



THE ART OF BEING GENUINE

How do we invite trust and build relationships in an online community without the face-to-face interaction? How do we convey that we are genuine? Research demonstrates how frequently email is misunderstood and how much we depend on tone of voice, facial expression, eye contact, and body language to understand what someone is saying. Most written correspondence happens within a framework of previous shared experiences. In the online environment we don't have any of those other cues to assist in creating relationships. The Art of Being Genuine requires some self-evaluation. Sometimes we need to be a sculptor, carefully chipping away all that is not genuine.



1. Use a natural conversational style. Don't talk down to people and don't try to talk over everyone's head. Use the style and tone that you would use if you were talking to a friend at your kitchen table. Read what you've written and if it doesn't sound like you...try again.
2. Be open, transparent, and approachable.
3. Ask yourself, "Am I trying to push my own agenda here?" If so, reconsider.
4. Review whatever you write looking for "I". If the "I" gives insight into who you are, that's awesome. If it sounds like a chorus of me, me, me...think it over.
5. Take a chance and share your failures as well as your victories.
6. Don't be afraid to go out on a limb to stand for a matter of principle, but allow others to stand for theirs.
7. Choose descriptive words to give people an idea of who you are and what you are feeling, observing and thinking. Others will identify with you. People are multi-faceted. If you only show one side of yourself, people will think you are not genuine.
8. Be helpful. Don't try to answer every question, solve every problem, but do contribute when you feel that you can genuinely be of assistance. Don't jump into a conversation just to get your name out there. That's disingenuous.
9. Listen. Listen not only to what is said, but what is unsaid. This is where a single genuine question can open the door to a whole new level of understanding, connection, and relationship.
10. Make people feel comfortable. I recently visited a highly technical website that invited me to call with the simple sentence: We're easy to talk to...call us. I did. And true to their claim they answered my questions in terms that I could understand.
11. Be intentional about using the important words that convey thanks, appreciation, and the value that you place on relationships.
12. Make sure that your compliments and praise are highly valued by running a genuine scan...say it when you mean it and mean it when you say it.
13. Give generously of your knowledge and expertise.
14. No matter what your subject is don't take yourself too seriously. Try to inject a little levity. Everyone can use a smile or a laugh.
15. Words in cyberspace have a very long life. Be wise about the words you choose.