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WHEN HUMOUR AND THERAPY COLLIDE WITH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

BY CHRIS WALLWORK (MBACP)

I have been faced with an interesting personal and business challenge this week. In my work as a therapist here in Wellington I have been working with my colleague Nathan to produce a series of bite-sized videos for our website.

These videos have been designed to appeal to potential clients looking at our site and the various directory listings we have, in the hope that they would de-bunk some counselling myths, and place us at the head of the queue when it comes to being potential therapists of choice by the people watching them.

Nothing wrong with that, lots of therapists do the same I'm sure. However, whilst watching these videos back I noticed that whilst I was pleased with the message coming across, I was holding reservations as to how little our own individual personalities we were allowing to come across in the video – was it enough, or too little? Are clients that bothered with a corporate personality, or do they want to see the personality of the therapist who will be sat across from them? Authentic marketing anyone?

This issue was compounded later that evening, as I came to delete all the 'mistakes', the attempts to get the videos right, from my camera – I noticed that in these mistakes, our true personalities were showing. There was laughter, humour, banter – some of the very things that can help to define us as individuals. I watched the



outtakes, and decided to make a compilation of them to share on my personal Facebook page amongst friends. There was nothing incriminating, counter-ethical, rude or demeaning about these outtakes – simply recorded evidence of two therapists making mistakes, who knew such a thing was possible?!

My challenge has been whether to release this 'outtakes' video on our Cornerstone website also. I wonder how potential clients would react to humanity and personality portrayed in that way. Would it be positive or negative for business development? I am left wondering whether clients would like the reassurance of 'calm and steady', or whether the occasional 'leaking' of personality would in fact be a positive thing for our site.

It also got me thinking as to whether enough of our own personalities comes across on our site. Maybe this needs to change. What do fellow therapists think, more or less of individual personalities when it comes to the business development side of our business?

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