

CHAPTER

3

Develop a Personal Brand

Every time you suppress some part of yourself or allow others to play you small, you are in essence ignoring the owner's manual your creator gave you and destroying your design.

—Oprah Winfrey

Branding

Having established your target market and identified their urgent needs and compelling desires, the big result you help them get, as well as the benefits of the investable opportunities you offer, you are ready to develop a plan for deciding how you want to be known in your market—in an irresistible and unforgettable way.

You will do this by developing a personal brand. Brands are not just for big corporations. In fact, a personal brand will serve as an important key to your success. A personal brand will help clearly and consistently define, express, and communicate who you are, who you serve, and why you have chosen to dedicate your life and work to serving your target

market so that you can attract your most ideal clients and not those who are less than ideal. Personal branding is far more than just what you do or what your web site and business cards look like. It *is* you—uniquely you. It allows you to distinguish yourself from everyone else: what is unique about who you are, what you stand for, and what you do.

Your brand is about making yourself known for your skills and talents. More than that—your brand is about what you stand for. Successful people find their style, build a brand based on it, and boldly express themselves through that brand. To let the world see your true, authentic worth is powerful and it makes you memorable.

Think about some of the most successful people you know. The entertainment industry is a great example. On the television show *In Living Color*, Jim Carrey established himself as a physical comedian using exaggerated body and facial expressions to make us laugh, while Jerry Seinfeld became well known for his intellectual comedic style of observing the obvious. Whoopi Goldberg took an entirely different approach, baring her soul in her standup routines talking about career, motherhood, and the perils of trying to have it all. She used stories and emotions to strike an emotional chord in us to make us laugh. Each of these very different comedic styles is attractive to different types of people. Some people love Jim Carrey's work, while others don't particularly care for it. The same is true for Jerry and Whoopi. The more bold, authentic, and concise your personal brand is, the more easily you'll attract those you're meant to work with.

That's how a personal brand works—it defines you, but first you must define it. Your personal brand will give you the ability to attract fun and exciting clients who understand and *get* you. And you *get* them. You can see that each of the comedians I described expanded their repertoire after they became well known. Well, all of them except Jerry Seinfeld, who carried on with the same style that had always been successful for him. I doubt you'll ever see Jerry do a thriller playing a deranged sociopath.

Develop a personal brand that looks like you, thinks like you, sounds and feels like you—one that is instantly recognizable as your essence. It should be:

- Clear
- Consistent

- Authentic
- Memorable
- Meaningful
- Soulful
- Personal

There are three components to your personal brand.

- The first is your *who and do what* statement, which is based on who you serve and what you help them do or get.
- The second is your *why you do it* statement, which is based on why you get up every day to do your work—what you stand for. Sure, you stand for lots of things but you're going to choose one big one to stake your name on.
- And, the third is your *tagline*. More on these three components in a minute. But, first . . .

Releasing Blocks

Before we begin to craft your personal brand, it's important to address any blocks you are inadvertently creating that may hold you back from achieving success. I know it can seem unusual to discuss personal blocks as it relates to personal branding, but this is your life we're talking about. You want to play the biggest game possible, don't you? Of course, you do. The following questions can help you gain clarity about how you want to be known in the world. Consider them seriously.

The greatest strategy for personal and business development on the planet is bold self-expression.

Are you fully self-expressed? Again, I know this may seem like an unusual question. But I ask it because to create a gutsy, passionate, ardent, provocative, courageous, valiant, vibrant, dynamic, luminous, and respected

personal brand, you must be fully self-expressed. You can't hide behind the shingle that you've hung over your door and you can't water yourself down in any way, shape, or form. If you do, you won't be of interest to the people you're meant to serve.

As a business owner, you probably already work *on* your business—creating the framework that supports the business itself, such as setting up an automatic marketing system—and work *in* your business, serving your clients. How you brand yourself is equally critical and is a reflection of how you work *on yourself*.

Have you compromised yourself or watered yourself down in any area of your business? For example, have you been in a business situation where you walked away feeling like you settled for less or compromised your integrity? You may be thinking, “I don't sell out. I've never compromised or sold out.” If you haven't, you are unique. It's completely normal to compromise yourself or to be out of integrity from time to time. We all are.

It will serve you well to know exactly where you have run into trouble in the past. Since working independently and starting and running your own business is challenging, you can eliminate a lot of pain and surprise right now by acknowledging the issues you may have buried or have had a difficult time confronting in the past.

1.3.1 Written Exercise: List the ways in which you've sold out, settled for less, or compromised your integrity in your business, either now or in the past.

1.3.2 Written Exercise: What about the flip side? Tap into instances in your business life where you've felt alive and vibrant—fully self-expressed. Everything you did just flowed. Draw on all of your senses. What was happening at that time that made you feel so alive?

1.3.3 Written Exercise: Now compare the two areas, the ones where you sold out and the situations in which you felt most fully self-expressed. How can you change your behavior to speak boldly and from a place of free expression so that you're working in situations that make you feel fully self-expressed? How will you communicate to make sure you stop compromising or watering yourself down in the future?

1.3.4 Written Exercise: Start with a few situations (fairly comfortable ones) in which you could practice speaking from a bolder and more self-expressed place.

1.3.5 Written Exercise: Write down a few more situations (that seem a little more difficult) that you'd like to work up to speaking more boldly about.

There are two reasons for the exercises you're doing. The first is so you can help clients understand how you can help them. The second is so you can make sure that your personal and professional intentions are clear.

Clear intentions allow you to gracefully and confidently move toward your goals. Conflicting intentions will undermine your success without your even knowing it. They will hold you back from your dreams. They are the mother of energy drain and confusion. From a perspective of a personal brand identity, conflicting intentions will eventually lead to a bland message and a less successful you.

Here's a story to illustrate this concept. My father is an accomplished psychiatrist. I have always had great respect for him and his work. And, above all, I've always wanted him to be proud of me and my accomplishments. That's natural, right?

When I first launched my service business, I spent lots of time getting clear on my offerings and how I would communicate them to the world.

And then I did just that—or so I thought. I let everybody know what I was up to. However, not too much was happening. I got a few clients, but as I mentioned earlier, I couldn't really pay the bills, and I certainly wasn't happy with the response I was getting. So a few months later, when I was at my wits' end, I did a formal evaluation of my brand. I started with my web site. I locked myself away and read every word on my web site from start to finish. I sat back in my chair, staring at the screen in amazement and shock. The entire feeling of the site was not really me—it was almost as if my father were talking. In fact, I was communicating what I thought he would approve of.

I am not my father. I'm certainly not a medical doctor. Not having his credentials, I shied away from being bold and brave and instead played it safe, secretly hoping that he would approve of what I was doing. The reason this is relevant is that when I started my business, I was focusing more on personal development issues as they relate to business development. I wanted to help people become happier and more successful in their work. So I had two very conflicting intentions. One intention was to build a wildly successful business and the second (my conflicting intention) was to make my father proud. The underlying dynamic was not to do anything that he wouldn't approve of. And, here's the rub, if you think about it, many business problems are simply personal problems in disguise.

Even now, as a business coach, author, and speaker, much of the work I do helps people move through personal problems, as they relate to their business problems. I'm not practicing psychotherapy by any stretch of the imagination. However, I often relate to people on a very deep level. By remaining within conventional boundaries—the ones I *thought* my father would approve of—I limited myself dramatically. I didn't give myself the freedom to be truly me. I was inhibited and unable to offer the full extent of my experiences, point of view, and passion. The result was a rather confusing and bland identity. And the truth is, I had no proof or real reason to believe that my father wouldn't approve of my being authentically me. In fact, just the opposite is true; he wouldn't want me to be anyone but me. It was just a good story for me to hide behind.

In order to set clear intentions for yourself, you must remove the conflicting intentions that you currently have. Your reality is created by your present intentions. If you want to change your reality, you must change your intentions. My vision for you is that, through this book, the intentions for your business, as well as your life, will become clear to you and to your clients.

1.3.6 Written Exercise: Identify one of your most important intentions as it relates to your business.

Example: I intend to book myself solid.

1.3.7 Written Exercise: Take a good hard look within to see if you can identify any potentially conflicting intentions for the intention you identified. These are likely to be subconscious and more difficult to identify, and they are nearly always based on fear.

Example: If I book myself solid, I won't have time for myself. Or, in order to book myself solid, I'll have to promote myself, and self-promotion will make me feel pathetic and vulnerable. Or maybe you want to book yourself solid but you *think* self-promotion is unappealing.

1.3.8 Booked Solid Action Step: Identifying and acknowledging your conflicting intentions is the first big step in releasing them. Awareness is key, but not always enough to prevent conflicting intentions from affecting and blocking our positive intentions. The next step in the process is to identify the underlying fears. Once you've identified them, you can begin to take steps to relieve them.

For this step, it's critical that you very carefully choose one or two sincerely and highly supportive friends to share your new insights with. They must be truly supportive and willing to help you change. Often as we begin to make changes in our lives, whether business or personal, some of our

most dearly loved friends and family can feel threatened by the process of change. While they may consciously want you to be successful, they may have their own subconscious conflicting intentions and be highly invested in wanting to maintain their own comfort zone by keeping you in yours. These are not the folks you want to ask for help from to do this exercise.

Share the intentions and their conflicting counterparts with one or two others and ask your friends to help you in recognizing whether these are genuine concerns or unfounded fears. Then brainstorm ways to address the problems.

While you can take this step on your own, we're often too close to our own fears to see them clearly. Having a supportive friend, mentor, or professional coach who has a bit more objectivity than we do can help put them into perspective.

You Are Uniquely You

It's often those qualities that make you uniquely you—the ones that come so naturally to you that you don't even think about them—that become the best personal brands. Susan's story illustrates the point.

A pleasant woman in her early forties, Susan, came to me and asked me to help her discover “what she was born to do” so she could launch her own business. It was a particularly tough time for her. She had recently been divorced and needed to support herself. As you might imagine, she was concerned about what she would do. Years earlier, she had been a successful trader on Wall Street. Yet it had now been over 20 years since her glory days. I asked her, “What are your quirks?” “Quirks?” she replied. “I don't have any quirks.” She sounded moderately offended. “Okay,” I said, “Then tell me about your friendships; what are they based on?” Without a moment's hesitation she said, “My female friends are always asking me for advice on sex and intimacy.” “Interesting. Now we're getting somewhere,” I thought.

She told me about her unusual habit of giving scarlet-colored thongs (not the ones of the flip-flop variety) as gifts. Remember, this is the same

woman who told me she didn't have any quirks. After more prodding and investigating this unique, special, and entertaining quirk, it became clear that she was fully self-expressed when she was thinking and focusing on how women 40 and over can be, should be, and are, remarkable sexual beings (and more). She decided, even though she would have to resolve many conflicting intentions about doing so, that she was going to exploit her quirk and create *The Scarlet Thong Society*, an invitation-only social club for women over 40 who want to acknowledge their sexual prowess.

You may not have scarlet thongs to hand out, but chances are you do have something unique, maybe even quirky, that you really want to express and that others will notice and respond to.

1.3.9 Written Exercise: To know which secret quirk or natural talent is waiting in the wings to bring you wealth, happiness, and unbridled success in your business, answer the following questions:

- How are you unique?
- What are three things that make you memorable?
- What are the special talents that you are genetically coded to do? What have you been good at since you were a kid?
- What do people always compliment you on?
- What do you love or never grow tired of talking about in your personal life?
- What do you want to say that you would never grow tired of talking about when you are asked about your work?

Many times we are too close to see the qualities or quirks that stand out to others. Send a few of these questions to different people in your life to get their responses about you and your personality. Not only will you start to see some of the same truths about who you are, but you'll get back the most touching and warm e-mails—I promise. Try it.

1.3.10 Booked Solid Action Step: Send an e-mail to five or more people (include friends, family, clients, neighbors, and acquaintances from all the different aspects of your life).

- Ask them to provide you with your top five personality traits or quirks.
- Ask for fun or unique experiences they've had with you.
- Tell them to be brave and not to be shy.

Remember that your work is doomed to fail if you don't love it and share it with the world. And here's the biggie: *When you're fully self-expressed, you will love marketing.* You won't have conflicting intentions about promoting yourself. You won't feel that the world is coming to an end when you get a rejection. You'll smile and move on to the next opportunity because your ability to express yourself is directly proportional to your level of confidence and vice versa.

With all of this new and insightful information about yourself, you should be thrilled that you've already made it through the challenge of choosing your path and being an independent business owner. That's no easy task. Keep all of these insights in mind as you begin to craft your own personal brand.

The Three Components of Your Personal Brand

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there are three components to your personal brand:

1. Your *who and do what* statement.
2. Your *why you do it* statement.
3. Your *tagline*.

I want you to laser-beam your focus on these three aspects of your personal brand until you feel totally and utterly fully expressed when you put words to your *who and do what* statement, your *why you do it* statement, and your tagline. The process may take a week or it may take

a few months. It took me six months, but I didn't have this book to help me do it faster. The important thing is to give yourself the time to really give thought to it all.

Your *Who and Do What* Statement

Your *who and do what* statement lets others know exactly who you help and what you can help them do. It is the first filter that people will put you through when considering your services for hire. Your potential clients will look at it to see if you help people like them in their specific situation.

Your *Why You Do It* Statement

After potential clients identify with your *who and do what* statement, they will want to know if they connect with you on an emotional, philosophical, or even spiritual level. They'll want to know if they connect with your *why you do it* statement—the reason you do what you do, what you stand for. The reason you get up every day to do the work that you do. Those who resonate with your *why you do it* statement will feel it on a deep level and be strongly, almost magnetically, attracted to you. Many others in your industry will share your *who and do what* statement. Similarly, your *why you do it* statement and even your tagline don't necessarily need to be wildly unique. Just deeply meaningful to you—and to the people you're *meant to serve*.

Your Tagline

I have become known as “The guy to call when you're tired of thinking small.®” This is no accident; I've been saying this over and over since the day I realized that being “The guy to call when you're tired of thinking small” was a perfect tagline to represent and demonstrate my *why I do it* statement, that I want to help people think bigger about who they are and what they offer the world.

Your tagline, based on your *why you do it* statement, is something you'll never get tired of hearing. And the first time you hear someone refer to you by it, you'll want to cry tears of joy. You'll formulate one simple sentence that allows people to define you in a manner of your own choosing. You'll never get tired of saying it or hearing it because it's based on what you stand for, what's important to you. And, most importantly, not only will it very deeply and truly mean something to you, it will resonate with the people you're meant to serve. Reading or hearing your tagline will be the defining moment people need to decide whether to purchase your services, products, or programs.

Your *tagline* lets others know what it's like to be around you. It says something about who you are at your core, and it's the essence of what you want to achieve or experience in the world. Think of it as the bigger vision that is the inspiration for what you do in your business. Your *why you do it statement* and associated *tagline* is the way in which you want to touch others' lives in a positive and meaningful way.

You may have noticed that my tagline is not necessarily specific to my target market. It may resonate with many people; professional service providers aren't the only ones who want to think bigger about who they are and what they offer the world. But I've chosen to offer my services to this inspired group of people, not to every single soul on the planet. Your tagline is not necessarily about your target market; it's about the emotional connection you make with people in general *and* with your ideal clients in your target market. Many people serve the same target market you serve, but your *tagline* is what will resonate with some people and not with others: It will resonate with those you're meant to serve.

Why have you dedicated your life to serving others? How do you want to make a difference?

If you don't want to make a difference, consider making your living as something other than a service professional. The operative word is service.

Wrap up review:

1. *Who and do what* statement (for example, I help service professionals get booked solid.)
2. *Why you do it* statement (for example, I want to help people think bigger about who they are and what they offer the world.)
3. *Tagline*: (for example, The guy to call when you're tired of thinking small.[®])

1.3.11 Written Exercise: Start with the basics. Keep it simple and straightforward. What is your *who and do what* statement? Who do you help and what do you help them do? Refer to your target market from Chapter 2. The first time around, just come up with something accurate and clear for now—make sure a five-year-old can understand it. List as many possibilities as come to mind. Finish this statement, “I help . . .”

Example: I help . . . service professionals get booked solid. (Or, for the five-year-old, “I help the store sell more stuff.”)

1.3.12 Written Exercise: It's time to step out of your comfort zone again. Set aside that inner critic and give yourself permission to think big—I mean really *big*, bigger than you've ever dared to think or dream before. Be your most idealistic, inspired, creative, powerful you. What is your purpose? What is your vision of what you hope to achieve through your work? Remember, your work is an expression of who you are. List whatever comes to mind.

1.3.13 Written Exercise: Keeping the preceding in mind, craft a minimum of three possible *why you do it* statements.

1.3.14 Booked Solid Action Step: If your *why you do it* statement is not immediately and easily identifiable, get together with a group of supportive friends or associates who know you well and ask them to brainstorm it with you. It's often the things about you that are most natural and that you don't even recognize that become key elements of your *why you do it* statement. Having some outside input and a few more objective perspectives can make all the difference.

1.3.15 Written Exercise: Craft three to five possible taglines that represent and demonstrate your current favorite *why you do it* statement.

Roma Non è Stata Costruita un Giorno **(Rome Wasn't Built in a Day)**

Neither was my personal brand. I went through many, many versions, even one a month, before I got to a *why I do it* statement and tagline that worked for me. I didn't get caught up in trying to find the perfect brand message or positioning statement. I didn't worry about it because I knew I could change it. I knew that creating a tagline that represented what I stood for was a process and that I'd just keep changing it until I got there. If I didn't start with something, though, what would I have had? I'd have had nothing.

First I got clear on my *who and do what* statement, that "I help professional service providers get more clients."

Then I got clear on my *why I do it* statement, that "I want to help people think bigger about who they are and what they offer the world."

What took longer was nailing down my tagline. I worked really hard on trying to find it. It took about six months. I thought about it every day, but the amazing thing was that it came to me by accident. I was with a bunch of people and we were masterminding and brainstorming about our businesses and everyone was talking about what they did. I was giving

the others a hard time, teasing and questioning, asking, “Why would I hire you for that?” I was playing devil’s advocate until finally, one of the women gave it right back to me and said, “Yeah, well why would I hire you?” I blurted out, “Because I’m the guy to call when you’re tired of thinking small.®” Suddenly the whole room went silent, as if everyone was holding their breath. After a few moments the same woman shouted out “Yes! That is *so you!*” Everyone in the room was cheering and the air was charged with excitement.

Even so, I didn’t really think much about it until a couple of weeks later as I was talking to a colleague about an idea I had for the Think Big Revolution, a free online social network where people could come together to think bigger about who they are and what they offer the world. I was excited about it, but I questioned it: “I’m not sure about this *big* stuff. I came up with this tagline that I’m ‘the guy to call when you’re tired of thinking small,’ but I’m not sure about it. Do you think anyone will actually care about that?” She laughed and said, “Michael, are you dense?” I said, “Yes, but you’re going to have to be more specific.” She explained to me that she likes being around me because I help her think so much bigger about who she is and what she offers the world. And, I’m happy to report that it became a reality at ThinkBigRevolution.com, based on my *New York Times* best-selling book, *The Think Big Manifesto* and, yes, it’s still free; it will always be. No one owns big thinking. I hope you join me in the Revolution.

I realized then that because it was so natural to me to want to help people think bigger about who they are and what they offer the world, it didn’t seem like such a big deal. It took discussing it with others who weren’t as close to it as I was to get the perspective I needed. The exact thing that came most naturally to me was the thing that was drawing people to me, instilling in them the desire to purchase my products and enroll in my programs and seminars.

As I began using my *why I do it* statement and tagline to let others know why I do what I do, I found that the people for whom it resonated would immediately comment on how much they connected with it. Those who didn’t *get* it, wouldn’t. That’s okay. It’s all about attracting

those people who are meant to work with you. The rest will be attracted to someone with whom they will resonate, and you won't end up with less-than-ideal clients.

Recall the story about the old man, the boy, and the donkey. The process of booking yourself solid isn't about how to please as many people as possible. It's about how to convey your own unique message to those who are waiting to hear it. That can't be achieved with personal branding that's been watered down in an attempt to appeal to everyone. It can be achieved only through bold, no-holds-barred self-expression. It's about being uniquely you and standing for something—in a big way.