5 Skills I Learned From the Prolific Regis Philbin



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I got up on stage in my home city Philadelphia, in front of a crowd of just over 500 people to talk to a group of aspiring authors about leveraging the power of the internet to spread their message. I didn't have sweaty palms or a cracking voice, and the talk went very well.

I'm not saying this to brag. For whatever reason, speaking in front of groups is easy for me. I'm lucky that way.

But plop me in the middle of a small group where I'm expected to interact and I am super shy… I never quite know what to say until I warm up a bit.

However, my business requires me to be able to interact with people on a regular basis, sometimes without much notice, and often in small groups. Quite often, I have to be able to seem at ease in situations with people who are new to me – no matter how uncomfortable I feel on the inside.

To learn these particular social skills (which don't come naturally to me), one of the things I did was watch the master, Regis Philbin.

Regis was a master at putting people at ease, and he logged more hours on broadcast television than anyone else in history. His recent death was a loss to the TV landscape, and a loss to me personally.

Here are five lessons I learned watching Regis over the years.

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Always be ready to go

A great portion of Regis' career in front of the camera was live and unscripted. And he made it look EASY. That was because, for him, it was. Regis was always prepared to do his job in front of the camera – no matter the subject or circumstance.

Watching him on "Live! With Regis and Cathie Lee" and later on "Live! With Regis and Kelly" was watching a master at his craft. He was always able to be funny at just the right moments while giving serious subjects their due gravitas.

Watching how prepared he was in every situation helped me to prepare better myself.

Use stories to make a connection

Philbin's co-host Kelly Ripa is quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "I think he is the world's greatest storyteller."

Storytelling is an underrated art form, but extremely important for setting people at ease and creating rapport and Regis was a master at it. One of his favorite stories involved the astrologer Sydney Omar, who was the first guest on his first national television show. Omar predicted that Regis would fail that time around and he did, only to come back and become a household name (which Omar also predicted).

Learning how to tell stories well has helped me talk with strangers with a great deal more ease. It's also helped me land new clients and make more sales. People relate to stories at a visceral level. Facts and figures just don't work in the same way.

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Cultivate long-term relationships

One of the many talents of Regis Philbin was his ability to cultivate long-term relationships. Michael Gelman, the producer on the Live! shows, worked with Regis for 29 years.

Having solid, long term relationships like this requires integrity and trust – traits that Philbin had in abundance. Gelman told the *New York Times* the key to the show was to, "Let Regis be Regis."

I've found that one of the keys to business is the ability to develop relationships where people know you and trust you to deliver a quality product every time you do business with them. If your colleagues trust you then you will get much further than if you try to hustle them and your business will

have much more staying power.

Make people comfortable

Regis was a master at making people feel comfortable when he had them as guests on his show.

Regis' good-natured joking put people at ease and let them reveal more of themselves than they might have otherwise. According to *The Washington Post*, part of Regis' appeal was his ability to make fun of his own enthusiasms.

Using gentle humor also works wonders in business settings. You need to be careful how much you use, but humor can put people at ease and make them comfortable like almost nothing else. As Jimmy Kimmel said in a tweet, Philbin was a "great broadcaster, a good friend and a tremendous amount of fun."

Have a great work ethic

Plenty of dubious sales letters depict people frolicking on the beach and working maybe an hour a day, but real business almost always requires a serious work ethic. You have to show up day after day and put in the hours to move your business forward one step at a time.

Sometimes it's boring, but that's usually what it takes.

Regis Philbin was the master of work ethic, as proven by his Guinness World Record for the most hours on US television. He clocked in an astounding 16,746.50 hours in front of audiences. That's someone who showed up ready to work.

Regis Philbin had tremendous talent and work ethic to rival anyone in the industry. He played to his personal strengths and had great character. If we're ever looking to learn more from him, he kindly left behind 16,746.50 hours of lessons.

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