

The Hype Handbook

Tags: [#human-relations](#) [#personal-branding](#) [#career](#)

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Dialogue

A lot of us bristle at the term "hype" -- what is it really?

I understood that, on balance, the most malicious people among us tend to have the most intuitive understanding of these principles. At the same time, most well-meaning people fail to understand—or reject outright—these psychological realities.

As a result, harmful products, ideas, and ideologies tend to gain the most traction, while those that have the most potential to help people and move society forward often flounder.

This goes back in history - the story of the Magi.

We've evolved through history to seek guidance from those who appear miraculous. There are two factors that come up in research of indicators of what people perceive as miraculous vs. just chance. The factors: surprise and worthiness.

You don't have to have the persona to do really nutty things in order to benefit from this.

There's a fine line between learning to tell your story in the most persuasive way possible and being a braggadocious liar. The latter will ultimately work against you because, despite appearances to the contrary, most people are surprisingly good at spotting truly blatant bunk.

To stay on the right side of this line, think of the various elements of your narrative as faders on a music studio mixing board. When recording engineers mix a track, they could theoretically place every instrument—bass, guitar, drums, vocals, and keyboards—at the same level. But this would make the result an ugly blob of noise, no matter how good the underlying song actually is. Instead, they raise and lower different instruments in the mix. None of the instruments disappear entirely, but some come to the fore while others recede into the background.

Bonni's colleague. Lesson: I need to do the work to mix these. Either no one else will -- or they won't mix it the way I do.

Examples:

Thomas Edison

Ayn Rand

Andy Warhol

Tactics:

1. Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Practice not mentioning your weaknesses for a week.
2. Come back to the list and reframe how some of your weaknesses might be strengths.
3. Develop your story. Hero's journey -- three act structure.

What have you changed your mind on?

Quotes

Highlight [xx]: In a perfect world, the best work would attract the most attention on its own merits. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. Instead, the single most important factor that determines whether something becomes a phenomenon or a flop is arguably the least understood—an ephemeral combination of manufactured drama, media manipulation, and behind-the-scenes maneuvering. By pinning down and organizing these principles, and presenting them in an easy-to-learn and easy-to-use format, I've attempted to make this magic formula accessible to the rest of us. The human animal is not rational. We make decisions based on emotion and mental fallacies and then justify our choices afterward. So here's my message to you: If you are a business owner, entrepreneur, executive, artist, activist, or thinker who can honestly say that you are truly trying to make the world a better place, it is your moral imperative to learn how to harness raw emotion and irrational thinking to your benefit. You must come to understand how people really make decisions, why they really get excited, and why they really choose to follow some people over others. Then you must use your understanding of these principles for good.

Highlight [77]: By crafting the persona of someone who has the ability to perform amazing feats, you tap into one of the two key miracle heuristics that ransom and Alicke pinpointed—worthiness. And by choosing a feat that most people don't encounter every day, you tap into the other—surprise.

Highlight [77]: Despite what they'd have you believe, the number one difference between magicians like Branson and the rest of us is not the size and scope of their accomplishments. It's that they think and talk differently about those accomplishments.

They have learned to present an easy-to-digest version of reality—one with a simple story arc in which they are protagonists using their powers to overcome clear-cut obstacles to achieve a worthy goal.

Highlight [78]: At the same time, there's a fine line between learning to tell your story in the most persuasive way possible and being a braggadocious liar. The latter will ultimately work against you because, despite appearances to the contrary, most people are surprisingly good at spotting truly blatant bunk. To stay on the right side of this line, think of the various elements of your narrative as faders on a music studio mixing board. When recording engineers mix a track, they could theoretically place every instrument—bass, guitar, drums, vocals, and keyboards—at the same level. But this would make the result an ugly blob of noise, no matter how good the underlying song actually is. Instead, they raise and lower different instruments in the mix. None of the instruments disappear entirely, but some come to the fore while others recede into the background.

Highlight [79]: Just as working the faders is the best way to get across the artist's vision, turning up the volume on the elements of your story that showcase your accomplishments and lowering the volume on those that don't will give you the best shot at realizing yours. In some instances, however, the underlying track may still need some additional work first.

Highlight [80]: In short, figure out if your talent is in short supply among members of the new crowd you're looking to become part of, and if it doesn't cost you much to give a little of it away, do so, especially if it would appear particularly magical to those who don't possess it. Not only can leading with these sorts of abilities gain you entrée into circles that might otherwise be closed to you; it is often the first step in getting the people who matter most to the achievement of your goals to view you as miraculous.

Highlight [83]: Do you have a certain trait you've long been self-conscious about? Do you have an eccentricity you've taken pains to hide? Pieces of yourself that other people think are weird or useless? Think back to your childhood. Can you remember being made fun of because of a certain aspect of your personality and then vowing not to act that way anymore? Were there places you went to in your daydreams that the world convinced you were unacceptable? List them all. Don't hold back. Next, for each of these traits, think of a way to reframe it into a positive. Nestled into every one of the quirky elements that you have long suspected makes you a bit of a misfit is a golden nugget from which you can refashion yourself as a magus. From all of these, choose the one that seems the most intriguing. The more sharply it stands out from the tenor of your time, the more likely it is that it contains the magic you are looking for. This is the foundation upon which you should begin building your persona. Once you've decided upon your magical power, weave it into every element of how you present yourself. Embody it whenever you communicate with the world—whether in a talk that could decide the course of your career or in a one-on-one conversation with a member of your extended social circle.

Highlight [84]: Make one list of all your strengths and another of all your weaknesses. Put aside the weaknesses. Over the next week, you are going to practice not mentioning any of them. • After a week, return to your list of weaknesses. Think about how you might flip each into a strength. Choose one of these newly discovered strengths and find ways to slip mentions of them into your various communications—whether one-on-one conversations or promotional materials. • Develop your story. Come up with a ready-made narrative that explains how you got where you are. There are many storytelling structures out there to help you mold your tale (the hero's journey, the three-act structure, etc.). Fit your story into one of them to make it more compelling.

References