



# WHAT'S NEW?

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**A**nother year has gone by. Was it one of personal growth for you? Or do you feel as if you're where you were at the beginning of the last one? That nothing's really changed? That you're still on a treadmill?

During the last quarter of 2010, I had the great joy of working on a project with Donna Rachelson, a marketing fundi who has just written her first book, entitled *Branding and Marketing YOU*. She took a novel tack and video-interviewed nine leading people across diverse fields in South Africa. Specifically Monica Singer (CEO of STRATE), DJ Fresh (5FM fame), Prof. Loyiso Nongxa (vice-chancellor, Wits University), Tumi Makgabo (former CNN broadcaster and businesswoman), Mike Stopforth (CEO Cerebra), Ian Ollis MP, Vuyo Jack (Empowerdex pioneer), Allon Raiz (serial but very successful entrepreneur) and exercise and sports science guru Prof. Tim Noakes.

Donna's open-ended questions to these good people were designed to find out what factors they believed made the biggest contribution to their success, to identify any special talents or characteristics and understand how they marketed their personal brands so successfully.

Surprisingly, or not, significant commonality emerged. Off the top of my head, they ran something like this:

1. You have to identify your passion/s because when you're driven by it/ them, you're at your most energetic and inspired.

2. Authenticity (being who you really are) and congruence ('what you see is what you get') are non-negotiable. People don't like dealing with fakes and acting out a role is unsustainable.
3. You need to identify your USP (unique selling proposition), point of difference, niche or speciality and really sweat it.
4. You have to network – even if you're an introvert, terrifying though the thought may be.
5. You need to engage in significant projects that grab the imagination and people's attention.
6. Those interviewed didn't use regular PR or promotion channels – they just collaborated and worked on significant projects that created excitement.
7. The people behind successful personal brands give back in their field of expertise and to the broader community. They are generous people and they grow others.
8. Spirituality and respect featured on most checklists.
9. They're not so much focused on reputation management as conducting themselves appropriately in the first place so they don't need to worry about negative reputation incidents.
10. Perhaps the most exciting point is that none of them come from privileged backgrounds. They are all testimony to the dictum that success is one per cent inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration. They don't talk about luck – only hard work.

Why am I telling you about this book? I believe I'm doing you a favour because if there's something that can shift tired old perspectives and situations, reading

this book is a sure-fire recipe. It's not a theoretical rehash of other business books. It comprises verbatim conversation with nine people who have made a success of personal brand building – and therefore their lives. They are admired and respected in their communities and the career arenas in which they operate. They deliver fresh and simple suggestions for making change – based on real-world experience. In between their conversations, Donna has drawn threads, conclusions and observations and the book is highlighted with 'Insights' that emerge as the discussion flows.

If you've been wondering how you can change what you do and how you do it – you'll be hard-pressed to find better value than starting your year with a read that genuinely has the potential to change your life. I've read it a few times and each time a different facet stands out, or an insight speaks to me. I have no doubt it will do the same for you. The book is available in good bookstores and if you have trouble tracking down a copy, get hold of Donna on [donna@brandingandmarketingyou.com](mailto:donna@brandingandmarketingyou.com) and she'll point you in the right direction.