



LIVING A PERSONAL BRAND OF GRATITUDE



As you follow the steps in *Selling You: How to Create, Live, and Sell a Powerful Personal Brand*, you'll learn that because you are a multi-faceted person, your personal brand will be multi-faceted too.

For example, your personal brand might include attributes like “professional,” “courteous,” “reliable,” “smart” and “fun.” Or it could be “tech whiz,” “serious,” “well-read” and “ambitious.”

No matter which facets of your personality you choose to showcase in your personal brand, however, you should include a few attributes that reveal the kind of person you are at your core, like “considerate,” “helpful” and “kind.” And one that everyone should consider including is “grateful.”

In fact, why not make “gratitude” a major part of your personal brand? If you do, you will find that others:

- Respond to you, in kind, with gratitude.
- Appreciate you for appreciating them.
- Feel good about themselves because you seem to feel good about them.
- Are happy that they have done something to deserve your gratitude.

Sometimes, gratitude simply happens. Someone does you a kindness, and you appreciate that. A pleasant surprise comes your way and makes you feel warm and grateful. Your hard work pays off in the form of a raise, a bonus, a promotion or a party, and you can't thank everyone enough.

But gratitude doesn't have to be an accident. It doesn't even have to be your natural

reaction to good fortune. You can mold yourself into a grateful person by changing your mindset, by practicing simple acts of gratitude, and by paying attention to the blessings around you. There are plenty.

The grateful mindset

A whole body of literature that has been circulating for a couple of decades promotes the notion that positive thinking can create a positive life. What could be more positive than gratitude?

Consider best friends Shelley and Deanna, who come from similar backgrounds, went to the same schools and wound up working in the same field. They're around the same age. Shelley is a happy person and Deanna, a cynic, tends to view the world with negativity. Deanna has, on occasion, criticized Shelley for always looking on the bright side.

Shelley's happiness isn't lost on her. She sometimes wonders how she got so lucky with a great job, a supportive husband, a nice income and fun friends. She is a positive thinker, and she figures that good thoughts bring about a good life.

Deanna, on the other hand, always waits for the other shoe to drop. She has a good job, but she doesn't love it; she has a husband she fights with all the time; and she has an obsession with money that prevents her from enjoying what she has. She loves Shelley, but she sometimes resents her for having a

happier life. Not a positive thinker, Deanna quietly studied her friend to try to figure out why their attitudes were so different even though they had so much in common.

And it came to her: attitude. Shelley has an attitude of gratitude. She is grateful for that job, husband and income. She is grateful for her friends, her family and her experiences. Deanna really isn't. She always finds something to criticize.

So Deanna told Shelley: "I figured out why you're so happy. It's because you're grateful." That made sense to Shelley. Maybe positive thinkers are more grateful; she's not sure. But she knows when she appreciates the good in her life, more good comes into her life. And the cycle of gratitude spins round and round.

Shelley knew that her positivity was at the core of her personal brand. But she hadn't considered that gratitude was fueling that positivity. Now, her personal brand showcases her gratitude above all else.

How can you change your mindset to one of gratitude if it doesn't come naturally? It takes practice.

Practicing gratitude

Once you choose to live a grateful life and decide to incorporate gratitude into your personal brand, the next step is to live that personal brand. Live your gratitude.

Getting to a powerful personal brand takes three steps: Create. Live. Sell.



Create. If your goal is to have a personal brand that showcases gratitude—either above all else or at least as part of a well-rounded brand built on a foundation of gratitude, it's a good idea to make a plan. It's not enough to say that gratitude is your brand, especially if it hasn't been part of your brand up to this point. You'll need to figure out very specifically how to make gratitude part of your brand. And that means figuring out how to not only act grateful but to genuinely feel it.

As part of the creation process, observe how others who seem to be grateful live their brands. Do they smile a lot? Say "thank you" for every little thing? Return favors? Surprise their co-workers and pals with little gifts or invitations? Are they good listeners? Do they find the silver lining?

When you think about adopting some or all of those grateful traits for yourself, how does it make you feel? Like it's impossible? Not you? Envious that it comes so naturally to others? Do you think you can do it? Or at least try it?

What other traits say "gratitude" to you? Loyalty to friends? Praising others so everyone will know the admirable things they do? Prayer? A positive attitude?

Next, look for evidence of gratitude in your own personality. What makes you feel grateful? How do you express your gratitude to others? Do you express it? How comfortable are you with expressing it?

When you create a personal brand, do it with the mindset that you will show others your brand all the time. You will let it shine through your personality, your actions and your words. If you're not a demonstrative person, how will you demonstrate your gratitude in a way that

will make it obvious to others that you are a grateful person, grateful for them, grateful for the opportunities they are offering you?

After you do this soul-searching, you can answer this question: Is a brand of personal gratitude right for you? Can you pull it off?



Live. The second step toward a powerful personal brand is to live that brand. Day in and day out, you need to be the person your brand says you are.

If you create a brand of gratitude, then you need to be grateful day in and day out. Or, if you've created a brand of gratitude that you have to grow into, you need to act like you are grateful day in and day out. This is not inauthentic if you genuinely want to and believe you can make yourself a grateful person and live a life of gratitude.

How does someone act grateful? It starts with observation.

Get to know yourself a little better. Notice when something happens that makes you feel appreciative. Notice when and why you say, "thank you."

Then, notice when you do not feel appreciative, even when someone is kind to you, helps you, does you a favor or gives you a gift. Notice when you could say "thank you," but you don't.



A challenge:

Demonstrate your gratitude in some way a minimum of five times a day every day for the next week. Practice saying "thank you." Observe when you feel appreciation. Show your gratitude by giving something back: a smile, a "thank you" in return, a favor, a token gift, a kind word.

Then:

- Make a point of saying "thank you" every time someone is the slightest bit helpful.
- Go beyond a simple "thank you" and show physical evidence of your appreciation. For example, a very grateful office manager at a very busy TV station writes what she calls "love letters" on Post-its and sticks them on the computers of her colleagues a couple of times a week. She writes things like, "You're awesome" and "We couldn't do it without you."
- Catch yourself before you say anything negative out loud when someone does something nice for you. Don't be like Deanna, who said when her sister gave her a beautiful red silk blouse for Christmas, "This has to be dry-cleaned. That's expensive," or like the crotchety old uncle, on opening a gift from a nephew who struggled to find something to give him every birthday, who said, "Let's stop exchanging gifts every year. I don't need any of this junk."

One woman told her grateful stepdaughter, a prolific writer of thank-you notes, to stop sending them because she doesn't want to have to send any of her own when the stepdaughter gives her a gift. In another case, the good friend of someone who spent hours making her a scrapbook commemorating a 40th birthday trip they took together said, before even opening the gift, "I don't want to exchange gifts. I didn't get you anything."

Surely, all of those people were searching for these words: “Thank you.”

- Keep “thank you” on the tip of your tongue so it will be ready when you need it. When do you need it? Whenever someone says “yes” to your request for a favor; or recommends you for a project or job; or writes a letter of recommendation for you; or buys you a cup of coffee; or bends over to pick up your pen when you drop it on the floor. Say “thank you” many times a day because that’s how often other people deserve to be thanked.
- And then, accept the gratitude that others show to you. Don’t brush it off as unnecessary. Don’t say, “It was nothing.” Kindness is not nothing. It deserves a reward. The reward is gratitude.

Selling Your Brand of Gratitude

1. **Plan.**
2. **Look for opportunities.**
3. **Establish trust.**
4. **Ask for what you want.**
5. **Follow up with gratitude.**



Sell. Step 3 toward having a powerful personal brand is to sell that brand; that is, to use that brand to sell yourself. If you live a brand of gratitude every day without exception, it will be easy to sell yourself as a grateful person.

Even if you have to grow into your brand of gratitude by practicing it every day, you will be able to sell yourself as a grateful person. That can reap enormous benefits, including:

- People who want to work with you, socialize with you and simply be around you because they know you appreciate them.
- Favors from those who know you will be grateful for them and that you will return those favors as soon as you see that you can fill a need for someone else.
- Better work from employees who report to you and realize that you’re someone who admires and respects them when they make an honest effort.
- More of what you want. When you get what you want, and you are demonstratively grateful, those who give will be willing to give even more.

Selling your brand of gratitude is best accomplished using the same strategies that professional salespeople use when selling products and services. Selling yourself is a sale, after all. The five steps are:

STEP 1. PLAN. Just as you planned your brand and how you could live it consistently, make a plan for how you will sell it. Selling a brand of gratitude means revolving your day and your life around it. It means showing up grateful every day in every situation. It means turning even potentially negative interactions into successes by using gratitude as your secret weapon to disarm someone who might be hostile, untrusting or afraid.

Who can help you solidify your brand as a grateful person? What do you have to do to convince others of your grateful demeanor? How can you check yourself to make sure you are spreading gratitude instead of unwittingly making the wrong impression?

Plan to live your brand of gratitude and use that brand as a guidebook for your day, your week, your month and your year.

CREATE. LIVE. SELL.

STEP 2. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES. What opportunities do you have at work to show your gratitude to co-workers, employees, bosses and clients? How might they react if you do that?

The more you say “thank you” and offer words and tokens of appreciation to others, the more they will believe that you truly are a grateful person. Take every opportunity to show your appreciation: a pat on the back, a compliment, a lunch invitation, a gift of a candy bar with a tiny thank-you note.

STEP 3. ESTABLISH TRUST. If you act grateful sometimes and ungrateful sometimes, your brand is not “grateful.” It’s, “You never know what you’re going to get with this one.” People like to buy from those whom they like and trust. Establish trust by living your gratitude brand consistently so others know they can expect that from you. Sell yourself by consistently living your brand.

STEP 4. ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT. This step, usually the hardest one even for seasoned sales professionals, gets easy when your personal brand is all about gratitude. When others know you as a grateful person, they will be more than happy to say “yes” to your requests whenever they can. People appreciate being appreciated. If they know they will get that from you, then they will give you what they know you want.

STEP 5. FOLLOW UP WITH GRATITUDE. Of course. Show your gratitude after you make the “sale”—you’ve sold yourself or sold your request and you have what you want—by keeping your promises, doing what you said you would, and making the other person happy and proud to have helped you along the way.

Showing your gratitude today can reward you even years later when someone remembers you for your personal brand and reaches out with opportunities.

A personal brand of gratitude is the single, most-effective way to make a good impression on others that will last for a lifetime.



Create an authentic personal brand.
Live that brand every day.
Sell that brand to everyone you meet.



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