

Using Facebook to Spread Your “GOOD WORD”

By Julia Schopick



When a colleague suggested I use Facebook to get my message out to the public, I believe my exact words were, “Facebook is dumb. I’ll never use it!” But, at his insistence, I signed on, because I had a book to

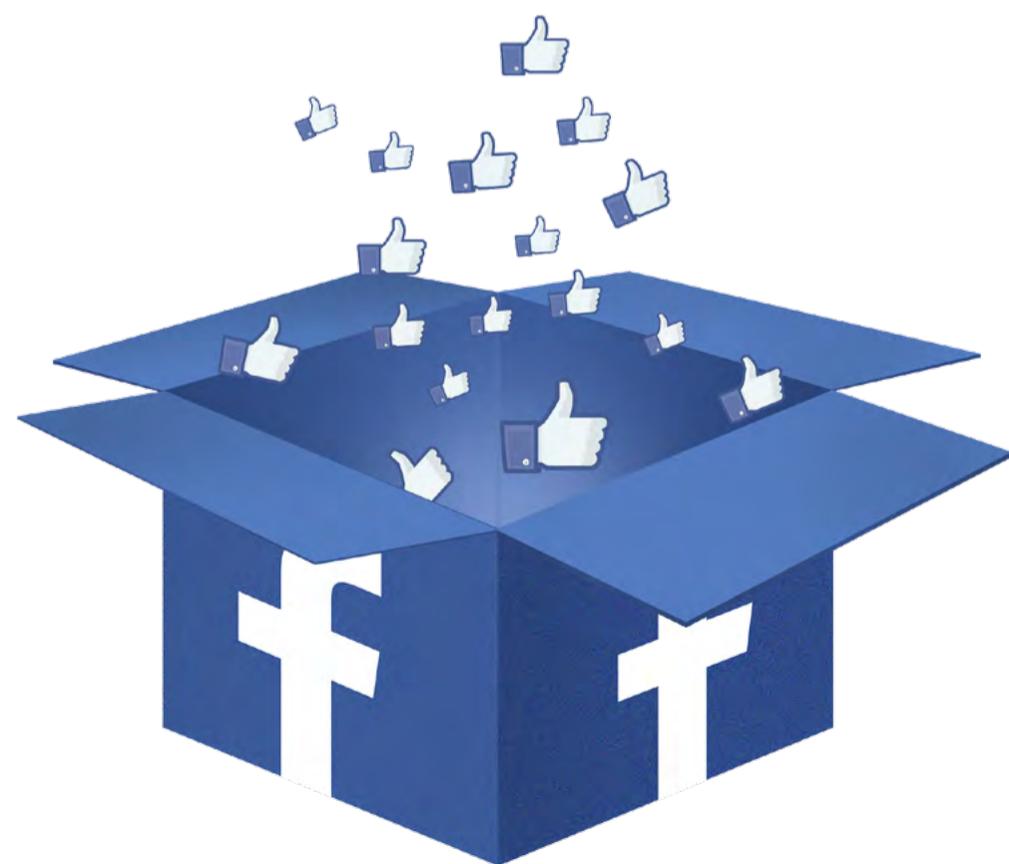
promote and a deep need to educate the public about its important messages. Unfortunately, the first people I “friended” posted pictures of their most recent delectable meals and their beautiful gardens. I was sure I was right: Facebook really *was* dumb! But then, I began to connect with people whose missions were similar, though not identical, to mine and who were serious about educating

their friends and followers about important topics. I began to see how powerful Facebook could be.

In a few short months, I lived to eat my words. Not only am I on Facebook. I have a personal page and a fan page for my book, *HONEST MEDICINE*. And on my two pages combined I have nearly 5000 friends and followers. But popularity—or lack of it—is not the point of Facebook for me. The point is that I find it one of the most powerful ways to get important messages out to the public. And the more passionate one is about one’s message, the better Facebook is as an avenue for disseminating it.

There are several ways to do this.

Some of my Facebook friends link to articles on their own websites and blogs to spread their important messages. For instance, Dana Trentini, who suffered a miscarriage because her thyroid wasn’t being properly managed by her doctors, educates other women about the proper care of thyroid disease through her blog, Hypothyroidmom.com. Then, she shares her blog postings with her 900,000+ followers on her Facebook page of the same name. An average post of Dana’s gets several thousand “shares,” and even more “likes.” Ditto, Mary Shomon, also a thyroid patient advocate who, with Dana, has written a book, *Your Healthy Pregnancy with Thyroid Disease*. Mary has two thyroid websites: her verywell.com (formerly about.com) site, and her personal thyroid site. Her Facebook page has over 100,000 followers.



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It is primarily by sharing their extremely thought-provoking blog posts about thyroid disease on Facebook that both women get the most traction for their ideas. Others who share their important messages on Facebook include the man I refer to as “my favorite whistleblower,” Wendell Potter, author of *Deadly Spin: An Insurance Company Insider Speaks Out on How Corporate PR Is Killing Health Care and Deceiving Americans*. Wendell was Vice President of Corporate Communications for CIGNA, one of the most powerful insurance companies. In that capacity, he was a cheerleader for an industry he later came to realize was interested in profits over patients. He resigned in 2008. His tell-all book became a New York Times bestseller. But Wendell decided not to rest on his bestselling-author laurels. He is a guest columnist for the Huffington Post and other publications, and was—and still is—interviewed on countless mainstream radio and television programs, speaking about the pros and cons of the Affordable Care Act, as well as other insurance industry-related issues.

And how does Wendell promote his writings and media appearances? Through Facebook, of course. Many people (including me) share his articles, as well as links to his media interviews, thus helping to spread his important message. Lots of other people use Facebook in a similarly educational way. I’ll just mention a few here: Ronald Hoffman, MD educates the public about integrative medicine; nutritionist Jeanne Wallace, about nutritional treatments for cancer; Martha Rosenberg, about the pharmaceutical industry and gun lobby; and Ann Fonfa, about integrative treatments for cancer. (Ann has an important website, AnnieAppleseedProject.org, too.)



Most troubling, though, I found that his doctors were not at all interested in learning about the cutting-edge treatments I found for him—some were nutritional, others weren't. When he had a recurrence of the tumor ten years later, his suture line wouldn't heal. It was then that I found a treatment that literally saved his life.

This is one way people use Facebook to disseminate information that is important to them—and to others. I use Facebook a bit differently, but with a similar result. My book, *HONEST MEDICINE: Effective, Time-Tested, Inexpensive Treatments for Life-Threatening Diseases*, emerged from my personal experience of helping my husband, who was diagnosed in 1990, at the age of 40 with a cancerous brain tumor. He survived twelve years beyond his doctors' predictions for him.

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HONEST MEDICINE is the result of this quest. It is my life's mission to share, not only these treatments with patients who need them, but also the message that patients need to do their own research, because doctors often will not have lifesaving an-

swers. And Facebook, along with hundreds of radio interviews, has kept my book and its messages in the public's eye for five years. Largely because of my involvement on Facebook, I am regarded as a patient advocate with important information to share.

Ironically, I do NOT openly plug my book on Facebook. I share other people's important Facebook postings, priding myself on being able to separate the wheat from the chaff—i.e., the good information online from the bad. I'm constantly on the lookout for postings to share that I consider noteworthy. By doing this, lots of people learn about me, my book and my mission. I also share lots of postings I find online on both of my Facebook pages—especially about the bad behavior of pharmaceutical companies, and about new treatments my friends and followers (and many doctors) won't know about.

In addition, I share links to radio shows I've appeared on to promote my book. "Isn't that blatant self-promotion?" you might ask? Not if the topic being discussed will be of special interest to my friends and followers, as well as to people in Facebook groups in which I am active.



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One of the treatments I feature in my book is Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN), which has helped many thousands of people around the world who suffer from autoimmune diseases as far-reaching as multiple sclerosis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and Parkinson's disease. When I discuss LDN on air, as I do whenever I am interviewed on the radio, lots of people will be interested in listening to these interviews after they've aired. Not only do I share them on my two Facebook pages; I also share them in several Facebook groups devoted to educating people about this formerly little-known treatment. And many of my friends and followers share my postings and links with their friends and followers, thereby garnering an even wider audience for my message.

But I think my best use of Facebook is by commenting effectively.

I learn about postings that I think will benefit from my comments in two ways: (1) when they appear on my Facebook timeline, and (2) through emails I receive informing me that a new posting has been added in one of the groups I'm a member of. Whenever there is a "thread" I feel I can add important information to by commenting, I do so. In my comments I often post links to studies that either back

up or disagree with an assertion made in a posting or in another comment.

In my comments, I also "tag" other Facebook friends I believe will want to know about the posting I'm commenting on. By tagging a person, it means they will be notified that I have mentioned them. When I use commenting and tagging in this way, others often thank me for my comments, and in the process, mention my book. For instance, if I am commenting on an interesting posting about the pharmaceutical industry, I might tag Martha Rosenberg. For a posting or a comment about an innovative cancer treatment, I would tag many people, including Ann Fonfa and Jeanne Wallace. And when this article is online, I will tag the people I have mentioned in it, as well as *New Consciousness Review*, where it appears, and its editor, Miriam Knight.

In closing, I have found Facebook, which I once proclaimed to be "dumb," to be one of the best ways to get important information out to the public. If you'd like me to support your important work by providing a complementary consultation in how best to use Facebook to get your message across, please write to me at Julia@HonestMedicine.com. In the subject line, write "Facebook consultation."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julia Schopick is a best-selling author of the book, *HONEST MEDICINE: Effective, Time-Tested, Inexpensive Treatments for Life-Threatening Diseases*. She is a seasoned radio talk show guest who has appeared on over 100 shows and is often invited back. Through her writings and her blog, HonestMedicine.com, Julia's goal is to empower patients to make the best health choices for themselves and their loved ones by teaching them about little-known but promising treatments their doctors may not know about. Her writings on health and medical topics have been featured in *American Medical News (AMA)*, *Alternative & Complementary Therapies*, the *British Medical Journal* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. She also coaches authors and other experts in how to use Facebook and radio interviews effectively to get their messages out to the public. You may reach her via email at Julia@HonestMedicine.com.

