

Become More of Who You Are (And Other Lead Positive Tips)

Lead Positive profile: Sally Hogshead, brand expert, bestselling author (Part 1)

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Meet [Sally Hogshead](#), branding expert, bestselling author of the [FASCINATE: Your 7 Triggers to Persuasion and Captivation](#), and natural Asset-Based Thinker.

Sally leads by focusing on her assets—she believes the greatest value you can add is to become more of yourself. In fact, she created the Fascination Advantage Assessment, to help others discover their own natural advantages of [persuasion](#) and to gain a better [understanding](#) of the world sees them.*

Read on to learn how she learned first-hand the importance of “becoming more of who you are” and “understanding who you are not” and how those realizations spurred her career to new heights.

This is part one of Sally Hogshead’s Lead Positive profile. Come back next week to read part two in which she talks about the impact her kids had on her perception of herself and her assets.

What three signature events inspired the passion and innovation you demonstrate as a leader?

Become more of who you are

Around 2008, I had a really difficult time in my business with the economy. Meeting planners had slashed their speakers’ budgets and I hadn’t really hit my stride as a professional speaker. So I focused on trying to be better than other speakers. I looked at what they were doing. I tried to copy them and tried to outdo them. I tried to become a copy of somebody else. It was exhausting. I looked terrible on the outside and I felt miserable on the inside because I wasn’t able to raise my speaking fee.

I think a lot of people can identify with times in their lives when they’re working as hard as they can, but they’re not seeing a reward financially or emotionally. They don’t seem to be able to move forward. They feel stuck. And so, I took a hard look at myself.

How did the world see me? I realized that I was trying to copy speakers who

focused on authority, were highly detailed, had every word of their presentation memorized or simply repeated the same stories over and over. I was trying to outdo them rather than figure out who I naturally was and the relationship I had with the audience.

I began steering my career more toward becoming more of who I already was. The audience doesn't need me to change who I am; they need me to be *more* of who I am and communicate in a way that's going to help them hear and take action on my message. Within two years, I had increased my revenue by 700 percent even though I hadn't changed my speech. All I did was change the way I communicated what my speech was to my prospective customers, my prospective clients.

So, the lesson in there for all of us is you're never going to be successful in your career, you're never going to make as much money as you potentially could if you try to be something that you're not. Remember, you don't want to change who you are. You want to become more of who you are.

Understand who you are not

When I was seven years old, my sister was the number-one rated swimmer in the world. She had two Guinness Book world records that year. It was also the year my brother went to Harvard. And so, as a seven year old, I was thinking, "Well, how can I stand out?"

I didn't want to go into athletics because my sister had already mastered that and I didn't want to focus on academics because my brother had already claimed that territory on the family trophy mantle. I realized that creativity and seeing things from an alternative point of view were really where I was going to be able to reach my highest levels of achievement.

It was an understanding of who I was *not* that allowed me to see who I actually was. And from that, I discovered that I wanted to go into advertising and I wanted to use creativity as a way to really make a difference in the same way that my brother and sister had. Continuing that spirit of creativity allowed me to think very differently about the traditional psychology framework of how we understand personality and instead think of it more like a personality brand.

Know where you're at a disadvantage

To this day I hate pre-Algebra, but pre-Algebra played a defining moment in my career. In the seventh or eighth grade, I came home from school and I got a

terrible grade in pre-Algebra on my report card: a D. This is what my pre-Algebra teacher wrote in my report card. I actually put it in the book:

“There’s a fine line in math between being creative and being erratic. I will continue to support Sally in using her creativity, but [also in] becoming more consistent in her work.”

I remember feeling crushed by this. But looking back, what my teacher wrote was actually perfect. She said, “There’s a fine line in math between being creative and being erratic.” She wanted me to think about things in a very specific way—very linear, very rational, analytical, and systematic.

I will never be great at rational, systematic thinking. It’s simply not how I add value. It’s not how people perceive me, and if I try to do that, I’m going to keep getting a D. Most of us have had times like this in our lives when we tried as hard as we could in a certain area and we still failed in the eyes of others. I propose that it’s not because we didn’t try hard enough or because we weren’t good enough. It’s because somebody was asking us to do something that was simply a disadvantage of ours.

There are going to be certain areas in your career and in your life where you’re going to be at a real disadvantage. It is going to take a huge amount of energy for you to get good results and it will end up taking energy from the areas where you could really contribute and make a difference.

For example, I score very high on passion. Some people score very, very low on passion. For them to go to a cocktail party and make small talk and hug strangers and have a conversation around the cheese platter would be totally inauthentic and awkward and tiring—very expensive in terms of their mental, emotional and physical resources. And yet, many of those people are in sales or they’re having to make client outreach.

If there’s an area in your work that you’re naturally primed to have a disadvantage, that you’re very unlikely to be exceptional at, it’s really important to know that. Then you can surround yourself with team members who can optimize you or you can put a little bit of caution tape around those spots in your work to make sure you’re not getting sucked into a no-win situation.

*Over the course of her ad career, **Sally Hogshhead** was one of the most awarded*

advertising copywriters, winning almost every major international advertising award. Her internationally acclaimed book, [Fascinate: Your 7 Triggers to Persuasion and Captivation](#), has been translated into over 12 languages. Her newest book, [How the World Sees You](#) is already a New York Times best seller as well as a Wall Street Journal best seller. Follow Sally on Twitter [@sallyhogshead](#).

Dr. Kathy Cramer has written seven best-selling books including *Change The Way You See Everything*, which started the ABT Global Movement. Her latest book, *Lead Positive* shows leaders how to increase their effectiveness through her revolutionary yet refreshing simple mindset management process, *Asset-Based Thinking*. [Download her Speaker Kit here](#).

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