

The Power of Being the Authentic You

By Jim Palmer – The Newsletter Guru and Dream Business Coach

Many entrepreneurs struggle with their ‘personal’ brand versus their ‘professional’ brand – or perhaps better stated, who they are ‘on the job’ versus who they are ‘off the clock’ – so to speak.

This challenge has never become more apparent with the incredible rise of social media and the truth is you can no longer have your ‘entrepreneurial’ brand and a clear and separate ‘personal’ brand that you wish, or feel should be off limits and not to be used when a client or prospective client is considering working with you.

It may feel unfair or somehow too judgmental when a prospective client uses what you consider to be personal when considering hiring you, but consider the following example.

Suppose you are a parent looking for a nanny and upon an interview you really like both the applicants’ credentials and resume. Then, after they leave you do a quick search on Facebook and see pictures of what you consider to be less than safe or appropriate behavior.

I’m not being judgmental of what someone does in their private life, but the fact remains, for many parents seeing these pictures would be unsettling to say the least, and a disqualifier to say the most.

And truthfully, as entrepreneurs, giving this even more than one second’s thought or deliberation about how this might be unfair is a complete waste of time and energy. For better or worse, this is the world we live in. There is no hiding who you are.

So the question is, as entrepreneurs that want to achieve higher levels of success, how do you use the fact that we are all operating in an online and ever-connected world, and use it to grow your business?

The answer is simple, and actually quite relieving!

Choose to be your authentic self – all the time. So what do I mean by being authentic? The dictionary describes authentic as “not false or an imitation, true to one’s own personality, spirit, or character.”

So the relieving part for many is that when you choose to drop the corporate facade and be authentic, you simply be the genuine un-edited version of yourself. This reminds me of the expression that ‘the truth shall set you free!’ When you are always authentic and truthful, you don’t have to remember what you told to whom and when!

Practically speaking, how does this work as you build your business?

I learned the powerful lesson of being authentic when I started doing my weekly videos in 2009. At first I tried to be the consummate professional businessperson; I kept a business-like straight face and delivered in what I believed to be an authoritative tone, some smart business advice.

The trouble is – while I do have some good business advice and wisdom to share, I’ll be the first to admit that I am not a ‘buttoned up’ professional businessman! The real authentic me occasionally messes up my words and more than often my brain and mouth are in a race to see what comes out first.

I also like to laugh, wear casual clothes and talk about my grandson and pets. And while I don’t flaunt it, I’m not shy about being a Christian. I love to serve and help others and I get genuinely excited when I help other entrepreneurs with an idea or tip that helps them get their business going. When this happens, I honestly feel like a kid in a candy store and if I retell this story on camera, it shows!

If you watch my videos today, you will see that I am not only unscripted, but I am 100% comfortable being who I am – I am the authentic self I just described.

The Pros and Cons about Being Authentic in Your Marketing

If you drop your double persona and simply be your authentic self all the time, you will attract a lot more of the people you are meant to attract, but you will also repel more of the people you are not ideally suited to work with.

If this troubles you, my advice is to get over it. You're not meant to please or work with everyone and life is too short to even try to play that game.

A quick last word about being authentic in a social world:

From a marketing perspective, as an entrepreneur or small business owner, I believe it is your job to be authentic. However, this does not give you freedom to share your every view on every hot topic.

How is this being authentic you might ask?

That's a fair question. Let me tell you first that the only reason I choose to be on any social media platform is to build my brand and grow my business, that's it!

I use social media to stay connected with current customers and clients, and showcase who I am and what I have to offer – such as my coaching programs, No Hassle Newsletters, No Hassle Social Media, etc. To that end, I will 'authentically' share things about me that help create and support that brand and image.

What I do not post and share are my feelings on certain hot topics or the 'flash point' of the day. I guess the best way to know what this means is the old adage that cab drivers use; do not discuss sex, politics or religion!

Just because social media exists doesn't mean you have to bare your soul and share your feelings. And the cold hard truth is who really cares!

So the bottom line is this: Stay focused on who you are, what you offer, what your brand is, and continuously generate content to support that brand – and do it in an authentic way.



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