



LEVERAGE TO LEAD



The **Story Builder** Toolkit



Hey There,

Thanks so much for downloading the Story Builder Toolkit. My name is Jennifer McClanahan-Flint, and I work with ambitious women and people of color to help them build dynamic, financially rewarding careers.

In my work as an Executive Coach and Career Strategist, I have consistently found that the biggest game changer for my clients is learning to clearly and effectively articulate their value.

The people I work with are savvy, smart professionals who know how to deliver stellar results; yet, when it comes time to share their accomplishments in an authentic way, they get tongue-tied and are at a loss for words.

My guess is you that you also stumble when you talk about yourself because you worry you'll sound arrogant or "braggy" when you discuss what you do.

The solution is simple: Tell an authentic, compelling story and highlight what's important about what you do.

Your story is an effective way to narrate your accomplishments and expertise, while sounding natural, down to earth, and even funny if you choose.

The Story Builder Toolkit gives you a clear outline about why stories matter, what they convey, and how to build an effective, personal story of your own.

I hope you find it helpful!

Warmly,

Jennifer

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Why Your Story Matters

"But I don't want to be a lawyer."

I was helping Lauren prepare for an interview for an international fellowship. She had graduated from law school but decided she didn't want to practice law. She feared her decision to not become a lawyer reflected poorly on her. That somehow people would think she wasn't as serious and decisive as she should have been. In fact, she didn't feel comfortable telling people she had attended law school.

Her reluctance kept her from fully leveraging who she is and what she believes in. And most importantly, it held her back from going after what she wanted.

We decided to focus on who she wanted to be and how her past helped her construct her future.

Lauren interviewed with confidence because she felt confident in the person she was and in her personal story. Developing her story provided her with the language to make an impact to those who heard it. Lauren ended up being the runner-up for the fellowship; but her story doesn't end there.

Three years after our work together, Lauren sent me email that said that the work we did on her story helped her better understand her mission. She continues to use her story as a guidepost to establish her priorities and to make decisions. Developing her story helped her land a challenging, exciting position where she uses her legal background. She admits that the one thing she was reluctant to speak about is now a tool she leverages to continue to build her career.

I know this story sounds magical. But honestly, anyone's story can be just as magical.

I use The Story Builder Toolkit in my Leverage to Lead program to help my clients develop their compelling stories. And now, I'm sharing this asset with you.

This tool teaches you how to create your signature story, which is crucial to conveying who you are at your core.

“One of the **most valuable skills** I gained from my work with Jennifer was **learning how to tell my story**. In this interview, it would be essential for me to express myself clearly and succinctly while **sharing insights** on my path, my **passion**, and how this opportunity would affect my future. Jennifer worked with me to identify my accomplishments, in order to help me reflect and **share a compelling story**. I learned to tell my story with enthusiasm and energy.”



Storytelling has been the cornerstone of success for many of my clients. It's a game changer in networking, interviewing, and asking for a promotion. The beautiful thing about telling your story is that it's all about you. You don't have to falsify or memorize it because it comes from your authentic experience.

Stories
are up to
22 times more
memorable than
facts alone.

- Jennifer Aaker, Professor of
Marketing at the Stanford
Graduate School of
Business

Using your story makes you a better negotiator and helps create stronger boundaries between work and family. It's also helps you promote yourself without sounding like you're bragging.

And the best part is, your story is uniquely about you. It can be short or long, serious or funny, and told over and over again. The key is your signature story must be authentic to you so it can show people who you are.

When you tell your signature story, you change people's perception of you in ways that reciting facts alone can't achieve.

What Your Signature Story Can Do For You

It shows the listener how you think and feel.

It doesn't tell people about your success, failures or achievements. It shares your motivations, ethics, and strengths in a way that leaves them feeling they know more about you.

It makes people pay attention in a different way.

Good stories make people slow down and listen. And when you have someone's attention, you have power. Stories give you the ability to move and motivate them.

It makes you relatable.

Stories instantly personalize you. People can relate to your strengths and emotions.

It teaches people how to talk about you.

One effect of a truly compelling story is that other people begin to tell it. They share their perception of you with others. This introduces you to people you've never met. For example, telling stories in a screening interview is the key to getting the next face-to-face interview. The screener will tell the story of why you're such an amazing candidate to the hiring group. I know because I've been the screener at the interview table and I've done it.





Let's Build Your
Story!



Let's Build Your Story!

Below, I've laid out an easy road map for you.

As you write, you'll discover what's unique about your journey and the experiences that got you to where you are today.

Keep in mind that you can also create a series of mini-stories for different audiences and situations. The possibilities are endless.

Discover your own magic. It won't fail you.

Stories compel people to focus and listen. A story that involves emotion is the best way to grab your audience's attention; a little vulnerability can build a connection that lasts. If you tell a good story people will remember you.

Your story is an integral part of who you are and why you do what you do. Your boss, staff, prospective clients, and potential employers want to understand your motivations, your Why.

To get clear on your Signature Story, answer the following questions:

1. Audience awareness: What is the point of your story?

Why are you telling your story? Who are you telling it to?

2. From there to here: What was your BEFORE situation?

Introduce yourself, describe your obstacles and share your state of being before your situation (i.e., Were you unaware, unhappy, disorganized, challenged, etc.?). Describe what your day-to-day life looked like. You can use language such as, "I used to feel as if..." Or you might say, "Back then I believed..."



3. The Shift: What or when was the TRANSITIONAL moment?

When or how did you encounter the obstacle or come face to face with the challenge? What happened that knocked you down, hurt you, scared you, made you look at your life in a different way? This part should be engaging so be detailed and sincere.

You might use language such as, *“Then this happened and I did this...”* Or you might say, *“Then I realized or understood...”*

Points to Remember:

- ❖ Your story needs to be personal, about you.
- ❖ Include emotion. Your story can be funny or dramatic, but not sappy.
- ❖ Determine the point of your story before you start.
- ❖ Build your story forward to make one clear and concise point.
- ❖ Craft your story using the following structure:
 - Set the scene
 - Introduce yourself and your mindset
 - Begin the journey
 - Encounter the obstacle
 - Overcome the obstacle
 - Resolve the story
 - Make the point
 - Ask questions
 - Re-state the point
- ❖ Remember to show and tell rather than just narrate the story.
- ❖ Stories that lack vulnerability are interesting but not compelling. Be Brave!
- ❖ Know your story’s powerful moment. Hold the moment.

4. Happy Ending: Describe the AFTER situation.

How did you overcome the obstacle? How did you turn it around? How do you think differently now? Describe your life now in terms of this opportunity and how it has changed you. You can use language such as, *“Now I am on a mission to ...”* Or, you might say, *“The real reason I do this work is...”*



In their own words: Client Success Stories



Lauren Luke
San Francisco, CA

"Jennifer helped me shape my story. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to interview for a fellowship. I wanted to be fully prepared and confident when I entered the interview room, and Jen helped me do exactly that and so much more.

She helped me develop a schedule in which I was efficiently using my valuable time. This included not only discussing ways to research and prepare for the interview, but creating a space in my life I could grow from my strengths. We met on a weekly basis and talked about my progress. I started going to the gym more often, eating healthier, and feeling more focused.

One of the most valuable skills I gained from my work with Jennifer was learning how to tell my story. In this interview, it would be essential for me to express myself clearly and succinctly, while sharing insights on my path, my passion, and how this opportunity would affect my future. Jen worked with me to identify my accomplishments, in order to help me reflect and share a compelling story. Jen was with me every step of the way, she was as excited as I was about this opportunity, and she made it possible for me to tell my story with enthusiasm and energy."

"I worked with Jennifer during my transition into a new area of education after working as a classroom teacher for 15 years.

After having two kids, I knew I needed more flexibility than my role as a teacher in a competitive, independent SF high school allowed me. I didn't want to just fall into a new role because it was convenient, though.

Jennifer's work ultimately paid for itself in a salary raise she coached me in negotiating. When we started to work together, negotiating my salary wasn't even on my radar, but as we progressed I had to face the fact that I was underpaid and I needed to say something about it. It's very satisfying to learn the skill of salary negotiation. And having success with the negotiation increased my overall confidence. If I can do that - all while doing the bazillion things a day that a working mom does - I know I can tackle other challenges that will ultimately enhance my life."



Holly Hirschfield
San Francisco, CA





Do you want to build your own story but aren't sure where to begin?

One of my strengths is helping clients find the thread that weaves their stories together. I'd be thrilled to help you find yours.

If you'd like to get in-depth support to build your own compelling story, simply **CLICK HERE** to send me an email.



About Jennifer McClanahan-Flint

Your career is more than a series of jobs.

I believe sharing your authentic story is a skill that can radically uplevel your career and compensation. That's why I work intensively with my clients to help them articulate their accomplishments in a manner that is natural and comfortable.

Eighty-five percent of my new clients are referrals because of the degree of success my clients experience. I have specific expertise around understanding and navigating bias, as well as compensation. Overwhelmingly, I help my clients significantly increase their incomes. While no coach can guarantee or promise more money, if what you are looking for is an increase in compensation, we can work to get it.



My work as an Executive Coach and Career Strategist has led me to work with people from companies such as Citibank, Morgan Lewis, JP Morgan Chase, Facebook, Google and Bloomberg Philanthropies, to name a few.

If you want more concentrated help learning how to clearly articulate your skill and expertise, email me at support@leverage2lead.com and we can schedule a time to connect.



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