

# CHAPTER 2

## Just Be Yourself (but better)

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# LEARN YOUR BRAND

Your friends may know it better

*This lesson has a video filled with information created just for you.  
Make sure to watch the video on the course page before you tackle the workbook.*

**YOU have a brand.** Even if you don't know what your brand is, you have one. Every time you walk into a room, your brand shows up with you. Every time you leave a room, people talk about you & your brand. But is it consistent with what you WANT it to be?

I hear you asking “What does your ‘brand’ have to do with public speaking?” the apostrophes and quotes are mixed up. Everyone asks me this question. Your brand is everything you are - from the words you say and your subject matter to the clothes you wear and the way you wear your hair. Right at this moment, you have a brand. Even if you've never defined it, you are your brand. If you've never thought about it before, take some time to really think about the brand you have - and if it matches the brand you WANT to have.

Before you start speaking on stage, your brand shows up. Before you say a word, before you shake a hand, before you open your talk - people are judging you based on the brand that came before you. Your brand shows up on your website, on your marketing materials, on your speaker materials, in how you write your emails, and when you walk in the room to say hello to the audience. Your brand is showing up even if you haven't defined it.

**“But Melanie, what is YOUR brand? And how did you figure it out?”**

**My brand is Approachable Badass.** It took me a LONG time to figure out how to define it. But the short story is: APPROACHABLE: I am really friendly & find it very easy to make friends. BADASS: I live a big huge life & push my limits on a daily basis. APPROACHABLE: People confide REALLY personal things with me even without knowing me well. BADASS: Once I know things about people, I push them past their “comfort zone” to find their own sort of badass.

After figuring out my brand, I cut my hair short, started (slowly) getting tattoos, found a personal stylist and a makeup artist, hired a photographer & showed her who I wanted to be, and then hired a brand designer who could bring my personality to life through my designed brand. I know - I make it sound easy - but that took me 5 years. The person you see before you - this

is who I aspired to be 5 years ago. And now I have a brand aspiration of who I want to be 5 years from now. It's ever-evolving, but MAN, does it feel good to show up unapologetically as myself in EVERY area of my life.

## HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE YOUR BRAND SHOWS UP BEFORE YOU DO?

**Now YOU:** Once you figure out your brand, you can show up on stage fully as yourself and you'll show up with a genuine authenticity that connects with any audience - even the ones who doubt you. People are CRAVING real humans - authentic speakers who don't BS them. They want to connect with you. Figure out your brand and you'll end up getting WAY more business than you ever imaged. (Seriously, it's that simple.)

**1. Write down 10 words that describe who you are.**  
 Think about your clothing style, your walk, your haircut, what's on your laptop, the color of your phone case, the car you drive, the coffee shop you go to, the bars you frequent. Be aspirational - how do you WANT people to know you. Write down up to 10 words that would describe your overall style, how you show up - your brand.

1.		6.	
2.		7.	
3.		8.	
4.		9.	
5.		10.	

**2. Text this to 10 of your friends & family: “What 3-5 words describe me?”**  
Write down all their words below:

**3. As you're waiting for responses, write down what you WANT people to say about you.**

**4. If you had unlimited resources, what would you want to change about the way you show up to match who you are on the inside?**

Now that I have you thinking about your brand, check out my friend, Joey Coleman.

# DIVE DEEPER

Joey Coleman

Watch the excerpt of Joey's talk in the course:

## FIRST 100 DAYS

Scribble all your notes below.

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Joey Coleman is not the “blue suit” speaker you would expect. Although, yes, he tends to wear blue, he has gotten a lot of grief over the years about his lack of “normal” speaker appearance. He even had someone ask if he was going to get a haircut before he got on stage. His answer, “Why? My hair looks great.”

Joey's wacky sense of style, bed-head hair, and colorful wingtips go perfectly with his upbeat, over-the-top personality and he uses it to his advantage on stage. He stands out because he knows his brand and rocks it. If someone doesn't like the way he looks or what he wears, he couldn't be bothered to care. He's on stage to share how you can rock your own style in your customer service, so why wouldn't he rock his personal style while helping you learn a new way of thinking?

I HIGHLY recommend **buying his book**, *Never Lose A Customer Again*, if you're in any sort of sales, customer service, or entrepreneurial role.

Know your audience, stand fully in your own personal brand, and be unapologetically you.

**NOTES:**

# DEFINE YOUR BRAND

Become the person you look up to

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My personal brand is Approachable Badass. I'm someone who's definitely not intimidating and could be your best friend (approachable), but I'm also going to push you a little bit (badass.)

Go back to the last section & re-read everything your friends & family said about you. Now, answer the following questions:

1.	Did the words your friends & family shared match how you'd describe yourself?	Circle one:    YES    NO
		If NO, why:
2.	How do you want to be defined as a brand?	
3.	Are those words your friends shared the way you'd like your brand to be identified? If not, what's different?	
4.	Think of 2-3 words that stand out & define you best.	

**5. What do you need to do now?**

Now that you have this awesome/kickass/lovely/amazing/adorable brand of yours, you've got to make sure you can show it externally as well as internally. Put together a checklist of the things you need to do to show up fully as yourself - with deadlines AND who you need to find to help you. Because nothing ever gets done if you don't have a deadline or help.

Checklist Items	Due Date
Item 1:	
Item 2:	
Item 3:	
Item 4:	
Item 5:	
Item 6:	
Item 7:	
Item 8:	
Item 9:	
Item 10:	

# SPEAK YOUR BRAND

Become the person you look up to

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If my dad has a personal brand, you do, too. He writes a certain way. He talks a certain way. He knows his subject matter. He speaks & writes EXACTLY the same way. When you read a letter from my dad, you can hear him speaking.

## **Do YOU write the same way you speak?**

Most of us have had to write papers for school at some point in our lives - for high school, college, Masters' degrees, Doctorates (ok, now we're getting fancy.) Writing papers taught us how to write properly, which is great. But no one speaks that way. And no one should write that way unless you're writing an AP-style paper for a scholastic journal.

For a long time, I would write blog posts the way I thought I "should," until I realized I wasn't writing LIKE ME. I then wrote talks that sounded NOTHING like me. Once I started reading them, I found my speaking voice and started writing the same way. It flowed - it was easy. I didn't have to stick to a certain style or a specific way of writing a talk - I could write it the way I said it.

**YOUR TURN:** Take all the rules you learned about how a "proper essay" is supposed to be written and toss them out. Throw away everything you've been taught about what is "CORRECT." Stop saying you "should" do it a certain way. I want you to write a speech that sounds like you - not an academic robot.

## **CHALLENGE: Next time you're having coffee with a friend, listen to how you tell a story.**

While you're writing your talk, I want you to think about your conversations. It's important to simplify the words you use to describe your industry, topic, or methodology - Write the words you actually say instead of the words that sound smarter. If you're used to using long or technical words in your everyday, I want to challenge you to use smaller words and define industry phrases - even if it sounds like you're dumbing it down.

Notice how you show up the way YOU show up. You show up as YOUR brand.

And your brand shows in:

- ➔ How you speak
- ➔ Your body language
- ➔ Your facial features
- ➔ Your choice of clothing
- ➔ Your mannerisms
- ➔ How you listen and interact

The things that light you up will light up others in the way that you share them. Write your talk so it fits YOU. Then we'll make it fit your audience. There is no structure for a "perfect talk" - even if there are whole books written about it. Even if certain stages tell you to do it a certain way. Instead of getting up on a stage and putting on a speaker voice, let's use the one you already have.

Let's create your brand dictionary.

**1. What words do you say all the time?  
(This is a good thing to ALSO ask your friends.)**

**2. In this list of words you say all the time, what needs to change to  
fit the brand you aspire to have?**

# BRAND YOUR TALK

How to make your talk yours

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Most of us have a favorite speaker. My favorite speaker is TED speaker Benjamin Zander who bucked the normal TEDtalk and crafted a talk that fit HIM. He didn't care about the rules, he wanted to show up as himself. I'll show you his video after this.

## **I WANT YOU TO SHOW UP AS YOU (which is NOT an easy thing to do).**

While you're preparing to write your talk, listen to other talks - other speakers. Check out the structure of their talks. Pull out pieces you like AND pieces that don't resonate with you. There's a reason they don't resonate - they don't fit your brand. See how the speaker interacts with the audience. Ask yourself why they start and end stories the way they do. Watch how they move their body on the stage. Check out their props. Pay careful attention to how they wrap up their talk.

Now start thinking about what makes you YOU. Why do people want to listen to what you have to say? Do you live the information you want to share? How so? Take the pieces you like from each speaker and bring them into your talk. Do things the way YOU would do it. No need to copy, just get ideas.

## **CHALLENGE: Look up other speakers & find inspiration for your style**

Watch at least 3 impactful speakers and write a list of things you do AND don't like. Write down the things you love so you can implement them. Write down the things you DO NOT want to do.

SPEAKER	TALK TITLE	THINGS I LOVED	THINGS TO LEAVE BEHIND

# DIVE DEEPER

Benjamin Zander

Watch the excerpt of Benjamin's talk in the course:  
**THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF CLASSICAL MUSIC**  
Scribble all your notes below.

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Benjamin Zander got on the TED stage and did something no other TED speaker had done. He did his talk HIS way. Most TED speakers are coached to stick to the script, stand on a red dot, and follow a TED pattern of sharing. Benjamin threw the script out the window and shared his enthusiasm for a normally dull topic - classical music.

He starts by sharing a Chopin piece and explains how most react to it. He then goes into why you should love it and then how you can love it. He truly gets the audience listening. And then shares how music moves people. But don't read my recap, come up with your own - you'll want to share it with your friends. I do.

Grab a tissue box and watch Benjamin Zander deliver his very enthusiastic TEDtalk about why you should love classical music.

Even if someone requires your talk to fit a certain structure, remind yourself that you're a rule-breaker and you do things YOUR way. Never feel like you have to fit into a box. Rock your brand AND your talk the way YOU would - as long as you're standing firm in who you are and what you know.

**NOTES:**

# SCRIBBLE PAD

**Add your notes, ideas, stories, and thoughts here in random order.  
No edits needed.**

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