

# Who you are is up to you - own your personal brand



By [Donna Rachelson](#)

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The 30-second elevator pitch, your next social media update, your LinkedIn profile, and the answer to the question 'tell me about yourself' are all opportunities to make a great first impression. They are also ideal occasions to showcase your own personal brand.

What really surprises me is how many people never think of themselves as a brand, and those that have given this serious thought often wonder how to market themselves in a way that is authentic and founded in integrity.

The belief that personal branding is only relevant for celebrity personalities, politicians, or high-profile captains of industry is a common and unproductive misconception. The fact is, we are all branded, whether we like it or not. In most cases, if you don't take responsibility for your own brand and market yourself effectively, others will do it for you.

While we may intuitively understand the importance of maintaining a good reputation, many people underestimate the ways in which almost everything we do counts towards building a personal brand. The way you dress, how you treat people, the quality of your work, the people you associate with, how you handle difficult situations, and what you publish on social media platforms – these all matter a great deal and send the world a message about the kind of brand you are.

By adopting a simple change of mindset and attitude towards personal branding, anyone - irrespective of industry or chosen career path - can begin to develop, grow, and market themselves far more effectively. And the best place to start is by knowing yourself. This is the fundamental cornerstone to personal branding. Without this self-knowledge and awareness, there is no way you can build an authentic brand. It is only once you know who you are, your values, and what difference you want to make, that you can address how you will achieve your goals and pursue your purpose.

The most successful personal brands all share one important feature – authenticity. Authentic personal brands are effective because they're honest. Personal brands that are brave enough to be honest, even when they've made a mistake, stand out from the clutter and create an emotional connection. Which is why truly living what you say is so incredibly important in personal branding and marketing.

Rather than being an intimidating prospect, the realisation that what your personal brand stands for is entirely your decision can be very empowering. People with successful personal brands understand the need to take responsibility for building their own brand rather than letting other people dictate it.

The next time someone says, 'tell me about yourself' think about how your story can create an emotional authentic connection and then seize the moment to define your brand before someone else does.

## ABOUT DONNA RACHELSON

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