

The Persona Project

Step one: Identify 6-12 characters that express who you are in different context.

Take a piece of paper and map out some compartments of your personality. Give characters or Personas silly names. Doing this allows you to objectify the character and examine it without getting too caught up in yourself.

Some characters clients of mine have identified include:

Crazy Stalker Girl, Mad Professor, Boy Wonder, Bush accountant, Rockstar Wannabe, Princess Perfect, Florence the rescuer, Skater Boy, Fantasy Freak, Whirling Dervish

And on it goes...I love watching people identify and then embrace parts of themselves they hide or only bring out with certain friends and situations. Its quite healing to acknowledge in characature a part of you and use that to be more effective on stage when you speak. It also increases your likeability (charisma). This self effacing characterisation also helps makes you more real.

I imagine a mental health expert might feel this fracturing of yourself into various unique personas is somewhere on the condition spectrum with multiple personality disorder or schizophrenia. They might be right, so lets stay light and breezy in using this technique. Its easy for the 'personas' project to become a massive journey of self awareness and acceptance. I think it too important to be taken that seriously. Stay light and somewhat flippant as you play with the various personas within you.

Step two: Tap into these characters to make your presentations more appealing.

Three ways you might do this:

1. Find a metaphor or analogy out of the character that serves you when you speak.
2. Adopt some movement or dramatisation from the stereotyping of the different characters.

3. Explore stories and narrative from each of these personas or characters.

Three quick illustrations and examples:

a. Rockstar Wannabe

Uses story of BONO from U2 and the late Pavarotti collaboration on the single Miss Sarajevo released under the band Passengers as an example of the power of collaboration.

b. Mad Professor

Uses a lab table on stage and makes points through mixing chemical reactions and demonstrating laws of physics as they relate to the immutable laws of marketing and selling.

c. Skater Boy

Contradicts and dismisses some commonly held beliefs. Shaking up the status quo by sharing stories of heroes from Extreme Sports. Explaining how the attitude that makes them tick is exactly what companies need to foster in their innovation leaders.

An actor studies a character and people mimicking and adopting traits gestures mannerisms, tones of voice pitch and pace of voice all in an attempt to make the pretense seem authentic. As a speaker all you have to do is turn up those parts of you that are easily identifiable so that they work on the main stage or platform when you speak.