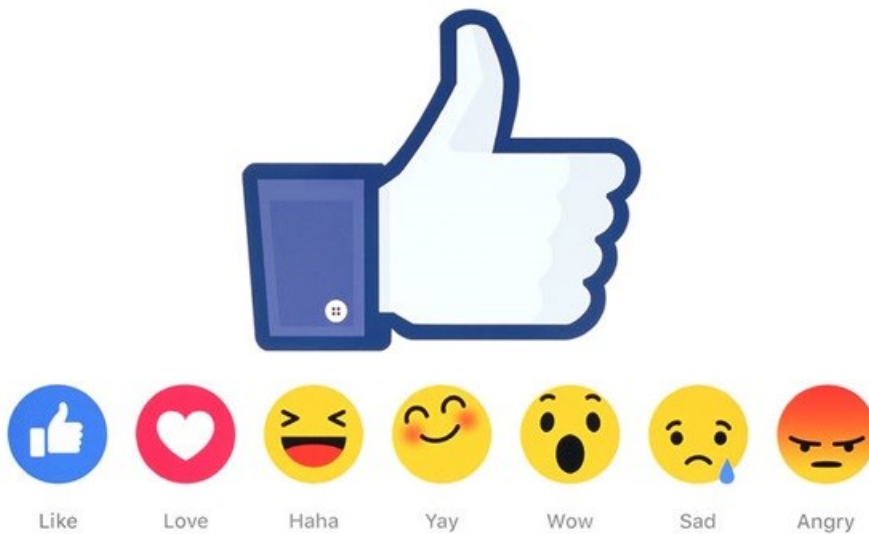


Follow yourself, not your 'likes': 5 steps on the path of progress

By  Claudia Roth

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Take a look at the world today: brands define success by the number of social media followers, hits, likes and comments. Individuals are becoming more separate (alienated) than connected in the quest to be unique and stand out; and inauthentic leaders are forcing global societies apart. A rosy picture, isn't it?



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This 'me-me-me' approach that is commonplace in the brand arena – and lately expanded into other areas of society – does little more than feed the ego and its defining and arguably destructive three S's: Separateness, Superiority and Selfishness (also seen as selfies). We live in an age of uncertainty and only by accepting change and, importantly, bucking the collective unconsciousness will we begin to find the meaning we crave and reap the rewards both personally and professionally.

A clear divide between leaders is emerging: a) those who embrace uncertainty, empower themselves and see unlimited opportunities, constantly rewriting the game plan – personally as well as professionally; and b) those who are falling deeper and deeper into the collective unconsciousness, blaming outside circumstances, blissfully unaware that they have boarded a sinking ship.

As a leader, do you dare to explore your inner world, challenge your self-image, face your fears and embrace the uncertainty of change? What does it take to escape this collective unconsciousness?

Progress relies on new awareness

Turn your next boardroom meeting on its head with these five talking points and nuggets of 'inner reflection' that will get the creative juices flowing freely and set you and your team firmly on the path of authentic progress:

1. Be vulnerable

The word vulnerability is not common in business. Yet paradoxically Brene Brown's YouTube video on [The power of vulnerability](#) has been viewed more than 28 million times. There must be some people who feel vulnerable judging by the number of views!

2. Knowledge is limiting

Recognise that while knowledge has got you this far, it won't get you much further in the age of uncertainty. Mental knowledge alone will neither deepen your understanding, nor advance your business. Read my article on [why knowledge is limiting](#).

3. Self-awareness is the key

No longer viewed as esoteric, boardrooms of the future will centre on this very topic and its ability to nurture creativity and choices. Khalil Gibran once said, "Knowledge of the self is the mother of all knowledge. So it is incumbent on me to know my self, to know it completely, to know its minutiae, its characteristics, its subtleties, and its very atoms."

4. Authenticity

Yes, it's an overused word, but it's what consumers long for; they want to be moved, engaged, inspired and fulfilled. Businesses need to shift strategies to follow suit, and the important point here is that authenticity relies on self-awareness.

5. Emotions are the new currency in business

How can you emotionally engage your customers with your experience, brand or service? How do you want them to feel and what experience do you need to create? For example, Airbnb are taking the lead, digitally creating an environment of community engagement: connecting hosts and travellers. But, importantly your brand and employees have to live and feel the emotion you wish to instil into your customers.

The fact is people are seeking increased meaning and connection – in their lives and the brands they align with. But whether an individual or a company, true connection can only come from within: from an exploration of awareness and an unwavering commitment to authenticity and integrity. The level of self-awareness by any leader dictates the future success of an organisation or a brand.

The moral of the story... #FollowYourself!

ABOUT CLAUDIA ROTH

Claudia Roth is the founder of Soul Luxury.
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