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## BE YOURSELF

Let's look at what the experts advise. By the way, while these tips sound bizarre -- they're real nuggets, so stay with me:

1. Be an authentic liar.
2. Be your own valentine.
3. Fight bull.

Here's how these successful experts connect with the marketplace – and you can too:

**Be an authentic liar.** In his latest book, *All Marketers Are Liars*, Seth Godin explains “the power of telling authentic stories in a low-trust world.” Mildly unsettling at first, he makes the case that our buyers are actually the ones who are lying. To themselves. About why they want to buy from us.

Successful marketers are just providing the stories that our buyers choose to believe. But here's the rub: you have to really live the story you're telling. The second a potential buyer smells anything less than complete dedication to what you're selling, you “cross the line from fib to fraud.” It's simply not good enough to have a good story. You have to live up to it as well. If you're a cobbler with no shoes, why should your clients take your advice?

**Be a role model for what you sell, and nothing less.** Then tell a good story about it, to buyers who want to believe.

**Be your own valentine.** In his hot little book, *Little Red Book of Selling*, Jeffrey Gitomer takes a tough-love approach to helping us be the best version of ourselves we can be.

My personal favorites are:

- **No Whining** (“Don't whine to me that the customer won't return your call. Study voicemail. Don't whine to me that your boss is a jerk. Get a new one. Don't whine to me that your company won't give you a laptop. Go buy one.”)
- **Kick Your Own Ass** (“Ever have a bad day? Ever lost a sale you thought you had? Ever had someone say yes to you and three days later just evaporate? Wanna know what to do about it...? Kick your own ass. No one is going to hand you success...that's something you have to do for yourself.”)

The heart of Gitomer's message is put your heart into your work... and if you don't love what you sell, go sell something else. No amount of cleverly packaged marketing spin can camouflage a missing heart. Your clients will see right through it and won't buy from you.

Research shows that people buy professional services because of trust. In Gitomer's words, “If they like you, and they believe you, and they trust you, and they have confidence in you...then they MAY buy from you.”

**Let your heart shine through in your words and actions.** If you do, your clients will like, believe, trust, have confidence, and buy from you.

**Fight bull.** In their recent book, *Why Business People Speak Like Idiots: A Bullfighter's Guide*, Brian Fugere, Chelsea Hardaway, and Jon Warshawsky give it to us straight. Stop using words that are meaningless, boring, indirect and obscure. Start communicating with your own voice, personality, and style.

How many times have you sat through mind-numbing presentations, meaningless PowerPoint slides, or felt no connection with (no trust in?) the person trying to sell you on their idea, service or product?

So stop. Just stop adding to the bull that piles up every day in business communications. Talk and write to your target audience person-to-person. Ask them simple questions that get to the heart of their wants and needs. Tell them that you've thought a lot about their situation and have some ideas that might help them. And do it without the crutch of slides, silly business-speak, or slick messaging.

In other words, just be yourself.

\*WIIFM: What's In It For Me?

### References

Fugere, B., Hardaway, C., and Warshawsky, J. (2005). *Why Business People Speak Like Idiots: A Bullfighter's Guide*. New York: Free Press.

Gitomer, J. (2004). *The Little Red Book of Selling*. Austin: Bard Press.

Godin, S. (2005). *All Marketers Are Liars*. New York: Penguin.

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