

Are you telling yourself a limiting or empowering career story?

What is your career story? When professionals come to me for career coaching, I ask them to tell me their career stories thus far in their own words. I ask them to be brief and only to let me know what got them to this point in their careers and how they see where their career stands at that moment.

Temps de lecture : minute

4 December 2023

What I am looking out for is how they tell their story. What do they emphasise, and what do they leave out of their career story? Later, I ask them to write it down, limiting it to around 200 words. By writing it down, my clients and I can assess the story better. They get the opportunity to see their thoughts, beliefs and feelings before them versus these just rolling around in their heads, causing confusion.

The stories we tell ourselves internally become our reality because we keep repeating them to ourselves, believe them, and tend to operate within them. These stories heavily influence what we think we can and can't do, the options and opportunities we see for ourselves, and how others will likely perceive us.

Your personal collection of stories can lean towards either a more negative or positive side, depending on who you are and the combination of your natural tendencies, upbringing and work experiences. They help me understand your thinking and beliefs about yourself. Through this discovery process, I aim to shift these stories towards possibilities, abundance, positivity and growth. I examine how you tell your career story when I listen to and read these stories to see whether it is a

limiting, or an empowering, story.

What are limiting and empowering career stories? Both tell me the types of thoughts and beliefs that you hold about your career, yourself, your capabilities and what you think is possible for you:

- Limiting stories: The thoughts and beliefs expressed are those that place a limit on what you can do in your life. They do not allow you to reach your true potential and prevent you from achieving your purpose.
- Empowering stories: The thoughts and beliefs expressed empower you to achieve what you want in your career. They give you the confidence to succeed and search for opportunities for growth and improvement.

After categorising your story as either 'limiting' or 'empowering', the next step is to peel the onion on your thoughts and beliefs so that we can reframe them to unlock your full potential. I often hear or read several limiting beliefs in these stories that impede growth, learning, decision-making and career plans.

CASE STUDY: Denise

Denise, a young professional, came to me for help. I asked her to state her career story in her words. She told me she had a good career thus far, five years into it. She received good performance feedback each year, but felt stuck, not growing and unhappy. She was very emotional while telling her story. She did not know what was next for her. Her bosses were not giving her feedback that helped her grow and she had tried applying for a few jobs with other companies but the response was not great. Her personal life could have been better. Although Denise felt that she knew a lot about her work, everyone thought that she was too young, so she felt that her voice needed to be more invited and heard in important matters. The external recruiters were telling her that she

needed to be more experienced.

After our 'peeling the onion' discussion, we first identified and focused on her biggest limiting belief: 'Everyone thinks I am too young.' Because Denise believed everyone thought she was too young, she was hesitant to speak in meetings, was not assertive and put limits on expressing herself on critical issues. Our reframing on this limiting belief was around helping her focus on the value she brought to the discussion versus how people would think of her and her contributions because of her age or perceived lack of experience.

In some instances, to help professionals understand their stories better, I give them the task of writing down the following about each job in their career:

1. What was the primary reason you accepted a job?
2. What was the primary reason you left every job?
3. What would people say about you in each job?

Through this exercise, I am asking you to identify patterns. Your career decisions and choices give us further data points regarding your story and who you are. Whether you know it or not, you tell yourself stories about who you are, what you are capable of and how others perceive you on a daily basis. These internal stories shape the reality you experience, and you will find that you operate within their confines. Your story, whether limiting or empowering, also impacts the options and opportunities you perceive in your life.

My goal in helping you to know yourself is for you to consciously examine your inner story and then reshape your narrative to create a more empowering reality. By consciously choosing an empowering story, you can break free of your limiting beliefs and unlock your true potential

So, what is your career story?

This is an adapted book extract from *Careers Unleashed* by Asad Husain.

Asad Husain is the author *Careers Unleashed*.



Unlock your potential for
extraordinary career success

ASAD HUSAIN

Buy Careers Unleashed Now

Article by Asad Husain