

Show Your Work By Austin Kleon: Book Summary(+PDF)

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Show your work helps you put your work out there and build an audience. If you aspire to be an influencer and if there are some doubts and hurdles that are stopping you from taking action, this book is for you.

Show Your Work: Book summary

A new way of operating.

“Creativity is not a talent, its a way of operating.” – John Cleese

You should focus on getting really good so that people come to you. You don't have to find an audience. Your audience has to find you. And the best way to being found is to put your work out there and make it discoverable.

Instead of wasting your time on 'networking', focus on consistently putting your work out there so that you can take advantage of the network.

You don't have to be a genius

“Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think.”

Forget about being a genius and think how you can contribute and be valuable to the society. Stop what others can do for you and start asking what you can do for others.

You don't have to be rich, famous or an expert to share. Online, everyone has the ability to contribute something.

Be an amateur

“*That's all any of us are: amateurs. We don't live long enough to be anything else.*” —
Charlie Chaplin

Most of us don't want to reveal that we are amateurs. But that's what we all are. And sometimes, amateurs can teach others better than the experts. The world is changing so fast. Today's expert is also tomorrow's amateur.

Pay attention to what others are sharing and take notes of what others are not sharing. And fill the voids with your own efforts no matter how bad they are at first. Forget about being an expert or a professional, and live like an amateur.

You can't find your voice if you don't use it

The only way to find your voice is to use it. It's hardwired, built into you. Talk about things you love and your voice will follow you.

Sharing what you do and what you know is a matter of existence or non-existence. It might sound a little extreme, but in this day and age, if your work isn't online, it doesn't exist.

Think process not the product

By taking advantage of the internet and social media, one can share whatever he wants and whenever he wants, at almost no cost. Although the process is messy, humans are interested in other human beings and what other human beings do. By sharing your process and BTS you can form a relationship with your audience. You can document your life and share it with the world.

Share something small every day

“*Put yourself, and your work, out there every day, and you'll start meeting some amazing people.*”

There's no such thing as overnight success. There's a lot of hard work and perseverance behind what looks like an overnight success.

If you are in the very early stages, share your influences and what's inspiring you. If you're in the middle of executing a project, write about your methods or share works in progress. If you've just completed a project, show the final product, share scraps from the cutting-room floor, or write about what you learned. If you have lots of projects out into the world, you can report on how they're doing—you can tell stories about how people are interacting with your work.

Your daily dispatch can be anything you want—a blog post, an email, a tweet, a YouTube video, or some other little bit of media. There's no one-size-fits-all plan for everybody.

Don't worry about everything you post being perfect. 90 percent of everything is crap.

“One day at a time. It sounds so simple. It actually is simple but it isn't easy: It requires incredible support and fastidious structuring.” —Russell Brand

Don't be a human spam

You can't share absolutely everything online. You have to be careful of over-sharing. There's a big difference between sharing and oversharing. If you are not sure, if something is worth sharing or not, let it sit there for 24 hours and then decide.

Choose a good domain name

“Carving out a space for yourself online, somewhere where you can express yourself and share your work, is still one of the best possible investments you can make with your time.”- Andy Baio

Build a good name. Keep your name clean. Don't make compromises. Don't worry about making a bunch of money or being successful. Be concerned with doing good work and if you can build a good name, eventually that name will be its own currency.

Love your garbage

We all love different things that other people may think are garbage. But, you have to have the courage to keep loving your garbage, because that's what makes you unique. If you find something you enjoy, don't let anyone else make you feel bad about it.

Tell stories

Human beings are social and emotional beings. They want to know where things came from, how they were made, and who made them. The stories you tell them are what make a huge effect on how people feel and understand your work. A personal story is what helps you make a better connection with your audience.

Teach what you know

“The impulse to keep to yourself what you have learned is not only shameful, it is destructive. Anything you do not give freely and abundantly becomes lost to you. You open your safe and find ashes.”- Annie Dillard

Teaching doesn't mean instant competition. Because there is an intuition that you only gain through the repetition of practice. No one can emulate you right away, even if you share all of your secrets.

The minute you learn something, turn around and teach it to others. This way people feel closer to your work because you're letting them on what you know.

Don't waste your time networking

There are people who waste their time and energy trying to make connections instead of getting really good at what they do. Because that's the only way you attract people who love the stuff that you do. Being good at things is the only way that earns you genuine connections.

Manage your energy

“Whatever excites you, go do it. Whatever drains you, stop doing it.”—Derek Siver

You have to be very careful of the people you hang with. If you feel worn out and depleted after hanging out with someone, you should be more cautious of that person.

Learn to take a punch

When you put your work out into the world, you have to be ready for the good, the bad, and the ugly. The more people come across your work, the more criticism you'll face.

The more criticism you take, the more you realize it can't hurt you. If you spend your life avoiding vulnerability, you and your work will never truly connect with other people.

“The trick is not caring what EVERYBODY thinks of you and just caring about what the RIGHT people think of you.” —Brian Michael Bendis

You want feedback and criticism from people who care about you and what you do, not some random stranger. There are sad, awful, or completely insane people all over the internet. They will hate you or criticize you more often. But, if you stop feeding those criticisms and trolls, they will eventually go away.

Keep a mailing list

Emails are decades and decades old and it's nowhere close to being dead. If you send someone an email, it will land in her inbox and will come to her attention.

The people who will sign up for your newsletters will be your biggest supporters. So, you have to be careful to not betray their trust. Treat them with respect.
