

Know Your Essence; Strengthen Your Network

In this era of the internet and social media, prospective employers have access to many more candidates and information about potential talent. Today, there's no such thing as job security and it seems that downsizings are frequent and commonplace.

These trends are here to stay, which makes it critical for you to be positioning (selling) yourself all the time, even if you are gainfully employed by a good company. Your work alone is no longer a good enough representation of you, there's more to it now. Communicating who you are professionally and personally needs to accurately reflect the image of the person you are now. So how can you stand out from the crowd so that you get referred to the kinds of positions you want?

Who are you? Can you effectively answer this question when meeting a business colleague for the first time at a networking event? People want to know who you are and what you're all about. They get a sense of you and your essence through brief interactions with you at meals, during breaks at conferences and even when you are picking up your child from day care. Each interaction creates an impression, and once made, it can be hard to change.

When someone in our industry hears your name, what comes to mind for them about you? Your picture on Facebook and LinkedIn and the language you use to describe yourself conjures up an image in the minds of those viewing your profile. Are you sending a message that is congruent with whom you are? Is it the right message for how you want to be perceived?

Networking is about making connections that count, both professionally and personally. To make the right impression, the one that you want, takes time, effort and some deliberation. Have you ever met someone and had an immediate sense of them? How does that happen? It's not an accident. That woman has probably focused on this and received coaching to support her ability to create that aura.

Knowing your essence can help you embody who you are every time you network. Your essence comes from the inside out. It's an integration of your natural gifts and talents, your visual image, how you speak and your energy. These elements send signals to people about who you are and create a perception of you. Let's take a closer look at each.

Here are **5 Steps** to get in touch with your essence.

Step 1: Identify Your Natural Gifts and Talents

Do you know what you were meant to do? Do you have clarity about what you do best? Can you tell when you are in a state of flow? You were born with innate gifts, things you do automatically, they come naturally to you. Because your talents are inherent, you don't recognize that you have special abilities.

Often it's other people who notice your genius and they call upon it regularl

They may not tell you, but they utilize your abilities and slot you into particular roles. This may be evidenced in your job and in your personal life, with friends and family. Your intrinsic talents are one aspect of your essence.

Step 2: Consider Your Presentation

What do people think about you from what they see? Not only your clothes, but your hair style, make-up jewelry, clothing, scent, even how you walk and carry yourself. Is the image you project consistent across different areas of your life? Do your wardrobe and other elements of your essence and style integrate from work to home and other aspects of your life? Knowing your essence can help you integrate and project the right visual image that works for you and in all parts of your life.

Step 3: Articulate Your Language

Do you have the clarity and the language to articulate clearly how you want to be perceived by others? When you know this, you communicate authentically and people get your message. In order to communicate your message to others, you need to know what that message is in just a few sentences. That takes some work and often the help of a professional.

Step 4: Sense Your Energy

What do others experience in your presence? Are you calm and peaceful, high-energy or nervous? People can sense your comfort level and how “real” you are. Are you able to create a genuine connection with others? This only happens when your true essence is revealed. It’s not about acting a particular way so that you project a certain way of being. This way of being exudes from you, without thought or effort because it comes from the core of who you are.

Step 5: Name Your Essence

Defining your essence creates **alignment** in your life. Because you are thinking and behaving in ways that are coming from the inside and manifesting on the outside, you experience congruence. You find that people listen to what you have to say and your influence and impact increases. You feel strong and powerful and others are attracted to you because you are credible and authentic. The key is to **embody** your essence.

The benefits manifest in both your career and personal life when you are able to embody your essence. You will make decisions that are true to who you are. You will lead a more integrated life where you will naturally discover more work/life balance. It enables you to weave a beautiful tapestry of your life that is uniquely you.

Diane Kubal is CEO of Fulcrum Network and the creator of the Essential Circles, a model and approach that identifies and names your essence. She leads programs and consults with women in business to bring forth their essence, aligning it with their work and life. To learn more, call or email Diane at 630-

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