

Ethics, social media, and... profersonalism.

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“This isn’t personal, it’s business.”

Can we agree that the line above is, to a large degree, utter wog smank?

If yes, then skip directly to the next paragraph. If no, then here’s your newsflash for the day: a person who experiences longstanding and pervasive feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with disregard, disconcern, and non-compliance for the rights and feelings of others (especially if coupled with uncontrolled impulsivity and a willingness to use deceitfulness for personal gain)—in short, a person with the ability and willingness to shrug off another’s pain—may have what psychologists call antisocial personality disorder. That term not ringing a bell? How about sociopath, or psycho, are you tracking with me now? And you know what we call someone who disregards others’ emotions because s/he is incapable of processing them? *Autistic*. What I’m saying is, “It’s not personal, it’s just business,” used by an individual at the end of a string of broken relationships (or deals), is a big clue to a mental health worker (which I am not, btw) to check for a broken brain.

Business is always personal. Pretending otherwise is tantamount to celebrating the sociopath. Your job is your livelihood... that’s pretty darn personal, methinks.

Yet, it is also professional—not in a cold-hearted way, but in a respectful and responsible way. You do need to be able to assess situations free of emotion not because you’re ignoring emotion, but because that’s how you figure out the best way forward for the betterment of all!

So, it’s both... it’s always both. Always professional, always personal. Always...

profersonal.

Now here’s what this means: you can’t complain that trying to balance your professional and personal lives, especially through social media, is difficult. The answer to the unasked question is, no, it’s not unfair to have to keep recruiters, bosses, and clients from seeing that Vegas vacation photo album your friend posted on Facebook. (Though, talk about a party foul.)

I think social media may finally bring personal integrity back to business. It reminds us that we can’t separate these two worlds. Never could, actually, though the good Lord knows we’ve tried.

I’ve long worked with higher level executives who have struggled with the profersonal nature of

executive politics; technology now makes it so my Millennial clients must grapple with the same issue. It's subtle It's not just a question of "branding" or thinking twice before posting an incriminating photo on Facebook—though those things are important—it's shifting your perspective to a point where you are so totally clear and consistent in your story... to a point of polished profersonalism.

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