**How to Self-Promote Without Bragging**

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Many authors feel uncomfortable when they talk about their accomplishments, thinking people will perceive them as being an unlikeable, shameless self-promoter. However, professional success depends on being—and being seen as—both competent and amiable.

Trying to hide the fact that you are boasting does not help. A boast masked as a complaint (“I’m so tired of being the only author my publisher likes.”) or by humility (“I can’t believe I won the award for best book ever!”) may be perceived as arrogance. Although bragging is usually socially inappropriate, there are ways to draw attention to your accomplishments without consequence. Here are a few ways to do that.

**Responding to a question**.

If radio or television hosts ask you to reveal positives about yourself, you should accommodate them. People usually do not judge a person as boastful when answering a direct question. One way to prepare for this situation is to give the host a list of questions to ask. Then you can plan a modest answer in advance.

**Reveal when others are revealing**.

I have attended many meetings that began by asking attending authors to describe their successes. In situations where others share, people can successfully convey their accomplishments without coming across as egotistical. The penalty for bragging seems to dissipate when others in the room are engaging in self-promotion. You can see this effect regularly on social media, where self-promotion is ubiquitous.

Use this same strategy while networking in person. Use questions to get others talking about their successes. When people make a point of pride with others, they are prompted to reciprocate by asking you to talk about your accomplishments.

**Find a promoter**.

Authors hire publicists and agents for good reasons. Most important is that intermediaries are seen as less self-serving and thus provide an aura of objectivity. You get the same effect and impact when you publish favorable reviews, testimonials and endorsements on your book’s cover, on your website and in your sales literature. This indirect bragging is less likely to elicit negative emotions.

**Strike a balance**.

When people present a balanced picture of themselves, rather than describing only their achievements, they can come across as more credible. As you conduct a store event or media interview, describe your less-than-successful experiences (failures). Then conclude with a lesson you learned from it. Your audience will appreciate and respect your candor.

When negative information is sprinkled into a largely positive narrative your accomplishments stand out and may be more readily accepted. When an interviewer asks, “How did you become so successful?” begin by saying, “I had a lot of trouble getting to where I am now….​” Your audience will relate to you because they empathize with your journey. As you reveal minor weaknesses, people will view you as more authentic, which leads to greater trust and motivation to heed your advice (and buy your book).

**Celebrate correctly**.

We all want our achievements to be recognized and applauded. It’s a boost to morale and well-being. However, your response will be equally telling. If someone unexpectedly compliments you publicly, resist the temptation to humbly downplay it. Also avoid humorous self-deprecation which can easily backfire. A simple “Thank you” will suffice.

Over time, people will send you emails or verbally attest to your skills as an author or speaker and how you changed their lives. These are wonderful accolades and worthy of celebration. Keep a file of these comments and reflect on them periodically when you need an emotional lift.

At the end of the year create your personal Year in Review (see my article, “Create Your [Personal Year In Review](http://www.bookapss.org/Articles/YearReview.pdf)”). List your Top Ten Best and Top Ten Worst events of the past year. Use the Best list to rejoice in your accomplishments and relive the positive emotions you experienced when they occurred. Do not dwell on your Worst list, but recall the beneficial lessons you learned and use it as a reminder of how far you have come.

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