BRANDED for LIFE!

8 Elements to Transform Your Personal Brand Career and Life

Ellen Looyen

America's Leader in Personal Branding
**Praise for Ellen and “Branded for Life”**

“Easy and fun to read, this book goes beyond the typical branding exercises and provides unique and insightful tools to communicate your value confidently and authentically. A little gem of a book that can be read again and again as one evolves in their professional and personal journey.”

*Menexia Tsoubeli, Ph.D., Director R&D, Campbell’s Soup Company*

“Ellen creatively captured my brand in a way that reflects my style, energy and values. Her extraordinary personal attention was above and beyond what I expected. Ellen’s in-depth branding process encouraged me to focus on my strengths and abilities and how I wanted to communicate that as a professional Realtor.”

*Patti Camras, Realtor, Coldwell Banker*

“Creating and sustaining an inclusive environment starts with great leaders who are highly self-aware and who have mastered self-leadership. Ellen’s personal branding book is a must read for anyone who wants to distinguish themselves as a world-class leader who inspires diversity, inclusion and innovation.”

*Stacè Middlebrooks Head of Diversity & Inclusion*  
Southern California Edison (SCE)

“At last! Professional branding defined! A great story about creating your brand through finding your true and unique self. Ellen’s book is an interesting, useful and valuable guide to changing the way you view, acknowledge and leverage your talents.”

*Amanda Page, Change Lead, Cisco, UK*
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8 Elements to Transform
Your Personal Brand, Career and Life

By: Ellen Looyen
“America’s Leader in Personal Branding”
Contents

Acknowledgments .................................................................................................. 9
Foreword .............................................................................................................. 11
Introduction ....................................................................................................... 13
Prologue ............................................................................................................. 21

Chapter One
Influence and Personal Branding ................................................................. 25

Chapter Two
Element #1: Consciously Manage Your State of Mind ......................... 39

Chapter Three
Element #2: Have Self-Awareness ............................................................... 53

Chapter Four
Element #3: Artfully Communicate ............................................................ 65

Chapter Five
Element #4: Radiate Likeability and Empathy ........................................... 77

Chapter Six
Element #5: Inspire Confidence ................................................................. 87

Chapter Seven
Element #6: Serve as a Leader ................................................................. 95

Chapter Eight
Element #7: Maintain Presence ............................................................... 103

Chapter Nine
Element #8: Authentically Project Your True Self ................................ 113

Epilogue
Six Months Later ................................................................. .......................... 121

Appendix ............................................................................................................ 125
Next Steps ....................................................................................................... 137
In loving memory of
Lance Miller,
Renaissance Man, Sailor
and the best friend I’ve ever had.
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My Black Lab, Lily, who, for over ten years, has been there for me through thick and thin...**Dogs Rule!**
As someone who has trained and coached thousands of entrepreneurs and business professionals since 1991, I have observed that personal branding produces a very high return on investment—not just monetarily over time, but also in the subjective, but critical, areas of self expression, joy, happiness and professional creativity.

This book represents an outstanding introduction to personal branding. It clearly outlines the process and also demonstrates Ellen’s mastery in using story-telling and objective facts to weave a powerful narrative to enable you to present yourself in the most professional (and profitable) way.

My association with Ellen began a few years ago. After several years of searching for a branding professional to help me brand both myself, and my coaching business, I was immediately drawn to Ellen. She was clear and concise in what needed to be produced and how to make it happen.

Ellen demonstrated a Yoda-like ability to glean the best of me, while asking some very straightforward questions. I was not the kind of person to shirk from information that made sense and could help me direct my business, so I decided to hire Ellen (from a group of about 25 contenders).

My branding results were remarkable in the following ways:

1. The marketing materials that resulted from the partnership with Ellen were outstanding and far exceeded my expectations, in terms of messaging, artistry and their overall ability to instantly connect with my perfect clients.
2. The materials have measurably attracted higher quality clients with an eye for not just style, but for content of message, as well.

3. The quality of business opportunities, joint ventures and speaking opportunities has gone up by more than 50% since the branding exercise—consistently, each year, for the past three years!

If you are someone who has experienced disappointing marketing results or branding programs that have not delivered on their promise, this book and Ellen’s step-by-step, time-tested process will help you move through any of the obstacles that most of us have experienced.

Additionally, Ellen’s focus on energetic presence, emotional intelligence and all of the inner workings of a personal brand, will help readers identify the ‘blind spots’ which may be keeping them from enjoying the likeability and success they desire.

The personal branding process that Ellen has so skillfully demystified in this book is very clear and logical. As she shares the branding stories of her two main characters, Ellen inspires readers to craft compelling stories of the uniqueness and value of their own work contributions, an imperative element to successful personal branding.

I highly recommend going through this book thoroughly, with pen and paper in hand, as Ellen guides you to masterfully articulate the many gifts and talents you have to share with those people you most want to attract and influence.

Sunil Bhaskaran
Executive Business Coach
I’ve always been an original, but it took me a very long time to appreciate my own uniqueness.

As a six-foot tall woman, I knew a lot about standing out in a crowd (literally). In my high school yearbook, the quote under my photo said, “Individuality is the salt of life.” At the time, I was very upset by that quote; I wanted to be like everyone else and just fit in!

Years later, standing out from a crowd of look-alikes was what I built my career on. A fortune cookie I received a few years ago best summed it up. The message read: “You discover hidden treasure where others see nothing unusual.” As a branding specialist, that is exactly what I do every day. I look for the “golden nuggets” and for what makes people and their businesses uniquely valuable.

You see, it is impossible to succeed, to distinguish yourself, and to be remembered, if you strive to be just another face in the crowd. Successful businesses and business people need to stand out from the crowd. They need to be remembered. They need to stand for something. In short, businesses and people alike, both need compelling brands.

You already have a personal brand...whether you know it, or not!

When people hear your name, several things instantly come to mind. But are they the perceptions that you would choose for people to have of you? They should be, because your career might just depend on it. Personal brand management is for everybody...and it’s especially for those wanting to move ahead in their profession, climb the corporate ladder or attract new clients.
Personal Branding is about how others perceive and experience your value and the impressions you leave behind. A critical tool for business and career success (like a current resume, a LinkedIn profile or a website), your personal brand should convey the very best version of yourself, communicate your uniqueness and value, and energetically connect to those you most want to influence. There’s a direct correlation between how well you’re able to confidently broadcast your self-worth and the value of your work product, with your net worth and your ability to rapidly advance your career or grow your business.

You might already have an idea of what a brand is: the logo on your car, a distinctive color scheme for your favorite sports team, a mission statement written on a wall of a business. What most individuals don’t realize is that people have brands too; and whether you want one or not, you already have one. So what does your personal brand say about you?

Unlike most personal branding books, this book is really about taking a profound journey into yourself and into your own uniqueness and value as a professional (as well as a human being). This is a book about self-awareness and self-appreciation and about building an authentic personal brand from the inside-out. The brand and influence-building tools in this book take the form of an inquiry into who you are being and how that influences your work. Remember, that it is less about ‘what you do’ and more about ‘who you are being’ when you do what you do.

The exercises in this book were designed to encourage mindfulness, emotional intelligence and honest self-reflection. When you redefine your personal brand in such a conscious and authentic way, and begin to own the origin and energy of your personal impact and brand on others, it will change the game and put you in a whole new league, while remaining true to yourself.

**What’s in it FROM me (versus what’s in it FOR me)?**

If you are like most, you are probably really good at what you do, but
feel uncomfortable standing out or bragging about yourself by tooting your own horn. Instead of arrogantly boasting about yourself and your accomplishments, you can give a voice to your contribution of value by positioning yourself as a ‘Thought Leader’ with many skills and insights to share.

No matter what your situation is, whether you own a business or you’re employed by one, you no longer have to be defined by a mere professional title or job description. Starting right now, I encourage you to think of yourself as the CEO of your own personal brand. Your company owns your job, but YOU own your career and your professional brand! No longer will anyone else have control over your career destiny, once you learn to position and package yourself as the unique and valuable person you are.

**Origins of This Book**

I have always stepped out of the crowd to blaze my own trail. I knew as soon as I arrived at Temple University, that I wanted to major in Philosophy. As a seeker of truth, I was always asking questions and searching for deeper meaning. Majoring in Philosophy, while an unconventional choice, taught me to analyze and distill things down to their essence. Little did I know then, how that choice of a major would later help me in my future work as a branding specialist.

However, I still had to have some real life experiences before I would discover the true power of my *Eight Elements of Influence*. At the beginning of my career, I was one of the first women in Sales at IBM. I was very young and it was at the height of the Women’s Movement. I quickly realized that to be taken seriously and be respected, I had to be extra mindful about managing the impressions I left behind.

It turned out that my early career experience as a professional salesperson at IBM (and later at Xerox Corporation), has influenced everything I’ve been doing since those days. I learned that people only
cared about ‘what was in it for them’ and that whatever I was promoting needed to solve their problems. If I wasn’t able to clearly articulate the value and benefits of the products I was selling, I would not close the sale.

This critical insight guided all of my work; especially when, many years later, I became a marketing consultant, specializing in helping small businesses articulate their uniqueness and value. I designed marketing materials for consultants, coaches, lawyers, Realtors, financial planners, and other service professionals. I created stellar presentations to attract more clients to their various services; yet there was sometimes a disconnect from the professional brand and the actual person providing the service.

After studying and interviewing my clients, I discovered that all the promotional brochures and websites in the world could not close business, if the person providing the service did not convey the same level of confidence that their marketing materials portrayed. In other words, there was a lack of congruence between the business brand and the personal brand of the professional trying to sell their services.

Most of my life, people have described me as “charismatic.” At first I didn’t understand why that was true; but I did notice I was able to easily attract people and opportunities to me. I always wanted to understand this natural gift I was lucky to possess. I began reading everything I could find on the subject of ‘Charisma’ (that almost mythical ‘It Factor’ that successful people used to emotionally connect and influence those around them).

As a result of years of research, I created my “Eight Elements of Influence” (which, by the way, spell out the word “Charisma”), to help self-employed entrepreneurs and corporate professionals move their careers forward.

After speaking to groups and teaching the Eight Elements to my coaching clients, I realized how many more people were in need of
this knowledge. To teach the *Eight Elements* to the masses, I created an eLearning course with lessons and self-paced activities for students to work through, to craft their own personal brand.

Most people are clueless about their personal impact. Therefore, this book begins with readers becoming more aware of how they are impacting the people they most want to influence. It concludes with the integration of my *Eight Elements of Influence* to help readers *become* the personal brand that people instantly like, trust and connect with.

After delivering a one-hour webinar several years ago (with record-breaking attendance), for the Professional Business Women of California (a non-profit, supporting ‘emerging’ female leaders in Corporate America), they decided to offer my live, 8-week, eLearning webinars to their global community of 30,000. The successful joint venture eLearning programs, were PBWC’s most highly attended offerings, drawing people from over 60 countries. The success of this partnership re-energized my career and brought my work to the attention of many Fortune 500 companies like Cisco, HP, Oracle, Visa, eBay and countless other American companies doing business around the world.

In Corporate America, I have helped engineers, financial analysts, sales and marketing departments and research & development professionals, from middle management to top executives. After all these years of helping such a diverse group of both men and women all over the world, I’ve come to appreciate how my program is really for anyone who wants to get ahead, as it meets people wherever they currently are in their careers.

At first I was very surprised that leading companies would invest in personal brand development for their employees. Later, I learned how important it was for them to be able to attract and retain great employees, especially with all the new, ‘sexy’ companies competing for top talent (like the Googles and the Facebooks of the world, offering everything from free gourmet food to massages).
The use of ‘Story Telling’ in this book

One of the most important components to a successful personal brand is being able to tell a story about how you brought value to a client, stakeholder or co-worker.

With this in mind, I have created two avatars for you, the reader, to give you perspective on your own personal branding journey. These characters, Sanjay and Susan, are composite characters, based on the thousands of people I’ve helped. I want my readers to go through the personal branding experience in much of the same way we viscerally “experience” brands through a deep emotional connection.

As you ‘experience’ the personal branding process and learn to employ my *Eight Elements of Influence*, you will probably feel the same fear, frustration and ultimate success that many of my clients have experienced going through this process of self-discovery. Hopefully, by keeping up with the adventures of Sanjay and Susan, you will come to see that the doubts and trials you face in your own process are normal and absolutely surmountable.

As Sanjay and Susan go through my branding webinar, I highly encourage you to embrace their experience first-hand and follow along with all of the written exercises. These exercises can be found, in the same order they appear in the story, in the Appendix at the back of this book.

By taking my “Influence Inquiry” before you learn how to integrate the *Eight Elements of Influence*, you will immediately see where your work needs to begin.

**Benefits**

After completing all of the exercises in this book and successfully integrating my *Eight Elements of Influence*, you will have created a compelling personal brand; and you will be perceived as the influential expert you really are. As you take an honest inventory of all of your many competencies, you will also be boosting your self-confidence along the
way. Your enhanced self-worth will in turn, build your net worth. No longer will your own ‘blind spots’ and overly reactive emotional triggers hold you back; instead you will become more confident, present and successful. Rather than working so hard to get people to like you and feel comfortable around you, you will become a person who’s likeable and comfortable to be around!

You will learn that the secret to effectively managing your personal brand and having greater influence lies in the present moment. You will also discover how your own thinking shapes the way you see and experience life. As Wayne Dyer, the spiritual ‘Thought Leader’ and best-selling author, so eloquently said: “When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.” When you are feeling calm, centered, relaxed and truly in the present moment, you’ll be broadcasting your most ‘energetically attractive’ and charismatic self, and your personal brand will be irresistible to the many people you wish to influence!

**This book and the exercises in the Appendix will help you:**

- Understand the current perceptions people have of you, and improve them
- Articulate your own uniqueness and value
- Redefine and re-tell your own unique professional branding story
- Manage your own state of mind, to proactively manage your career destiny
- Take an honest inventory of your emotional intelligence, including your ‘blind spots’ and emotional triggers
- Become a more confident and effective communicator, collaborator and team member
- Radiate such an irresistible energetic of presence, confidence, influence and authenticity, that you become the person that people like, hire and promote!
The kids were in bed, if not yet quite asleep. The television was off, and Sanjay and Susan each cradled a glass of wine on the couch. After a prolonged silence, Susan finally broke the ice.

“What’s going on?”

Sanjay studied his wine glass. “This whole personal branding thing has been a lot tougher than I thought.”

Susan could certainly agree, and was tempted to regale him with stories of her own journey. But something told her that Sanjay needed to get something off his chest. She decided to pry. “How so?”

“I wasn’t actively listening in the present moment,” his eyes flickered to Susan and back to his glass. “Not to you, not to the people at work.”

Susan’s heart hurt for him. She wanted to tell him that he was wrong, reassure him that he had been a good husband. But he didn’t listen, not consistently and sometimes his responses were just...wrong. Thankfully, Sanjay wasn’t needing a response just yet.

“I tried listening. After that session on listening, it seems like that was all I did for a week. Just listen.” His eyebrows narrowed, “It didn’t make anything better though.”

“What are you trying to make better?” Susan asked.

Sanjay got up and retrieved a folder from the table. He handed it to her without a word.

Susan didn’t know what was inside of the folder, but she certainly
didn’t expect to find Sanjay’s Personal Impact Surveys. She scanned through them quickly, trying to glean why Sanjay was so upset.

“They all hate me.”

“No!” Susan objected. She pointed to a comment. “See? This person says that you are very intelligent and focused on getting the job done.”

“It also says that I’m abrupt and quick to judge,” Sanjay countered, not even looking at the page she held up.

A quick glance through the rest of the surveys revealed that Sanjay was right. Had he memorized all of his results? She rifled through the papers, hoping for something to say.

“You said I was hard to talk to.” Sanjay’s voice had gone weirdly flat.

“Sometimes you are. Sometimes it’s like you’re missing that part in the conversation where you acknowledge the other person’s feelings. You’re already onto the next step where you fix their problems. “But Sanjay,” she reached out for his hand, I still love you.”

“Why?”

“Why?” Susan couldn’t believe he could even question this. “Because you are my other half. You keep me grounded. You support me when I’m down. You are the father of our children. You are the person that I want to see at the end of the day.”

“But I don’t listen or acknowledge your feelings.”

Susan thought for a moment. “Do you remember that time when I was studying for my Financial Planner certification, and I had that total freak out moment, and everything was really dramatic and over the top? Do you remember what you said to me?”

“No, I don’t.”

For the first time in the conversation, Sanjay sounded interested, even curious. Susan took hope from that, grabbed his shoulders and firmly said, “Snap out of it!”

Sanjay’s eyes met hers in shock.
“That’s what you told me. Snap out of it,” Susan whispered. “And now I’m telling you.” Then she leaned forward and brushed her lips against his.

“Taking an honest inventory of your uniqueness and value isn’t supposed to be easy. I’ve been thrown for a loop myself. My feedback said that clients weren’t taking me seriously. That I was sabotaging my meetings by trying to be over-the-top friendly. As Ellen would say, I was being incongruent. I’m still working on that.”

“Too friendly?” Sanjay asked dumbfounded, as he found it so hard to be friendly, at all!

“Yep,” Susan smiled reassuringly. “It hurt, but it wasn’t the end of the world. Remember, this is the starting point. The finish is wherever we decide we want it to be. “We can proactively manage the perceptions that people have of us” Susan reminded him.” You can overcome these obstacles.”

“Really?” Sanjay asked Susan hopefully.

“Really,” she said firmly. “And just because you care this much about it.”

It wasn’t until Susan was falling into bed, after they had talked for hours and finished the bottle of wine, that Susan was able to put her finger on what was so remarkable about the night. For once, she had been Sanjay’s rock. She provided the needed strength and was able to support him, after all the times he had her back. Susan knew her husband was hurting, but she also knew how determined he was to change things. She fell asleep with a smile, confident that they could handle the future together.

Sanjay sat at home on the couch in the middle of the afternoon. His youngest, Lily had to be picked up from daycare early with a fever. She was down for a nap now, and Sanjay was pleased that he would be able to call in live to the personal branding conference call.

He actually wished he was at work. Sanjay had been completely surprised how much talking to Susan had helped him. He hadn’t
realized what a funk he had worked himself into over this whole personal branding process. Things were really improving at the office. Susan had taught him a technique for making people feel heard, and so far the response had been fantastic. People were starting to warm up to him and open up more.

According to Susan, the trick to making people feel heard was to slow down and get fully present. Don’t respond right away. A conversation is not a ping-pong ball shooting back and forth across the table. Susan had coached him to take a full breath and make eye contact before saying anything.

She had taught him that the second step was to acknowledge what he heard or how the other person might be feeling. He was still working on that part. So far he tended to repeat what he had heard in his own words, but he thought he might be able to spot the feelings a little better in the future.

For now, it was getting the results that he needed. He felt hopeful again.

“Hello and welcome to week five of the personal branding and influence-building program,” Ellen greeted her audience. “Today I will be talking about my Fifth Element: Inspire Confidence.

“But I do want to take a moment to congratulate you on making it halfway through the program. You are sticking with it, and for that, I thank you and I suspect your career will thank you, too.

“Let me remind you, that your personal brand should answer the following:

What you’re known for, what you’re known as and what you’re known for knowing. And as your career progresses, these things will also change and evolve.

“Let’s jump into today’s lesson, Element Five: Inspire Confidence. Confident people inspire the confidence of others; and it’s impossible to be an effective leader without it. People feel your confidence (or your
lack of it)! You cannot fake confidence...real confidence comes from deep inside of you; it’s a way of being versus something that you do. All four of the previous Elements build confidence; as confidence is born out of self-awareness, realness, personal appreciation and self-understanding. And most importantly, remember that:

**Confidence is the #1 reason people choose or buy anything!**

“When you are in a positive state of mind, you project greater confidence. As a result, your self-confidence will inspire others around you. Self-confidence is an attitude, which helps create a positive and realistic perception of yourself and your abilities. Even though confidence is based on how you see your own uniqueness and intrinsic value as a person, confident people are not focused on themselves. They are fully present and in the moment; and when you’re doing business with them, you feel like you’re their most important client.

“The more faith you have in your own capabilities, the more you will be seen as confident. Being able to easily speak about your unique strengths, your special talents and the contribution your expertise brings to others, will make people have more confidence in you. If you lack confidence and do not believe in yourself, how can you convince anyone else of your value? You cannot affirm your uniqueness and value, the keys to successful personal branding and influence-building, if you don’t value yourself.”

To his own surprise, Sanjay’s finger jumped over and unmuted his phone. *Am I really going to do this?*

“Ellen? This is Sanjay, an engineer, in the Silicon Valley. You might be able to tell from my voice that I am not from the US. In my country, we are not supposed to toot our own horn. It’s just not considered appropriate in my culture. So, I’m really struggling with this aspect of the program.”

“You know, I work with lots of different cultures from all around the world, so your situation is actually quite common, Ellen agreed. “However, to succeed, you are going to need to advocate for yourself
and highlight your talents and the Return on Investment (ROI) your company gets from the contributions you are making to their bottom line. And that’s where the art of storytelling is most useful. Your stories should focus on how you’ve helped someone else, and not on how fabulous you are.

“As you feel more confident, your verbal and non-verbal messages should reflect your own belief in what you do. When you really believe in what you do and the value you offer, your inner beliefs and self-assuredness will radiate through your non-verbal messages.

Sanjay considered his survey results for a moment. Basically everyone said I needed to work on empathy and active listening. He smiled wryly. But at least I have consistency down!

“When you experience insecurity...realize that it’s only a state of mind; and you have bought into something about yourself that is not necessarily true. Confidence as we learned earlier, is nothing more than a state-of-mind; and so is self-doubt or insecurity.

“Feelings of self-doubt and low self-esteem are driven by fear. Whether it is not being good enough, not being valued or wanted, feeling worthless or insignificant. Your self-esteem is based on the opinion you have of yourself.

“Low self-esteem comes from the way we were treated in childhood or in important relationships. Through emotional exploration, compassion and self-education, we can heal the past and confidently move forward in life, leaving our emotional “baggage” from the past, in the past.

My self-esteem has really taken a beating lately, Sanjay thought.

“Confident people can accurately assess their capabilities and they have a deep faith in the future. Insecurity and self-doubt are the enemies of confidence. When you are feeling insecure, there are a few action steps you can take. These are the Ten Tips for Building Confidence (and for combating insecurity). Take particular note if one resonates with you.
“First, focus on your strengths and core competencies. Focusing on your core competencies builds confidence. Second, become more self-aware and try to understand where your self-doubt originally came from. Usually it stems from childhood or from an important relationship.

Grade school. Grade school was hell.

“Third, improve your posture and your physical appearance. The way you carry yourself tells a story that has a lot to do with how confident others perceive you to be. Fourth, admit your mistakes and weaknesses and learn from them. I think that this one is fairly self-evident.

Sanjay grinned, Who me? I’m never wrong! Just don’t ask my wife!

“Fifth, consciously focus on the things that you are grateful for. Confident people focus on gratitude. Sixth, speak up and take risks. It’s scary, but the more you do it, the more capable and confident you’ll become.

Hmmm. Risks. He always delegated the risk taking to Susan. Maybe, he considered.

“Seventh, focus on what’s in it from you...what you selflessly have to contribute to others. Eighth, practice being more enthusiastic about your accomplishments, your uniqueness and the value you bring to others. Some of us are so humble, that even when we choose to tell our story, it comes across as flat and unmemorable. So be sure to infuse your story with lots of enthusiasm.

Ellen said that for my benefit.

“Ninth, readily admit when you don’t know something. Confident people know that they don’t know everything, nor do they feel like they have to. The tenth and final item on our list is to take yourself and life less seriously. Develop a sense of humor and relax. Have fun with people.”

Susan does tell me to lighten up. I guess I can give that a try.

“We are coming to the end of our Element on confidence...Both your self-confidence and also how confident others are about the value you
have to offer them. However, there is an activity, in the Appendix, in the back of this book, called the “Influence Inquiry” that will help you take a closer look (from the inside-out), at how you convey confidence; and it will also help you to identify areas where you can build even more confidence. Through your honest answers, it will help you actually determine your confidence level in the workplace.

“The questions range from how confidently do you articulate your accomplishments? To what do you do very naturally in the workplace that appears deceptively easy from another’s perspective? These questions are designed not only to tease out your weaknesses, but also to identify your strengths as well. I highly recommend that you take the time to answer these additional questions.

“I want to reiterate one more time, that a good personal brand exudes confidence and authenticity. To create that, you need to feel that, and part of that comes from really appreciating yourself; but you can’t appreciate yourself if you are lying to yourself. So be real, dig in and do the exercises. Thanks so much for being on the call with me live today.

Appreciate myself? Sanjay knew the unconditional appreciation and love that he felt for his wife and his children. For his parents and siblings, too. But to appreciate himself that same way...Could he? Did he?
Next Steps

For more information, re: scheduling an Interactive Keynote Talk, a live, full day “Thought Leadership” training, global webinars, private personal brand and influence-building coaching and business branding, please contact Ellen Looyen directly at:

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To purchase Ellen’s comprehensive, 2-module, brand and influence-building eLearning program for yourself or for your work team:

www.ellen4branding.com

Ellen’s Suggested Supplemental Reading List

The Soul of Money... By: Lynne Twist

Compelling People... By: Jeff Neffinger and Matthew Kohut

The Presence Process... By: Michael Brown

Emotional Intelligence... By: Daniel Goleman

The Power of Now... By: Eckhart Tolle