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The Artist Elevator Speech

What is it?

The elevator speech answers the question, “What do you do?” It is a unique and authentic expression of what you do. It is a way to articulate your passion and purpose. It is a verbal business card that makes your listener want to run to your web site to see your work for themselves.



Creating the Elevator Speech:

1. Brainstorm

- a) What are the aspects of your work that amaze and delight you? Jot down words or phrases as they occur to you as you reflect upon this question.
- b) Choose two works that you find especially provocative. Underline them. You might choose more than two but begin to narrow your list until you find two that are the most provocative.
- c) Research these words. Go to a dictionary. Copy all of the definitions, even if they don't seem relevant at the moment. Go to a thesaurus. Select words that capture your imagination. Copy these down as well. Go to an etymological dictionary. Look up the root word and the etymological history of your words.
- d) Reflect on these words, meanings and associations, writing down what you notice. Where are you surprised? Where is the dissonance? Where is the resonance?

2. Create the Environment

- a) Review your notes. What theme song would you like to have playing in the background when you give your elevator speech? Think about the tempo, the mood, the meaning of the song.
- b) If you were painting your elevator speech, what is its predominant color?
- c) If possible, set your environment by playing the music you selected and composing your speech on the color of paper that you chose.

3. Write the Speech

- a. Your speech should be only a few sentences. You might start out by writing a paragraph and then pare it down to its essential sentences. In the first sentence, directly answer the question about who you are and what you do (e.g. I am a painter.) In the next sentence or two describe what makes your work unique. In the wrap up sentence, speak to the benefits to your audience of your work or use a teaser that makes your listener want to see your work.
- b. Practice your speech and use it. It will change and develop as you use it.
- c. You might want to adapt your speech for different audiences (a potential buyer, at a bar-b-que, for another artist)

What you do is WONDERFUL. Your elevator speech should excite and intrigue your listener to want to see more of your work--right now. A perfect time to pull out your business card!