

## Your “One Coach’s Story”

*“Only experience can make wisdom a visceral part of our lives by bridging the distance from head to heart. That’s why a storyteller is magic but a teller of facts is not. There is a reason why parables are the oldest form of teaching: They work.”*

Gloria Steinem, Revolution from Within

### Have You Noticed?

At SeattleCoach we keep asking you to mine your experiences and explore your life, even your sense of calling, and then to be able to talk about why you see yourself as a coach or coaching leader: *You know how . . . ? What makes you unique? How you like to work? Who you want to serve?*

And you should know that we have a tradition: Every time our larger SeattleCoach tribe comes together, someone tells their “One Coach’s Story.” The volunteer stands up and in about five minutes tells about their journey to this moment, and to this growing craft, in their life. This, of course, is practice for speaking to the rest of your personal and professional life.

We’re at a time in history when the price of data, facts and figures is falling—it’s available everywhere. What isn’t falling is our delight in listening to a compelling story—a story that may connect some dots, and along the way, teach, protect, inspire or delight us and our listeners. In an evolutionary way, we are all creators and consumers of stories.

And for a coaching leader, storytelling is an essential skill as we explain, truth-tell, persuade and encourage.

### Writing Your Story

What do you know about the nature of a good story? Here’s the oldest of story lines: ***An ordinary person goes on a quest.*** And those ordinary people are usually vulnerable and flawed heroes (Odysseus, Precious Ramotswe, Frodo, Katniss Everdeen, Harry Potter, Ellen Ripley). When the great teacher Moses received his call to lead, he worried, *“O Lord, I’m not very good with words. I never have been, and I’m not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.”*

Don’t you love a great story? We listen, we empathize and recognize and breathe in lessons. And maybe we wonder, *“Maybe I could go on a quest too.”*

### As Usual, We Don’t Have a Formula for Writing Your Story

(but we do have a few questions for you):

- What personal experience moved you into this journey towards coaching leadership? *Restlessness? Wondering, “Is this it?!” A slow dawning? Getting older? A loss? Your sense of purpose + mortality?* What happened? Who believed in you?
- And then what happened? What did you do? What were your inquiries and experiments and what did you begin to notice? How did your direction come into focus as you moved through contemplation to preparation to action? Do you remember the first time you identified yourself as a coach or coaching leader?
- Like most of us with a learner’s mind, you probably had times when you felt like a vulnerable beginner. What happened when you allowed people to see that you were new at this?
- What did you do when it began to seem too hard, even impossible? When you encountered significant internal or external resistance and, like Moses, you just wanted to give up and “go back to Egypt?”
- And when you kept learning and kept going, how did you refine your core message? How did you continue to talk about your emerging craft and presence as a coaching leader? And to whom? And then whom? Was there a point of no return?
- What convictions and core truths began to become confirmed in your heart? Who began to notice? What hard data and research and science aligned with and fortified your message?
- And, as your message about the value of coaching has begun to connect with the people you increasingly want to influence and serve, what are you contemplating? What might you do next?

Since the beginning of coach training (*“Engaging Elevator Exchanges”, Your DATA, Your Vocáre Compass*) we’ve been asking you to identify the elements of your story and to test-drive them both with the members of this Cohort and with supportive colleagues who are following your coaching journey.

And soon we’ll be asking you to author and present a longer version of your story, your ***“Next-Steps/Personal Vision and Version Presentation.”***

In the years to come, as you keep re-telling and refining the story of your journey into coaching leadership, who knows? The next time the whole SeattleCoach tribe comes together, we may ask you to stand and deliver your ***“One Coach’s Story.”***