

JOURNAL ACTIVITY



Some of Your Own Deep Stories

In the prior lesson we introduced the idea of deep stories. This lesson includes a list of common deep stories. Read this list and see if any of them resonate with you and/or trigger other ideas.

Use the space provided within this lesson to capture your thoughts and list out any deep stories that resonate with you. Some of you may find one or many items that you quickly relate to while some of you may find none. Both are normal.

This is not easy. Remember it is common to experience resistance to the idea that these might be stories because they absolutely feel like facts. We are not asking you to believe this at this point, we are asking you to be curious and open-minded to the possibility that these are stories.

It is more important that you walk away from this with awareness about the notion of deep stories rather than having identified one or more of your own. That said, take this opportunity to think seriously about this for yourself.

Deep Stories - Examples

- * I need perfection

- * I'm not _____ enough ("good," "smart," "educated," "rich," "successful," "happy," etc.)

- * I'm fundamentally flawed in _____

- * I can't be happy until _____

- * If I "show up" the way I really am, people will (judge me (harshly), reject me)

- * I need to be liked by everybody

- * It's important that others see me as successful

- * I'm responsible for the happiness of others

- * Other people are responsible for my happiness

- * I don't have time to take care of myself

- * I'm not a risk taker





- * Conflict is bad (or conflict is good)

- * I need harmony in my environment

- * I need others to see me as “strong”

- * I believe that showing vulnerability is a sign of weakness

- * I’m smarter than everybody else

- * I’m always right (or I’m never right)

- * I can’t win (or I can’t lose)

- * I have to prove myself every day

- * Things will always go wrong

- * It’s always my fault when things go wrong

- * I’m supposed to fail/I’m not supposed to succeed

- * I need certainty

- * I need security

- * I need to be in control

- * I can’t interact socially

- * I’m not supposed to outshine certain people in my life

- * I need to gain approval from _____ (my parents, my partner, my friends, etc.)

- * I need to get angry with people in order to ensure they get the message

- * I need everyone to agree with the solution in order for it to be successful

- * I need to be happy; life’s too short for anything else

- * People don’t listen to me

- * There’s not enough opportunity for all of us to be successful

- * I need to have intellectual mastery in one or more areas

- * I can’t handle rejection/isolation



- * I can't express my emotions

- * I need to express my intense emotions

- * I'm not creative

- * My past defines me; I will never overcome it

- * It's too late to change

- * I can't _____ (because I'm not wired that way)

- * I never _____ (because I'm not wired that way)

- * I often beat myself up about _____

Once you have completed reviewing the list and capturing your notes, see if you can hypothesize if one or more potential deep stories might contribute to the self-limiting behavior (SLB) that you are working on.

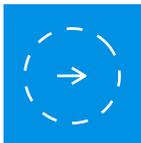
For example, let's say a person has an SLB of not speaking up in meetings. You can see how that person might have an underlying deep story of "I'm not smart enough," or "If I say what I really feel people will judge me," or something else.

Another approach to identifying deep stories that underlie your SLB is to consider the following two questions:

1. What worries you about shifting your SLB (in this example, not speaking up in meetings)? ("I might be judged harshly")
2. What benefit do you get from your SLB? ("Nobody will judge me harshly")

Answering one or both of these questions, in this scenario, unveils the deep story of "If I speak up, I will be judged harshly."

Capture your thoughts on this (any potential deep stories associated with your SLB) in the space provided in your journal.



Personal experiences with this activity vary widely. On one end of the spectrum a person may be entrenched in their view that these are facts, not stories. At the other end of the spectrum an individual is beyond excited to think that s/he could potentially shift one or more of these stories about themselves.

Where are you on that spectrum at this moment?

