

Five Tips for Talking about Yourself in Business

Maybe your clients **DO** care a little about you.

by Pamela Ziemann

www.pamelaziemann.com

We've been told for decades that 'your clients don't care about you, but only what's in it for them.' As an entrepreneur, do you really believe that? Would you want to align yourself with people who don't care about you at all? Not even one teaspoon of care?

While most of us don't want to hear endless blather, there are times when revealing your core mission is the exact ingredient that would make your business grow. If you started your business for a thoughtful, personal reason, your prospects might find it refreshing to know that you're not just in it for the money. Many people I work with have been so conditioned to think about the other guy, they forget to let their own light shine. In some cases, they forget they even had a light and the weariness of endless marketing really gets them down.

It's about balance. One-size-fits-all kind of advice can do more damage than good. First of all, ask yourself honestly, "Do I talk too much about myself?" If you do, go back to the articles that recommend putting more attention on what's in it for your client. On the other hand, if you have a rich, inner life that you tend to keep secret, this article is for you.

You have unique wisdom that the world desperately needs right now. If you don't share the deeper reason why you're in business, the people you were meant to serve can't hear you. If you do what you do because you want to change the world in a positive way, we need to hear about it. Usually the thing you're most afraid to say is the precise thing that, once said, will catapult your career. You've got to trust your voice. And you've got to trust that there are people who want to hear it.

So how do you share something of yourself and build an emotional connection while keeping it all in balance?

1) **Keep it brief.** Say what matters most to you in a clear, concise way that touches the other person in a heartfelt way. Don't be tempted to give the long, chronological, minute- by-minute explanation. If you have a turning point story of why you got into your business, practice it a couple times and see how much you can edit out keeping the words you use as potent as possible.

2) Notice the difference between people who want to know more about you and those who don't. If you're feeling rushed, **use your intuition.** It may not be the appropriate time or person. Remember, if people want to know about you, they want to know the real you. Keep it unadulterated. Just say no to the little voice in your head that wants to be clever. Speak from your heart, not your head.

3) Many cultural creatives do what they do because of what's happened to them in the past or what they want to see changed. The last thing you want to do is share a victim story with a potential client. Don't go there. If you've had a negative experience use it for good and put your attention on **how you can be a guide for others** because of what you've learned.

4) **Examine your intention** before speaking. Are you talking simply to get attention? Or do you use the power of your words to relate, break down barriers and help others move forward? When you use your story to help others move on in their own life, they'll want to hear your story. Good intentions are the foundation of meaningful dialogue and true connection.

5) **Ask questions** periodically. How does your story relate to their current needs? Would they like to hear more details of anything specific? Share yourself while including others and it won't feel like a monologue.

When I work with groups, each person clearly articulates the features and benefits of their product or service. It's when they discover their core message, however, and express it whole-heartedly, that others feel a real connection and start asking them for their business cards.

The phrase, "the meek shall inherit the earth," was translated from its original Aramaic meaning of "those who soften their emotional rigidity will gain the power of nature." That's power I'd like to align with. That's why I do this work. How open and vulnerable are you willing to be? Are you using your emotions wisely? How much of yourself are you willing to reveal? When you chip away the layers of protection, not only can people see who you truly are, it allows an opening for you to receive. You'll start creating a whole new kind of wealth.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "When you don't share your story, you betray it." If you're the type of person who justifies not speaking up because you heard a marketer say you should only talk about what's in it for the other guy, think twice. President Obama had the courage to share his story clearly and succinctly. From that solid foundation, he put his attention on others. That's speaking from the inside out. That's the kind of speaking that will make a positive change in your life and the lives of those you touch.