire hears their first and last name used by a manager or leader within the first week, retention jumps by 22%. Simply being recognized as an individual — by name, by story, by what matters to you — makes people feel valued. Everyone wants to go where they’re known, cared about, and seen as more than just a role on the schedule.

Celebrate POSITIVE CHARGE

- **How Are You Celebrating?**
- **What Are You Celebrating?**
- **When Are You Celebrating?**
- **Does the Team Understand What is Celebrated?**
- **Is Everyone Involved?**

A positive charge for celebrating comes from being intentional and creative about how achievements are recognized. One organization used elephants — real ones at first glance, but actually ceramic and wooden — as their celebration symbol. Whenever someone hit a personal or team goal, they'd hold an "elephant ceremony," complete with a chant and a surprise reveal for who was being honored. It became a fun, unifying ritual that energized the team.

The idea is to reflect on how celebration happens in your own workplace. What's being celebrated — and who gets included? Are only certain metrics, like census numbers, recognized? Or do all roles, from leadership to facilities staff, have clear goals tied to acknowledgment? True celebration is inclusive, consistent, and connected to what people contribute every day.



AI can actually make celebrating even more personal and fun. To show how, an imaginary team member named *Maria* was created — someone who shows up every day, does her job well, but often goes unnoticed. Using a chatbot, a custom song was generated for her based on her favorite music style — in this case, easy-listening pop. If Maria liked jazz or hip-hop instead, the song could easily match that vibe.

It's a simple but creative way to make someone feel seen. Tools like [Suno](#) can help teams do this at no cost — turning appreciation into something playful and memorable. Whether it's part of a recurring recognition ritual or just a surprise now and then, adding a little AI creativity to celebrations can boost morale and make people feel truly valued.



At a recent Florida Assisted Living Association event, there was a vendor who went all out on the theme — so much so that it inspired a fun idea. The next day, a photo from the event was turned into a coloring page. Imagine doing that for someone on your team — turning a great moment or accomplishment into something creative they can take home, share with their kids, or even display at work. It's a light, personal way to celebrate effort and involve others in the recognition.

The takeaway: acknowledgments are actions that engage and retain great people. Whether it's a song, a small ceremony, or a coloring page, having a plan for consistent, thoughtful celebration keeps teams connected, appreciated, and energized.

The C Power Sources

Concentrated Listening

Conflict Resolution

Contributing

Civility

Care

Celebrating

The final takeaway brings all the “C” power sources together — concentrated listening, conflict resolution, contributing, civility, care, and celebrating — but with one key reminder: none of it matters unless you actually *flip the switch*. Action is what brings these ideas to life.

Even with busy schedules and long to-do lists, small, intentional steps make a difference. Spend just two minutes making a quick plan — maybe to recognize someone’s effort, address a brewing conflict, or set up a short collaboration session. Those tiny actions are how you keep the energy flowing and your team powered up.

In the end, it’s all about serving with joy — keeping that light on, both for yourself and for the people you work with.