

Dorie Clark: Ultimately, your personal brand is just your reputation. It's pretty simple. I think sometimes people worry about it too much or they overcomplicate it. But the real question is just, what is your reputation? What do people think about you and is it what them to think about you? Especially these days, if you want to be successful you can't just leave it to chance. You can't just say, "Oh, whatever, my work will speak for itself." Or, "Oh, well, they'll figure it out."

Robert Glazer: Welcome to Elevate, a podcast about achievements, personal growth and pushing limits in leadership and life. I'm Robert Glazer, and I chat with world-class performers who have committed to elevating their own life, pushing the limits of their capacity, and helping others to do the same. Welcome to the Elevate podcast. Our quote for today is from Gary Vaynerchuk and it is, "You need to know your personal brand and stay true to it."

Robert Glazer: Our guest today, Dorie Clark, is one of the world's most respected thinkers on personal branding. She's a bestselling author, professor, coach and consultant who helps people transform themselves into thought leaders in their area of expertise. Dorie is the author of three books, has lectured at Duke, Harvard, Stanford, Walton and has consulted with companies such as Google, Morgan Stanley, Microsoft and many more. Dorie, welcome. I'm excited to have you join us on the Elevate podcast today.

Dorie Clark: I am so glad to be here. Thank you so much for having me.

Robert Glazer: Do you teach at all these schools? Do you rotate?

Dorie Clark: I do rotate. I live in New York City and so I fly down to Duke about three times a year to teach for them. I actually just got back last night from teaching one of my programs for them called Communication For Leaders, and I teach for Columbia a couple of times a year as part of their advanced management program on personal branding.

Robert Glazer: Very nice, so you have a lot of credentials.

Dorie Clark: Thank you. Oh, I even forgot, I teach in Russia too. I teach for SKOLKOVO, which is a top business school in Russia. I teach personal branding there too.

Robert Glazer: Must be very different than in the U.S.

Dorie Clark: They have a simultaneous translator which is a little weird to get over, just seeing somebody in the corner who's speaking into an earphone and some of the people are listening through headsets. So you have to learn how to do it that way. But yeah, it actually is amazing taking folks, many of whom... I mean there's a lot of mid-level professionals and so a lot of them really did grow up in a communist country. For them to be taking a course on personal branding is wild geopolitically.

Robert Glazer: Very foreign. You've had a wide range of experiences throughout your career, including politics, academia and now spending a lot of time coaching. How did you get your start?

Dorie Clark: My start actually came because my original plans just absolutely did not work out, I had to improvise to find something that would. Originally I wanted to go into academia. I got a master's degree but I ended up getting turned down for all the doctoral programs I applied to so I had to scramble and figure out another plan. I became a journalist because I thought, "Okay, sort of similar. I can read and write and talk about ideas." Which was not a bad idea at all, it was something I enjoyed. But I didn't really realize that the journalism industry was collapsing just as I was entering it, so I only did that pretty briefly. I did it for a year and then I got laid off and just could not manage to find another job in journalism.

Dorie Clark: I ended up turning to politics which is what I had covered as a journalist and I had had some experience volunteering on political campaigns before. I became a political campaign spokesperson for a presidential race and then for a governor's race, and worked in politics, unfortunately, for a lot of candidates that kept losing so I had to have another plan. And then I ran a nonprofit for a couple of years. Eventually 13 years ago I started my own business because I realized that being self-employed, being an entrepreneur, could enable me to use all of the different skills that I had built about being in speaking and ideas and thinking about how you communicate those ideas effectively. I was finally able to bring them all together in one place.

Robert Glazer: Interesting. So what presidential campaign was it?

Dorie Clark: I worked for Howard Dean in the 2004 cycle.

Robert Glazer: Oh wow. I have not heard that name in a while.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, yeah, I mean nowadays he comes up and everybody says, "Wow, if only the worst thing our political leaders did was scream a little."

Robert Glazer: Right. Yeah. It's different perspective through today's lens.

Dorie Clark: Yes.

Robert Glazer: What did you learn working on your first presidential campaign? I would say in general and then maybe more related to branding.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, I mean in general I think I learnt... hey, certainly learnt the value of hard work. Sometimes people say that being an entrepreneur is challenging because, oh, you're working all the time. What I realized was that being an entrepreneur actually feels easy compared to working on a political campaign because you have to get the work done but you have a lot of liberty, of a lot of autonomy

about it. If you need to, whatever, go to the dentist at two o'clock in the afternoon, you do it, or if there's something really important for you, you can work around it. It makes it so much more manageable despite whatever the volume of work is.

Dorie Clark: On a political campaign, I mean it was... I think the only thing I can compare it to is possibly being in the military. We worked weekdays from... We had a standing staff meeting every weekday at 8:00 AM and we'd work until about 9:00 or 10:00 at night. On weekends, it was our big break, we'd work from 9:00 to 6:00 on weekends. It was very exciting because Saturday night you could finally go out and see a movie or something with your friends. But you were working seven days a week, there's no labor laws or anything covering that. It was such high stress and such an intense pace that literally everything I've done in my life since then has seemed very, very easy in comparison.

Robert Glazer: Better to do the harder thing first.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, exactly.

Robert Glazer: Could teach millennial parents that, we might be in a better situation today. I'm curious, in a campaign, working the sort of hours, it's clearly not for the money. Do people believe that much in the candidate, do they believe that much in the party, do they just want to be part of the experience? I'm always curious at what causes people to work at that level in environments where they don't have a lot to gain.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, I think there really are a lot of true believers. I mean if you're going to be working that hard for a particular candidate, you need to feel a sense of mission about it otherwise it just wouldn't be worth it. The money was not great at all. I was making \$4,000 a month as the New Hampshire communications director, and I was one of the senior people.

Robert Glazer: You're in New Hampshire so that was high stakes.

Dorie Clark: It was very high stakes. Our field organizers were being paid \$800 a month. In fact, we got in trouble, the campaign got in trouble and had to raise their salaries because we were actually paying them so little it turned out to be illegal. It was poverty level wages for many people on campaigns, of course, the hours are bonkers.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, you really feel like you're doing something important with your life. You feel like you're doing something important for the country. I think where it does get interesting is... I was working during a primary and so then of course Dean did not get the Democratic nomination.

Robert Glazer: Right, I was going to ask this, yeah.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, so John Kerry did that year, and a certain percentage of our staffers then go on to work in the campaign for the nominee. At that point it really does become about, okay, well, it's about the cause or causes that you're invested in, or it's about defeating the incumbent whom you presumably don't like, so it rallies you. But it was interesting for me because, with the stipulation that I'm sure John Kerry's actually a perfectly nice man, I had spent nine months of my life as the spokesperson thrashing John Kerry.

Robert Glazer: I've always wondered this, right. Yeah, that's hard to... Well, in today's lens it seems like people shift their thinking on this stuff daily, but yeah, that's hard.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, and so I absolutely did not want to work for John Kerry. I hated him. I'm just, "No, I can't work for that man." Of course, I voted for him but that's a different thing than working for somebody. And so I couldn't bring myself to do it although other people in the campaign certainly went on and did it. Some of the more lucky or lucky/farsighted of our staffers went on to work for Barack Obama in his Illinois senate race. That turned out to be a good career move for them. I went back to Boston and I ran a nonprofit for a couple of years.

Dorie Clark: It was a little bit random. It was somewhat of a career deviation one might say. But it turned out to be a valuable step for me in that it taught me a lot about entrepreneurship and I think enabled me to be able to have the tools to successfully launch my business two years later.

Robert Glazer: You launch your business two years later, it's a perfect segue. You put up the flag. What are you selling?

Dorie Clark: We often talk about pivots in business.

Robert Glazer: Pivots, yeah.

Dorie Clark: Originally I thought that I would be a political consultant. I thought that was a pretty plausible strategy because I had been doing high level politics and said, "Okay, I can do this freelance now." It turned out that, for whatever reason, whatever point it was in the cycle or just the lack of the draw in terms of my pitching initial clients, I was not getting a lot of pickup with political candidates but I was getting a lot of inquiries from government agencies, from nonprofits, a little bit from businesses. I was like, "Okay." I mean I was not dumb so I'm like, "You know what? If you want to hire me, I'm available."

Dorie Clark: Literally I had cards... My first card said, "Dorrie Clark, political consultant." And so I went back and got business cards that said, "Dorrie Clark, communications consultant." I'm like, "Great, I'm going to see who wants me and go there." And so I was basically doing marketing and communications consulting in the early days of my business.

Robert Glazer: Today you're known as the expert personal branding and self-reinventions. What was the process that drew you to that subject and how'd you go from becoming an expert in politics and communication to personal branding?

Dorie Clark: Well, in some ways there is a very direct throughline in the sense that political communications in a lot of ways really is personal branding for the candidate read large. That's very much what it is. It's oh, what is their mission? What do they stand for? What's their message? How do you make sure that that is what gets conveyed rather than what their opponents wants you to think about them?

Dorie Clark: I think there's definitely a lot of similarities. But I think it little bit of a circuitous path to get there in the sense that for the first number of years of my business that I was actually making money and being able to have a business, I was doing enterprise level consulting. I mean I was essentially doing marketing strategies, not for individuals but for businesses, and so I had to learn the methodology for that. But eventually in 2009, that was the year that I really got serious about wanting to build my own brand through writing a book. I'd always wanted to write a book, just because it was a personal bucket list goal, but I knew as well that it would be useful for me in terms of branding my business and hopefully attracting clients.

Dorie Clark: I had a bunch of different ideas for books but none of them were successful. Basically all the publishers were like, "Well, this is fine but you're not famous enough." And so I got all of the proposals rejected. I had literally written three different book proposals.

Robert Glazer: You're good with rejection early in your career it sounds like.

Dorie Clark: Yes, yes, I was very well acquainted with it. I decided, "Okay, all right, if they're telling me the problem is that I'm not famous enough or I'm not well know enough, I guess I will just have to work on that" And so I started blogging, not out of any great desire to blog but because I was like, "Well, I want a book and clearly this is what I have to do to get it."

Dorie Clark: And so eventually after a lot of pushing I was able to break into writing for the Harvard Business Review. One of the pieces that I wrote for them early on was called How to Reinvent Your Personal Brand. That piece become popular and it caught the eye of the editors and they asked me to expand it into a full-length magazine article for them. At that point, once it got into the print edition, it caught the eye of some literary agents who reached out to me and said, "Oh, have you thought of turning this into a book?" Of course this is what I'd been waiting because-

Robert Glazer: I guess I've thought a lot about it.

Dorie Clark: Yeah. For me it was a blog post, whatever, but I'm like, "You like this one? Great, that's my book." And so literally that's how it happened, was I discovered that people were interested in the concept of taking the marketing work that I had been doing with companies and applying it to individual professions. Certainly it was something that I felt capable of doing, I just hadn't really realized that there was a lot of interest in it, but once I saw it I dove on it. Since then, personal branding and building a brand as a leader has been a cornerstone of what I write about and what I speak about.

Robert Glazer: How do you define a personal brand?

Dorie Clark: Ultimately, your personal brand is just your reputation. It's pretty simple. I think sometimes people worry about it too much or they overcomplicate it. But the real question is just, what is your reputation? What do people think about you and is it what them to think about you? Especially these days, if you want to be successful you can't just leave it to chance. You can't just say, "Oh, whatever, my work will speak for itself." Or, "Oh, well, they'll figure it out." I mean maybe if we all had more attention to give, that would probably be true. But people don't have a lot of attention these days. They don't have a lot of bandwidth and they're just frankly not paying very close attention to you.

Dorie Clark: And so it is really important for us to take the lead in helping to guide other people's perceptions. It doesn't mean anything weird or salesy or duplicitous. It just means being thoughtful about how we would like to be seen and then living our life strategically in accordance with that so that the right message gets through. But a lot of people don't do that, they don't take the time to do that, or they don't know to do that. I think it's a mistake and it's something that if you just put a little bit of thought into, it can really be easily corrected.

Robert Glazer: Do you think there's a misperception, and I'll focus on executives and senior leaders in this context, but in today's world and social media, that they can have a different personal brand and a company brand, that way they don't realize given the public nature of everything they do it is one in the same and they need to pay more attention to it?

Dorie Clark: Well, I think what you're talking about touches on two interesting issues, Bob. One is the idea of the personal versus the professional and then the other is the individual professional brand versus the company brand-

Robert Glazer: Correct.

Dorie Clark: ... and how all of those touch on each other. To take the former, if we're talking personal versus professional, I think at this point people are probably mostly aware that, look, yes, it's true. You can set your Facebook to friends only and things like that. We also know there is such a thing as screenshots and so we have to be aware that anything that's shared online can spread and so we need to be mindful of that.

Dorie Clark: I think that ultimately it doesn't necessarily matter that much if there's certain things that you'd like to keep private. For instance, at the course that I was just teaching at Duke this past week called Communication For Leaders, there was a gentleman in there who asked the question, he said "Well, I keep my Instagram private? Are people going to look at that askance? Are they going to think that's weird?" I said to him, "No, a lot of people use Instagram or sometimes Facebook as a place where it's look it's pictures of the kids or whatever. People don't literally need to connect with you every single place."

Dorie Clark: But what we need to be aware of is even if there's some things that you're keeping private, or as private as these things can be, we do need to give them something to latch on to. I mean I think it is a problem if people google you and they literally can't find anything about you online. It's like, "Okay, Mr Witness Protection, who are you?" So it's important to have something up there that gives a sense of who you are, LinkedIn profile or certain professional thing so that people just get at least a sense.

Dorie Clark: But when it comes to the individual brand versus the company brand, I think this is an interesting area where people don't always really fully appreciate it. But I like to think of it as a Venn diagram, if you can picture your junior high math with the two overlapping circles. If your brand is so wildly different than your company's brand, it's probably not going to end well for you because outside people and also inside people eventually are going to say, "Wow, why does he even work here? He doesn't even have anything in common with what we're doing."

Dorie Clark: But simultaneously, an equally serious problem, is if your brand literally is too overlapping circles, if your brand is exactly what your company's is and nothing else...

Robert Glazer: Maybe you seem inauthentic.

Dorie Clark: You seem inauthentic or you seem like a yes man. It's like you're not bringing anything new to the table. Ideally the strongest place to be for your personal brand is... certainly needs to overlap with your company brand some so people can say, "Oh, yeah, well they share values. They share some DNA." But also you're bringing something distinct to the table that the company wouldn't have without you. That's what makes you valuable in the end.

Robert Glazer: I'd love to get your opinion on LinkedIn. I've written on this a bit as one of my more popular articles from last year. I think there's strong cases to be made... Facebooks, your personal profile, Instagram obviously. I'm constantly amazed at the stuff that people comment or say on LinkedIn without recognition that their company name and title is attached to it. I understand that they're perceptions but it just seems to be completely ignorant of the association there, particularly when they're just negatively commenting on other people's post.

Robert Glazer: I mean I had someone... and I know there's some culture implications but something I wrote and this guy wrote this terrible rude, obnoxious reply and I looked and he's a vice president of Visa in France.

Dorie Clark: Wow.

Robert Glazer: But I've seen more of this than I would... I don't know whether people forget that their company... If it's not their company but that when they're posting it says, "Dorie Clark, Adjunct Professor" next to it. LinkedIn seems to be the one that maybe has the most opportunity and the most problems for people in this professional and personal crossover.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, I think that's right and you raise a really interesting point. When I was actually down at Duke I was meeting with one of my executive coaching clients and we were having interesting conversation around this because she had posted an article on LinkedIn which became really popular. I mean this is astoundingly viral, it got multiple millions of views so it really, really traveled. But she was a little bit traumatized by it because it was a topic related to millennials in the workplace which, of course, is something that everybody has an opinion about. She, on LinkedIn, got a lot of, frankly, very hateful messages insulting her. I mean she was not saying something wild but it was just a lot of real vitriol, just trolling her. She was saying, "I don't even understand, these are real people. This is not a YouTube avatar of a kangaroo. This is an actual person that can be traced. How can they do this?"

Dorie Clark: And so I do think that people really lose themselves sometime, they forget the context. At a certain point there's a reckoning. I mean, a metaphorical example is everybody thought it was really like, "Oh, wow, how smart, how amazing, how innovative, that WeWork can hold no property and all of these longterm leases. They're so smart. They're worth more than all these hotel companies and yet they don't own anything. Oh, let's give them a 47 billion dollar evaluation." And then in a certain point it was great and great and great and great until suddenly the jig is up then wow, the jig is up.

Dorie Clark: I think it's very similar for a lot of professionals on LinkedIn. You can get away with being snarky or rude or even hateful, until someone notices, until you are applying for that senior position that you really want or you're being evaluated for a new position at a new company, or frankly, if you cross the line to the point where somebody takes the screenshot and sends it to your boss because they know your boss and all of a sudden it's like, "Oh, guess you shouldn't have done that."

Robert Glazer: Do you have any basic social media rules that you encourage as part of your personal branding teaching, just some dos and don'ts that are absolute?

Dorie Clark: I mean the vast majority of things on social media are really not hard. I think there's a lot of people who worry, "Oh, but what if I make a mistake, or

something like that?" You know what? If you're a decent person, you're probably not going to make a mistake. It's not really a mistake when somebody writes an article about millennials and you say, "You stupid bleep. You bleeping bleep bleep."

Dorie Clark: I think just about any sensible person would understand that's not the move there. I think people really, frankly, worry too much about it. Now, of course, you're going to be asked for [inaudible 00:23:03]. If you're in a regulated industry there's a lot of regulations that your firm has and so you need to be cognizant of that. It just is a special situation. I know for instance executive coaching clients I've dealt with in the financial services industry sometimes their companies have banks of pre-approved LinkedIn messages, or something like that.

Dorie Clark: But they also can use LinkedIn just really not in the broadcasting sense. LinkedIn is still a great tool for them in terms of sending personal messages to people or doing private outreach. But I think that the key is, number one, if you're a sensible person, probably don't worry as much as you may be worrying because of these horror stories. You wouldn't do that, so I think it's probably okay. But I'll say many people, for fear of making a mistake or just because of inertia or just it feels too overwhelming, they go to the opposite extreme and they don't do anything.

Dorie Clark: It is a missed opportunity because ultimately what social media is great for is ambient awareness. At this point in our life, and you get to be a mid-career professional, you really have met or interacted with thousands of people. But you also can't reasonably keep in active touch with all of these people. It becomes too hard. But LinkedIn is fantastic because you're connected with them. If you are posting regularly and it's actually interesting stuff, whether it's curating articles or sharing your perspective or something like that, if it's valuable, if it gets upvoted and people like it, then it's going to be on more people's feeds. They're scrolling through, and they might not have talked to you for three years but if they see, "Oh my god, look, Bob just released a new book. That's really cool." They might buy the book. They might be reminded, "Oh, Bob does speaking, I should bring him in." It becomes very useful in that regard, which is a real professional value.

Robert Glazer: I know a lot of topic that you focus on is reinvention from the person brand. How do people get started when they want to reinvent themselves? What are some of the mistakes they might make in attempting to do that?

Dorie Clark: Well, when it comes to reinvention I would say that one mistake that people make is that if they're in the early stages of it, sometimes they're not properly clear with people about where they are in the process. What I mean is if you know you want to leave your current thing but you're not quite sure what you want to go to, sometimes... People get hopped up on things, right? They're like, "Oh Bob, I'm so excited. I'm going to start a new career as a travel writer." You're like, "Oh great, Dorie, that's sound exciting." And so meanwhile, because

you think this is a definite declaration, you might actually have some political chips you can use. You say, "You know what? I'm friends with a travel editor at the New York Times, I should connect you guys." "Oh fantastic." Oftentimes the person would say, "Yes, thank you." to the connection. But if that connection is made prematurely, if two weeks from now I'm like, "Oh yeah, actually I'm not going to be a travel writer. Actually I'm going to open a yoga studio." You are going to be really mad at me because essentially I have burned scarce political capital with you.

Dorie Clark: And so it's fine to tell people you think you're going to be a travel writer. You're exploring being a travel writer or whatever. But I think sometimes people a little definitive and they change their mind. If you do that too many times you look flighty so it's important to just contextualize it for people.

Dorie Clark: I think a second mistake that people make which, again these things are easy to prevent if you cognizant of them, is just understanding that it will take a while for it to sink in with folks that this is your new thing, right? Again, they're not paying necessarily that much attention to you if they're a casual acquaintance, and so they just literally might not remember that you're starting to practice as an executive coach or that you have bought the new business or whatever. And so that is actually why, again, social media can be so valuable because if they start to see a million posts from you about, oh blah blah blah, this new thing. It helps sink in over time, "Oh, right, Dorie did mention that. Oh, yeah, she's doing that now." It begins to get them in the mode of thinking of you in this new way. Especially if you are creating content around it, it also shows them that you're serious about the new idea and this is not just a fly-by-night situation.

Robert Glazer: How about the situations where you were star senior member of one of these things and you rode that to success but it did turn south quickly? Let's go back to your example, WeWork, so senior executive working with the CEO there, now the retrospective lens is, "What were you doing when he was doing all of this stuff?" How do you react to that? I know a couple of people who have found suddenly, particularly in mid-career, an implosion of the place that they were at and that they used towards their credibility. In that reinvention or going back to the market then trying to distance your personal brand from that, do you have any suggestions?

Dorie Clark: Yeah, absolutely and you're right, there are a lot of professionals who face that circumstance. Certainly I did to a certain extent working for Howard Dean, right? It's not necessarily that people are holding me responsible but for a long time people were like, "Oh you worked for Howard Dean. Did you tell him to scream like that?" I'm like, "Yeah, that's right. That was exactly the game plan. You got it." But it's much more serious of course if it's like, "Oh, you were a senior leader at Wells Fargo. Oh nice."

Robert Glazer: Yeah, exactly.

Dorie Clark: You know what's in people's heads and so ultimately at that point you need... And this something I talk about actually in my book, Reinventing You. I have a whole section about how do you overcome a bad reputation. I talk about Michael Milken who, of course, was the junk bond king and got in trouble with the law, had to pay a big fine, and for a long time was a poster boy for misdeeds, but over the past 30 years has dramatically rehabilitated his reputation. In his case, a lot of it is through charitable work, it's true creating a philanthropic initiative, et cetera. But you really need to think through, what is your strategy?

Dorie Clark: Let's say you were at a company that has become besmirched in the public imagination, you might have had nothing to do with it, but what do you do? I would say that you want to name the elephant in the room because otherwise-

Robert Glazer: Right.

Dorie Clark: ... it's what everybody's going to be thinking, right? And so this is the opportunity where through your cover letter, or through... Hopefully, of course, your best jobs are the ones that you get through referrals or through personal introductions and connections. But you want to say upfront, "Look, I'm coming from Wells Fargo or I'm coming from Boeing safety department?" Or whatever it is.

Robert Glazer: 737 certification team.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, exactly. You can say, "Look, I learned a lot from it. Let me tell you, this has been a professionally traumatic experience and it has made me a better safety engineer. It's made me a better banker and here's what I learnt from it and here is how I can apply these new skills to make your organization even better." But you need to control the dialogue on it because otherwise if you try to just avoid it like, "Oh, no one will notice." the whole time they're just going to be thinking, "Wow, is this guy guilty as sin. Why is he not saying anything?"

Robert Glazer: Yeah, so you just got to own this right upfront.

Dorie Clark: Yeah, yeah. You own it and you lean into it and you control the narrative around it.

Robert Glazer: Understanding that that would probably end a few of the conversations, right? But I guess it's better to know that upfront than to know that at the end, right?

Dorie Clark: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, that's... It'd be hard to get a job coming from the Boeing 737 or MAC certification team, I think, right now.

Dorie Clark: Yeah.

Robert Glazer: One of your books, Stand Out, digs into the importance of thought leadership. I think it's really interesting even for people who are just beginning to prove their value in an organization. This is a whole different view on personal brand. How should people within an organizations and at all levels start to stand out as a thought leader internally?

Dorie Clark: Well, so ultimately, Bob, in Stand Out, and later developed in a course that I created called the Recognize Expert course, I created a methodologically. After interviewing dozens and dozens of top leaders and professionals, I discovered that there's three keys ingredients in becoming a recognized expert, whether that is in your industry or whether that's in your company, that is content creation, social proof and your network. What I mean by each of those, I mean, content creation, I'm using a broad term, but essentially it means that you have to share your ideas publicly. It's hard, of course, to be known as an expert if people don't know what you're thinking, if they don't know what your ideas are.

Dorie Clark: So if you are trying to build a brand as a consultant or something, maybe that means writing a book or writing articles. If you're trying to build a brand inside a company, maybe It means participating on the company intranet where you're sharing tips, maybe it means leading a lunch-and-learn, maybe it means speaking up in meetings, maybe it means chairing a committee. But it's finding way to publicly share your ideas so other people know what you're thinking and what you stand for.

Dorie Clark: Social proof is a term borrowed from psychology. It basically refers to what is your creditability that other people can see, how do you manifest that. Certainly it would be things like, again if we're thinking about external folks, maybe it's, "Oh, do you write for high profile publications, or have you worked with certain clients that everybody's heard of? Or things like that." Internally it might be, "Are you associated with projects that have been very successful, or are you mentored by someone that is considered a top leader in the company?" All those things redound to your credit and your credibility.

Dorie Clark: Finally, it's your network because knowing a lot of people, having a strong network, means that you have ambassadors that are supporting you even when you're not in the room, which is really critical. So trying to build relationships with people across the company so that they've heard of you, they know who you are, they know you do good work and they will have your back when you're not present.

Robert Glazer: If someone was 22 years old and they were just starting in an organization, which one of those would you encourage them to focus on first?

Dorie Clark: Well, I think that one of the things that's most critical if someone is literally just starting out in a company, I'd say focus on your network first. Because odds are if you're 22 you may not have found it yet, whatever it is, the thing you want to do, the thing you're good at. And so it is not at all unlikely that your first job is maybe in the direction of what you want, but not really. And so if you can make

an effort to really, within the company, continue the process that you probably did in order to get the job, which is having informational interviews, meeting people, having coffee. But you keep doing it when you're in the company. That can be really valuable because the truth is you might start out in sales and decide, "You know what? I really don't like this. This is not for me, but I like what they're doing over there in project management." Or, "I think what they're doing in human resources is really cool."

Dorie Clark: And so it's not only a way for you to get to know what the rest of the company is doing, which is certainly valuable for you just in terms of your holistic perspective and being able to be better at your job, but you're also building a coudry of alias so that if it comes up that you decide, "You know what? This thing I'm doing is not for me." You have people that you can call to say, "Hey, look, I really love working at this company, but I don't think this place is for me. Are there any openings or do you have advice for me about how I can break into HR." Those people will be willing to help you out.

Robert Glazer: That is good advice. All right, last question for you, Dorie. This is multi-variant so it could be singular or repeated. What is a personal or professional mistake that you've made that you've learned the most from?

Dorie Clark: Well, I think that the most important business decision, I really believe that we make, is who our romantic partner is, who our spouse is. Obviously it's a pretty big life decision as well, but it also... You really can't do your job effectively if you don't someone who is on the same team with you. For me personally, I would say something that I eventually did and eventually did right, but I dragged it out far too long, was I was in a relationship with someone that was not really supportive of my career the way that I wanted to be doing it. That was just a terrible emotional struggle because I was constantly being pulled in two directions. It's hard enough to accomplish what you want professionally, it's really hard if you're trying to do it and also having this undercurrent that's pulling you the other way.

Dorie Clark: And so eventually I ended the relationship but it was very hard and very painful. So I think the mistake was just letting it drag on too long and not really taking it as seriously as I should have that some of the early signs that I saw were warning that this was a problem that was not going to go away.

Robert Glazer: I don't want to get into the specifics but I think in terms of it being helpful for people, just characteristically, what were things that put the work? Was it travel or was it just not believing in the work? What was the core tension there?

Dorie Clark: Yeah, I mean it turns out I've had a couple of different relationships where this is manifested in different ways. But I would say in one of them I think travel was a big part of it. She would say, "You're living the best part of your life without me." And I'm like, "I'm on a business trip." We did vacations and we did other things together but it was just a lot of guilt around having to travel for work.

Dorie Clark: And then in another relationship probably the place where it manifested the most was that... Again, as an entrepreneur, it is a rare situation where... I think it's maybe different with some fields, but it's a pretty rare situation for me that I will have to change plans at the last minute because something arises. But when it does, it's usually pretty significant. And so when that happened I was getting blowback where it was like she really wanted me to grovel about it and make it up to her. I believe in like, "Oh, I'm so sorry. I know it's an inconvenience. I know I said I would do this and now I can't." But it was to the extent where it was like this federal crime if I had to do it. I'm like, "I need someone who has a level of understanding that I would only be doing this if this was really important." I just need somebody to be like, "It's okay, Dorie. We'll do it next week." That was what I needed. I didn't need to be stressed about how it will be received at home.

Robert Glazer: That is very fair. Well, Dorie, what's the best place for people to learn more about you and your work?

Dorie Clark: Yeah, thank you so much, Bob. On my website I have more than 400 free articles that I've written for places like Forbes and Harvard Business Review. Folks can access them at dorieclark.com. I'll also mention, for people especially who are interested in personal branding, I have a resource which is the Stand Out Self-assessment. It is 42 pages of, I think, helpful questions to think about your brand and your best ideas that you can bring forward at work. Anybody who wants to get that can go to dorieclark.com, D-O-R-I-E-C-L-A-R-K.com/join, J-O-I-N.

Robert Glazer: 42 pages of questions?

Dorie Clark: Yeah, there's a lot.

Robert Glazer: I mean it's a lot of homework.

Dorie Clark: It's hardcore. But you know what? It's a hardcore world, man.

Robert Glazer: All right, Dorie, thank you for sharing your story with us today.

Dorie Clark: Thanks so much, Bob. Take care.

Robert Glazer: To our listeners, thanks for tuning into the Elevate podcast today. We'll include links to Dorie and her books and her website on the detail episode page at robertglazer.com. If you enjoyed today's episode with Dorie or any of the others, I'd really appreciate it if you could leave us a review as it helps new users discover the show and content and learn from it as well.

Robert Glazer: If you're listening on Apple Podcast, you can just select the library icon, click on Elevate and scroll down to the bottom to leave your review. Thanks again for your support. Until next time, keep elevating.