

## The Modern Editor Podcast – Episode 6: The Stories We Tell Ourselves

**Tara Whitaker:** [0:03] Welcome to *The Modern Editor Podcast*, where we talk about all things editing and what it's like to run an editorial business in today's world. I'm your host, Tara Whitaker. Let's get to it.

**Tara Whitaker:** [0:18] Hello, and welcome to today's episode. We're going to be talking about the stories we tell ourselves. Now, as an editor (and particularly a book editor), I'm going to guess that you're familiar with stories. And if you're not an editor listening to this, I'm going to guess you're a reader and are still familiar with stories. But we're going to take a little bit of a twist today on that kind of story you have in mind. This is about stories and thoughts that we tell ourselves and how they can affect our editing businesses. Now, chances are, you have been telling yourself a story or—let's be honest—multiple stories for so long that you don't even realize it. I know I do on a very regular basis. And just because we have these stories that we tell ourselves does not make them true. They're just thoughts and beliefs that we have said over and over and over to ourselves, that we take them as fact, even though they're not. And those thoughts and beliefs—those stories—honestly dictate how we run our businesses, whether we start our businesses at all, the decisions that we make or not make, the risks we take or not take. It really trickles down into a lot of things that we don't even realize until we're made aware of them. So that's what we're going to dive into today. And there is going to be some overlap with imposter syndrome. So, you're gonna get a little double whammy in today's episode. So, we're going to talk about what I mean by stories we tell ourselves, give you some examples how to recognize when you're telling yourself a story, and then how to flip that story, so it's not working against you. All right? Let's dive right into it.

**Tara Whitaker:** [2:03] So, what do I mean by the stories we tell ourselves? So, like I said, these are oftentimes thoughts and beliefs that are just so automatic to us or so ingrained in our brains that we just don't even question them anymore. We just say them without thinking. Or think them without thinking? You know what I mean. It could be something that we heard when we were growing up, it could be something that was repeated to us, or—let's be honest—it could have been said one time, and we just took it as fact. And a lot of times, in my experience, it revolves around something that I am insecure about or have a little bit of a lack of confidence or a sore spot. And that's why it's so much easier to believe, right? How easier is it to take criticism or something negative than it is to take a compliment? I think we can all relate to that on a very deep level, which is why the stories can get in our own way.

**Tara Whitaker:** [3:01] So, I'm going to start with this example because it's the story that inspired this entire episode and why I wanted to talk about it. It's not in any way a grab for sympathy or, or anything like that. It's—it's simply just the story that influenced this. So, when I was young, I was told that my voice was annoying. I don't know who said it. I don't know when it was said [or] how old I was. Clearly, I remember it. But I just remember hearing that I had an annoying voice. And to go along with that, more into growing up—again, I'm not sure exactly when, but it was at least late teenager years, certainly in my early 20s—I was told that I sounded like a little girl. And all my life—maybe not now post-kids, my haggard appearance probably says otherwise, but—I've always been mistaken for younger than my actual age, which came in handy when I would go to the movies or out to eat and get the “under 12” discount. You know, my parents appreciated that, but it didn't do so much for my confidence, not gonna lie. But paired with, you know, you have the appearance, “I look young,” and then I've got the “I sound young.” I've always been insecure about that. And it's really held me back because I've internalized it so much that if I sound like a little girl, then I can't speak with authority on something; I can't be taken seriously.

**Tara Whitaker:** [4:35] And I experienced this a lot in corporate when I had, you know, my full-time jobs before I started my business. You know, “Oh, you look so young!” And they would call me *Baby* and *Honey* and—bleh! That's a whole 'nother episode on that. But it was really hard to be taken seriously and as a professional because of this appearance. Apparently, I look young and the fact that apparently, I sound young. I don't think I do, but I thought I did for the longest time. And that's why—one of the many reasons why I didn't start this podcast. I mean, why in the world would I do something that literally puts my voice, and only my voice, out there for the world to hear? Anyone can listen to this podcast. Anyone can write a review and tell me that my voice is annoying, or that I sound like a little girl. Why in the world would I put myself out there like that? And so, I didn't, for a long time. Even though I had this idea years ago, I let that story dictate my business. And now, we're only on episode six, but I have big plans for this podcast. This podcast is going to be a large piece of my business. And I didn't let it happen because of these stories I was telling myself. I say this now with like, frustration and annoyance in my voice, but it's aimed at me, all right? I don't—I'm not putting that on you. It's totally me. But when I realized this, I just got irritated with myself and thought, *why am I letting this story*—because it's a story, it's not a fact—*let this affect my business?* This is affecting my livelihood. What a bunch of BS—let's be real.

**Tara Whitaker:** [6:20] So, that is the exact example that led to this episode. And I'm hoping that it helps at least one of you out there that might be telling yourself a story—a similar story that you might not even realize. Or maybe you do, and I can help you overcome that and get it to a place where you're operating from a sense of confidence,

a place of security, and not letting these thoughts and beliefs guide your business and—quite frankly—guide your life. So that's what inspired this episode.

**Tara Whitaker:** [6:52] Some of the other examples we could come up with, something like *I can't start my business because you need a college degree, and I don't have one.* Or—this is another personal example, but—*I'm type A. I'm very detail-oriented—you know, I'm very, you know—I like my systems and my processes, so there's no way that I can also be creative. That just doesn't match; you can only be one or the other, right?* Wrong. But for the longest time, I told myself I couldn't; I'm not creative. Well, who said? Who said I wasn't creative? Just because I'm not a super fantastic painter or artist or—whatever—writer, that doesn't mean I can't be creative. Think about some things like that, that you tell yourself. *I can't find new clients because—I don't know—I don't look a certain way, or I don't sound a certain way, or I don't fit into this certain mold.* Things that are similar to that are perfect examples of stories that may—well, most likely are not true. Maybe sometimes they are, and we'll go into that in a little bit. But most of the time, they're not.

**Tara Whitaker:** [8:04] So how can you tell when you're telling yourself a story? So, first of all, if you find yourself repeating something or saying something without thinking about it. It's just become so automatic that it just rolls off the tongue. Or many times, in my experience, they sound or have these certain phrases in it: *I never..., I can't..., I'm not [fill in the blank] enough. I have to [fill in the blank] because.... I always...* See the pattern there? It's something that we take as fact that you always something or I never something. And this happens a lot with imposter syndrome. This is where this has the crossover because we tell ourselves we can't do something. But it's simply our brains trying to protect us and keep us safe. It's not true. It's not fact. It's just a thought. So, if you say something to yourself or out loud, you know, *I am not good enough.* You just don't question it. It just has become fact. That's a good indication that it's a story. Another way of figuring it out—and this depends on how in tune you are with your gut; you know that gut feeling. If you say something like “I'm not good enough,” and your gut has this little twinge or this little feeling where it's like, *hmm...you might want to explore that, or do you really think so?* That's a really good indicator. Because your gut knows a lot more than we do. Let's be honest. It is the first—for me, it's the first thing that, you know, gives me a heads-up. I know that something's not up if my gut tells me otherwise. If you're the same way, that's a really good indicator.

**Tara Whitaker:** [9:55] Now remember, practice makes better, not perfect. So, this is going to take practice. Just like a lot of the things that I talk about, these are not quick fixes. These are not one-and-done things to check off the list. This is deep inner thought work. This is deep mindset work. Because I truly believe when we put the time and effort into something at the beginning, it sets that foundation and gets us on track to lead a sustainable business. I know I could go on and on with this metaphor, but a

shaky foundation leads to a shaky business. So doing these things at the beginning, or when you learn about them, is the key. So again, when I was thinking about doing this podcast, I kept telling myself: *Well, I have an annoying voice. I have a little girl voice.* And it just came up automatically. Didn't even have to think about it. It was just automatic. But then I went through what I'm going to show you here in a minute, and I realized that I was letting something that I couldn't even remember for sure when it happened dictate launching a major portion of my business. Ridiculous. It was so ridiculous. I don't know who said these things. I don't know when they were said. I don't know if they were said once, twice, twenty times. I don't remember, which tells you something right there. If I can't even remember who said it or what, when it happened, why am I letting it have such an impact on my freaking business? I shouldn't. So that is why we're here today. That's why you're listening. Because I did this work. Wasn't easy. I'm not saying this is easy or simple. But it's a clear process to get you to where you need to be. I realized that I can't control the way my voice sounds, to a point. I sound like how I sound like, and if someone doesn't like it, they don't have to listen to it. You know, no one's forcing them to tune into the podcast. I'm not going to say that if I ever get a review that says I have an annoying voice that I'm going to enjoy it. But I think I'll be in a much better frame of mind to take that as—you know—brush it off and not let it get to me too much. Whereas before, I would have let that completely overwhelm me. And maybe I wouldn't even continue with the podcast. Like, I would have really let that bother me, which would have been a shame because I think that this podcast can do a lot in the future and serve a lot of positivity in the industry. And to let one silly comment ruin it would just be silly. So, if you're thinking along those same lines, you're in good company.

**Tara Whitaker:** [12:34] Alright, so how do we flip the story? Once we figure out that it is a story that you're telling yourself—and again, it might take practice—how do you flip it so that it helps you? Now when you're first starting out, this will be weird and awkward. Again, practice. But my tried-and-true method (for a lot of things, not just this) is if I have a thought, I'll just say, “Well, why?” Be the annoying three-year-old that says why or asks why after every single thing you say. Why? Why do you think that? A lot of times, a lack of confidence comes into play, at least it does with me. And keep asking yourself why until you get to the root. Ask yourself, did someone tell me this in the past? Does that person even matter? Do you even remember who said it? Is it true? Is it actually true? Is it a fact, or is it purely just a story or something that feeds into my lack of confidence? Do I think that I have a different voice? Yes. If someone tells me it's annoying, it's so much easier for me to believe that than it is for me to hear that I have a good voice or a good podcast voice. Much easier to believe. And then ask yourself, do you want to change your mindset around that thought or that story? Like I said, more times than not, it's probably going to be a story.

**Tara Whitaker:** [14:02] Now sometimes it could be actually true. And here's another real-life example. I will say I am terrible with remembering lay vs. lie. And I am. That's not a story. That is a true fact. I have tried and tried and tried to learn the difference and when to apply them, and I can't. I just can't. I cannot—my brain refuses to grasp it. But that's okay. What do I do? I have resources bookmarked that I refer to every single time I come across lay or lie, and I use them. That's it. I don't have to sit here and wallow in it or say, well, I can't be an editor because I can never remember lay vs. lie. If that were the case, I think we would have like 75% of the editors out there would not be editing because it's a tricky one. I just use it. I work around it. It's not, it's not something to overcome per se. It's something to work with. I'm not going to remember that grammar rule. I'm just going to use my resources like a good editor does—like a Modern Editor does—and go from there. Now, if that's the case for you, great. There are some stories that are true. For the most part, though, a lot of them are untrue. And if that's the case, then you're going to take action to change it to work around the story.

**Tara Whitaker:** [15:28] Now, we're—how do you do this? That's where the TEARA process comes in! And if you haven't listened to episode three, I highly suggest you go do that about mindset. I walk you through the TEARA process on how to manage your thoughts and emotions. But for here, I will just say the acronym T-E-A-R-A stands for thoughts, create our emotions, which drive our actions, that produce our results. And then, we create an anchor thought to help ground us and remind us. So, the summary is you change your thoughts, and you can change your stories. Simple as that.

**Tara Whitaker:** [16:06] Now, this applies, obviously, to your business—we're talking about editing businesses here, after all—but you would be amazed at how much this actually can trickle into your life as well. Once you get into the habit of questioning your thoughts from a place of non-judgment—let's be very clear here: I don't want you questioning every single thought you ever have in your entire life. That's not productive, healthy, any of that. But when you have these stories pop up and you can analyze them from a place of non-judgment, there are so many things to uncover and to unwrap. And yes, it might be uncomfortable. Yes, it might be awkward. Ugh! But this is where the true growth is. Is this where the true growth lays or lies? I don't know. I don't care. You know what I mean? That's where the true growth is. Our brains are these magical, wild, brilliant things. But they can be such a pain in the butt sometimes. And this is a great way—or a great example of how they are a pain in the butt sometimes. They just try to protect us; they just try to keep us safe. They tell us stories that, you know, keep us safe. And we've got to learn how to manage it. We manage our brains; we change our thoughts; we change our stories; we rock our businesses. And if that seems odd to you, I can say that a few years ago, I would have said the same exact thing. I never ever thought that doing deep mindset work or thought work had anything to do with an editing business. None. Was too woo-woo-y, was too out there. You know, I'm focused

on my editing skills and tangible things like starting an LLC, or, or an S corp or whatever. And, you know, getting my software in place. And I'm telling you, this is where the growth happens. This is where wild, amazing, spectacular things can happen in your business. When you figure out the stories that you're telling yourself that are untrue, unhelpful, and flip them around so that you are coming from a place of confidence and abundance and community and all the good things, that is where the magic happens. Now, I could sit here and go on a tangent, and I'm gonna wrap it up because we're at the end.

**Tara Whitaker:** [18:43] But that's, that's the episode in a nutshell. Now, you know that editors tell themselves stories, just like everybody else. In different ways you might have thought initially. But now you know how to recognize when you're telling yourself those stories. You have clear steps on how to flip those stories and have them work for you instead of against you. And I wish that I could say that this was on purpose, and I had it totally planned out, but I definitely didn't. But this episode is actually a perfect example of what business coaching looks like. Obviously, it would not be in podcast format. It would be in a one-on-one format. But it's talking through things like these that will help you take your business to the next level.

**Tara Whitaker:** [19:31] And so, with that, I've actually just launched my Editing Business Accelerator program. So, what this is, is a personalized, one-on-one coaching program. It's not a course. It's not something that you go through module-by-module. What it is, is a group of coaching sessions from September to December of 2022 to help you with your specific needs and goals through the rest of the year. So, there's going to be fourteen coaching sessions—fourteen 50-minute coaching sessions. After each session, you're going to have clear action steps on what to do in between each session. And then you're also going to have unlimited Voxer access with me. If you don't know what Voxer is, it's a free app. It's basically like texting or voice messaging, just without exchanging phone numbers. But you will have that access to me for that entire—it's seventeen weeks technically, but I took three weeks off for the various holidays in November and December. But this coaching program is specifically tailored to your needs. So, coach-client A, who wants to get their business off the ground—we'll tailor that program to them. But coach-client B might be well into their business, and they want to, you know, set up their systems and processes. I will tailor the program and the coaching directly to them. So, it's very individualized; it's very specific. It's basically like me sitting next to you or standing next to you, holding your hand, taking you through everything you need to do through the last four months of the year. So, if you're interested in learning more, I've got more information over on my Instagram @taramqwhitaker, and there is also a link in my Instagram bio to fill out a short questionnaire to get the ball rolling on signing up. Doors are closing on Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. So that obviously we can hit the ground running in September, the doors will close.

I would like to offer it again in 2023, I just am not sure when at this point. But it will be closed and won't open again until next year. So, if you have any questions for me, please feel free to reach out. I hope to see you in the Accelerator, and if I don't, I hope to see you here next time. Until then, keep learning, keep growing, and know that you've got this!

**Tara Whitaker:** [21:57] Thank you so much for tuning into today's episode. If you enjoy *The Modern Editor Podcast*, I would be so grateful if you left us a review over on iTunes. And as always, you can head to [tarawhitaker.com](http://tarawhitaker.com) to connect with me and stay in touch. We'll chat again soon.