

# INTRODUCTIONS: Flipping the Script

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# 2 “What do you do?”

Is there a question more universally fraught these days?

Answering the question used to be easier. As kids, we were asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The answers were always one word. Nurse. Firefighter. Astronaut. Teacher. Princess. A title. A role. One-Thing. A name. We look for a box to put ourselves in to make it easier.

The one word title isn't enough. It's not accurate.

We aren't a cog in the machine. What we call ourselves, the title we assume, is deeper than a genre or industry.

**We are unboxable.**

So how do we explain the complexity and nuance of our work that matters in a simple with high impact?

# 2 Flip the Script

The expectation is that we answer the question with what we do. The job, the title, the task

**The Normal Script:**

I am a [...] with [x company].

I do [...].

But that is jumping to specificities too quickly, leaving out the full scope of what you're trying to create in the world.

What we're going to do is reverse the order.

**My work is about [...].**

**Right now that looks like [...].**

**Now let's see this in practice.**

# 3 How it Works

You and I meet at a networking event on zoom. And you ask me, “So what do you do?”

## **The Normal Script:**

**Title: I am a communications consultant.**

**The What: I align internal and external communication for leaders and entrepreneurs.**

Not bad! It says something concrete and clear. But you don’t get a sense of what matters to me or who I might be outside of one particular facet of my life.

## **The Flipped Script:**

**My work is about... finding the words to communicate who we are, what we do, and why it matters.**

**Right now that looks like...**

**helping unboxable leadres name their work so they can be heard and known in the change they make in the world.**

This second one gives you the same information as the first but in a way that paints a picture of who I am in relationship to the thing that I offer. You have a better idea of what I might be like in the rest of my life, what values I likely hold, what things spark my curiosity. You see me, not my job.

And I still answered the original question but on my own terms.

# 4 Try It Out

Make an intro that doesn't put you in a box. Instead, tell us the story of WHO you are, WHAT you do, and WHY it matters. Then try it out with a trusted friend or colleague. Get their feedback on how to represent yourself well.

## **Normal Script**

How do you introduce yourself now? What's the first thing that comes to mind? This language is useful to get you started on the new version and may be an easier place to start.

## **The Flipped Script**

Now try the alternative way.

**My work is about...**

**Right now that looks like...**

# 5 Be Seen

The Flipped Script means there's room for change. We aren't trapped forever in an out-of-date version of ourselves. When our jobs and titles change (and they WILL change) we can retain a sense of identity and consistency.

Your story and how you tell it defines how others see you, and even how you see yourself. The words we use to describe our work can be the difference between confinement and expansive opportunity.

And a great way to do this is to avoid the trap of starting with a title, a word that will never really tell us the beauty that you offer. Instead, flip the script. Tell us what your work is about. And from there, the details will all make sense.

You get a choice in how you present yourself to the world. Don't let us miss you.

# 7 Contact



Dana Ray believes that words are action: that what we say is essential to what we do. She helps unboxable leaders name their work so they can be heard and known. Using her Ground Truth Discovery Process, she distills her client's fundamental craft and distinct vision into clear language that aligns internal and external messaging. Her clients create in diverse fields such as tech, global health, fashion, dance, design, theater, visual art, and activism.

Ray holds a Master's in Literature and Writing from Bucknell University. In 2013, she received a Fulbright to Bulgaria where she designed and implemented original curriculum in critical and creative thinking. She continues to work internationally and is based in Washington, D.C.

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Thank you.

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