

Article 2 Resource: Narrative Ownership

A Reflection Resource to Support Your Journey
Toward Narrative Ownership and Career Agency



Real Talk & Reflection

Damon Maassen, CPTD



When everything felt uncertain, I kept waiting for someone or something to give me permission to move forward. I didn't realize how much I was deferring to external validation instead of trusting my own voice.

That's such a common experience. In coaching, I often see people waiting for a sign or a perfect opportunity. But the truth is, even in career transition, we can still make aligned decisions. They don't have to be massive to be meaningful.

It took me a while to understand that reclaiming agency doesn't mean ignoring reality. I had financial stress, moments of doubt, and days I just needed to rest. Agency became asking: What's possible today?

Exactly. There's so much power in that reframing. Sometimes the most courageous act is choosing the next step based on your current needs, not some ideal future state.

I used to think career clarity meant having it all figured out. Now, I realize it's more about staying connected to what matters — and being willing to move forward even when the whole path isn't visible.

That's the shift. Career transition is less about fixing and more about becoming. It's a time to listen deeply, be gentle with ourselves, and write a story that reflects the fullness of who we are, at the moment we're writing it, not just what we've done.

Dr. Sarah Trocchio



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Additional Resources

Resource Name	Type	What It Offers
Designing a Life You Love by Greater Good Science Center	Online Magazine	Applies design thinking to life and career choices, encouraging experimentation and reflection.
How to Think Strategically About Career Transition by Harvard Business Review	Article	A research-backed guide to identifying misalignment and making thoughtful career shifts.
4 Ways to Deal with Burnout by NPR Life Kit	Article + Podcast	Practical advice for recognizing and navigating burnout, a common transition trigger.
How to Make Hard Choices by Ruth Chang	TED Talk	A compelling talk on how meaning is created through choice, especially during periods of ambiguity.
The Purpose Project by Carolyn G. Tate	Book	A self-guided tool to identify purpose drivers, especially useful for aligning your next role with core motivators and values.
The Square Peg Club	Community + Coaching	A space for career misfits, seekers, and rebuilders — offering coaching, community, and conversation.
Fishbowl	Community App	Real-time peer insights and support through career shifts, job searches, and transitions.

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Anchoring Questions for Career Agency

These help guide decisions when clarity feels hard to access:



- What matters to me right now?
- What's one small step I can take this week that aligns with that?
- What options give me the greatest sense of possibility — even with uncertainty?
- What tradeoffs am I currently willing (or not willing) to make: financially, emotionally, or logistically?

Try This: Name your "non-negotiables" and your "okay for now"s to better evaluate your options in this season, not forever, but for now. As Sarah says at the Square Peg Club all the time, we just need to focus on our next first thing.

Support from The Square Peg Club & Damon Maassen

Led by Dr. Sarah Trocchio, The Square Peg Club offers values-driven coaching for those navigating career transitions, pivots, and identity-aligned growth. Learn more at [The Square Peg Club](#).

Damon Maassen offers coaching and consulting to help people and teams rewrite their narratives during times of change. His work centers inclusion, belonging, and clarity as paths toward more human-centric workplaces and careers. Connect with Damon on [LinkedIn](#) to learn more.

Whether you're looking to pause, realign, or reignite your work with intention — we're here to support you.

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Reflection Prompts

Use these questions for journaling, coaching, or quiet reflection:

- What values have guided the best chapters of my career so far?
- Where in my current narrative am I outsourcing my worth or waiting for permission?
- How might a bridge opportunity help clarify what I want more of, and less of, in my next chapter?
- When I imagine a work life that feels aligned, what's present? What's absent?
- What stories am I ready to stop telling myself and what new ones might I begin?



Gentle Practices for Career Transition

- **Pause before the pivot.** Space between endings and beginnings can bring surprising clarity.
- **Reclaim your “why.”** You don't need a perfect job title to embody purpose.
- **Honor your realities.** If you're navigating financial strain, it's okay to prioritize stability and stay in motion.
- **Own your story.** Speak about your career shift on your terms — with honesty and self-trust.
- **Let curiosity lead.** Reach out, test ideas, explore side projects. Doing creates clarity.



Final Encouragement

There is no perfect map for what comes next but there is momentum in asking better questions, making intentional decisions, and letting your story evolve. Even when clarity feels far away, your curiosity, your values, and your courage will light the path forward.

— Sarah & Damon