

Why This Matters for Module 2: Builder Identity Work

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Tags	

This module is essential for Legacy Rising because it shifts participants' self-perception from shame-based identities (e.g., "broken" or "at risk") to empowered, dignity-centered ones (e.g., "builder" or "cycle-breaker"). Drawing on Polyvagal Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and shame research from experts like Porges, Deci & Ryan, Maté, Hari, and Brown, it emphasizes that psychological safety, autonomy, and strength-based narratives are key to sustained transformation, reducing dropout, secrecy, and relapse while fostering growth and entrepreneurship.

How It Builds the Individual

The module's design progresses from awareness and deconstruction to reconstruction and commitment, building self-compassion, agency, and community in a structured arc. Here's how each section contributes to individual development:

- **Language Audit & Icebreaker:** Participants identify "shame words" vs. "builder words," recognizing how labels influence behavior. This builds self-awareness and emotional intelligence, helping individuals challenge internalized negativity and adopt empowering language, which research shows reduces shame's corrosive effects and enhances motivation.
- **Shame Scripts & Narrative Rewrite:** By listing shame scripts and flipping them into builder scripts, participants reframe self-stories with evidence-based positivity. This fosters resilience and self-compassion, as rewriting narratives activates neuroplasticity, decreases anxiety, and increases competence and autonomy per Self-Determination Theory.
- **Builder's Code Workshop:** Co-creating group norms in their own words instills ownership, trust, and accountability. This enhances relatedness and psychological safety (Polyvagal Theory), promoting a sense of belonging that

supports vulnerability, feedback, and peer growth, leading to stronger interpersonal skills and reduced isolation.

- **Identity Vision Board:** Visualizing the "future builder self" with images, words, and SMART goals encourages proactive identity-building. This step boosts competence and purpose, turning abstract aspirations into tangible plans, which correlates with higher entrepreneurial follow-through and well-being.
- **Reflection & Commitment:** Sharing "builder words" and affirmations solidifies new identities publicly in a safe space. This reinforces agency and pride, creating habitual positive self-talk that sustains long-term change, as dignity-first approaches show improved recovery stability and life satisfaction.

Overall, Module 2 bridges Module 1's release of the old self to intentional reconstruction, empowering participants to act from strength rather than shame. Programs anchored in dignity and autonomy report higher engagement, lower relapse, and greater personal/entrepreneurial success, transforming survival mode into growth mode.

Why This Matters for Legacy Rising

- Traditional models use labels that reinforce shame, leading to disconnection.
- Legacy Rising prioritizes dignity-first language and norms, helping participants see themselves as builders, fostering trust, safety, and belonging essential for entrepreneurship.
- Outcomes: Increased psychological safety, agency, and group cohesion, resulting in stable recovery and real-world impact.

Expanded "Theoretical Foundation: Dignity-First Identity" (for the "Why This Matters" or Similar Box)

Why This Matters

Programs that treat people as "problems" drive dropout, secrecy, and relapse. When you anchor change in dignity, safety, and autonomy, people stick around and build new identities. This module draws on research showing that dignity, psychological safety, and identity-building—not shame—are what drive sustained transformation (Porges, Deci & Ryan, Maté, Brown).

Core Research & Evidence

- **Polyvagal Theory (Porges, Dana)**
 - **Key Point:** Safety—not surveillance—unlocks engagement and learning.
 - **Quote:** “The nervous system needs felt safety to move from survival to growth.”
 - **Citations:** Porges, S. W. (2011). *The Polyvagal Theory*; Dana, D. (2018). *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy*
- **Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan)**
 - **Key Point:** Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential for lasting change.
 - **Quote:** “Human beings have an inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise their capacities.”
 - **Citations:** Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*; Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*
- **Shame Research (Maté, Hari, Brown)**
 - **Key Point:** Shame and labels increase relapse/dropout; dignity and agency drive recovery and growth.
 - **Quote:** “Shame is the most corrosive emotion—it disconnects us from change.” (Brown)
 - **Citations:** Maté, G. (2008). *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*; Hari, J. (2015). *Chasing the Scream*; Brown, B. (2012). *Daring Greatly*

Why This Matters for Legacy Rising

- Dignity-first language and group norms help people see themselves as “builders,” not broken.
- Builds trust, psychological safety, and a true sense of belonging—preconditions for growth and entrepreneurship.

Citations (Full List)

- Porges, S. W. (2011). *The Polyvagal Theory*.

- Dana, D. (2018). *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy*.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*.
- Maté, G. (2008). *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*.
- Hari, J. (2015). *Chasing the Scream*.
- Brown, B. (2012). *Daring Greatly*.

Expanded "Exercise: Shame Scripts & Narrative Rewrite" (Full Section)

Exercise: Shame Scripts & Narrative Rewrite

Identify the shame-based stories you've been carrying, and rewrite them as builder scripts.

Purpose

Shame scripts keep people stuck. Builder scripts open possibilities. This exercise helps participants catch and flip the narratives that hold them back.

Time

20 minutes

- Solo journaling: 10 min
- Pair share: 10 min (optional)

Materials Needed

- Workbook or journal
- Pens
- Optional: Two-column worksheet (Shame Script | Builder Script)

Instructions

Part 1: Identify Shame Scripts (10 min)Prompt:

"Shame scripts are the negative stories you tell yourself about who you are. They're often in the form of 'I am...' or 'I always...' or 'I can't...'

List three shame scripts you've carried. Be honest. This is private—no one will see it unless you choose to share."

Examples of shame scripts:

- "I'm just an addict."
- "I always quit."
- "I'm a screw-up."
- "I can't be trusted."
- "I'm too broken to succeed."
- "People like me don't build businesses."
- "I don't deserve good things."

Reflection questions:

- Where did this script come from? (Family, past failures, institutions, your own voice?)
- How has this script shaped your choices?
- What has this script cost you?

Part 2: Rewrite as Builder Scripts (10 min)Prompt:

"Now flip each shame script into a builder script—a truer, stronger version.

Don't make it fake-positive. Make it real. What's the evidence that the shame script is wrong?"

Examples:

Shame Script	Builder Script
I'm just an addict	I'm someone who knows obsession—and I'm learning to redirect it
I always quit	I get back up every time, even when it's hard
I'm a screw-up	I've made mistakes, and I've survived every one
I can't be trusted	I'm rebuilding trust, one choice at a time
I'm too broken	I'm resourceful as hell—I've survived things most people can't imagine

Shame Script	Builder Script
People like me don't build businesses	People like me are the best builders—we know how to hustle and adapt

Part 3: Practice (Optional Pair Share)Instructions:

"Pair up. Share one shame script and your builder rewrite.

Practice saying the builder script out loud. How does it feel?

Partner: Your job is to witness and affirm. You can say, 'I believe that' or 'I see that in you.'"

Facilitator Tips

- Model vulnerability—share one of your own shame scripts and rewrites
- Emphasize: Builder scripts aren't about being perfect. They're about being real and strong
- Watch for participants who struggle to rewrite—help them find evidence ("What have you survived? What have you done that took guts?")
- Never force the pair share—some will want privacy, and that's valid

Follow-UpWeekly practice:

Every time you catch yourself repeating a shame script this week, pause and say the builder script instead—out loud if you can.

Report back: What happened? Did it feel different? Did it change your choices?

Connection to Module 1

In Module 1, they grieved and released the old self. In Module 2, they're actively building the new one. This exercise is the bridge.

Expanded "Exercise: Builder's Code Workshop" (Full Section)

Exercise: Builder's Code Workshop

Co-create a group code of conduct rooted in dignity, respect, and accountability—in the participants' own words.

Purpose

When participants create their own rules, they own them. The Builder's Code

becomes the foundation for trust, feedback, and peer support throughout the program.

Time

20 minutes

Materials Needed

- Large poster paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Sticky notes (for individual contributions)

Instructions

Part 1: Individual Brainstorm (5 min)Prompt:

"Think about the kind of group you want to be part of. What values matter to you? What ground rules would make you feel safe, supported, and challenged to grow?

Write 1-3 'code' statements on sticky notes. Use plain language—the grittier, the better."

Sentence starters (optional):

- "Builders..."
- "We..."
- "In this space, we..."
- "We don't..."

Examples from past cohorts:

- "Builders help builders up."
- "We speak with dignity, even when calling out bullshit."
- "We show up, even when it's hard."
- "No gurus here—just cycle-breakers helping each other."
- "Confidentiality is sacred."
- "We celebrate wins and learn from failures."
- "We don't shame—we challenge with respect."

Part 2: Group Share & Synthesis (10 min)Process:

1. Participants post their sticky notes on the board
2. Facilitator reads them aloud (or have participants read their own)
3. Group clusters similar ideas
4. Discuss: What themes emerge? What's missing?
5. Narrow to 5-8 core statements that resonate with everyone

Facilitator role:

- Guide, don't dictate—let them write 80%
- Only add essentials for safety/compliance (confidentiality, respect, consent)
- Push for specificity: "What does 'respect' look like in action?"

Part 3: Commitment (5 min)Process:

- Finalize the Builder's Code on the poster
- Everyone signs it (literally—pen to paper)
- Display it prominently in every session
- Read it aloud together at the start of each module (optional ritual)

Facilitator script:

"This is your code. These are the agreements you're making with each other. When someone breaks the code, we call it out—with dignity. When someone lives the code, we celebrate it. This is how we build trust."

Facilitator Tips

- Avoid corporate/institutional language—let their voices lead
- If conflict arises later, refer back to the code: "What did we agree to?"
- The code can evolve—revisit it mid-program or when issues come up
- Make a digital copy for the alumni network (they'll reference it after graduation)

Sample Builder's Code (from Houston Pilot Cohort)

1. Builders lift builders. We show up for each other.

2. What's shared here, stays here. Confidentiality is sacred.
3. We speak truth with respect. Call out bullshit, but never shame.
4. We celebrate wins and learn from failures. Both are part of the journey.
5. No gurus, no pedestals. We're all cycle-breakers figuring it out together.
6. We own our mistakes and make amends. That's how we grow.
7. Rest is not weakness. Builders need recovery time too.

Post-Workshop

- Type up the final code and share it in the cohort Slack/Notion/group chat
- Print copies for everyone's workbook
- Reference it throughout the program: "That was a real Builder's Code moment —thank you."

Expanded "Module 2: Builder Identity Work" (Overview/Structure Section)

Module 2: Builder Identity Work

Why This Matters

This module draws on research showing that dignity, psychological safety, and identity-building—not shame—are what drive sustained transformation (Porges, Deci & Ryan, Maté, Brown).

Theoretical Foundation: Dignity-First Identity

Module Objective

Shift participants' self-concept from "broken" or "at risk" to "builder" and "cycle-breaker." Replace shame with agency and pride—because the way you see yourself dictates how you act.

This is the reconstruction module. Module 1 was about grieving and releasing the old self. Module 2 is about intentionally building the new one.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will:

- Recognize how shame and labels have shaped their self-concept and behaviors

- Practice using dignity-first, strength-based language about themselves
- Create a personal "builder identity" narrative and vision
- Claim their new identity publicly (within the safety of the cohort)

Time: ~120 minutes (flexible by group)

Module Structure & Activities**Section 1: Language Audit & Icebreaker (10 min)**

- **Group Prompt:** "What words have you used—or heard others use—to describe you at your lowest? At your best?"
- Write on sticky notes or whiteboard. Separate "shame words" vs. "builder words."
- **Mini-Discussion:** How did those words impact your choices?
- **Facilitator Tip:** Allow "pass" on shares. Model vulnerability by giving your own examples.

Section 2: Shame Scripts & Narrative Rewrite (20 min)

- **Solo Journaling:** List three "shame scripts" you've carried (e.g., "I'm a screw-up," "I always quit," "I'm just an addict").
- **Rewrite:** Flip each one into a builder script (e.g., "I'm resourceful as hell," "I get back up," "I know how to survive").
- **Share in pairs (optional):** "What's it like to say this out loud?"
- **Facilitator Tip:** Never force vulnerability. Always give permission to skip the sharing step.

Section 3: Builder's Code Workshop (20 min)

- **Activity:** Cohort co-creates a Builder's Code (group agreement) for respect, accountability, and growth.
- Sample starter: "Builders help builders up," "We speak with dignity, even when calling out bullshit."
- **Facilitator Tip:** Let the group write 80%—the more they own it, the stronger it sticks. Post final code somewhere public.

Section 4: Identity Vision Board (25 min)

- **Art/Collage/Journaling:** Participants use images, words, or drawings to represent their “future builder self.”
- Encourage addition of SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
- **Group Share (if comfortable):** “How is this version of you different from who you used to be?”
- **Facilitator Tip:** Remind: There's no “wrong” way to vision.

Section 5: Reflection & Commitment (10 min)

- **Prompt:** “What's one ‘builder word’ you'll use this week when talking about yourself?”
- **Optional group affirmation:** Go around and everyone says one “builder” trait they see in another participant.

Add-Ons / Extras

1. Anonymous “Shame vs. Builder” Survey

- Give before and after Module 2, or as a check-in.
- Pre- or post-module, ask: “What labels have held you back? What labels light you up?”
- **Survey Questions:**
 1. What are 1-3 labels or words you've heard used about you at your lowest?
Example: Addict, lazy, unreliable, broken, failure, criminal, etc.
 2. How have these labels affected the way you see yourself?
 3. What is one label, word, or phrase that lights you up or feels powerful (even if you rarely hear it)? *Example: Resourceful, builder, leader, survivor, creative, etc.*
 4. If you could pick a single word for how you want to be known in this group, what would it be?
 5. Is there a "shame script" (a negative story) you catch yourself repeating? If yes, write it here (optional):

6. Now rewrite it as a "builder script"—what's the truer, stronger version?
Example: "I always quit" → "I get up again and keep going."
 7. Anything you want to say to the group about how we treat each other, or a rule you want in our Builder's Code?
- **Facilitator:** Share results anonymously (remove names) to normalize experience and spark discussion. Use "builder scripts" to seed group Builder's Code.
1. "My Builder Story" Mini-Podcast
 - Invite participants to record a 2-min audio clip: "Here's how I'm rewriting my story." Share with cohort/alumni if they consent.
 - **Facilitator:** Provide an example if needed, but never pressure anyone.
 1. Peer Nomination
 - Have each participant anonymously nominate someone for a "hidden builder" trait they've seen.
 - **Facilitator:** Read nominations aloud or display on board.
 1. Builder's Code Posters
 - Turn the cohort's Code into a poster or Notion banner for ongoing visibility.
 - **How to Use:**
 - Start with a blank template in your first cohort session.
 - Have participants suggest ground rules and "builder values."
 - Encourage plain language—the grittier, the better.
 - Facilitator fills in gaps only for safety/compliance.
 - Keep it public—review and revise each month.
 1. Alumni Drop-In
 - Invite alumni to share their biggest label-to-builder shift, and how it changed real-life outcomes.
 - Facilitator: Allow Q&A for deeper connection.

Assessment / Reflection Prompts

- Before/After self-description: "How would you have described yourself before today? How do you want to describe yourself now?"
- Quick check-in: "What builder trait did you use (or see in others) this week?"

Citations (For Grants/Slides/Docs)

- Porges, S. W. (2011). *The Polyvagal Theory*
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). *Self-Determination Theory*
- Maté, G. (2008). *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*
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Exercise: Shame Scripts & Narrative Rewrite

Exercise: Builder's Code Workshop