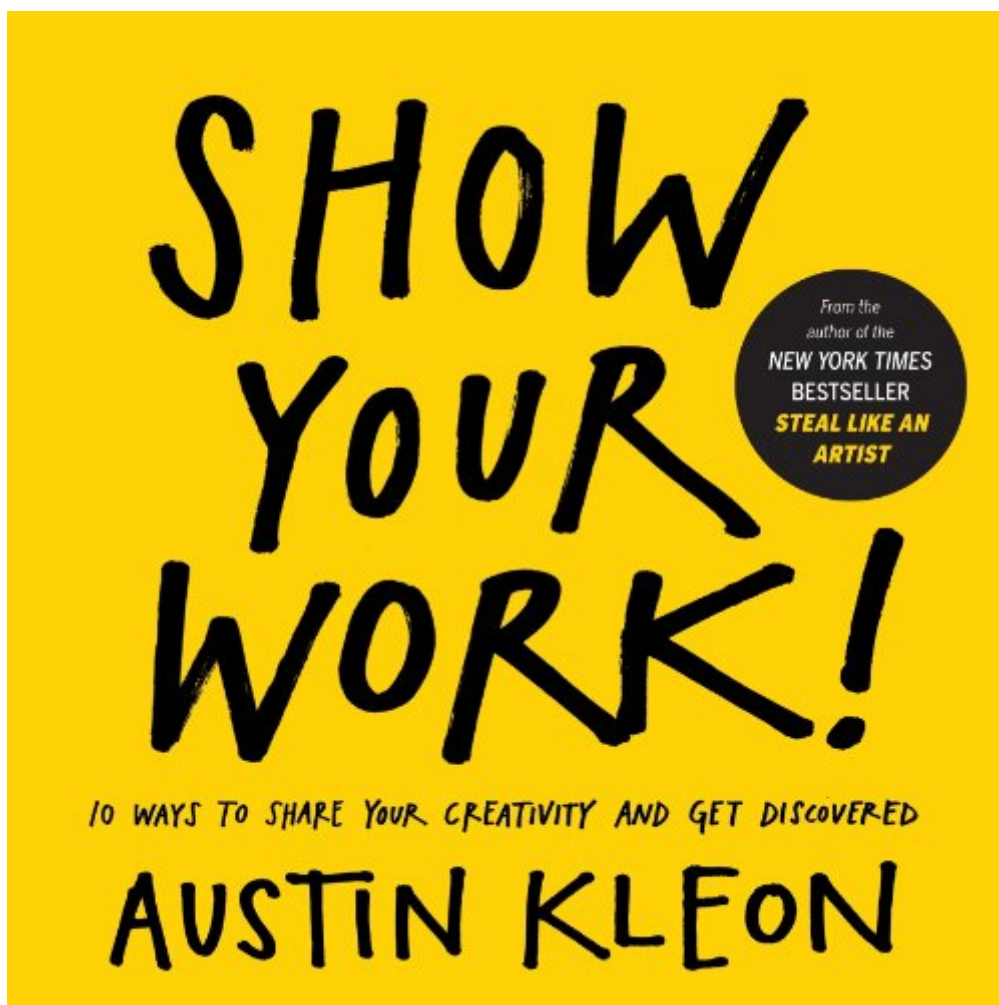


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Show Your Work!: 10 Ways To Share Your Creativity And Get Discovered



Synopsis

In his New York Times bestseller *Steal Like an Artist*, Austin Kleon showed readers how to unlock their creativity by "stealing" from the community of other movers and shakers. Now, in an even more forward-thinking and necessary book, he shows how to take that critical next step on a creative journey "getting known." *Show Your Work!* is about why generosity trumps genius. It's about getting findable, about using the network instead of wasting time "networking." It's not self-promotion, it's self-discovery "let others into your process, then let them steal from you. Filled with illustrations, quotes, stories, and examples, *Show Your Work!* offers ten transformative rules for being open, generous, brave, productive. In chapters such as *You Don't Have to Be a Genius*; *Share Something Small Every Day*; and *Stick Around*, Kleon creates a user's manual for embracing the communal nature of creativity "what he calls the "ecology of talent." From broader life lessons about work (you can't find your voice if you don't use it) to the etiquette of sharing "and the dangers of oversharing" to the practicalities of Internet life (build a good domain name; give credit when credit is due), it's an inspiring manifesto for succeeding as any kind of artist or entrepreneur in the digital age.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kleon has an engaging writing style. His illustrations are cute. He is an able curator of interesting quotations. But this book is mostly devoid of meaningful or useful content. Here is some of the advice you'll receive:- Put your work out there, share it with others regularly- Meet up with people in real life, not just on the Internet- Don't be afraid to make money off your creative work- Keep going- Maintain an e-mail list- Give proper credit when you refer to other people's workI won't spoil the rest--if you do read the book, you'll see that I'm not simplifying anything in that list. He goes into zero detail about **how** you should do any of those things, which leads me to believe that he considers the suggestions themselves as worthy of paid publication. Even as free blog posts, most of these chapters would leave me asking, "And...?" This is a catchy write-up of the most banal common knowledge on the topic.I loved Steal Like An Artist (and still do), but this book was not worth the money or the time I spent on it. Big disappointment. I will probably still buy his next book, but I hope I won't have to return it like this one.

As Austin Kleon explains, his previous book, Steal Like an Artist, "was about stealing influence from other people" whereas "this book is about how to influence others by letting them steal from [begin italics] you [end italics]." I agree with him that "all you have to do is to show your work" but only if (HUGE "if") it's worth stealing and you know how to do that in terms of what, when, and where. Actually, he wrote this book "for people who hate the very idea of self-promotion." It's not enough to be very good. "In order to be found, you have to [begin italics] be findable [end italics]. I think there's an easy way of putting your work out there and making it discoverable [begin italics] while [end italics] you're focused on getting really good at what you do."Kleon's two books can be of incalculable value to those who need help with creating content (whatever its nature and extent may be) and then help with attracting the interest and support of those on whom the success of the offering depends. It could be a product, a service, or both. Its target market could be singles, seniors, the unemployed or under-employed, new parents, do-it-yourselfers, beginners at whatever...you get the idea.So, how to become findable? First, Kleon explains the need for developing a new mindset, one that will enable the reluctant self-promoter to think differently so that she or he can then operate differently. Here's his key point: "Almost all of the people I look up to and try to steal from today, regardless of their profession, have built [begin italics] sharing [end italics]

into their routine. Next, he urges his reader to find what the musician Brian Eno characterizes as a "scenius": a group of creative individuals who make up an ecology of talent. "What I love about the idea of scenius is that it makes room in the story of creativity for the rest of us: the people who don't consider ourselves geniuses." Then Kleon suggests ten specific observations and initiatives, devoting a separate chapter to each. The purpose of the first, "You don't have to be a genius," is an important reassurance that David and Tom Kelley also provide in their recently published book, *Creative Confidence: Believing that only geniuses are creative* "is a myth that far too many people share. This book is about the opposite of that myth. It is about what we call 'creative confidence.' And at its foundation is the belief that we are *[begin italics]* all *[end italics]* creative...Creative confidence is a way of seeing that potential and your place in the world more clearly, unclouded by anxiety and doubt. We hope you'll join us on our quest to embrace creative confidence in our lives. Together, we can all make the world a better place." The other nine call for initiatives that almost anyone can take. Kleon suggests the most important do's and don'ts to keep in mind. Two key elements are repeatedly emphasized. First, share generously and continuously with those who comprise an appropriate (key word) ecology of talent: people who share common interest and goals, yes, but also common questions and concerns. Share what will be of greatest interest and value to them. Also, be yourself. Why? I like Oscar Wilde's response best: "Everyone else is taken." Each person is a unique work-in-progress. That's hardly an original insight but well-worth repeating. Let's allow Austin Kleon the final observations: "Human beings are interested in other human beings and what other human beings do. Audiences today not only want to stumble across great work, they, too, long to be part of the creative process. By showing people your 'behind-the-scenes footage" [i.e. portions of incomplete and imperfect work], they can see the person behind the products, and they can better form a relationship with you and your work." So show it...and your authentic self in process.

This is a refreshing kick in the butt about believing in yourself as a creative person and jumping in with both feet. The basic idea is to put yourself out there even if you (or your work) is a work in progress. This book borrows heavily from the late Paul Arden's "It's Not Who You Are, It's Who You Want To Be." In fact, the author quotes Mr. Arden at one point in the book, but in the page of acknowledgments, he makes no mention of Arden's wonderful book (get it). That's why I dinged this book a star. I do recommend this book if you are at all insecure about your place in the (creative) world, but I also highly recommend Mr. Arden's book, which is a classic and essential (and a shorter read than this).

I liked Austin's first book *Steal Like an Artist* and this one didn't disappoint. This book offers a motivational push to get off your butt and get your work out in front of an audience. Whether you are an artist, musician, writer or a speaker, you have to get your stuff seen, heard and experienced by others to know if it is any good. And it might not be and that's okay. It's validation and it helps you get one step closer to the work that will be loved by your audience, your team or your customer. This book inspired me to change up some of my content for some of the speaking gigs I've been doing. It's been rough and a little uncomfortable (okay, a lot uncomfortable) but when I heard an audience member make a comment about how much they enjoyed a particular point that I had made (in my new content) it made it all worth it. Getting those new ideas out of my head (and out of my growing notebook of notes), dusting them off and giving them a little life has opened up a whole new channel of thinking for me. It would not have happened if I had not shown my work. Thanks Austin for the encouragement and the push to do it. Great book.

I did it backwards but it worked out just as well. I read *Show Your Work* first and then read *Steal Like an Artist* second. Whichever you read first, you'll learn and be reminded of five star lessons in creative arts, specifically writing, in my case. Author, Austin Kleon breaks the process of creating art and getting it noticed into small steps. This is a short, fast read with a major dose of powerful ideas. He shows us the reasons for taking each action he recommends. Kleon effectively converses with the reader as if sitting across a table from us in a cafe having a brainstorming session about our art, in whatever form it takes. His ideas are simple but incredibly profound, easy to grasp and put to use. Highly recommended.

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