

The Art of Graceful Self-Promotion

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Objectives

- To understand the difference between shameful self-promotion and graceful self-promotion and then to appreciate the value of self-promotion.
- To practice how to speak diplomatically and strategically about yourself and your accomplishments.
- To identify self-sabotaging behaviors.

How does a leader look, sound, act?

- Adjectives?
- “As a leader, people are taking my temperature all day long.”
 - They’re watching me
 - Leaders project a professional image

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Caveat: Is your view of leadership realistic?

- Problem: We constantly compare ourselves to others and come up short.
- Why? The further we are from “them,” the more deficient/demoralized we feel!
 - Social comparison + accurate appraisal
- Solutions:
 - Compare yourself to them when they were at YOUR level (NOT looking at them now)
 - Compare yourself to colleagues at the national level (not Nobel Laureates at Hopkins)

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Ask the “superstar” in your life...

- “What were the decisions you were making, that led to the career path you are taking?”
- How many senior leaders “expose their jugulars”?
 - “Yes, I have 4 R01s now, but I’ve also had 20 rejected R01s!”

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Dr. Julie Freischlag’s Top 10 Leader Tips

(former Director of Surgery, Dean of the SOM at UC Davis Health System)

- Starter tidbit: “ignore the noise”*
- Find the powerful (people) and partner with them
 - Be a good _____. Then lead with that and say it proudly!
 - You must TEACH somebody something! After all, somebody taught you.
 - Show up and make sure they know you were there.
 - Speak the truth. Never lie – it can hurt.
 - Laugh
- Listen. Put your thoughts in a cartoon thought bubble and then filter what you ACTUALLY say out loud.
 - Be willing to change your mind.
 - Care about your family and friends and let people know you care about them.
 - Take chances
- Finishing tidbit: Leading isn’t just a title; it’s an ATTITUDE!* (Virginia Tilden, PhD, RN, U. of Oregon)

Peter Drucker, “What Makes an Effective Leader” in HBR’s 10 Must Reads: On Leadership

- They asked: what needs to be done?
- They asked: What is right for the enterprise?
- They developed action plans.
- They took responsibility for decisions.
- They took responsibility for communicating.
- They were focused on opportunities rather than problems.
- They ran productive meetings.
- They thought and said “we” rather than “I”.

Envision yourself as a leader and start ACTING from the vision!

- Graceful self-promotion is speaking diplomatically and strategically about yourself and your accomplishments.

If you want credit, gain visibility

- Q. How do we gain visibility?
- A.
 - Scholarship
 - Promotion
 - Service (committees, task forces)
 - Involvement & leadership in our professional organizations
 - Network

But being “visible” is not necessarily equivalent to being “heard”!

- Hence, graceful self promotion!
- Problem: But I’m not comfortable talking about myself!

Why don’t we do self promotion?

- Socialization, unconscious learning, parental training
 - Shameless
 - In poor taste
 - Is egocentric
 - Violates social norms
 - Not professional to toot your own horn
- Desire to connect, not impress
- Fear

What do we “usually” say/do when someone compliments us?

- “Oh, it was nothing!”
- “I was just lucky”
- “Oh, this old dress?”
- “Really, you don’t think it makes me look fat?”
- There’s a delicate balance between CONFIDENCE and HUMILITY

Do NOT “Humblebrag”!

- Humblebrag = Boasting disguised as modesty, false humility, manufactured demureness, tempering good news with some personal fault:
 - “I AM featured in People’s “Most Beautiful” (what can I say, they all make mistakes) BUT did the shoot w no makeup and I have to say...SCARY!”
 - “Totally walked down the wrong escalator at the airport from the flashes of the cameras”
 - “Hi, I’m 16 and I’m publishing 3 books and an album this year. Do you have any advice on how to handle it best?” @humblebrag

Activity: Share with a partner

- What is one thing that you are really good at? And what is one recent accomplishment of which you are proud?
- Prepare a pithy pitch of your partner and her/his accomplishment with the group!
- *Point: we’re oftentimes more comfortable praising others than ourselves.*

How to brag with modesty

- Learn how to present yourself with ‘authentic confidence.’ Observe and learn from others who do it well.
- Always consider the intention behind your communication; to SHARE information about your successful efforts
- Consciously monitor your language; don’t be self-deprecating
- Anticipate high-stakes interactions; and be ready for them.

How do you gracefully, rather than shamelessly promote yourself?

1. Make a habit of recognizing and praising the accomplishments of others.
2. Be sensitive to timing.
3. View talking about yourself (or others) as educating or teaching others, rather than “selling.”
4. Develop an interesting story around the facts.
5. Remember, your success makes your unit look good.
6. Keep your boss in the information loop, in a timely manner.
7. Practice graceful self-promotion to avoid “credit theft.”
8. Don’t be stingy with your information.
9. Report the publication, grant, or presentation in the local institutional letter.
10. Remember, you serve as a role model to others in your field.
11. Make sure key people “know what you’ve done for them lately.”
12. Take credit gracefully

Activity: Anyone want to try?

- What is one thing that you are really good at? And what is one recent accomplishment of which you are proud?

When in doubt, remember 2 things:

- A gracious ‘thank you’ is enough
- Balance I vs. We statements

Elevator Speeches

- Brief and succinct (1-2 minutes) sound bites
 - Tells a story
 - Persuasive summary of a recent accomplishment
 - May be constructed like a PAR (problem, action, result)
- Spotlights your uniqueness
- Leaves a positive memory

Activity: Prepare YOUR Elevator Speech

- Prepared for a BRIEF chance encounter
- Delivered effortlessly
- Practice makes perfect
- Example: It's Monday morning, you are rushing to a meeting. As you reach the elevator, you meet Dean Cunningham, the big kahuna! He smiles in greeting and you pause for a moment. Then he asks you: "So, what's been keeping you busy these days?" WTW???

5 Body Language Poses that can Sabotage Success

- Crossing your ankles while standing
- Fig leaf pose with hands while standing
- Tipping or tilting your head
- Coy eye contact
- Nervous habits (e.g. playing with your hair)

Julie Bawden Davis, August 1, 2013

***Watch Amy Cuddy's Ted Talk: Power Poses

- "Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained."

Marie Curie

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