



Stories and Limiting Beliefs

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We're all storytellers. Politicians tell you a story about how life will be better if you vote for them. Marketers tell you a story about how life will be better if you buy their product. Parents tell you a story about how life will be better if you do what they say. Such stories often get described as "the truth" or "for your own good."

We also tell ourselves stories. You may tell yourself you cannot get your dream role because you do not have this or that qualification, you cannot advance a product you believe in because you are not good at marketing, you cannot start an exercise program for lack of time and so on and so on.

Stories, stories, stories, ..., stories of inadequacy, scarcity, laziness, inertia; of being a victim, of inferiority, of superiority, of being a failure, that we keep telling ourselves and others. We keep telling stories as to why we did not progress in a field of our dreams, how we are not university material, how we are not marriage material, or how we can never find a perfect mate or teacher. We tell stories of how we don't have enough time, money, health, beauty or any of the infinite other things. Though we want to be creative, we give excuses, telling stories of how we don't have talent, how somebody in our life did not encourage us, how this is not the right time or place to start it or that may be we will start it when we are free of all our responsibilities.

Sometimes, without our knowledge, we create such stories because they bring us attention, or the person we are telling will agree with us that they are also in the same boat which reinforces our belief in our story. It is a vicious cycle. When we believe in these stories strongly, every cell in our being believes them manifesting that into our reality which becomes our truth.

Having said all this, we should always keep in our minds to never judge our stories as *good* or *bad*. There are no good or bad stories, only those that aid our personal journey and those that don't.

It is quite probable that these stories we are calling *bad* now, actually helped us in our past to overcome a difficult situation or otherwise protected us. But, that same story may now be blocking or limiting us from progress. The trick is to not get attached to our stories, but be fluid and be willing to change or discard the stories that are not serving us well at this moment. So, we should only judge them as being *useful* or *not useful now*; alternatively, *expansive* or *limiting at this point* in our lives. We are responsible for our stories and nobody else.

It is all in the belief. If a story creates a conflict within yourself and in your environment, and constricts you, then it is a limiting story. If it creates harmony and peace within and without, then it is an expansive or useful story.

In many ways, we are what we believe ourselves to be. There is a lot of truth in the notion that "we are the stories we tell ourselves." Our past however need not dictate our present or our future. If we could create a limiting story and believe in it so strongly as to prevent us from achieving our goals, can we create more expansive story to unblock us and benefit us in our lives?

Yes, we can!

So why not make up a different story and in the process start to shape a different set of circumstances?



Reflection 1

I invite you to indulge in some honest introspection about the stories you tell yourself. The only audience that truly matters is the internal one that knows the difference between fact and fiction.

Listen when you talk to yourself. If you want a real eye-opener, jot down the things you say under your breath or in your head. You may be shocked at the kinds of limiting, judgemental, negative, critical stuff that pours almost constantly through your brain.

Then start to challenge those limiting thoughts when they arise. You'll start to feel better about yourself, impacting on your level of happiness. Others will also feel better about being around you, and it's only a matter of time before your external circumstances start to match your predominant internal mantra.

Reflection 2

The exercise involves writing your own eulogy. You will write two versions – the first represents the one you are heading for based on how you currently live your life and the stories you tell yourself.

The second represents the life that you want.

Now take some time to reflect on both and define the gaps that exist.

Then ask yourself – what stories am I telling myself that hold me back from living the life I want?.

What new stories do I need to create to create the life I want?

In conclusion

So while on the subject of stories, the following has circulated through via email channels for several years, but it bears repeating.

One evening a wise old Cherokee grandfather told his grandson about a battle that was going on inside himself.

He said, "my grandson, it is between 2 wolves. One is evil: Anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego....

"The other is good: joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith..."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins.?"

The grandfather simply replied, "The one I feed."

Our attitudes are a matter of the decisions we make, one minute at a time...which wolf we decide to feed. Choose which attitude you'll align with...success or failure...it's up to you, starting now.