



Tool 13

Recruiting the Storyteller: Old Stories, New Stories

The stories we tell ourselves about ourselves have a profound influence on how we see ourselves and how we show up in the world.

“Author, authentic, authenticity, authoritative’ all have the same root, which means ‘genuine’. When we become aware that we are telling ourselves stories, we begin to have a choice about what stories we are telling, and that is the true beginning of authoring our own existence.... To be in a life of our own definition, we must be able to discover which stories we are following and determine which ones help us grow the most interesting possibilities.”

—Markova, *I Will Not Die an Unlived Life: Reclaiming Purpose and Passion*, 2000, p. 12

By inviting the mentee to notice the stories they are telling, the mentor-coach supports the mentee in expanding their awareness of the impact the stories have on themselves, their life, and learning journeys.

As the mentee uncovers the beliefs and assumptions within the past and present stories they tell, they can choose how to respond to the stories. The mentee can choose to honour treasured, old stories, drawing strength and clarity from them for their own learning and growth. Or upon reflection, they can choose to let go of old stories that are no longer useful by exploring alternative stories that will better serve them and provide energy and momentum for their current journey. Creating future stories to live into is another impactful way to invite the mentee to play with the power and energy of story.

It is also thought provoking to invite the mentee to look at the collective stories told within their educational context and to consider how the stories might help or hinder building a collaborative culture and operationalizing the collective vision.

“Three premises about story:

- *How we make our experience into story determines how we live our personal lives.*
- *What we emphasize and retell in our collective story determines whether we quarrel or collaborate in our community.*
- *What we preserve in larger human story determines what we believe is possible in the world.”*

—Baldwin, *Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives Through the Power of Story*, 2005, pp. x–xi



Exercise: Old Stories, New Stories

We tell ourselves three kinds of stories:

- Old stories that we treasure and want to pass on
- Old stories that are no longer useful to us
- New stories that we want to live into

Together, work through the following steps to consider and “unpack” examples of each kind of story from the mentee’s internal story log.

1. Fostering wisdom from old stories we treasure

Mentee

Share a story you love to tell about yourself from your work or role as an educator.

Mentor-coach

Pose some of the following questions to support the mentee in unpacking the story:

- *How does your current wisdom and experience resonate within this story?*
- *What about the story gives you pleasure in the telling?*
- *Who are you in the story? How does that relate to who you have become?*
- *What keeps you telling this story?*

2. Letting go of old stories that no longer serve us

Mentee

Share a story that you are still telling yourself about your work or role as an educator that is no longer serving you.

Mentor-coach

Use some of the following questions to support the mentee in unpacking the story:

- *What is it about the story that no longer serves you?*
- *More specifically, what within the story do you want to let go of?*
- *What’s a story that better reflects your current reality?*
- *What do you want to acknowledge in yourself, given your evolving story?*



3. Creating space for our emerging stories, our evolving selves

Mentee

Share a new story about your work or role as an educator that you are living into.

Mentor-coach

Ask some of the following questions to support the mentee in unpacking the story:

- *How does it feel to articulate and share this new story?*
- *What is it about this new story that you find compelling?*
- *What strengths and gifts do you already have that are part of this emerging story?*
- *Who are you becoming as you live into this new story?*