

CAREER

REINVENTION

BOOTCAMP

Module 3:
Identifying
Your Myths

Audio + Transcript

Pamela: We are now going through Module 3, which is about myths and fantasies. It's really exciting this week.

Let's talk about what a myth is. I like to make a joke in my book, *The 10 Laws of Career Reinvention*. We're not talking about the Greek god myths where they come down and the clouds part and they're moving humans around like little chess pieces. We're not talking about those kinds of myths.

In career reinvention, we're talking about myths being unrealistic ideas that you hold in your mind about how things are going to be or how they are. It's about how they're going to be when you reach your goal or what's true in this moment.

For example, a common career reinvention myth is, "When I get a new job, my life is going to be perfect. All my problems are going to be solved. I'll be happy." Often you won't even know you have a myth. It's going to show up as a feeling, maybe pressure or misery that you're not there yet. It's just a block.

We were talking about a different career myth. This is another really common myth: that what you want doesn't really exist. The interesting thing about holding myths like that is that if you believe that what you want doesn't exist, you will not see it, even if it's sitting right in front of you. We see what we believe. In order to see possibilities, we have to change those beliefs.

Let's talk about some of those problems with myths. If we see what we believe and we are holding a myth that says, for example, "I'm too old," then all we're going to see are opportunities that we're too old for. We're not going to see the ones where we would not be too old and would be qualified for.

Myths can block us from a lot of things. They can block us from seeing the opportunities that are in front of us to have and shape what we want. They can block us from seeing possibilities. When we don't see possibility, often what happens is that we get drained.

We short-circuit our career reinvention before we even get started because we think, "It's just not possible for me to have what I want. Therefore, I'm not even going to make an effort." That's one of those really detrimental things about myths. You definitely want to uncover what you're holding so you can begin to see possibility.

Another problem with myths is that they cause your goals to carry too much baggage. When you're thinking, "My life is going to be perfect when I make that switch," your dreams can't possibly carry the weight of such heavy expectations.

When you pile all of that onto this career reinvention, it becomes a very heavy burden. It's too much to support. That's when you start to say, "It feels like so much work because I have to change my whole life."

The big myth is that everything is going to be perfect, so you have to change everything. Then we get overwhelmed. We're forcing our dreams and reinvention plans to carry way too much weight. That's another problem with myths. You think it's not possible, so you give up on it.

Even if you persevere and are in it saying, "I feel overwhelmed, but I'm going to persevere," holding a myth can set you up for disappointment. You're thinking, "I thought I'd be happy when I got there. Now I'm there, but I'm not happy."

That's another one of those fears that people come to us with at The Reinvention Institute. "What happens if I get there but I'm not happy?" that's a big one, but that's because there are some myths that need to be cleared up so you know for sure whether or not you're going to be happy when you get there.

Here's another thing myths can blind you to. By expecting your new career or job to deliver what you seek, you may not actually recognize the things within yourself that need to change.

A lot of times we put that on the job. We say, "It's the job. If I change the job, everything will be great." That's when you find yourself cycling through different opportunities, thinking, "The next place is going to be different." In reality, what needs to be different is you.

If you notice that you're starting to repeat a problem that you assumed your new job would resolve or you look over your careers past to date and find that you're continually experiencing the same stuff happening in job after job, chances are that you have a myth blocking you from seeing that it's not the job that needs changing. It's a pattern in you that needs to change.

This is how you get yourself out of that holding pattern. If you keep repeating the same things, you start to say, "What kinds of myths am I holding? What am I thinking is going to

be solved by making this change? Is that something that's really a part of the change, or is it part of myself? Rather than trying to change something outside myself, is it something I need to change?"

When you start thinking along those lines, that will blast you out of the holding pattern. It also opens up more sweetness in your life. By holding on to myths, you've missed seeing what you could do right now that would make your life better.

In Modules 1 and 2, you came up with this ideal day and vision. Holding onto a myth like, "I have to wait until I get there to live this vision," can block you from seeing what you could do today to start pulling components of that ideal life and day that you have into how you're living right now.

When you concentrate on improving your life in the present, new pathways open up. All of a sudden, possibilities start to show up. Unexpected opportunities present themselves, and your chances of achieving the change you want to see increase exponentially.

This is what you're going to do. Basically, part of the exercise for this module is that you're going to start to go through and think about what kinds of myths you're holding. You want to know what kinds of myths are blocking you, and this is an important thing.

What you're going to do to uncover that is ask yourself, "What do I believe will be different? What do I believe about my reinvention? What things are blocking me?" That's another way to uncover your myths.

"Why couldn't I have what I want?" That's another great question to ask yourself when you're trying to uncover a myth. If your answer is, "Because it doesn't exist," then it's a myth. Somewhere, someplace, it does exist. Then you can start to do myth-busting activities.

That's going to be one of your things. Come up with a myth, and then come up with a reality statement. If your myth is, "Nobody else out there is having a flexible job," the reality is, "There are people who have flexible jobs. Let me go look for those examples. First and foremost, let me decide that I'm going to sit on the side that has that job."

You can find evidence for anything you choose to believe. This is the most important thing to understand about a myth. Exploding your myths is about choosing the belief you want to be true for your world. Whatever you want, it can be true for you.

Maybe the person next to you can't have what you say you want. Maybe they can't have a flexible schedule. That doesn't mean you can't have a flexible schedule. That might mean making some shifts and changes, but often the only thing stopping you from having what you want is this myth that you can't.

That's what you want to know about your myths. "What belief systems do I choose to have?" That's how you begin to create and craft your world. You're determining consciously the belief systems that you want to operate under and then looking for evidence to support those beliefs and explode those myths.

A cousin of myths is our fantasies. Myths are unrealistic beliefs we hold about what life is going to be like when we get to where we're going. Fantasies are a close relative. There are two kinds of fantasies. One is great, and one is not so great.

The good things about fantasies are what we did in Module 1. It's visioning, positive thinking and what we were just talking about with exploding myths and deciding what beliefs you're going to operate under.

Those are the good things of fantasies. It's about seeing a possibility or visionary idea. That's one definition of fantasies. It's a visionary idea and something you want to create. That's a healthy thing. Just like the ideal day, that's a visionary idea for what you have in mind about how you want to live. That's the healthy use of fantasy.

The unhealthy definition of fantasy is a supposition based on no solid foundation. That is where it starts to become a problem. If you build your career reinvention on a supposition based on no solid foundation, then you're building that reinvention on quicksand.

The example I love to use for this is the one where I was wanting to work on Wall Street, and I was working in school toward this goal. I was going back to school for my MBA so I could have this.

A lot of that was based on fantasy and what I thought my life on Wall Street would be like, but I never bothered to go out and check to see what the details of that were. I just had this dream in my mind. It was a great dream, but I didn't bother to check the reality behind it.

Of course, when I get there, the reality started to hit me in the face. I thought, "This is not at all what I wanted," but by that point I had invested all this time and energy, and I was there.

That's what fantasies do. When you have a fantasy and you don't bother to check what's behind that fantasy, all of a sudden, you're in some new life, and you end up unhappy. If you base your career decision on this fantasy, chances are that your reinvention is not going to stick. You want to avoid getting there and saying, "I'm not happy."

You have to explode your fantasies up front. You need to know what you're going into 100% as much as you can in advance so you're making informed decisions that are not based on fantasy but on the realities, and you're making a clear decision that you're willing to take the reality of the situation. The truth is that there's good and bad for every situation.

What career reinvention does when you're exploding your fantasies is it has you check the reality and say, "What are the good things, and what are the downside things?" You make a clear decision that you're willing to deal with those downside things just so you can have the payoff of the upside things.

Sometimes the downside things are deal-breakers. If you knew them up front, you would say no. That's what you want to do. You want to clear out those fantasies right up front so you don't invest a lot of time, energy and money making a switch only to find out when you get there that you're not happy.

To do that, you have to say, "Where am I holding these fantasies? Where am I starting to think things might be a little bit perfect? What do I need to check out? What are the downside questions?"

In a few modules and a couple of weeks, we'll be talking about going to the natives. That's one of the great ways you can explode those fantasies. You can ask somebody in an industry who is working on doing what you're doing what I call the downside question. "What are the downsides of this?" You start to inform yourself.

Most people when they're out there asking, they're only asking things that confirm the dream. They're never asking the downside questions that would interfere with that fantasy they're holding.

Up front, you want to explode those fantasies and start paying attention to the realities. Even when you're reading something and thinking, "This sounds great," look for the downside. That's not to be negative. It's just so that you have a well-rounded picture.

Maybe you're looking at a particular position and thinking, "This position sounds great. I'd really be in the mix in this job," but it happens to be a position at a company that's known

for being demanding, and you'd have to give 110% and your vision is about being able to be home with your children at 5:00.

You don't want to labor under the fantasy that it's a great position. You don't want to think, "I'll be able to do that." You want to know right up front that it's a position that, if you take it, that 5:00 time with your child is probably not going to be possible on a consistent basis.

These are the things you're going to be doing around your myths and fantasies.