

Selfless Self-Promotion

Wait... Isn't it supposed to be "shameless self-promotion"?

I wrote a blog about "selfless self-promotion" recently, and had a problem with the web page. Emailed my tech guy. He got back to me, and told me how to fix the "shameless self-promotion" article. Though his eyes actually saw "selfless," his brain filled in the culturally expected concept. That says a lot about feelings many people have in today's "social" economy—especially we entrepreneurial helper/healer/teacher types. It's a world in which we have to brand ourselves and compete so intensely for attention—when literally everyone is doing the same thing. Help! Isn't it somehow shameful? Like, what happened to humility?

But what if there is a kind of self-promotion that is indeed selfless? What if, in the sea of "Me—MY STUFF!" shouting it really stands out? And what if we empathic, entrepreneurial helper/healer/teacher types are in fact best equipped to succeed at it? In fact, this is true. Better yet, selfless self-promotion dovetails perfectly with a deeply spiritual way to live your life. With climate change, peak oil, massive extinctions, a healthcare system whose expensive "fixes" do not heal, and more—mainstream culture is up against the wall. The ONLY way to get through this crisis is for all of us reach into our deeper hearts and put out the unique things we think, feel, and are passionate about. Whether it's yoga, family constellations, or energy psychology, more and more people desperately need what we alternative entrepreneurs believe so deeply in.

This means that plenty of people out there need YOU. What if it's your simple duty to put yourself and what you are passionate about in front of them in the spirit of love and compassion? It's not about your ego, and not even about the results. It's

about dedication to a sacred, self-organizing process that might just save the Earth as we know her. Not to mention relieve a lot of misery in folks alive today.

How do you do this? Well, since everybody is trying to sell something, everybody also walks around with a deep, instinctive "sales defense." So the first (contrarian) step here is—Don't Sell, just Look for the Fit. In your face-to-face and social media conversations, focus on evaluating people to see if what you are is what will help them. That's all. This suddenly levels the playing field and disarms the sales defense. What? You're evaluating me?

Fine, you might say. But when do I tell them about my stuff? YOU DON'T—not right away anyway. Instead you Ask, Listen, and Learn First. In the sea of shouting, people will remember you as interesting if you show genuine interest in them. As an empathic helper/healer, this is your strong suit anyway—so you lead with it. You ask questions and draw people out about whatever interests and excites them. Become interesting by being interested.

Now, as the person warms up to you, you do begin to direct your questions in a certain way. In my book on practice building¹, the next little rule is: Scout the Territory. In every person's experience, there will be some things that draw them to what you do (tie-in's), and some that push them away (turn-off's). Tie-in's are going to be previous good experiences, unfulfilled desires, and benefits related to what you offer. Turn-off's will be bad experiences, fears, various kinds of costs, and risks.

Your job as you Ask, Listen and Learn empathically is to sense when, how, and how much of "your stuff"

you can successfully present (towards the end of the conversation) as you know more about the person. First contacts are not about commitment. They are about initiating a "client engagement cycle" that leads to commitment. That means presenting a few tie-in's without stumbling at this point into any unseen turn-off's. By the second or third contact, a more fair and balanced discussion of the pro's and con's of the "fit" for both you and the person becomes relevant.

When I first began learning about social marketing from people like Michael Port and Paul Zelizer, my reluctance (and also resentment) formed around: "What? I'm supposed to turn almost every social contact into a quest for clients?" But slowly, something different dawned on me. Look for the Fit and Ask, Listen, Learn First, the first two steps, are a wonderful way to approach everyone anyway. Whether the "fit" is going to be a new client, a new friend, or just a pleasant conversation in the grocery line—the guidelines remain the same. Draw out the divine in everyone and look for where it overlaps with the divine in you. So doing your business right also means living a socially spiritual life. It's "Namaste" in action. And it just might save the world. ▲

¹ **The Family Constellation Practice Builder.** Though some material focuses on constellations, most of the lessons in this book fit any helper/healer. <http://tinyurl.com/pracbuilder>

