



Crafting Your Personal Brand



COACHPRENEUR
Academy

Developing Your Personal Brand

How to Stand Out in a Crowded Marketplace

Knowing your brilliance isn't enough. To succeed in the world of professional coaching, you must help others discover you within a crowded marketplace. The good news is, having already selected your coaching specialty and ideal client avatar, two of the hardest decisions are behind you. Now it's time to set yourself apart and magnetize others to you by leveraging your personality, passions and purpose into your personal brand. Sound like fun? I think so too!

As you work through this chapter, keep in mind that you already have a personal brand. What you have yet to do is to make it visible outside of your family and social circles.

Why is your personal brand important?

In the old days, we'd meet face to face. That was usually the first and only way someone else could get a sense of you, and you of them. In these encounters, whether they were a business meeting or blind date, you drew upon a range of interpersonal communication cues that included speech, tone of voice, body language and facial expressions. This was how we got to know and remember one another: "Oh, I remember him! He's the tall guy with the big smile... who picked his teeth at the table after he finished eating."

Even though you'll still be meeting people in person, especially if you network, speak or attend events to meet your prospects, you'll also have to "introduce" yourself to a wider audience via the web and marketing collateral. So your first mission is to uncover your true colors. By that, I'm referring to the aspects of you that help people remember who you are and why you (and you alone) are their go-to coach. In this course, we'll take a closer look at the fundamentals of personal branding and how you can start marketing your services effectively with just a few tools.

As a coach, your personal brand is essential to standing out among a sea of options. Your brand is what makes you memorable. It's what allows others to get a sense of what it would be like to work with you. A brand represents who you are, what you stand for, believe in, and hope to achieve for others.

Like you, your brand is one of a kind. It offers an authentic representation of who you are as a whole person. From your most passionate interests to those lovable qualities you naturally exude, your brand is built on what makes you uniquely you. Personally, I think branding yourself and your services is almost as fun as helping others: the colors, language, logo, core messages, memes, taglines, imagery – oh my!

The concept of branding has been used to the point of cliché in business today. It is applied to everything from major international corporations to recent college graduates just emerging into the job market. But as a coach, your personal brand is non-negotiable; your clients are buying a relationship with you. They need to get a sense of who you are and decide if they like, trust and respect you as their go-to



Developing Your Personal Brand Cont'd

resource. Generally speaking, people are looking for someone who has similar values and resonates with the core of who they are themselves. There is nothing more rewarding than attracting those who naturally resonate with who you are, what you believe, and want what you've got. Before we move on, I encourage you to hold NOTHING back. Bring your whole self into your brand.

It's important to take a beat here and draw a quick distinction between a personal brand and a product brand. Personal brands are a representation of you and your services as a whole. A product brand is a bit more specific. It represents a single item or series of related items. While products are an extension of your services, they also require a brand image of their own. A product brand includes the features and benefits of that product as they relate to its ideal audience. This means that when and if you decide to create your own coaching programs, line of clothing, candles, apps, etc., you can have a heyday in the creative department of your business! Another option is to hire a brand strategist and design team to produce it for you!

But for right now, we're focusing on your most important brand – your personal brand!

Visibility? Friend or Foe?

It's likely you are either ecstatic about the opportunity to take your personal brand out into the world or, if you are like the "old me," you're feeling a bit vulnerable. Either response is perfectly normal. Trust me, it took some serious pushing by folks that love me dearly to convince me I wouldn't be classified by a myriad of superficial things: too fat, not pretty enough, too geeky, too alternative, too "me!" (Let alone my opinions on the environment, animals and the importance of self-love and a spiritual practice!)

I share this up front because I frequently hear these same concerns from others who prefer to play it safe and work behind the scenes. All the while, these hidden jewels of coaches are just hoping someone will notice their value. They hold back when it comes time to put energy into being seen and celebrated for who they are and the value they bring.

If you're worried about what other people may think about you or just don't see the value in shining your light, it's my duty to let you know: without a brand, your ideal clients aren't likely to find you. This is true regardless of whether you're currently a business owner or work within a large corporate environment. Behind the scenes is behind the scenes.

As you cultivate your brand, you are choosing what you share as well as what you don't. For example, I have gone to work in my PJs. But you don't see that part of my personality online (due in no small part to some very clever camera angles). The bottom line is I manage my personal brand by cultivating a professional persona, but it's still authentically me.

Your Personal Brand Elements

Your personal brand is a combination of different elements. These can include:

- Symbols and Logos
- Design Elements
- Color
- Imagery
- Your Name
- Sound and Music
- Reputation
- Emotion
- Tone
- Personality
- Point of View
- Mission Statement
- Core Message
- Manifesto
- Vision
- Values
- Personal Story

Together these elements combine to form your personal brand. When leveraged correctly, they effectively separate you from all other coaches and service professionals. Your brand allows other people to “get to know, like, and trust you,” even though they haven’t physically met you... yet!



Crafting Your Brand Identity

With these basic elements in mind, let's begin creating your personal brand.

As a coach, your personal brand begins with your personality. Are you funky, intellectual, free-spirited, logical, or punkish? Do you relate to being optimistic, a joker, an avid health nut? Maybe a mix, with one aspect more dominant than the others depending on your caffeine level or hours spent meditating?

Here's a sample profile taken from one of my past business coaching clients. She used archetypes among other ways to describe who she is:

- Ex-engineer
- Spiritualist
- Nature-lover
- Dog-lover
- Creative
- Organic-healthy
- Naturalist
- Heart-centric
- Deep-thinker
- Achiever

As a spiritual guide and transformational coach, she is a direct conduit for her clients to receive nature's divine guidance. Her personal brand is expressed with images of her in nature. Her color scheme is built from bright greens and red-hued desert oranges with metallic accents. When you read her website and marketing materials, you feel her deep connection with spirit and her caring heart reaching out to you. She's clearly personable; it's evident in the language she uses in her copy and video presence. And if you are someone that likes to work at a deep soul level, you'll resonate with her offerings. She goes deep and isn't afraid of exploring the intricacies of humanity through Mother Nature. But her practical, former engineer self still shines through. Therefore she attracts women who are much like her, ready for a deeper and more meaningful life outside of the left-brain world. Women who are seeking to understand the deeper nature of their being and create a new life outside of their work profile.

If you are looking for someone who wears suits and would like to advance in the corporate arena, you might be repelled by her brand. That's ok. She is attracting her tribe by being who she is. This is the key to attracting the people you want to work with most. Letting your authentic nature shine allows your ideal clients to discover you. It's how they resonate with you.

Personality

So which titles would you give yourself? Vegan or Paleo, dog or cat lover? Yoga or Pilates? Begin the process by creating a list of things that truly represent who you are. This will often be an extension of the coaching niche you've selected – but not always.

For example, do you love nature? Your brand may end up incorporating nature-based images in your marketing content. Love dogs? They belong in the picture too. (Just not so much that you end up looking like a breeder or animal shelter – think subtle touches!) Think I'm kidding? I'm not. You've got to stand out. And when you show up as a whole person, others see: 'hey that person is like me'.



What aspects of your personality do you wish to shine through in your personal brand?

After you're satisfied with the list, circle the aspects of you that you most want to share with others. Perhaps some of these elements will be shared through blog posts while other content is used to build and nurture relationships with your ideal prospective clients.

I encourage you deeply to be your whole self. But there may be personal aspects you'd prefer to keep out of the light as a luminary and changemaker. For example, although I've had my fair share of diseases and health setbacks, those parts of my life aren't something I want to be known for. Be who you are, everyone else is taken!



Personality Cont'd

If you are wondering about how your personality might play out in your brand, take a look at these websites:

www.daniellelaporte.com/

Danielle is a skilled writer; her brand speaks most prominently through her words.

www.brenebrown.com/

Brené's photo and careful brand elements give you a strong sense of her practical but very approachable nature.

www.marieforleo.com/

Marie's style and flair certainly speak to a particular audience. This is a well branded site that gives you a strong felt experience of her mission and who she is. It's also highly memorable.

www.tonyrobbins.com/

This site was recently updated. In the past, the site was filled with images of Tony Robbins. Now he's taking a different approach. But notice the front cover. Who do you think his audience might be?

www.marshallgoldsmith.com/

This website is certainly dated, but you can still feel the formality of it.

www.michellebarryfranco.com/

Michelle (one of our community members) has a well-done site that allows you to really connect with her and get a felt sense of what it would be like to work with her.

www.YourName.com

Yes, it's true – I'm holding this spot for YOU. I'd love to showcase your exceptional site for future students to admire!

Leave a lasting impression – the look & feel of your brand

With your list of mind, let's begin to translate your personality into a brand identity. But first, a warning: I don't follow the rules found in traditional branding. I go with what works in the modern relational marketing world – tapping into the energy of feelings and values to decide on colors, images and words for your brand and messaging.

Remember, your brand is your “face.” It is what most of your ideal clients will engage with first as they “meet” you online.



- When others interact with my personal brand, I'd like them to feel:
(e.g. calm, confident, optimistic, hopeful, inspired, held...)
- The key messages I'd like them to hear through my personal brand is:
(Anything is possible. Dream big. Evoke Change Your Way – I couldn't resist!
- The values I'd like to express through my personal brand are: (Integrity, Grace, Achievement...)

Your answers to these questions will guide your choices for the imagery, symbols, colors, fonts, messages, and language you select within your brand. They are also direct reflections of your persona!



Create Your Mood Board

What is a mood board?

One of the easiest ways to craft your personal brand is to create a mood board. A mood board is a visual map that combines your type font choices, photographic images, illustrations, colors and patterns together. Like a vision board, it is designed to help you see the broader picture and synthesize your brand and messaging ideas, a mood board instigates additional ideas and connects the dots to the ones you're currently working with. A mood board is particularly useful for you to view the "whole" of your brand. It also enables you to see inconsistencies such as competing colors or messages. In my opinion, a mood board is an ideal starting point for creative inspiration.

Not only will a mood board help you gain the clarity and direction you need to make decisions on your brand elements, it also reveals how well the elements all work together visually. With that completed, you're free to create your visual brand style guide.

Pick a format to create your mood board in

This is easy as there are only two: physical or digital. If you're tech-savvy and enjoy working with computers, you can quickly assemble a slick mood board from culling a nearly limitless range of digital sources. You might also use Pinterest or other free online platforms like Moodboard (gomoodboard.com) or Canva (canva.com).

That said, I'm an old-fashioned girl who likes the feel of paper and the tactile charge I get from pasting objects to a board with a glue stick. Entirely up to you. But if you do opt for digital, I'd recommend printing your final product and mounting it to a board. Physical things have a way of becoming more real than something stored on a drive that gets turned off at the end of the day.

Next, a little scrapbooking

This is what makes a mood board so creative and fun. Browse your favorite websites, magazines and even the marketing collateral from competitive coaching services or big-name brands you admire.

If you are doing this the old-fashioned way, print and cut out the images, words and phrases that inspire you. These items should directly reflect your answers to the questions above. As this tool is just for you (or your client), you probably don't have to worry about copyright infringement. But if you publish it anywhere or use it as part of a presentation, it's a good idea to have permission to use any of the copyrighted material that appears on your mood board. Alternatively, you can certainly keep your mood board in digital format.

Create Your Mood Board Cont'd

Add design elements

While images and text are great for inspiration, you'll want to embellish your mood board with design elements. I absolutely love iridescent foil and glitter, which is something that shows up in my branding elements. For you, it might be certain patterns that become backgrounds, such as yogic, Asian, African or similar symbols, and textured backgrounds. I love cat prints and fur! You'll appreciate having these elements to jazz up your website, brochures and other materials. They'll imbue an extra layer of personality onto your marketing materials. For inspiration, go to www.shutterstock.com and type "backgrounds" or "symbols" in the search bar. What do you find in the results that inspires you?

Mount it and place it in a visible location.

Once you've selected the ideal items and arranged them in a way that inspires you, it's time for glue (or "Flatten Image" if you're a Photoshop gal). Again, if you create your mood board online, I recommend printing it or having it printed at Costco, Staples, Office Depot or any local print shop capable of printing in a large format. Finally, affix it to a thick piece of mounting or backing board and place it somewhere you'll see it throughout the day and night.

Need Inspiration?

Google "mood boards" and you'll get a quick sense of where we are heading. Also, once you've created your mood board, you'll be able to freely make numerous choices related to your brand, such as your color palette, font types and image styles. Plus, if you work with a designer, he or she will have the advantage of truly knowing what you want with a simple glance at your mood board. This will save them time and you money.

Next Steps...

With your mood board in place, it's time to create your Brand Style Guide. Also known as a brand bible or visual style guide, this guide is traditionally used to ensure the consistency of your brand across all marketing platforms. I use it to organize my personal brand. It saves time explaining my design wishes when subcontracting work. It also keeps me consistent with my brand across my social media, website, presentations, and other promotional tools.



Create Your Brand Style Guide

A brand style guide is a document that establishes the guidelines and rules for how all aspects of your brand will be represented and used. Intended largely for designers, a good brand bible outlines the basic design tools needed to create and disseminate your company's communications. The intended purpose is to craft an integrated and easily identifiable representation of your brand, regardless of who's doing the work. If you don't have a style guide, it's likely that a graphic artist or web designer will take liberty with their version of your brand. That means you run the risk of becoming unidentifiable for those who need you the most. But the real reason I want you to do this is so you, as the creator of your brand, remain consistent across your marketing collateral and in-tune with your brand.

Think about McDonald's for a moment. Their golden arches wouldn't stick in the minds of the millions they serve throughout the world had they changed colors and logos from year to year.

One of the easiest ways to get started (and generate ideas) is to look at how some of the world's most recognizable brands do what they do. A good resource that compiles some of the most well-thought-out brands is produced by SEO guru Saijo George. Find his list by entering the phrase "Brand Style Guide Examples, Hand-picked by Saijo George" in your favorite search engine.

Elements of a Brand Style Guide

Here are the most primary components of a brand style guide to get you up and running quickly while providing a unified representation of your services.

These include:

- Logo & Logo Usage
- Color Palette
- Font Styles
- Iconography
- Photography & Images
- Overall Brand Voice
- Your Personal Story

Logo & Logo Usage

Your logo can either be a logotype (letters only) or a logomark (symbols and icons), and sometimes a combination of the two. The difference between the two is that a logotype incorporates the name of your brand and usually a branding slogan or tagline. It is often customized specifically for the logo format with typeface, size and color selected to optimize readability and retention. Coca-Cola, Disney and Google all provide classic examples of this type of logo.

In contrast, a logomark is an identifying image or symbol that doesn't contain the business name but represents the brand nonetheless simply by the power of image recognition. Good examples include Apple's apple, Target's red bullseye, and the Twitter bird.

As a newer coach, one of my favorite tasks in setting up my first business was creating a logo. It took me nearly nine months before I created the perfect one. That being said, I highly recommend you start with a logotype and keep it simple for the time being. This enables you to refine your branding over time as your business identity forms and you become ever clearer on what your service offerings will be. The second reason to keep it simple for now is cost. That's because you can expect to spend anywhere from \$100 to \$5,000 for a professionally-designed logo. No need to shell out that kind of cash at this point, unless you are certain about what you want and have plenty of funds to do so.

Instead, I recommend creating a quick logo using something like basic clipart or contracting it out through a cost-saving freelance service like Fiverr or Upwork. This is just until you are certain about your company.

However, the process itself is so fun that many coaches dive in immediately (nobody ever heeds my advice in this area!). Truth be told: I like the idea of having enough money to pay a good designer to give you a logo that stands out. But in the startup phase, I'd personally invest the money elsewhere, like something closer aligned to getting clients in the door. But since you're probably going to go ahead and do it anyway (because I know from personal experience just how fun this can be), here are a few recommendations.

Make it meaningful

To create a good logo, know what you are symbolizing first and foremost. Take for example the Whole Person Coach logo.



It symbolizes the emergence of a person from a courageous space into their wholeness. The arc represents the "container," the spiral is "growth," and the circle "wholeness." The Coach Training World logo is a lotus that is merged with a dialog box, symbolizing the power of communication to transform lives. The choice to make it multicolored was very intentional: it represents the whole person.



Logo & Logo Usage Cont'd

There are a multitude of resources for creating your own logo. Entrepreneur.com published a helpful article with some of the biggest dos and don'ts. It's called "How to Create a Logo" and can be found through Google.

If you want to do-it-yourself, some of the top software platforms you'll find are:

- Adobe Illustrator or Photoshop
- Logomaker.com
- Summitsoft Logo Design Studio
- LogoSmartz Logo Design Software

Most of these platforms are fairly easy to use and often provide wizards that walk you through the process step by step. If, not check out www.lynda.com for some amazing training videos on how to learn these software applications. Unless you choose to purchase the software application itself or opt for a monthly-fee service, like those associated with Adobe products, the creation of your logo will be free.

In many cases, you can even download your finished logo and use it for your website and social media presence without paying a dime. Fees usually enter the picture when you need a larger hi-def version comprised of vector files for professional printing on a letterhead or business card. But even then, those fees can be modest (starting at \$50 or less). Be sure to shop around before committing to a service or platform.

Logo usage

Your logo or logotype is an incredibly important part of your brand once you are established. That's why you want it to be reflected consistently wherever and whenever it's used. Your brand style guide helps maintain the integrity of this appearance. In your guide, be sure to dictate exactly how to use your logo. In modern media, this might include variations depending on where the logo appears – an alternative, simpler version of your logo used within a mobile app for example. Amazon offers a great example here. Their mobile app is a combination of the classic Amazon logotype and swooping arrow set above their logo for a shopping cart.



Reflection exercise

- How important is it to you to have a professional logo at this point in your business start-up? If it's not a top-of-mind priority, consider going with a fun font and creating a basic logotype. If it's important, continue with these questions to get started!
- What resources do you have (self/other/outsource) to create a logo?
- Do you prefer a logotype or logomark? Combination of both?
- What do you wish your logo to symbolize?

Color Palette

In general, the strongest logos and color palettes consist of two to three colors. There are no hard rules on this. But by limiting the number of colors you use, it becomes far easier and more cost-effective to maintain a consistent personal brand across varying mediums. For example, most web-based marketing tools support the full color palate. And your logo might look amazing online with a striking and intricately designed cascade of color. But what happens if you want to have that same logo printed? You'll either have to substitute colors, create a monochrome version (remembering that black and white are colors too), or pay per color (\$\$\$!) to have that logo printed.

Choose your colors

Refer back to your mood board. Take note of the color themes you find there. Do you love black, grey and red? Or are you a pink, gray and white kind of person? Maybe you notice iridescence with black and white – yummy! Metallics and even Day-Glo colors can all be rendered in print and online with the right tools. If you tend to like gradients (where one color fades into another), that can also be part of your brand. Just make sure the gradient stays the same throughout your marketing content.

And remember that colors evoke feelings too. So as much as I love hot pink, it really doesn't work well with the holistic, transformational look and feel I want to give. The colors you select are all about you, but they're also about who you hope to appeal to. For additional tips on appealing to a specific mood, Google "color psychology" for studies on choosing the most effective colors.

Identify your color palette

Select the two or three colors that best represent your brand from your mood board. Then using the mood board as a reference, go online or to a printer and ask for a pantone matching chart. Your goal is to identify the colors RGB/HEX value and CYMK value.

If you don't know which colors to choose, start with one as your primary color. This is your foundational color. For example, in the Coach Training World site, this is a dark blue/gray color.

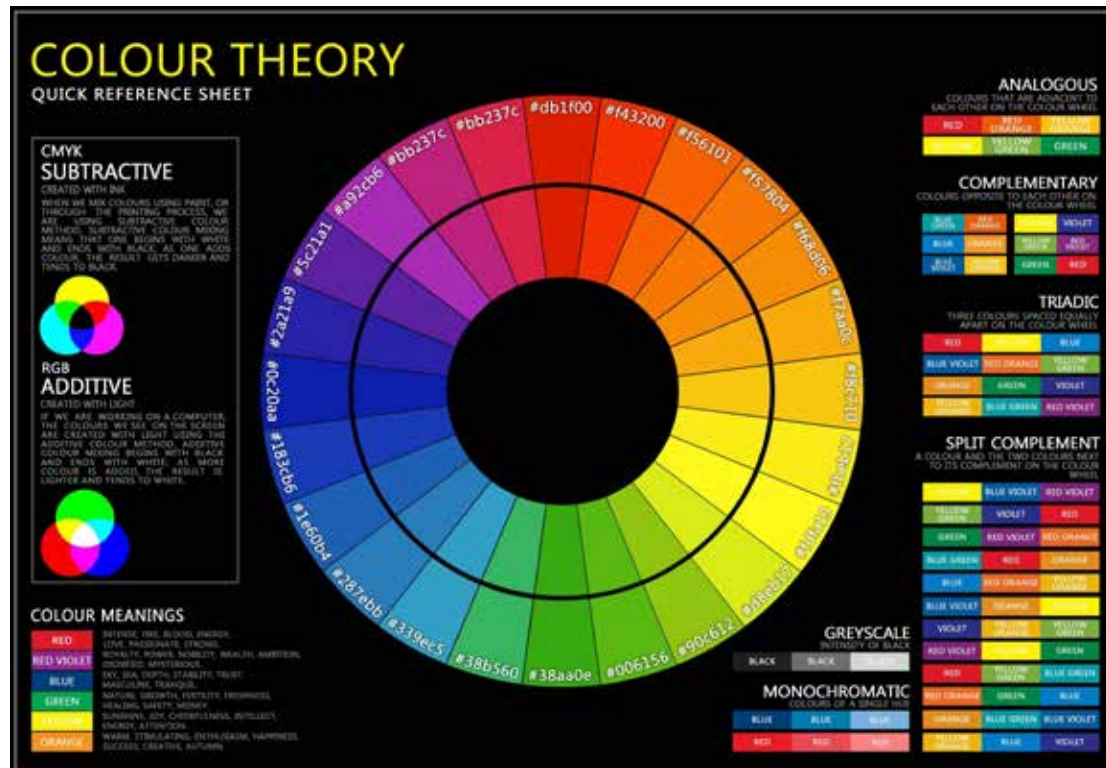
Next use a color wheel to identify complementary colors. To create a complementary color pairing, find your primary color hue in the color wheel below then select the hue directly opposite it. Orange and blue, magenta and green, and purple and yellow are examples of this technique. One color will always be "warm" while the other is "cool," thus providing the greatest degree of contrast.



Use your workbook to record your values.



Color Palette



Another color wheel tool (that is also super easy to use) is available online at: color.adobe.com. The dropdown menu offers a variety of different options. Simply select “complementary” then drag the individual points to see which colors pair best with your chosen primary color.

With the simplicity and affordability online platforms provide, it’s easy to get caught up in the automated process. But there are a couple things to be aware of that become highly important if you want to print your logo on business cards, letterhead or billboards. The first is you’ll have to give a printer or web designer the exact hex or RGB code for web use, as well as CMYK values and Pantone colors for items that will be printed. Failure to do so will be immediately noticeable in colors that don’t match the rest of your brand.

The second bit of advice I’d offer you is that shifts between RGB and CMYK can be severe. So be sure to manually check any conversions for accuracy. This is yet another reason to hire a professional designer who understands these nuances. It will save you time, disappointment and money when printing.

Typography

The typeface you select speaks volumes about you and your brand. That's why it's important to select font styles that can easily be applied throughout most if not all your marketing collateral.

Main or body font

The first of these is known as your main or body font. This is the font you'll use for most of the text on your website, blog, brochures, business card, and other branded collateral. I recommend choosing a main font that is legible and attractive on a wide variety of devices. For a quick reminder on the difference between the two, consider the following:

Serif Font | Sans Serif Font

The serif font in the above example uses Times New Roman; the sans serif example uses Calibri.

Historically speaking, sans serif fonts were thought to be ideal for electronic publication while most printed materials used a serif font. Many web-based publications rely on some form of sans serif typeface, but the choice is ultimately up to you. Dr. Jakob Nielsen, an expert on web usability, had this to say on the matter in his post "Serif vs. Sans-Serif Fonts for HD Screens"

"Almost all mainstream printed newspapers, magazines, and books use serif type, and thus people are more accustomed to reading long texts in this style. However, given the research data, the difference in reading speed between serif and sans serif is apparently quite small. Thus, there's no strong usability guideline in favor of using one or the other, so you can make the choice based on other considerations — such as branding or the mood communicated by a particular typographical style."

Some people find sans serif fonts easier to read. Psychologically, they also have the added benefit of imbuing your brand with a hip, clean and modern appearance. Personally, I think they add a friendlier, more casual air to marketing collateral, in contrast to the more traditional, formal appearance of a serif typeface.

One more word of caution: black fonts against a white background provide the optimal reading experience, both online and in print. In the design world, this is known as "high-contrast." Another article published by the Nielsen Norman Group, this one by Katie Sherwin entitled "Low-Contrast Text Is Not the Answer," argues the case:

"When the contrast is too low, users experience eye strain as they try to decipher the words. Research has also shown that people are less trusting of text that is hard to read — a carryover from the age of 'fine print.'"

In addition, it's best to avoid using colored fonts or reverse text (white text against a black or dark background) in your body copy as this dramatically reduces readability.



Typography Cont'd

Headline font

After selecting your main font, you'll choose one reserved primarily for your headlines. Often slightly more decorative, this is usually printed in a much larger font size and used to call attention to a topic or page heading. Therefore, it should be reserved only for these purposes.

Unlike your body font, this one can be more ornate. Serif fonts would be acceptable here, as would bright fun colors. Just don't sacrifice readability too much. Depending on your specific audience, those who view your website are likely doing so on a mobile device between fifty and sixty percent of the time, according to recent statistics. Therefore I recommend using the same typeface for your headline that you did for your body font. Simply alternate the font weights or size.

Decorative or highlight font

This font is used sparingly and usually only to highlight between one and three words. Because this font is decorative, it's hard to read. But it sure can make your webpage, quotes, and other marketing collateral pop! Examples of decorative fonts include anything that mimics handwriting, cursive, grunge, and the like. Again, I'd point to Oprah's "O" as a prime example. It appears to imitate her signature and, in all likelihood, was taken directly from it.

As a further example, take a minute to look at www.coachtrainingworld.com. You'll notice I've selected sans serif fonts for both my body copy and headlines. I've increased the size of the headline and selected a color that matches my overall color scheme. Up top, in the header image, I picked a typeface that was not only playful and fun but that also looks good at that size and is decorative. Again, if you use a decorative font, use it sparingly. Remember: you want people to remember your style, not get lost in it.

Word to the wise: Google web fonts

There are hundreds of amazing fonts you can select from. But you may want to consider using one of the "Google web fonts" for at least your body copy and headline. Why? Doing so allows the font you select to be accurately reproduced by anyone who views your site. There is nothing more frustrating than coming up with a sparkling new web page only to have the margins and spacing completely screwed up by fonts that are incompatible with current web browsers.

This also ensures the fonts used in your website match those in your printed materials. Your logo font isn't as touchy because it gets converted into a graphic. But having a Google web font ensures your text appears the same regardless of the computer or device it's viewed on and, more important, is unified across all your materials. Learn more at: <https://fonts.google.com/>.

Typography Cont'd

Where to Find Fonts

There are many places you can either download free fonts or purchase them. Some of the most popular include:

- Google Fonts (fonts.google.com)
- dafont.com
- Font Squirrel (fontquirrel.com)
- Adobe Typekit (typekit.com)
- Myfonts (myfonts.com)
- fonts.com



Identify your font selections

Go back to your mood board for inspiration. Which font styles are you most drawn to? Select the two or three fonts that best represent your brand using one of the font sites listed above. Then download your free or purchased fonts and install them onto your computer. Take note of your choices here:

My body font _____

My headline font _____

My decorative font _____



Iconography/Symbols/Decorative Elements

Think of iconography as another way of looking at symbolism. As symbols go, each and every one of them has a universally recognized meaning. If not, they fail in their symbolic quality. The “+” symbol for first aid; the male and female indicators for restrooms; an airplane for airport; or the image of an animal on a road sign to indicate the potential for road hazards in the area. All of these communicate a message instantaneously and without the use of words. So ingrained are they in our collective unconscious, we understand the message without barely having to think.

This is the goal of many a marketer when crafting a brand. While many icons can be personalized to reflect your brand persona, you can’t stray too far from the basic icons themselves if you hope to use them effectively. Yet at the same time, these icons should be a direct reflection of your brand persona. In a blog post entitled “Equity: Brand Iconography,” international marketing guru Kantar Added Value said:

“We believe that people buy a brand when they anticipate it will make them feel better. More specifically people buy a brand when its ‘iconography’ projects an experience that will make them feel better. Brands which renew their iconography whilst protecting its integrity build strong brand connection and equity. These brands become iconic.”

Take a quick look at e-commerce juggernaut Amazon.com. On their homepage, you’ll notice iconography for their search function at the top of the screen (a magnifying glass) and their shopping cart over to the far righthand side. Depending on whether you’ve personalized your public profile, you may also see a message that says “Hello, [your name]” to the immediate left of the shopping cart. This heads a dropdown menu that gives you access to every aspect of your account. Talk about personalizing the user experience!!!

While you’re online, do a Google search for the term “shopping cart icon” and click on the images tab. There you’ll find page after page of shopping cart variations, each implying a little something different based on the weight of the lines, colors used, and angular or rounded shape.



Which type appeals to you most? Which would best represent the brand you’re trying to create and why? Simple or elegant. Modern or 3D? Answering these questions can simplify your search when you begin designing your marketing collateral (or collaborating with someone who will do the designing for you).

Iconography/Symbols/Decorative Elements

In short, effective iconography simplifies usability within your marketing collateral by providing shortcuts to communicate a common message. For this reason, the design of your icons (or those you select) should be universal, basic, clear, and evocative. At the very least, I would anticipate you needing icons for your 'contact me' function (usually an envelope with an arrow point down to it) and a shopping cart within your web design. If you leverage social media to promote your services and products (you'd be crazy not to!), you'll also have icons for each of the sites you publish content to. These should appear either up top above your header image or off to one side and "above the fold" – all easily visible without the user having to scroll down.

Here is another example of symbols used as graphical elements to brand a website with imagery and color.



This is one area where you don't have to waste time or money on a custom design. Thousands of icons are available for use free of charge, with professionally designed icons often available for \$1 to \$2 each. Some of the most popular sites include:

- Iconfinder
- Font Awesome
- Futuramo
- Streamline (streamlineicons.com)
- Shutterstock



Identify potential design elements: symbols, icons & decorative elements

Consult your mood board. Take into consideration which design elements you might want to use in your personal brand. Create a folder on your computer and start saving these elements for future reference. When you put together your Brand Style Guide, paste a copy of these elements into the guide for future reference.



Photography & Images

Photography and images refer to the overall style of the art you'll use within your branding initiative. If you include personal photos, this style will be reflected in the background, coloring, and “staging” of you in the photo. These same guidelines dictate the tone of any stock imagery you use.

As with color and font type, artwork has an enormous impact on your brand. Specific styles evoke certain responses. In fact, people can be made to easily recognize a brand based off nothing more than a photo. Think of Nike for a moment. Over the years, Nike has cultivated a brand personality that's as much about powerful images as it is about message. In fact, I might argue that a powerful image IS the message. Let's take a quick look at one of my favorite recent campaigns.



The ad accompanied a series of others each aimed at a different body part: thighs, legs, knees, hips, shoulders, etc. The point? They were reshaping the conversation women routinely have related to these parts of their body – parts that a wide range of women have historically struggled with in light of a narrowly defined standard of beauty in our culture.

The “Butt” ad is my favorite in this series simply for the message it relays. You also see the standard Nike elements in the campaign. Notice the bright, energetic colors that appear in these ads as droplets (sweat perhaps?), thereby implying movement. You'll also notice the telltale Nike split lighting design. Often using a large primary source light, this stark type of lighting setup splits the subject in two, a light half and a dark half. It's severe yet powerful, adding a high-contrast edge to the models that effectively reveals their bodies. Nike uses their images to tell a story. In fact, you could take away the copy and still get the basic premise of the “Butt” ad.

Professional photography is not necessary for all brands. But if it's an important part of yours, include it in your style guide. Again, this will save you the time required to explain your chosen style to photographers and all others who work with the images after that.

Photography & Images

There are three different types of images you'll want to explore for your website and marketing collateral:

- Photos of you!
- Photos that tell a story about who you work with, the way you engage others, and the meaning behind your work
- Photos/images that become background elements in your designs

Whether you use original photography or opt to use royalty-free stock art for the latter two (as most of us do when first starting out), keep the following checklist in mind:

- **Content:** What's the subject? People, products, interiors or nature? How are your subjects engaged? Are they in motion or at rest? Are the settings highly organized, open and sparse or busy and chaotic? Are the photos close-up or further away? Facial expressions? Body language?
- **Story:** What story do your images convey? What impressions do they give?
- **Mood:** Do your images impart a clear mood? How do your photos make others feel? Serene, mysterious, excited, inspired, romantic? Your mood board can guide you to offer a consistent feeling in your marketing efforts.
- **Angle:** What angle does the viewer enter your photos? Straight on as an equal? From a bird's eye view and a position of power? Or does the subject dominate the foreground, looking down on the viewer (probably best to avoid this last one in light of the services you hope to offer).
- **Editing:** How much and what specific types of editing will your photos receive? Think Photoshop here: correcting for color, lighting balance, grain or clarity. Minimal imagery with natural, desaturated lighting conveys an elegant calm tone (Oprah). Images with a high-contrast appearance convey vibrant motion (Nike).

Remember: who you are is reflected in your facial expressions and body language as much as in your hairstyle, makeup (or lack thereof), and clothing. Add those elements to your choice of background in combination with the cues we've just covered, and your photos will tell your story, reliably and effectively.



Choosing Your Images

Identify potential images to use in your website and other marketing collateral

Go to a service like Shutterstock and create a lightbox. Use their search feature to find and save 20 to 30 images you feel represent your brand. For example, if you want to work with diverse families, you could type in “diverse families.” If you are looking for background images that are all within a color scheme, search for “green backgrounds” or “green textured backgrounds” or “green marble.”

Download watermarked samples to try out in your marketing content prior to purchase. You might also try to match elements from your mood board when choosing your stock photos. If you are a photographer, you can save money and achieve an even more personal and integrated tone by creating your own images.

Once you have a selection of photos, ask yourself:

- What images best reflect my personality?
Use photos of yourself in your website to reflect your most accurate self. But remember: this site is for your audience. Too many photos of you might leave them feeling like they are meant to be a fan versus someone you can help. In the same way, too many photos of nature, might lead them to think they are on a hiking site.
- How might this image make someone feel?
If you plan on offering coaching to help with weight loss for those seeking to lose 100 pounds or more, photos of Victoria’s Secret models may not welcome your audience. Similarly, if you are marketing to spiritual entrepreneurs, photos of sterile corporate boardrooms are probably best avoided. Get the point?
- Does this photo work to support the story you’re trying to tell? Does it leave the person viewing it on your website or other marketing collateral feeling connected to it and you?

Emotion is the name of the game. Images are powerful tools to tell a story and create emotion. Use them wisely. They speak volumes.

Overall Brand Voice

Within each step we've taken up to this point, I've invited you toward authenticity. Making this effort will draw your dream clients to you, responding as people do to the commonality of interest in your message, appearance and, you guessed it, voice. Think of your brand voice as your unique language. It's the words and phrases you use, as well as the feelings you bring to life in others by the way in which you communicate with them.

Take another quick look at www.coachtrainingworld.com. Notice the voice I use is casual, friendly, and compassionate – a reflection of the services we provide. There is also a style to the language we use. It's likely you resonated with some of the words, concepts and values that permeate the numerous paragraphs of copy. That's why we're here. If you didn't, you'd likely be learning with a different community.

Explore some of the sites for your favorite personal brands. What feeling do you take away when you read their copy? Do they seem to be talking to you or with you? My bet is that the copy reflects a conversation among peers, even for high-end luxury goods. Yet while this works for most brands in a global, online marketplace, it's not a hard rule.



When you sit down to hone your brand voice, select a tone that reflects your personality:

- Are you playful, serious or a balance of the two?
- Do you want to project absolute confidence or an eagerness to explore?
- Emotional? Spiritual? Intellectual? Physical?
- Are you highly educated in a specific topic that you hope to convey? Or do you possess a more generalized knowledge?

General guidelines

As a general rule, many coaches position themselves as smart, lifelong learners, possessing a wide range of personal experience. They are often informal yet professional with expertise they use to support not direct.

Any additional qualities you add to your tone should reflect who you are. And it usually goes without saying, profanity has its place and audience. You'll know if it's right for you and your audience. I also think it's important to use an active voice versus passive. Review examples of the difference through a quick web search if you're unsure.

Lastly, avoid talking at someone or exclusively about yourself. Instead, speak to them as if you were having a real-time conversation.



Your Personal Story

Last but not least, there's you. A personal or professional story is used to build intimacy, trust, rapport and respect with your audience. It helps them feel connected to you, whether they read it from afar or you personally share it with a room full of prospects.

An engaging story not only demonstrates to your prospective clients that you understand their unique situation and needs, it also provides the evidence they need from a practical and emotional standpoint. That evidence being: you are the one and only.

There are three common story types:

- The Road Traveled
- The Phoenix Rising
- The Expert Guide

The Road Traveled is a personal story comprised of one or more events in a timeline that highlights experiences similar to your audience. For example, if you were a dating coach, you might share significant stories based on a series of dates you encountered before you found the right person. If you are using the Road Traveled story type, you're ultimately stating that you know the process required to get certain individuals where they want to be. You are also showing you have gained something of value to offer them – firsthand knowledge and experience they don't already have (and can't get from Google). Within this approach, you'd talk about your personal experience, dating challenges, and the triumphs you earned. You should also include a little bit about why you want to help others in a similar predicament.

The Phoenix Rising is a survival story. This is a powerful approach, and usually one in which you've experienced a life-changing wake-up call. Though you'll still follow a timeline as you would with the Road Traveled approach, the primary focus here will be on the before, during and after of the event. In particular, you'll want to demonstrate how you rose above tragedy and are now ready to help others in a similar position from a place of strength, knowledge and compassion.

The Expert Guide is a story that features you as the "expert" in the room. While the previous two story types focus on events in your own life, the Expert Guide story focuses on the transformation you make with your clients.

In this story, you weave your past clients' success stories together to illustrate how your partnership helped them achieve their goals. Like corporate case studies, this story type provides your ideal prospective clients with an understanding of how you help others in tangible, relatable ways. Though this story is less personal to you, it can be very impactful with certain audiences. It punctuates your capacity to affect change by including important details related to your client's return on their investment in terms of money, time, and effort saved.

Choosing the Right Balance of Story to Share

Your story is all about you. But more importantly, it's about your prospective clients being able to fit themselves into the storyline. Too much personalization will leave them feeling like you don't get them or that you're primarily concerned with yourself and your achievements. Although this works for someone reading about their favorite actress or rock star, it won't convert a prospect into a paying client. It's a fine balance. Too little personalization limits the connection, trust and respect you want to develop. Too much looks like grandstanding.

The best way to strike that balance is to position yourself as someone who knows what your target audience is dealing with or experiencing. For example, if your audience consists of people surviving a "big ordeal" they are more likely to trust someone who knows that pathway well. Maybe you didn't have cancer, but your sister did. Or you've worked as a nurse in oncology.

My point is: your audience needs a clear representation of understanding – they need to know you get them. Your story must express this understanding in a way that makes you relatable and positions you as someone who is able to help them right from the get-go of the coaching relationship.

I've worked with breast cancer survivors. But it wasn't until they found out my grandma had breast cancer and both my grandparents died of cancer that they would even listen to me. Still some would claim I had no idea what they were going through. And you know: they were right. But I possessed a strong enough understanding that enabled me to quickly build rapport through empathy and compassion for their situation.

All this to say: your story is a key element in your personal brand. It informs much of the content you will create for your marketing collateral (coming up in the next chapter) and should be the core of your brand. It's what makes you unique. And this brilliance is just the spark others are looking for.



Your Turn...

This concept is so important we've devoted an entire course to writing your story! Please visit the **Turning Point Story Course**. It's time to create that personal brand and document it. I've placed a worksheet walking you back through some of the central concepts from this chapter inside the course to simplify your process.

But before I close. Here's a little story around what can happen when you lose track of your personal brand. For me, it was costly!

A few years ago, I decided to reinvent the look and feel of my personal brand. I had been through some major life changes and wanted to freshen up my look. More than anything, I wanted this newer version of me to be reflected in my marketing efforts. Since I was creating a new personal website, it seemed like the first thing I should do was get new photos. Nothing wrong with that, right? Except that in the thrill and excitement, I overlooked the fact that artwork and images are major elements within a personal brand. Nevertheless, I put the cart before the horse and spent a couple thousand dollars on professional photos – all that before getting clear on my rebrand.

Right after I hired the photographer, I went shopping with a personal stylist. Three days later, the shoot was over. I reviewed the proofs the next day and was in complete horror. My personality showed up in its perfect style, but the clothing reflected my old corporate image (still trying to fit in).

I hated the photos. They didn't reflect my true nature (unless I was hoping to market myself to the corporate leadership arena, which I wasn't). A dear photographer friend of mine came to my rescue. She helped me with another photoshoot the very next weekend. The original wardrobe I'd selected got shoved to the back of the closet and eventually ended up at the thrift shop. The new clothes I selected were much more in line with the fun, playful vibe I was hoping to portray. As a result, these photos turned out exactly as I'd envisioned them.

Lesson learned. And that lesson was: get clear on your brand identity first then proceed with the rest.



Now... get to it!