

To brag or not to brag?

Description

One of my best friends is a very accomplished public relations executive, the former press secretary to a governor and the mom of two. She's married and lives in Claremont, which has wonderful private elementary schools that are extremely competitive due to the colleges in the area and the children of faculty who attend these private elementary schools.

When she was applying to schools, she called me to discuss her application. I was surprised. There was something missing from her child's written application! The application said nothing about her professional accomplishments, her volunteer work and her non-profit board service. Nor did she mention her husband and his family, who are prominent business and charitable leaders in Los Angeles. I asked her about this missing information. Being the gracious person she is, she said, "I don't want to brag, so I'm not going to talk about any of that stuff."

What????

She was very concerned that she and her husband would come across as pompous and self-absorbed if she wrote about any of their professional or charitable work or mentioned it during the parent interviews. I was concerned that if they omitted it, they would be overlooked in the competitive application process.

We discussed the situation. Together, we developed her family's key messages that focused on charitable giving, teaching her children the importance of giving back to their community, making education a priority for her family and community service.

My friend's child was accepted at her top choice school. She's now the head of the parent association at the school and her husband serves on the finance committee. What my friend considered bragging wasn't really that at all. It was telling her family's impressive story in a city filled with impressive stories. It was about marketing her family in a memorable way to admissions directors.

For most of us, it's always uncomfortable to tout our own accomplishments. Private school applications and interviews are one place where it is recommended and expected that parents will do just that. You just need to find a way to do it in a

low key, but memorable way.

Category

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