

SESSION 6: PERSONAL STORY

This exercise will help you bring your personal TWIST into your business. It can be used as the copy in your “About” page as well as an informal “script” for when you tell your story live to others (ex. on stage, in pitch meetings, in a Zoominar).

Answer the thought starter questions below and then write your Personal Story through the lens of your Brand Idea and Brand Pillars (250 words). Try different versions on diff people to see which connects more. Notice stories that move you and why. How can you borrow and TWIST those techniques in your story?

LOOK AT THE STORIES AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR PAST BRAND SCHOOL STUDENT EXAMPLES.

**Thought-starter questions when writing your Story. Answer as many of these questions as you can:**

What were you like as a child?

What did you want to be when you were a kid? Were there any hobbies or activities that foreshadowed what you would choose to do when you grew up?

Who were your childhood heroes? Any family, friends, teachers, that had a big influence on you?

What was your family like? How many siblings? Did you move a lot? Were your grandparents in your life? What did you learn from them? Any places you always travelled or activities you did together?

What was your education like? Favorite subjects? What did you study?

What did you secretly want to study but didn’t end up pursuing?

What jobs did you have (summer, internships, full time) that were unusual or different from what you are doing now, and how did they influence your interest and or approach to what you are doing now professionally/the brand you are launching?

Did you have an “AHA” moment when you decided to start your business? Were you trying to solve a problem that was personally important in your life? Please describe.

What was going on in the world/your industry when you started your business? What trends were you taking advantage of? What social issues or industry challenges were you trying to address?

Who gave you the guts to try new things? Who do you want to prove wrong or make proud?

Sometimes, great innovation comes from overcoming great adversity. Was there anything that you had to personally overcome that helped you become who you are today and gave you the drive to start your business?

How do you personally live your brand idea and pillars?

Brand Idea:

Pillar #1:

Pillar#2:

Pillar#3:

Do you have a favorite book? How is it relevant to the way you approach your work? This could be a book from your childhood. It does not need to be business-related.

Do you have a favorite quote/saying/mantra? Is there a quote that sits on your desk or wall?

Is there a popular song title that reflects your personal philosophy?

What would friends and family members be pleasantly surprised to find out about you?

Please feel free to share anything else you think is relevant here.

**Example of Brand Stories:**

**Tatiana's Story (260 words)**

As I gazed out at the beautiful Pacific ocean I could feel my stress evaporate like the ocean mist evaporating off the water. In that precious moment of peace, the idea for my business was born. Years of practicing as a clinical social worker, and raising two young daughters had brought me a lot of joy, but also a knot of stress that never seemed to go away. Here on our much needed family vacation in Hawaii, it was finally starting to lift. I felt more present, grounded, and hopeful than I had in ages. But I knew that I needed an easier, more practical, and more affordable solution than flying across the country to deal with my stress. I decided to merge my love of helping people with my passion for making jewelry. I worked to create jewelry with intention, incorporating stones and colors from my travels to evoke the peace I felt while away, and to carry it with me even when returning home. My mission is to make jewelry that allows the wearer to take their intentions and place them into the stones to create change; to be present and believe in infinite possibilities. Each piece in our collection is accompanied by a selenite charging stone to help recharge the materials as well as your own energy- to make it as easy as putting on your jewelry to remind you of your blessings - and to help you put positive energy back into the world.

XYZ Brand reminds you that life is precious and to wear it well.

**Ritu's Story (309 words)**

My lifelong passion for harnessing human potential to transform business was born sitting at my grandfather Baba’s knee in an open courtyard in India.

I come from a cultural background and family where new businesses thrive in complex markets, evolve continuously, and are mastered with boldness, grit, emotional intelligence and bringing speed to action. I learned valuable lessons from participating in my family business. From choosing fabrics for my mother’s boutique to helping my father in marketing in retail. By attracting customers and building trust ,I developed my mission to constantly create something beautiful, purposeful, practical, and that generates revenue.

My mother and father set the model for the profit-driven side of business. But my grandfather showed me that this can only succeed when balanced with the crucial ingredient of human input. In our family courtyard he would receive visitors all day. They sought him out for business advice, but the way he listened carefully and drew them out was the real gift. As well as being tactical and practical, he led by important values of kindness and diplomacy. This was a blended approach that allowed them to find their own voice and the tools to succeed.

Today, as a global business transformation consultant, I continue to bring these skills and values learned early on to my unique approach. I help Executives at purpose driven global companies leverage cutting edge technology to transform business by aligning products, processes and - importantly- people.

I do this through an approach that is smart, seamless and scalable. It looks at all key aspects of business and the often overlooked interdependencies between people and profit. With deep dives into revenue and cost drivers, we improve both the customer and employee experience. We call this overlap between business and human potential the valuable X factor.

At XYZ Brand we help transform business where it matters.

**Write Your Story below.** Try to get it down to 250-350 words and bring us into the Story with details, time and place. Connect it back to your brand idea and pillars. You can try a few versions if you can’t decide on any one story.

POST YOUR FINAL VERSION OF THE STORY ON THE COMMUNITY PAGE and upload this entire document to the site.