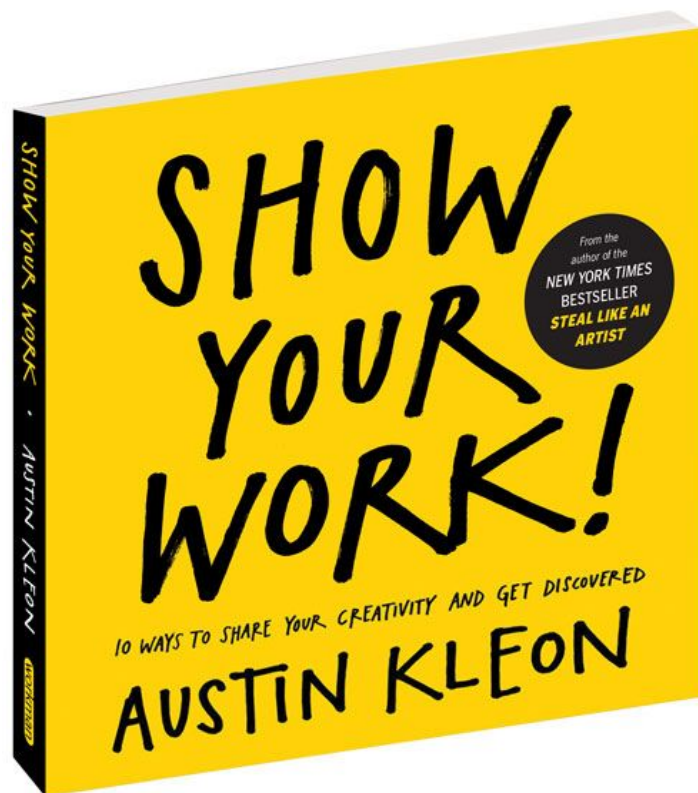


## Opening Quote:

“For artists, the great problem to solve is how to get oneself noticed.”  
—Honoré de Balzac



**Summary:** *Show Your Work!* came recommended by Seth Godin and offers 10 tokens of wisdom for aspiring artists and knowledge workers. Published by Workman in 2014, this 215-page book reads like a mosaic of simple yet gratifying revelations augmented by 95 quotes, 29 images, and 12 poems. Like so many self-improvement books, the content is mostly re-packaged wisdom. However, the material is structured and presented cleverly which makes for a fast, engaging read. This book caters perfectly to limited attention spans, social media addicts, or anyone who just wants to get better at sharing, teaching, self-promotion, storytelling, and how to realistically approach (and show) your life’s creative work.

## Table of Contents

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <a href="#">You don't have to be a genius.</a>       | 6. <a href="#">Teach what you know.</a>        |
| 2. <a href="#">Think process, not product.</a>          | 7. <a href="#">Don't turn into human spam.</a> |
| 3. <a href="#">Share something small every day.</a>     | 8. <a href="#">Learn to take a punch.</a>      |
| 4. <a href="#">Open up your cabinet of curiosities.</a> | 9. <a href="#">Sell out.</a>                   |
| 5. <a href="#">Tell good stories.</a>                   | 10. <a href="#">Stick around.</a>              |

## Chapter 1: You don't have to be a genius.

---

**Overview:** The myth of the “lone genius” is extremely dangerous. Instead, try to find a small group of like-minded folks who love what you love. Share your ideas, inspiration and work with them abundantly. Embrace the “amateur” mindset and commit to constant learning and evolution. Create an online persona to find and share your unique voice. Read obituaries every morning to channel mortality into productivity.

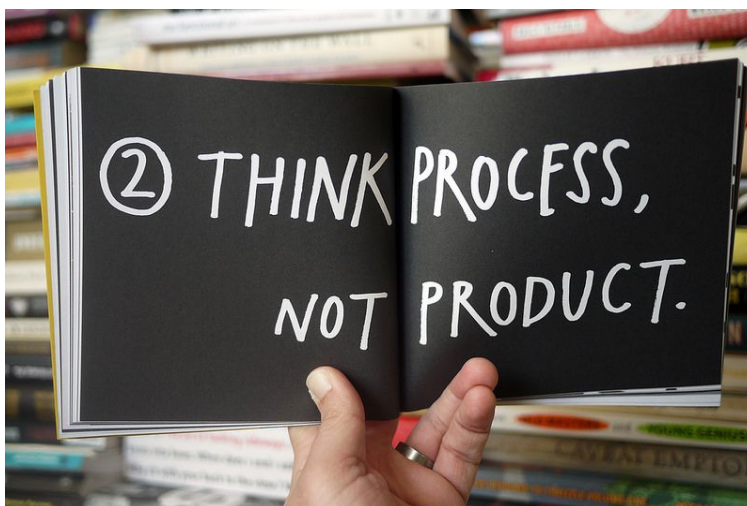
**Quotes (probably one of the most powerful quotes in the whole book):**

- “Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything—all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked.” —Steve Jobs

## Chapter 2: Think process, not product.

---

**Overview:** Intentionally separate “artwork” from the “art work”. Showcase the former, expose the latter. By sharing your process you can form a unique, human connection with other people interested in your work. In short, become a documentarian of what you do. Catalogue your trials and tribulations.



**Quotes:**

- “A lot of people are so used to just seeing the outcome of work. They never see the side of the work you go through to product the outcome.” —Michael Jackson

## Chapter 3: Share something small every day.

---

**Overview:** Leverage social media to share daily updates answering the question “what are you working on?” Make the time to share your work so that you can receive feedback and figure out what resonates. Seek to be helpful or interesting. Before sharing, asking yourself “So what?” to deduce the true essence of what and why you’re sharing. Overtime your flow of shared content will cluster into re-usable stock, i.e. “stock and flow.” Consider purchasing a domain of [www.yourname.com](http://www.yourname.com).

## Quotes:

- “Put yourself, and your work, out there every day, and you’ll start meeting some amazing people.” —Bobby Solomon
- “90% of everything is crap.” —Theodore Sturgeon
- How do you find time for all of this? “I look for it.” —Austin Kleon
- “One day at a time. It sounds so simple. It actually is simple but it isn’t easy: it requires incredible support and fastidious structuring.” —Russell Brand
- “Absolutely everything good that has happened in my career can be traced back to my blog.” —Austin Kleon

## Chapter 4: Open up your cabinet of curiosities.

---

**Overview:** One of the weaker chapters. The basic premise is to catalogue your inspirational sources and share them if you’re not yet ready to share your own work. Where do you get your inspiration? What do you read? What movies or music do you like? Who do you admire? This method can help connect with your audience and shape their understanding of you and your work. Don’t be afraid to dumpster dive: be open to receive inspiration in unusual situations. Be sure to give credit and always cite your sources.

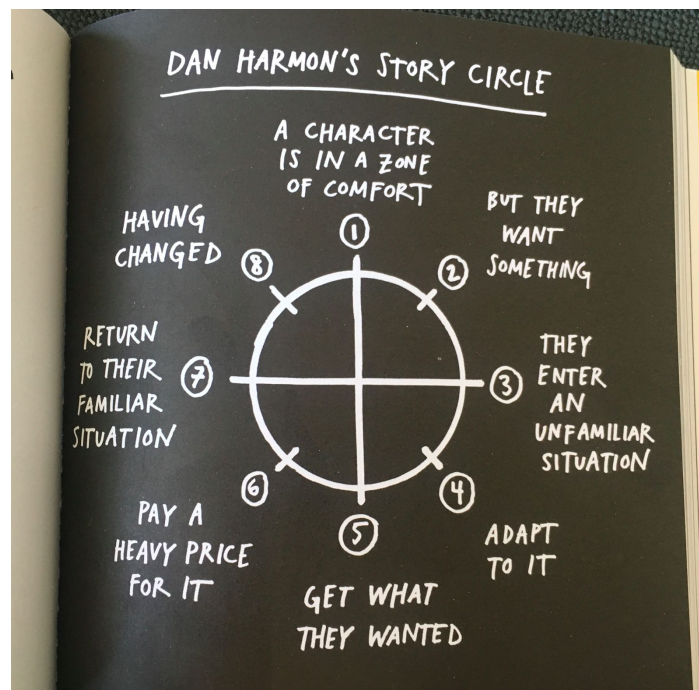
## Quotes:

- “I don’t believe in guilty pleasures. If you fucking like something, like it.” —David Grohl

## Chapter 5: Tell good stories.

---

**Overview:** Your work does NOT speak for itself. You must compose a narrative over time. Story structure is an important art to study. Learn how to talk about yourself in an authentic, simple and compelling way.



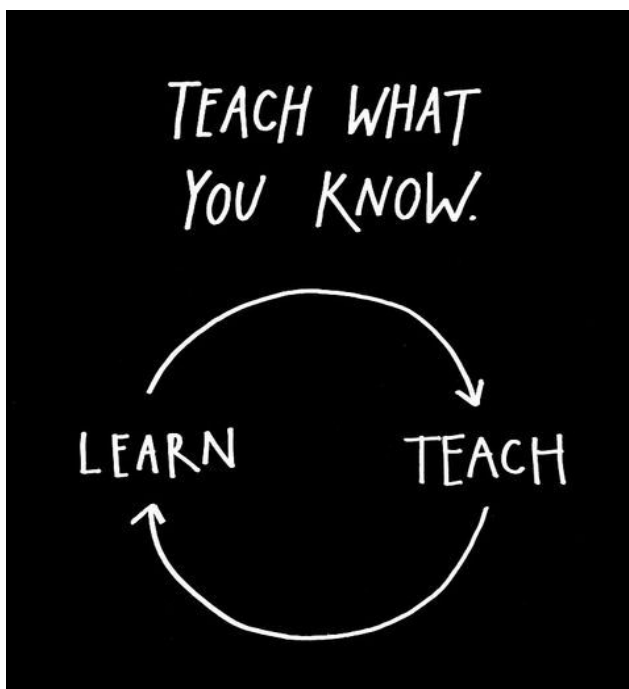
## Quotes:

- “In the first act you get your hero up a tree. The second act, you throw rocks at him. For the third act, you let him down.” —George Abbott
- “A character wants something, goes after it despite opposition (perhaps including his own doubts), and so arrives at a win, lose or draw.” —John Gardner
- “Autobiography is only to be trusted when it reveals something disgraceful.” —George Orwell

## Chapter 6: Teach what you know.

---

**Overview:** Resist the urge to hide your trade secrets. In fact, share them! Teaching is its own form of learning. The benefit is it will expose you to opinions and perspectives you should have thought of.



## Quotes:

- “What do you do? What are your recipes? What’s your cookbook? What can you tell the world about how you operate that’s informative, educational, and promotional?” —Jason Fried, David Heinemeier from *Rework*.

## Chapter 7: Don’t turn into human spam.

---

**Overview:** See chapter title. The sharing continuum is: Hoarder >> Contributor >> Spammer. Be cautious of success too: don’t let the world become all about you. Look for your next collaboration, ask your audience questions, ask for reading recommendations, chat about the stuff you love. Always keep listening, stay interested. Focus on quality over quantity when it comes to “followers” on social media. How can you find more people with you, e.g. fellow “knuckleballers”? When appropriate, try to connect with online relationships in person.

## Quotes:

- “When people realize they’re being listened to, they tell you things.” —Richard Ford
- “Being good at things is the only thing that earns you clout or connections.” —Steve Albini
- “Have you tried making yourself a more interesting person?” —Donald Barthelme
- “It’s all about paying attention. Attention is vitality. It connects you with others.” —Susan Sontag

## Chapter 8: Learn to take a punch.

---

**Overview:** Learn to take criticism. Fear is often just the imagination taking a wrong turn. Separate criticism of your WORK from your SELF. Keep moving, keep trying. You’ll never get approval from everyone, so expect criticism and harness it as an improvement mechanism. Don’t feed the trolls, and don’t share topics that are too close to home or sensitive.

## Quotes:

- “I ain’t going to give up. Every time you think I’m one place, I’m going to show up someplace else. I come pre-hated. Take your best shot.” —Cyndi Lauper

## Chapter 9: Sell out.

---

**Overview:** It is okay to benefit financially from your work. The term “sellout” is dramatically overused to attack legitimate ambition. To fund your operations, you have options: donations, crowd-funding, and selling products and services directly for money. Quality comes first, of course. Keeping a mailing list will help leverage your audience at scale (always ask permission). If success comes, pay it forward. Extol your teachers, your mentors, your heroes, your influences, your peers, and your fans.



## Quotes:

- “The real risk is not changing. I have to feel that I’m after something. If I make money, fine. But I’d rather be striving. It’s the striving, man, it’s that I want.” —John Coltrane

## Chapter 10: Stick around.

---



**Overview:** Don't quit your show like Dave Chappelle. Keep going. Keep working. Stick around. Chain-smoke your projects. Use gaps in your previous work to inspire new work. Be like Woody Allen who averaged one film per year for 40 years. Ernest Hemingway would stop in the middle of a sentence at the end of his day's work so he knew where to start in the morning. And after concerted effort, "go away so you can come back" by taking a sabbatical to reflect and not think about work. Use gaps in your day to reset: your commute, exercise, getting out in nature. Then, go back to chapter one. Become a student again. Take on the amateur challenge. Don't "start over". . . *begin again*.



## Quotes:

- "If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story." —Orson Welles
- "Work is never finished, only abandoned." —Paul Valéry
- Go about your work. . . "Every day, without hope or despair." —Isak Dinesen
  - You can't count on success; you can only leave open the possibility for it, and be ready to jump on and take the ride when it comes for you.
- "The minute you stop wanting something you get it." —Andy Warhol