**Your Biography**

**Why a personal biography?**

The world of work encourages us to see a career move as being about satisfying the market, not just that we can precisely fit into a box requiring certain skills, but often even that we can be expected to shape ourselves to fit a predetermined culture. If we accept that framework, we become numbed and uninteresting.

Your chosen career path must resonate so strongly for you that the market can’t turn you into another deadened applicant, believing success lies in being what others want you to be and saying whatever interviewers seem to want to hear. So when we meet to debrief on this exercise, we’ll ask you to discuss your life story in detail, just as if you were asked in an interview to do exactly this.

Remember always that the purpose of marketing is to make selling unnecessary. You must think like a buyer rather than a seller and allow yourself to seek a role that will genuinely be exciting to you. A thoughtfully written biography will help you reflect on what you really want, as well as the value you are able to create.

**How to write your biography**

Introspection is key to this exercise; we’re not looking for a mere chronology. Aim to include key information without getting bogged down in detail. The final product should be around 3,000 words in total.

*Approach the exercise from the perspective of* *an external observer – i.e.* *write using the third person* (he/she), not the first person (I).

Focus on your career choices, their consequences for your life in the past and their implications for your future. Consider and comment also on your beliefs about yourself and your potential, and on the foundation for these, e.g. the messages you absorbed about yourself as a child, your philosophy etc.

This exercise is to be the truth, *as if you were submitting it for publication* (you are not, of course; we will protect its confidentiality)*.* Remember:

* To be taken seriously, you must take yourself seriously. See yourself as chronicling a journey that conveys valuable lessons and inspiration.
* You are the editor of your life story. You cannot possibly tell the whole story and must edit it for impact.
* A good playwright can take a situation with the same core elements and make it a comedy or a drama. There is storytelling potential in even the most seemingly mundane of lives. Aim to write your biography in a way that is truthful, faithful to how you see your life, and that will engage anyone who reads or learns about your journey.
* Look for patterns. Your life needs a theme that is meaningful to you. A sense of purpose should pervade your story, even if it is only now in the process of becoming apparent. The finished narrative should have a sense of resolution, i.e. it should end with whatever you are currently able to articulate regarding the career outcome you are seeking and convey the sense of this being the appropriate outcome to your life’s journey thus far.

Review and polish your biography until you feel you would be ready to submit it for editorial review.