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| Reviewed by: | Bina Patel Botts |

***Plot Summary:***

 The author of this book, Peggy Klaus, is a business coach. She talks about how as a child, her father told her not to toot her own horn. If she did a good job, people would notice. Then as an adult, she went to Hollywood and found out that in order to get a job in the entertainment business she had to learn how to promote herself. If she was not excited about herself and what she had accomplished no one else would be either. She also learned that not all self-promotion was effective. She had to develop a way to talk about herself but still allowed her to be authentic to herself. Then when she moved to the business world, she found this same skill was just as necessary in the business world and it did not come naturally to most people. You have to let people know who you are and what you have accomplished.

In this book she takes you through her journey to help herself and then help others as a coach develop the art of bragging. She starts by talking about how we all must overcome the myth that “good work speaks for itself” and “modesty is a virtue.” There is nothing wrong with self-promotion, if done properly. It is possible to brag about yourself without sounding smug and self-centered.

The first step to effective bragging is to make a list of your skills accomplishments and develop what she calls brag bites and bragologues, short stories that you can pull out to use based on the situation. Most people tend to take for granted what they have accomplished and understate it when they talk about themselves. At the same time she cautioned that it should still be a conversation. It is not just a listing of everything you have done. Know your audience, these bragologues should be concise, interesting and meaningful to the people you are talking to. Be prepared to use your stories both at work and outside of work, you never know when an opportunity will come up.

Brag Nags:

1. Bore no more
2. Bring your best self forward
3. Recognize the importance of first impressions
4. Act like your best self (even when you really don’t feel like it)
5. Convey excitement about your work and accomplishments
6. Schmooze!
7. Take the emotional temperature of your listeners
8. Leverage the power of humor, stories and anecdotes

Twelve Tooting Tips for Bragging:

1. Be your best, authentic self.
2. Think about to whom you are tooting.
3. Say it with meaningful and entertaining stories.
4. Keep it short and simple.
5. Talk with me, not at me.
6. Be able to back up what you say.
7. Know when to toot.
8. Turn small talk into big talk.
9. Keep bragologues and brag bites current and fresh.
10. Be ready at a moment’s notice.
11. Have a sense of humor.
12. Use it all: your eyes, ear, head and heart.

***Book Club Meeting Discussion:***

Several of the attendees commented that they were originally skeptical about the book, but then once they read it they found it very good. Some thought they already knew how to promote themselves, but still found the book provided some good tips on how to do it better. Some were worried it was just going to talk about the need for an elevator speech. Others were worried because bragging was just not part of their personality, but then realized that her technique was meant to allow you to still be authentic to yourself. Everyone agreed that the book gave good examples that they felt they could use.

Key takeaways:

* It is hard to come up with a short introduction of yourself that is both impactful and memorable.
* Everyone has a story. We all have accomplished things and have interesting stories about ourselves, the key is to see them.
* Be aware of the room. Make sure your message is relevant for the audience. Your stories have to be something that people can remember. Don’t use too much technical jargon, but also don’t brush it off as nothing. Try to create a story that is meaningful to them.
* You can promote yourself and highlight what you have done while still being authentic to your personality. It just takes small changes in how you explain what you have done without changing your overall style.
* Control your story. What you tell your friends and family about what you have done is how they will then describe you to others.
* Bragging is not just about hitting your numbers. You have to explain how you are achieving those great numbers. That is the part that others will remember.
* The group discussed how society expected men to brag, so it was easier for them. Women were taught to be modest. This related back to many of the themes from the previous book, “The Confidence Code”. Showing that confidence was important.

***Personal Comments:***

I really enjoyed the book. I have never been comfortable bragging about what I have done. I have always hated blowhards, and really did not ever want to be that person. This book really put into perspective why it is important to talk about your own accomplishments in a way that is easy for others to appreciate and remember. It is just as critical to do this well on an ongoing basis with your boss as it is with someone you are meeting for the first time.

The book gave good examples that showed just how subtle the difference could be to create an impact.

Everyone should take the time to put together their bragologues. It will help you see what you have accomplished and give you more confidence. Rather than just hoping your hard work gets noticed, these bragologues will help you take control of shaping the story others pass on about you.