

BEN BAKER

POWERFUL PERSONAL BRANDS



A HANDS-ON GUIDE TO
UNDERSTANDING YOURS

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A HANDS-ON GUIDE
TO
UNDERSTANDING YOURS

BY
BEN BAKER

This book belongs to:

I define my Powerful Personal Brand as:

POWERFUL PERSONAL BRANDS:
A Hands-On Guide to Understanding Yours

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I believe that your POWERFUL PERSONAL BRAND defines who you are today and gives you the tools to become who you wish to be. Your POWERFUL PERSONAL BRAND allows you to have the confidence to achieve great things. It is the framework that allows you to close bigger sales, lead teams more effectively, or run larger organizations more successfully. In other words, it is the key to maximizing your ongoing success!

– Ben Baker

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CHAPTER NINE

WHAT ARE THREE EXPERIENCES FROM YOUR YOUTH THAT MADE YOU WHAT YOU ARE TODAY . . . AND WHY?

When I was in grade six or seven, Chuck Taylor leather high-top sneakers were the “it” thing. Growing up where I did and going to the school I went to meant that I was exposed to a lot of kids who came from families far wealthier than mine. Not that I came from a poor background; I did not. We were middle class and lived in a reasonably sized house, but my parents never had any ambition to be the ones who “kept up with the Joneses.” This came to a head the year all my friends got Chuck Taylor leather high-top sneakers, and I did not. I am sure that if my

father thought it was the right thing to do, he could have paid for them, but he wouldn't. I am sure that I protested loudly and told my parents that they were being unfair to deny me such a necessity.

Looking back, and now with a child of my own, I get it. It was about teaching me the difference between a want and a need, what is important, and what is nice to have. We all have those in our lives – things we desperately want, but, do we need them? Is having that better car or bigger house going to make us a better person? Is it going to really affect our personal brand and how it is perceived by others, or are they just things? I am all for creature comforts, but they do not make me who I am as a person. You could take away my house and my car, and my brand would remain the same. Who I am as a person, and who you are as a person, should not be determined by the things in our lives. A million-dollar home is not your personal brand; it is a thing. It is an achievement that came from your success, but it is not you. Take the time to think about the things in your life and whether they are a want or a need and how they influence your perception of yourself. For me, if you take away the love of my family, the respect that others have for me, and my desire to help others, then yes, you have taken away things of real value to me. If you take away my house or my car, I may be upset for a day or two, but I will go on, and thrive, as long as the core important factors in my life remain intact.

As the elder child in my house, I grew up being expected to sit at the table and converse with the friends of my parents. Looking back, this was one of the best things that my parents ever did for me. It taught me how to listen, how to converse, and about how to share controversial ideas in ways that people would accept, in premise, even if they were not ideas that they shared.

One of the people I met and learned to love and respect was a man who was a professional salesman. To the best of my knowledge, the man had no formal university education, but he was probably one of the smartest people I ever knew regarding understanding the human psyche. He grew up in the era of salesmen on the road and had all the stories to go with it. Many nights I listened to him tell stories about his adventures and the different products and services that he had sold over the years.

Then, one day, I had an opportunity to go and watch him live on stage. At this point of his career, he had become the pitchman for one of the educational seminar systems of the 1980s. This was the era where you filled a room with people who wanted to change their lives and showed them, for a fee of course, how you could teach them to do it. He never taught the course. Instead, he was the setup man, the guy (and in those days it was pretty much all guys) who came into town and convinced a room full of people that they had to sign up for that seminar TODAY. It was all about immediacy. It was all about demonstrating to people that their lives would change if

only they would lay down their money TODAY, and take a course that would show them the path to riches.

Watching him in action was magical. The turn of phrase, the deliberate actions, and the timing were incredible. Day after day, pitch after pitch, the cadence was the same. The nuances that sold the program never changed from audience to audience, and the crowd kept buying. After a week or so, I had to ask him how he did it. How was the speech so perfect that it never seemed to change? It did not seem to matter if someone asked him a question in the middle of his talk. He would just answer it and move on like nothing ever happened.

This is where the magic of the persona came into play. Now, this was a man in his fifties, who looked about fifteen to twenty years older than he was. He had a slight hunch in his back, his beard and hair were grey, and he wore hearing aids. What I was about to find out from him was most of that was an illusion. The hearing aids were not hearing aids, but speakers in his ears. He had a tape recorder in his pocket, and it played his speech into his ear every single night. When someone asked a question, he put his hands in his pocket, thought a moment, said that was a good question, and answered it. What he was really doing was hitting the pause button on the tape recorder. When he was done answering the question, he would put his hands back in his pockets, pause and look at the audience for a moment, hit the play button, and start again. On top of that, the beard, the grey hair, the clothing, and the thicker

glasses all were part of the act. It made people perceive him as being older and wiser and therefore more legitimate.

What did I learn from this? Many things. Mostly, that a person will sometimes play a part to advance their objectives, but you need to look deep to see who people really are. My dad's friend was, and still is, one of the warmest, most generous, and dynamic people you will ever meet. However, when he was on stage, he was playing a part to gain an advantage. I leave it up to you to decide whether that is right or wrong. In today's world, those pitchmen and women still exist, but in far fewer numbers. That way of selling does not work as well or as often in an information society. It is too easy to be found out and too easy to be discredited.

The most important lesson that I learned was the magic that can happen when you are on stage. How, if you are prepared and honest in your craft, you can take an audience to places they have not been and teach them something of value. Words, and the turn of phrase, can be a powerful ally to help achieve goals and objectives. It is not as much about what you say, but how you say it, that can influence people in your direction.

In my teenage years, I rode and raced a road bike. It was a passion for me. Every week, I rode at least 400 km (250 miles) in training and raced pretty much every weekend from April to October. I wish I were as fit today as I was then. The best rides that I got were every Sunday with a group called the Cinelli gang. Cinelli is a high-end bicycle that is still in production. It had the best Italian components, was

extremely lightweight, strong, and beautifully designed. I did not have a Cinelli; however, the owner of the bicycle store that I raced for and rode with every Sunday did. The owner of the shop rode in the British Empire Games and the 1948 Olympics. The people who were his friends were decorated riders from another era, and then, there were the young up-and-comers who rode with them, like me.

There are many things I learned from them, including how to ride safely in a tight pack of riders, how to attack coming out of a corner, how to figure out which riders will go hard and when, but those things are not what is important here. What is important is that they taught me dedication and the importance of working as a team. The dedication came from the fact that every Sunday, twelve months a year, whether it was sunny, raining, snowing, warm, or freezing, the Cinelli gang met at 8 a.m. and started to ride.

From my house to our meeting spot was a half-hour ride, and I picked up a friend along the way. Neither of us ever missed a week for years. It was more than dedication to a sport; it was a dedication to a family. I never wanted to be the person who let them down. To not show up meant the ride would have fewer riders, and the older ones would have to do more work going into the wind. I felt it was my responsibility, as did the others, to make sure that this ride continued to happen, and that the older riders got out and enjoyed it. Do not get me wrong; this was no meander. The owner of the shop was probably in his mid-sixties at the

time, as were some of his friends, but they all could move. We just helped them keep the pace going up the hills, and they showed us the best ways to descend.

Why is this story so important to me, and why does it make up part of my personal brand? The lessons I learned from these people about dedication, family, and teamwork was that the whole is much stronger than the individual parts. Those are characteristics that have grown up with me and have helped to make me who I am today.

- ❏ What are the experiences you remember from your youth? What are the things that happened to you, either good or bad, that taught you valuable lessons about what you believe and who you are today?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I help brands tell engaging stories that compel their customers to take action.

I am a father, a husband, a believer in community, and a passionate teller of the stories of brands. As the founder of Your Brand Marketing and the YourLIVING-Brand.live show, I work hand in hand with my clients to understand what makes them special and unique in a crowded space. It is by understanding the nuances of a brand, the special things they do that others do not, that unique stories can be told and audiences engaged.

I am available to consult, provide workshops, and speak on brand, message, market, vision, and value. My goal is always to tell the right story, to the right people, in the right way, so that the intended audience listens, understands, internalizes, engages, and is motivated towards action.



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creating your LIVING brand

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“Stop being a commodity! Become a brand worth loving!”
Ben Baker

Providing keynotes, workshops and consulting to effectively tell your brand story in a compelling and engaging way.

This book was written with three distinct audiences in mind:

- Leaders and future leaders
- Sales teams
- Those entering or re-entering the workforce

Though these audiences will read this book through different lenses, the objective for all is the same - to help you understand, codify, and communicate what your value is to others, and that is your **POWERFUL PERSONAL BRAND!**

Whether you are developing or cementing your leadership skills, new to the workforce or wanting to influence others to close more business, your desire should be to confidently communicate your uniqueness, so that others listen, understand, and are compelled to engage.

Through a series of questions and examples, you will gain the skills to understand who you are, what you believe and why others find you valuable.

In the end, the intention is for you to use this knowledge to build upon your continued success.



**“OMG! I'M ON THE
WAY HOME FROM
A WEEK AT A
CLIENT'S EVENT
AND I READ NEARLY
THE ENTIRE BOOK!”**

- GLENDA



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