# DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

**A**FFIRMED IDEALS
**S**OCIAL GENERATIVITY
**C**ONSISTENT ACTION
**E**NERGY & PRESENCE
**N**ARRATIVE & COMM.
**T**RUE SELF




## THE ASCENT MODEL

Developing your personal brand is about building a deeper connection with your true and authentic self and enabling your true self to positively influence others.

In the middle is your True Self and personal branding starts with an understanding of your values, strengths, and purpose. How will you then connect yourself to others? In the model above, the points of the star represents the ways that you demonstrate your true self to others through your being and action. As a result of your being and action, you generate in others, a sense of engagement, inspiration, influence, trust, and integrity.

This model was developed by Antonius Tsai and Tom Hurtado.

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## Affirmed Ideals

Affirmed Ideals are the values you choose to move toward, even if you're not fully living them yet. They are the qualities that call you forward—the kind of person you hope to become, the way you want to show up when you're at your best. In that sense, they function like a North Star. You may never embody them perfectly, but they give your life a direction. They help you navigate the tension between who you are now and who you feel you're meant to be.

These ideals are different from the True Self. The True Self is what already exists within you. Affirmed Ideals are the horizon. They are the principles that guide your growth, the commitments you return to when you drift, and the aspirations that shape your choices. When you affirm an ideal, you're saying, "This is the direction I want my life to lean." And over time, that leaning becomes a way of being.

## Prompts

- What value do you stand for?
- What do you want more of in the world and in yourself?
- If you had a personal motto, what would that be?

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## Social Generativity

Social Generativity is the part of your personal brand that asks: What is the authentic gift I offer to others? Not the polished version of yourself, not the roles you play, but the real gift that comes from who you are. Every person carries something—an insight, a way of listening, a steadiness, a spark—that becomes meaningful when it's shared. Generativity begins when you offer that gift freely.

This contribution doesn't have to be dramatic. Most of the time, it's subtle. It's the way you encourage someone at the right moment, the clarity you bring to a conversation, the care you show when no one is watching. Through these small offerings, you create impact. You shape the emotional and relational landscape around you.

Over time, these contributions accumulate. They become the way people experience you. They become your reputation—not because you crafted it, but because you consistently gave something real of yourself to your community. Generativity is the quiet legacy you build through presence, intention, and the willingness to share what is uniquely yours.

## Prompts

- Whom are you seeking to benefit from your contributions?
- What is to "gift" that you most enjoy giving to others?
- What is your impact on others?

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## Consistent Action

Consistent Action is the part of your personal brand that others can actually see. People may not know your intentions or your inner world, but they can observe your patterns. If you are consistently punctual, people come to expect that from you. If you are consistently late, they expect that too. Over time, these small behaviors form a rhythm, and that rhythm becomes the way others understand you.

We are, in many ways, what we do over and over. Our habits reveal our priorities more honestly than our words. That's why consistency matters. It's not about perfection—it's about direction. It's the ongoing work of cultivating the kinds of actions that reflect the person you're trying to become. When your behaviors align with your ideals, people begin to trust the coherence of your life.

Consistency is how reputation is built. Not through grand gestures, but through the steady accumulation of choices that signal who you are. When you consistently practice the actions that matter, your personal brand becomes something others can rely on.

## Prompts

- What are the core consistent actions that define you?
- What actions do you do consistently that other people tend to notice?
- In what ways are you the most reliable?

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## Energy & Presence

Every one of us carries a certain energy, and people can feel it long before we speak. Someone can walk into a room and immediately radiate warmth, steadiness, or tension. Energy & Presence is the part of your personal brand that others pick up intuitively. If you are caring, people will feel a caring energy from you even in silence. If you are anxious or distracted, they will feel that too. Our presence is never neutral. It radiates from the inner state we bring with us.

This is why awareness matters. The energy you exude is shaped by what's happening inside you—your emotions, your mindset, your level of groundedness. When you're not aware of your inner state, your energy spills out in ways you may not intend. But when you cultivate awareness, you begin to choose the kind of presence you offer to others.

Your energy affects people. It can calm, uplift, or inspire. It can also unsettle or drain. Energy & Presence is the ongoing practice of tending to your inner world so that what you radiate has a positive effect. Over time, this becomes one of the most memorable parts of your personal brand—not because you try to project anything, but because your inner life naturally shapes the atmosphere you create.

## Prompts

- What is your typical mood day-to-day?
- What is your general energy level?
- What energy do you tend to bring when you interact with people?

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## Narrative & Communication

Narrative & Communication is the part of your personal brand that others encounter most directly. It's the way you speak to people—the tone you use, the openness you offer, the empathy you bring into a conversation. If you speak with courtesy, people begin to experience you as courteous. If you speak with rudeness or impatience, they will experience that too. Over time, the way you communicate becomes a mirror through which others understand who you are.

Communication is not just about transferring information. It's about revealing something of yourself. When you speak with empathy, people sense that you are empathetic. When you listen with genuine interest, they feel valued. When you are open, others can actually see you. And without that openness, your inner world remains hidden.

Your narrative is the story you choose to tell about yourself—what you emphasize, what you share, what you allow others to know. Every time you communicate, you are saying something about who you are and what matters to you. Over time, these small moments of expression accumulate. They form a coherent sense of your character, your values, and your direction.

## Prompts

- When talking to other people, what do you enjoy talking about?
- Do you tend to be open or close-to-the-vest when talking with others?
- What do you typically say about yourself?

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## TRUE SELF

And then, at the end of the ascent, you return to the beginning. The True Self sits at the center of the model, but it also waits for you at the end—as the quiet realization of everything you've been moving toward. The True Self is not something you invent. It's the part of you that already exists beneath the striving, the expectations, and the noise. It's made of the values you actually live, the strengths that keep showing up, and the purpose that keeps tugging at you.

But the True Self becomes clearer as you move through the other dimensions. Your ideals point you toward it. Your contributions express it. Your consistency strengthens it. Your presence reveals it. Your narrative gives it language. By the time you arrive here, you're not discovering something new—you're recognizing something that has been quietly shaping you all along.

When you live from that center, your personal brand stops being something you build and becomes something you embody.S

## Prompts

- Name three things that are most important in your life.
- Name three strengths you exhibit when you are at your best.
- What is your purpose? What would you give your life for?

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