

# — 5 LIES THAT ARE — Killing Your Career





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### AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

A lie believed can be more powerful than the truth. Below are 5 lies that we've probably all told ourselves at one point in our careers. Continuing to believe them will kill your career faster than you can say "unemployment benefits." Time to make some critical mindset shifts!

### 3 WAYS TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS LIST

1. If, as you're reading each of these, you find yourself guilty of having believed that lie, *jot down the specific way it's showing up* in your career.
2. *Decide on just one ACTION you plan to take in the next 24 hours* to begin to free yourself from the effects of this lie (e.g., revamping a presentation, declining an opportunity, setting up a networking lunch/dinner). Taking action right away will give you instant momentum to start seeing BIG results.
3. *Tell a trusted friend or colleague about your ACTION commitment* and when you'll have it completed. Ask them to hold you accountable by following up with you the same day you're supposed to take action.

## *"My work speaks for itself."*

No, it doesn't. YOU speak for your work. Every time you fail to be recognized for your contributions, you're taking a razor to your career. If you don't find a way to speak about the value of your work, you're signaling that it doesn't have much value. So if you don't think much of it, why should they? It's death by a thousand cuts. Being valued by your organization brings inclusion, collaboration, recognition, promotion and market compensation - all things we want.

Rather than watch your career bleed out, get comfortable with self-promotion and become a master at it with a few easy steps:

### 1. Change how you think about self-promotion.

You are the CEO of You, Inc. and guess what the flagship product is? You! How in the world will anyone get all the wonderful benefits of this product if it's never advertised?

### 2. Keep receipts.

Understand what you do best and keep a running tab on your impressive, quantifiable results.

### 3. Master the art of storytelling.

Everyone loves a good story, so practice communicating your achievements in narrative form, giving credit to others where due.

### BOTTOM LINE:

The meek shall inherit the earth, but they won't get the next promotion or raise. So if you want it, speak up!

How is Lie #1 showing up in my career?

The one ACTION that I will take in the next 24 hours to free myself from the effects of this lie is:

My accountability partner for this ACTION is \_\_\_\_\_.

## *"They like me, so my job is safe."*

The workplace is about productivity, creating shareholder value, getting compensation with a good bit of jockeying for position thrown in - not friendship. I hate to break it to you, but unless your mom is your boss, no one likes you that much. How much is "that much?" Enough to keep you around when headcount issues dictate otherwise. Not enough to promote you when political winds start blowing in another direction. Being liked will get you a lot of people at your farewell luncheon, but it won't give you job security.

So what's a woman to do? For starters:

### **1. Do career-building work.**

It'll make you more valuable internally and give you options externally.

### **2. Pull out those receipts.**

Make sure the people that matter know it's your work (go back and review Lie #1).

### **3. Get your Rihanna on.**

Network, network, network. Since most jobs aren't posted, networking is a great way to find another job just in case the worst happens.

### **BOTTOM LINE:**

Make sure your resume has legs in case you need to walk.

How is Lie #2 showing up in my career?

The one ACTION that I will take in the next 24 hours to free myself from the effects of this lie is:

My accountability partner for this ACTION is \_\_\_\_\_.

*"I'm busy with tons of work, so they must value me."*

Ha! There's a big difference between being utilized and being valued, as many an overworked woman who's asked for a raise or promotion has found out. Just because you're swamped doesn't mean you're valued. It just means you're overworked.

Being valued looks like respect, inclusion, opportunities for advancement and development, and market compensation (at a minimum). I learned this first-hand when I was asked to take a position for which I was more than qualified in an organization where I had proven my worth for years. All was going well until it came time for salary negotiations. I was begrudgingly given the coinage I asked for, which I later learned was only 2% more than my male colleague who was doing half the work I was.

But I make a mental note of the number of teeth I had to pull to get that salary. It was a very loud and clear signal that while I had been utilized, what I brought to the table was not valued or respected. I made a strategic decision to take the role and flex my skill set with some big wins.

About a year later, I landed a promotion at another company where the opportunities, respect and the coinage were just right.

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Discern whether your organization views you as a mule to be worked to death or a thoroughbred to be invested in and prized.

How is Lie #3 showing up in my career?

The one ACTION that I will take in the next 24 hours to free myself from the effects of this lie is:

My accountability partner for this ACTION is \_\_\_\_\_.



## LIE #4

*"If I give credit to everybody else, they'll give it back to me."*

Repeat this after me: Don't put others in the spotlight expecting them to pull you into their shine.

Sure, in a kumbaya world we'd all hold hands, sing songs, and you'd give credit to others and they'd kick it right back to you. That's circle time in kindergarten, not how grown folks behave in organizations the vast majority of the time.

Gail\*, an executive director for a non-profit, learned this the hard way. Upon successfully completing a major fundraising campaign with her development officer Ron, Gail effusively bestowed praised upon his efforts when debriefing with their board. During the meeting, Gail spoke very little of her own contributions to the record-breaking campaign, expecting that Ron would throw some shine her way. Instead Gail found herself shivering in the shade when Ron proceeded to elaborate on the role he played, barely mentioning her name.

What could Gail have done instead other than bring a jacket to the meeting? At Gravitas, we teach our clients how to highlight their specific, outstanding contributions and their organizational impact, all while acknowledging the team.

### BOTTOM LINE:

Learn to spread the love and let your light shine.

How is Lie #4 showing up in my career?

The one ACTION that I will take in the next 24 hours to free myself from the effects of this lie is:

My accountability partner for this ACTION is \_\_\_\_\_.

*"Taking on non-essential assignments shows I'm a team player."*

Actually, it doesn't. What it screams is, "You can dump on me, no problem." According to an article published in the Harvard Business Review, women volunteer for these "non-promotable" tasks more than men; that women are more frequently asked to take such tasks on; and that when asked, they are more likely to say yes. Being disproportionately saddled with work that has little visibility or impact means it'll take women much longer to advance in their careers.

"But Mo, don't men volunteer for the company softball team and the fantasy football leagues?" Sure, they do. Know why? Because they get to work with colleagues as a team, have fun and build relationships. And after the weekly softball game, they're having beer and wings. And what are they doing over said beer and wings? You guessed it: building relationships. And those relationships facilitate sharing information, strategies and resources that are essential for success in the organization.

Meanwhile, you and two admins organized the firm's Christmas party. Sure, everyone had a great time for a few hours. And yeah, maybe the admin will be nicer to you the next time you need him/her to stay late. But did the dozens of hours you spend vetting the entertainment, curating the wine list and overseeing the bi-weekly planning meetings strengthen your ability to walk down the hall and get cross functional buy-in on your key initiative? That answer would be NO.

**BOTTOM LINE:**

There are lots of non-promotable tasks out there in these corporate streets. Be strategic about which ones you raise your hand for.

How is Lie #5 showing up in my career?

The one ACTION that I will take in the next 24 hours to free myself from the effects of this lie is:

My accountability partner for this ACTION is \_\_\_\_\_.



## *Thank You!*

If you recognized yourself in any of these 5 Lies That Are Killing Your Career, I pray you'll take the steps necessary to change your mindset.

In the meantime, stroll on over to [gravitasexecutiveconsulting.com](http://gravitasexecutiveconsulting.com) for additional resources to optimize your career & life.

*Monique Carlum Edwards, Esq.*

Gravitas Executive Consulting  
CEO | Founder

*Helping women of color get  
the promotion, pay, power & peace  
they deserve.*

