A Short Guide to Being Yourself Online

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How to Be Yourself Online

Hello! And welcome to "How to Be Yourself Online." This eBook is based on a workshop I ran with the same title, and I've tweaked the content to make it more specific to small businesses.

In these next few pages, we're going to:

- **Explore the different ways you share your personality online**
- **Discover why some "Internet Celebrities" have improved their expert status by being themselves**
- **Learn how you can be an expert by being yourself and doing what you love**
- **Explore different ways you can communicate this online**

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So if you know a blogger or business owner who might find this introductory guide to being yourself online, please pass it on!

Thank you!

If you have feedback or questions I'd love to hear from you: amy@harrisonamy.com

Enjoy!

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Being yourself online and offline

There are a number of different ways we can communicate our message to our customers or audience online, including:

- **Video**
- **Audio**
- **Written content**
- **Live teleseminars / webinars**

The majority of your communication is probably written content such as:

- **Blog posts**
- **Your website content**
- **Email newsletter**
- **Guest post or articles about your area of expertise**

Businesses can find this move from "face to face" to typed communication challenging because:

- **Tone of voice and body language is lost when you type**
- **What might be a joke when said in person can sound insulting when written**
- **You can lose that "conversational" feel by missing out the casual remarks that come so naturally when we speak**

However, there are also some fantastic benefits about moving into this "written" arena like:

- **You have more time to think about what you want to say**
- **You have the wonderful delights of a "delete" button to avoid "foot in mouth" situations**
- **If you're a naturally shy person, you can find a lot of confidence by writing rather than speaking in person.**

And there's also another big difference between publishing content online and having a chat in person…

Can you have split personalities online?

I'm not talking about a Jekyll and Hyde situation where by day you're a determined, focused business owner and by night you run around howling at the moon and bathing in puddles (unless someone's switched your coffee for decaf – I've heard the withdrawals can make you do that).

I'm talking about how "**in person**" we sometimes flex different sides of our personalities.

For example, I might be slightly different around close friends and family compared to talking to a shop assistant. I'm probably not going to reveal (straight away) to the shop assistant that the reason I need insoles (well only one) is due to the freakish difference in size of one foot compared to the other, but I have no problem admitting this to my close friends (and now you).

Around certain people we show different "levels" of our personality. Is this being "inauthentic?" I don't believe so. Often we're not completely at ease with other people until we know them a little better.

Exercise 1 - Your multiple personalities

List 2 groups of people that you might reveal different levels of your personality *E.g. Teachers / friends*

Group 1:_____
Group 2:_____

How might you change the way you are slightly when you're with them?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Now, can we do the same thing online?

How do you set your privacy boundaries?

Trying to keep your personality separate as you might in person can be a little trickier. Once you've published your thoughts and opinions, unless it's behind a restricted area, it's there for the whole world to enjoy.

And unless you take it down, there's a good chance it's going to be archived online, somewhere forever.

With every tweet, blog post, blog comment or article you write, you're building up an online fingerprint of your personality for everyone to see.

So now the shop assistant, my friends and my secondary school English teacher know about my freakishly large foot. It seems there's no escape – or is there?

Does this mean the loss of privacy?

There are certain ways we can still keep part of our lives separate. With certain websites, information can only be seen by the people we choose accept into our circle, such as Facebook for example. So we might share some information on Facebook that we wouldn't put on Twitter, and you probably wouldn't share private one to one online conversations on your blog.

In addition to protecting your privacy, you're also respecting your different audiences. Your Twitter audience for example, probably doesn't have the same interest in your personal Facebook updates as your Facebook audience.

Exercise 2 – Set your online sharing boundaries

What parts of your life and personality would you like to keep private, or only share with certain audiences?_____

How will you do this?_____

Why is your online personality so important anyway?

As a business owner, or a blogger, your online personality becomes your "brand" and ideally, within seconds you want your audience to have a distinct impression of:

- **Who you are**
- **What you do**
- **What you DON'T do**

When you can use written words, video and audio to convey this, it doesn't just help people "get to know you" it also:

- **Sets you apart**
- **Builds trust**
- **Makes it easier to attract complementary personalities**

Exercise 3 – What online profiles do you currently have?

List any websites where you have a "public" online profile (*e.g. twitter, Facebook, YouTube)* ___

_____

_____

_____

How do you use these sites to interact with your audience? *(e.g. online chats, status updates.)*__

_____

_____

Do these profiles address who you are, what you do and what you don't do? If so, how?_____

_____

_____

Exercise 4 – Are you searchable?

If you want to know what pieces of your personality are easy to find online, try Googling your own name or business name. Is the first impression you get from this, the one you want your customers / audience to have?

Successful online personalities

- **Gary Vaynerchuck – www.garyvaynerchuk.com**
  - Wine retailer
  - Outgoing personality
  - Now an influential speaker on new media and business
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xg2MukcqbdE

- **Naomi Dunford – www.ittybiz.com**
  - Runs a marketing service for small businesses
  - Foul-mouthed and talks openly about her mistakes
  - Extremely loyal fan base of 25,000 readers a month

- **Natalie Tran – www.natalietran.me**
  - Most-subscribed channel in Australia
  - Digital media student
  - Vlogs about awkward and humorous daily situations
  - Annual earnings estimated at $100,000 from advertising
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIX9NjpRWMg latest
  - Earlier video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-XXfxL3lOw

- **Tucker Max – www.tuckermax.com**
  - One of the **most-hated** internet celebrities
  - Best-selling author of "I hope they serve beer in hell" and "Assholes finish first"
  - Generally a horrible person by his own admittance – not for the easily offended
  - Accusations that some of his "true" stories are fictitious
  - Popular following with the 16-25 male college student groups

One of the reasons these Internet Celebrities are hailed as experts and have a loyal fan base is because:

They're good at what they do, **they love what they do** AND **their personalities are consistent**

Naomi pretty much swears no matter what she's writing about, Tucker Max almost always insults people and Gary Vaynerchuk is apparently like an excitable puppy even off camera.

How to be an expert by loving what you do

In the previous examples there are a range of "occupations" represented:

- **Wine retailer**
- **Marketing Consultant**
- **Vlogger**
- **Author**

The previous personalities based their work and businesses on something they love to do and you'll want to do the same.

It's this kind of passion that give you energy to work through the dips, constantly improve your skills and keep going even when you hit a bump in the road. So what do you love to do?

Exercise 6 – What are you happiest doing?

Think about what you love doing. What would you do even if you didn't get paid for it? What makes the time fly for you when you get "in the zone?"_____

_____

_____

Another stage of carving out your online "expert" personality is to partner what you love with something you're good at. (Remember, being an "expert" doesn't mean being the "best." It means **Being good enough to teach other people something of value.)**

Exercise 7 – your expertise

I'm really good at:_____

My friends and family would say I'm pretty good at: _____

My proudest moment was:_____

I know a lot of stuff about:_____

My friends / family, usually ask me to help with:_____

Don’t you know who I am?

Just as your personality sets you apart from the next person, in business, this would be your “brand.” The closer your content and online interactions are to your personality, the more authentic and trustworthy you and your brand will seem.

Exercise 8 – Who am I anyway?

How would friends describe you in 5 words?_____

_____

What annoys you?_____

What kind of magazines / tv shows / websites / books do you like to read / watch?_____

_____

_____

What makes you laugh?_____

_____

Something most people don’t know about me is:_____

What if people don’t like me?

- **Being like Marmite is a good thing - for every person who doesn’t like you, someone thinks you’re the best thing since sliced bread**
- **It’s more important to write what you believe / think than to please other people.**
- **The clearer you are about who you are, the more likely you are to attract other people who will suit your personality**

Exercise 9 – The Marmite test – Love it or hate it.

Try to find something that has divided opinion online. For example a film, celebrity or business that has received favourable and unfavourable reviews. Instead of taking a side in the debate, try to understand how that particular film, show, food etc, appeals to different personalities and interests.

Combining personality and expertise online

There are many different ways that you can publish content to show just how amazing you are and some will appeal to you more than others. For example

- **Video**
- **Audio**
- **Written text**
- **Live webinars / teleseminars**

I know we've focused mostly on written text, but other formats are certainly worth exploring and using more than one format is an excellent way to show off more of your personality to your audience.

For the final exercise I want you to create a piece of online content that: Shows off your personality and expertise and is valuable to your audience.

Exercise 11 – Create a piece of "your personality" to go online

Outline some content you could create to show off your personality and expertise.

The format I'll work in will be:_____
The subject will be:_____
It will be useful to my audience because:_____
I will publish it on (create a deadline!):_____
_____

That concludes this short guide to being yourself online!

Finding your own voice is tricky to start off with so don't worry about making mistakes. The more content you produce, the more confidence you will have and the clearer your message and your wonderful personality will be to your audience.

Good luck!