



# WHAT'S YOUR STORY



*“People are like stained glass windows: They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light within.”*

Elisabeth Kubler -Ross

**J**ennifer Aaker, a behavioral psychologist and a professor of marketing at Stanford Graduate School of Business, emphasizes how harnessing the power of story and engaging others is the key to success in everything you do – whether you are selling an idea to a client or co-worker, inspiring an audience or teaching a student, your goal is to engage your audience.

What's your story? Your story is evolving every day through your interactions with people and your reactions to all types of situations. While we are not always able to control our circumstances, we have the power to control our response. As your story evolves, you have the opportunity to improve and share it, every day.

How do you share your story in the workplace? Your personal brand is not what you think it is, it is based on the perception other people have of you. Are you known as a team player? Do you exhibit leadership skills no matter what your position? Are you someone that your co-workers want to spend time with? Perception is reality. What is the perception that people have of you? Self-awareness is curative. Let's review a few suggestions that will contribute towards crafting your positive and attractive personal story.

**No gossip, period.** You do not want to be known as the office gossip. In lieu of sharing the news that a person is getting divorced, lost their job or had an accident, why not share news of a wedding, baby or promotion? When you are the arbiter of positive news, you gain more trust than a person who shares negative news. You have seen it in the workplace, negative people form negative clusters. This is not a cluster that you want to be aligned with.

**Get noticed:** Do you work hard? Are your colleagues and boss aware of what you contribute? Challenge yourself in the workplace – don't wait for others to offer you more responsibility. Ask your supervisor how you can make their day better - is there a project that you can assist with? Keep track of what you accomplish and create a personal annual report that you can share in your review. This report should focus on the impact you had on the company. During your meetings with your boss, keep track of what is discussed. Follow up with an email, attaching the meeting notes with your follow up items

noted. Communicate as you complete these tasks as they may impact the work of other members of your company.

**Keep your net open:** What's your plan? Impactful performance, connections and results will not guarantee your current job, but it will help you secure a new one should the need arise. Companies close, departments evaporate; spend time crafting your story and building your brand. Kaizen is the Japanese word for “continual improvement.” Be a life-long learner, it will add to your story and serve to enhance your personal brand.

**Be nice:** Talk to everyone, you never know who you are meeting with and everyone has something to offer. It does not pay to judge others. Compliment your co-workers – *“You crushed it – great presentation, terrific sales numbers – can you share your knowledge with us?”* Building relationships with your colleagues is as important as building a relationship with your clients.

**The B20 Theory.** Brian Cotsonas, Regional Manager for Smith Optics subscribes to the B20 Theory – Be 20% better at everything you do – 20% is so attainable. For instance, if you are going to run 1 mile, run 1.4 miles. Start now – the sooner you start, the better you will be.

**Build your own tool box.** You never know when you can use the knowledge and skills. Stop focusing on your flaws and share your expertise. Your story is your currency; craft it carefully and spend it wisely so that the people you encounter will want to finish the chapter, and turn the page. Once upon a time...make it a story to remember!

**Gail Lowney Alofsin** is a keynote speaker, author, adjunct professor and business executive. Her book, *Your Someday is NOW – What are you Waiting For*, focuses on becoming your best you. Since being published in April, 2016, it has raised over \$35,000 for non-profit organizations. A lifelong student and humanitarian, Gail believes that we all have the capability to be a leader in our own lives, influencing the lives of others for positive peak performance and success. She can be reached at 401-640-4418 and [gail@gailspeaks.com](mailto:gail@gailspeaks.com). Follow her on twitter: [@gailalofsin](https://twitter.com/gailalofsin) and visit her website: [gailspeaks.com](http://gailspeaks.com).