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INTRODUCTION

Being More of Who You Are

Everyone has a brand, and anyone can be a strong brand. It doesn't involve changing your personality—you can be an introvert or extrovert. And it's definitely not about trying to be something you're not. The difference between one personal brand and another is that the person with a *strong brand* utilizes his or her special qualities to make a difference in the lives of others. Read that last sentence again, because it is the foundation upon which a strong personal brand is built. Using one's values and distinctive qualities to make a difference for others is the core ethos of strong, thriving personal brands.

Using marketing techniques merely to create a high profile for oneself is not the point and won't make you a stronger brand. When you make a discernable difference in the life of another, you make a lasting impression and your brand receives credit—a deposit in the “trust bank.” Every meaningful impression adds more “credits” that build toward the establishment of a trusting relationship. Since the ability to build trusting relationships is a key component of professional and personal success, people with strong personal brands are able to *achieve more of what they want by being more of who they are*.

One cannot underestimate the importance of authenticity, nor

can one overestimate the power of alignment in striving to become a stronger brand. The challenge to building a stronger brand is to have the courage to operate authentically, to strive to find alignment with others, and to be creative in applying one's special qualities to make a difference as often as possible. Passing along these and other "lessons learned" is our motivation for revising *Be Your Own Brand*.

In the first edition of *Be Your Own Brand* we successfully provided the first book that lays out a pragmatic framework for an individual to implement the principles of personal brand. Since writing the first edition, we observed two important trends that have made a big impact on personal brand: The first was the rapid growth and acceptance of personal brand as a professional development framework. The many books written about personal brand that followed *Be Your Own Brand*—some in substance and others in title only—have helped expand its use. The second trend is social media. The introduction and omnipresence of social media has created a tool that enables individuals to build a stronger personal brand in a way hardly imagined when we published the first edition.

After the book was published in 2002, we set out on our separate paths to apply the concepts of personal brand in our different businesses.

Karl, as the principal of Brand Tool Box, Ltd., applied the concepts of personal brand in his capacity as a corporate brand strategist. The pragmatic framework of personal brand allowed Karl to create a useful and powerful foundation for internal brand building. At the core of this corporate brand-building innovation is a framework to align the personal brands of employees with the brand of their corporate employer.

David, as a renowned business speaker and executive coach, employed the framework of personal brand in his business, which is built on inspiring others to thrive through living a purposeful

life. David's work in encouraging and coaching individuals to create powerful alignment of their personal brand with the contribution expected of them by their employers resulted in significantly higher employee engagement and commitment to key corporate strategies.

After traveling in our separate circles for years, we got together and compared notes. We observed that people with strong personal brands had a rich network of resources—functional and emotional—that powered the achievement of their goals. Our belief was reinforced that the “formula” for creating a strong personal brand is not complex, however, and that it is clearly a myth that personal brand building involves or requires shameless self-promotion.

Since writing the original edition of *Be Your Own Brand*, we have watched with interest the evolution of the concept of personal brand. In some ways its evolution has mimicked the advancement of the concept of business brand. Slowly (far too slowly in our opinion), companies are realizing that consumers trust a brand (the relationship they have with a product or company) because it consistently provides value and makes a difference for them. Another way of saying that is, *Trust exists because the company or brand delivers on its promises.*

We are even clearer today that this construct also holds true for personal brand. Our practice of adding value and consistently making a difference in the lives of others as the pathway to a strong personal brand is what separates our approach. This stance is the basis for this revision of *Be Your Own Brand*.

In this revised and expanded edition, *Be Your Own Brand* provides you with a contemporary perspective, including the effect of social media on personal brand and a set of tools to help you build a stronger one. We have structured the book in a modular fashion, enabling you to navigate the content in a way that best fits your style. First of all there are three logical sections: “Personal Brand Basics”; “Designing Your Personal Brand of Making a Difference”;

and “Using the Power of Alignment to Build a Stronger Personal Brand.” Within each of these sections is a set of stand-alone chapters all designed to be a quick read focused on a key element of personal brand building.

Along the way, we will introduce you to a number of interesting individuals who demonstrate how people who dedicate the distinctive qualities of their strong personal brand to making a difference for others build a successful life. You will meet Chip Bell, a great guy who brings a smile to the face of even the grumpiest person. You will also meet Terry Fox, a Canadian hero, who will inspire you with his dedication to making a difference. An introduction to Dr. David Dunn, a prominent world-class surgeon and medical researcher, will demonstrate how a strong personal brand is making a fundamental difference in the global health-care system.

We will introduce you to Temple Grandin—a woman with severe autism since she was a child, who has invented some of the most important improvements in the humane treatment of cattle and was the recent subject of a highly acclaimed HBO film. And you will meet Norman Borlaug, who single-handedly started the Green Revolution and did more than anyone else in the twentieth century to teach the world to feed itself, reducing world hunger on a large scale. And then there’s Willem Kolff, a humble Dutch physician who was the pioneer inventor of two important medical devices that have saved millions of lives.

After eight years of helping others understand and embrace the concepts of personal brand, we think we have learned a few things and firmly believe that by sharing them with others the world will benefit from having more strong personal brands. We are hopeful that this is one way we can make a difference, by being more of who we are.