



Module 2: Builder Identity Work - Complete Lesson Plans

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Tags	

Module 2: Builder Identity Work

Lesson Plans & Reading Materials

Total Module Time: 25-35 minutes of video content + readings

You don't have to complete this module in one sitting.

Module Overview:

This module helps participants understand how language shapes identity, break free from shame-based narratives, and build a new identity grounded in shared values and intentional self-concept. We move from external labels to internal truth, from shame to strength, and from passive identity to active identity design.

Research Foundation:

This module draws on polyvagal theory (Porges, 2011), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), trauma-informed understanding (Maté, 2008), and shame research (Brown, 2012). [1]

Unit 1: How Language Shapes Identity (5-7 min)

Subtitle: Words that build and break, neuroscience of self-talk

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Identify shame-based language patterns in their self-talk
- Understand the neurological impact of repeated negative self-labeling
- Distinguish between identity labels and behavior descriptions
- Begin conducting their own language audit

Core Content

The Power of Labels

The words we use to describe ourselves literally shape our neural pathways. When someone repeatedly hears or says "I'm an addict," "I'm a failure," or "I'm broken," the brain begins to organize behavior around that identity.

Research Insight: Porges' Polyvagal Theory shows that language—especially self-directed language—impacts our nervous system state. Shame-based labels trigger defensive responses (fight, flight, freeze), making growth and connection harder.^[1]

Shame Words vs. Builder Words

Shame Words (identity-based, fixed, totalizing):

- "I'm an addict"
- "I'm a screw-up"
- "I'm broken"
- "I'm a failure"
- "I'm too much / not enough"

Builder Words (behavior-based, specific, growth-oriented):

- "I'm in recovery"
- "I'm learning"
- "I'm rewiring old patterns"
- "I'm a cycle-breaker"
- "I'm building something new"

Notice the difference: Shame words describe what you **are**. Builder words describe what you're **doing**.

The Neuroscience of Self-Talk

Your brain doesn't distinguish between external criticism and internal self-talk. When you say "I'm so stupid," your brain processes it the same way it would if someone else said it to you.

Key Research: Maté (2008) demonstrates that self-concept formed under stress, trauma, or chronic disconnection becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you believe you're "broken," you'll unconsciously select environments and relationships that confirm that belief.[\[1\]](#)

The Language Audit Exercise

Instructions for Participants:

1. For the next 48 hours, notice every time you describe yourself (out loud or in your head)
2. Write down the exact phrase
3. Ask: Is this an identity statement ("I am...") or a behavior statement ("I did..." or "I'm working on...")
4. Mark which ones feel like shame and which feel like truth

Facilitator Note: Many participants will be shocked by how harsh their self-talk is. Normalize this. The goal isn't to judge the language—it's to notice it.

Discussion Prompts

- What's a label you've carried that you're ready to retire?
- How did that label get attached to you? (Who said it first?)
- What's one Builder word you want to try on this week?

Integration with Builder Types

- **External Processors:** May benefit from saying new identity statements out loud to tribe members

- **Internal Processors:** May prefer journaling their language audit privately first
 - **High Stimulation types:** Language audits may feel tedious—encourage them to set phone reminders 3x/day instead of constant monitoring
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Unit 2: Breaking the Shame Loop (5 min)

Subtitle: Shame scripts as self-fulfilling prophecies

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Identify their personal shame scripts
- Understand how shame creates behavioral loops
- Recognize shame spirals in real time
- Apply the Rewrite Process to one shame script

Core Content

What Is a Shame Script?

A shame script is a story you tell yourself about who you are, what you deserve, and what's possible for you. It's usually formed early (childhood/adolescence) and reinforced through repeated experiences of disconnection, criticism, or trauma.

Common Shame Scripts:

- "I always mess things up" (perfectionism, past failures)
- "I don't deserve good things" (trauma, neglect, poverty mindset)
- "People leave once they really know me" (attachment wounds, rejection)
- "I'm too damaged to be successful" (recovery, mental health, chronic illness)
- "I'm not smart enough" (academic trauma, comparison)
- "I'm a fraud" (imposter syndrome, career transitions)
- "I'll never be financially stable" (generational poverty, debt cycles)

- "I'm too old/young to start over" (age-based limiting beliefs)

Research Foundation: Brown (2012) defines shame as "the intensely painful feeling that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging." Unlike guilt (I did something bad), shame says I **am** bad.[1]

How Shame Becomes Self-Fulfilling

Shame scripts operate like invisible algorithms:

1. **The Script Activates:** Something happens (a mistake, a rejection, a trigger)
2. **The Story Runs:** "See? I told you I always mess things up"
3. **Behavior Follows the Story:** You withdraw, self-sabotage, or lean into destructive patterns because "that's who I am anyway"
4. **The Script Gets Reinforced:** "Yep, I was right. I always mess things up."

This loop can run for **years** or even **decades** without conscious awareness.

The Rewrite Process

If this feels overwhelming, pause. Take a breath. You're not doing this wrong.

You can't delete a shame script. But you can rewrite it.

Step 1: Name the Script

Write down the exact phrase. Don't soften it. If your internal voice says "You're a piece of shit," write that down.

Step 2: Find the Evidence Against It

This isn't toxic positivity. This is **pattern interruption**. Ask:

- When has this script been proven wrong?
- What would someone who loves me say about this?
- Is this script 100% true 100% of the time?

Quick Template for High-Stimulation Types:

Set a timer for 2 minutes. List as many counter-examples as possible:

- One time I didn't mess up: _

- One time I didn't mess up: _
- One time I didn't mess up: _

Stop at 2 minutes. Even one example breaks the "always" narrative.

Step 3: Write the Builder Version

This isn't an opposite statement. It's a **grounded truth**.

Example:

- Shame Script: "I always mess things up"
- Builder Script: "I've made mistakes, and I've also completed hard things. I'm learning."

Step 4: Practice the New Script

Every time the shame script runs, interrupt it with the builder script. Out loud if possible.

Research Insight: Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000) shows that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are core human needs. Shame scripts attack all three. Builder scripts restore them.[\[1\]](#)

Avoiding Toxic Positivity

Toxic Positivity:

- "Everything happens for a reason!"
- "Just think positive!"
- "You're perfect just the way you are!"

Grounded Builder Language:

- "That was hard, and I survived it"
- "I'm working on this"
- "I have strengths and I have growth edges"

The difference: Builder language acknowledges reality while refusing to collapse identity into shame.

Workbook Exercise: Rewrite Your Script

1. Write down your most persistent shame script
2. When did you first hear/believe this? (childhood, adolescence, recent trauma)
3. Who benefits from you believing this? (often: no one, including you)
4. Write three pieces of evidence that contradict this script
5. Write your Builder Script rewrite
6. Share your Builder Script with one tribe member this week

Discussion Prompts

- What makes it hard to let go of shame scripts, even when they hurt us?
 - How does your shame script show up in your entrepreneurial journey?
 - What would change if you actually believed your Builder Script?
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Unit 3: The Power of Shared Values (5 min)

Subtitle: Why communities need codes

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Understand the function of shared values in group cohesion
- Distinguish between imposed rules and co-created values
- Review sample Builder's Codes from past cohorts
- Prepare to contribute to their own cohort's Builder's Code

Core Content

Why Communities Need Codes

Values aren't just feel-good statements. They're **behavioral agreements** that create psychological safety and collective identity.

When everyone in a community knows what's valued and what's out of bounds, people can:

- Take risks without fear of judgment
- Hold each other accountable without shame
- Belong without performing
- Challenge each other without rupturing connection

Research Foundation: Brown (2012) emphasizes that trust is built through small, consistent moments of integrity. Shared values make those moments visible and repeatable.[1]

Imposed Rules vs. Co-Created Values

Imposed Rules (top-down, compliance-focused):

- "No negative talk"
- "Always be positive"
- "Respect the facilitator"

These create **performance pressure** and **silent rebellion**.

Co-Created Values (collaborative, identity-focused):

- "We call out shame language—ours and each other's"
- "We honor hard truths over comfortable lies"
- "We hold space without fixing"

These create **shared ownership** and **collective accountability**.

Sample Builder's Codes (Past Cohorts)

Cohort 3 Builder's Code:

- We are cycle-breakers, not victims
- We use Builder language or we correct it
- We show up messy, not perfect
- We witness without fixing
- We hold each other's momentum when regulation is hard
- We ask "What do you need?" before offering advice

- We protect this space by not bringing it into shame-based spaces

Cohort 5 Builder's Code:

- Obsession is our superpower, not our shame
- We honor the grief of what we're leaving behind
- We celebrate launches, not just outcomes
- We call in, not call out
- We remember: community over competition, always
- We show up for each other's hard days
- We are infrastructure, not charity

The Language of "We"

Notice that Builder's Codes use "**We**" statements, not "I" or "You" statements.

- "We are cycle-breakers" (collective identity)
- "We call out shame language" (shared responsibility)
- "We hold each other's momentum" (mutual support)

This language builds **tribal identity** and reinforces that no one succeeds alone.

How the Code Gets Enforced

Shared values only work if they're **actively practiced and gently enforced**.

Enforcement looks like:

- "Hey, I heard shame language just now. Can we reframe that?"
- "I need to call myself in—I just gave advice without asking permission"
- "Tribe check: Are we living our code right now?"

Enforcement does NOT look like:

- Shaming someone for breaking the code
- Using the code as a weapon ("You're not being a real Builder")
- Rigid rule-following without context

When Boundaries Get Crossed Repeatedly

If someone repeatedly violates the Builder's Code despite gentle call-ins:

Step 1: Direct Conversation (facilitated by tribe leader)

- Name the pattern without shame
- Ask: "What's making it hard to honor this agreement?"
- Offer support or accommodations if needed

Step 2: Pause and Reassess (if pattern continues)

- Temporary break from group interactions to reset
- One-on-one check-in with facilitator
- Clear pathway back: "When you're ready to re-commit to the code, we're here"

Step 3: Exiting with Dignity (if misalignment persists)

- Acknowledge this cohort may not be the right fit right now
- No shame, no public callout
- Door remains open for future cohorts

Note for Facilitators: Most enforcement issues resolve at Step 1 when handled with curiosity instead of punishment. Chronic boundary violations are rare and usually signal deeper misalignment, not malice.

Workbook Exercise: Drafting Your Cohort's Builder's Code

As a cohort, you'll co-create your Builder's Code in your first synchronous session. But you can start thinking about it now:

1. What value do you most need from your community?
2. What behavior would make you feel unsafe in this space?
3. What's one "We" statement you'd want included in your cohort's code?

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it easier to hold a value when it's shared by the group?

- Have you been part of a community with strong shared values? What did that feel like?
 - What's one value from past cohorts' codes that resonates with you?
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Unit 4: Your Identity as a Minimum Viable Product (5-7 min)

Subtitle: Product thinking applied to identity

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Apply MVP (Minimum Viable Product) thinking to identity formation
- Understand identity as iterative, not fixed
- Create a Version 1.0 identity statement
- Set a personal "launch date" for their new identity

Core Content

Identity as Product

In Module 4, you'll learn about MVPs (Minimum Viable Products) in entrepreneurship. The concept: Don't wait for perfect. Launch with Version 1.0, gather feedback, and iterate.

The same applies to identity.

You don't need a fully formed, perfect, Instagram-ready identity to move forward. You need **Version 1.0**—something that's true enough, strong enough, and clear enough to guide your next decisions.

Research Insight: Vallerand's research on passion (2015) shows that identity flexibility ("I'm becoming...") correlates with harmonious passion, while identity rigidity ("I must be...") correlates with obsessive, brittle passion.[\[1\]](#)

The Problem with "Finding Yourself"

The phrase "finding yourself" implies:

- There's a fixed, true self hidden inside you
- Your job is to discover it
- Once you find it, you're done

This is not how identity works.

Identity is **built**, not found. It's:

- **Iterative** (you refine it over time)
- **Contextual** (you're a different version of yourself in different environments)
- **Co-created** (your identity is shaped by the people you're around)

The MVP Identity Framework

Step 1: What's True Right Now?

Write 3-5 statements that are undeniably true about you **today**.

- I'm in recovery
- I'm a cycle-breaker
- I'm learning to build
- I'm rewiring old patterns
- I'm part of a tribe

Step 2: What Do You Want to Be True?

Write 3-5 aspirational statements—not fantasies, but **next-level truths**.

- I'm an entrepreneur
- I'm a leader in my community
- I'm financially stable
- I'm someone others come to for support
- I'm building a legacy

Step 3: Write Your Version 1.0 Identity Statement

Combine present truth with future direction.

Example:

"I'm a cycle-breaker in recovery, learning to channel my obsessive energy into entrepreneurship. I'm building a business and a life that reflects my values. I'm not perfect, but I'm committed. I'm Version 1.0."

Step 4: Set Your Launch Date

Pick a date in the next 7 days when you'll share your Identity MVP with your tribe. This makes it **real**.

The Psychology of Launch Dates

Why does setting a launch date matter?

Because identity without action is just a story.

When you set a date to share your identity statement with your tribe:

- You activate commitment (you're more likely to follow through)
- You invite witnessing (others hold the truth of who you're becoming)
- You create accountability (your tribe will ask "How's Version 1.0 going?")

Research Foundation: Self-Determination Theory shows that autonomy (choosing your identity), competence (building it intentionally), and relatedness (sharing it with others) all reinforce intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).[\[1\]](#)

Iterating Your Identity

Version 1.0 is not forever.

In 3 months, you might be ready for Version 2.0:

- You've launched your MVP business
- You've held your first coaching call
- You've led a tribe meeting

Your identity statement evolves **as you evolve**.

This isn't flaky. This is **growth**.

Workbook Exercise: Build Your Identity MVP

1. List 5 things that are true about you right now (no shame language allowed)
2. List 3 things you want to be true in 6 months
3. Write your Version 1.0 Identity Statement (3-5 sentences)
4. Pick your launch date (share with tribe)
5. What's one behavior that aligns with this identity that you can practice this week?

Discussion Prompts

- What makes it scary to "launch" a new identity?
 - How is identity-building like entrepreneurship?
 - What would it feel like to give yourself permission to iterate your identity over time?
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Unit 5: The Practice of Affirmation (3-5 min)

Subtitle: How affirmations rewire the brain

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Distinguish between grounded affirmations and toxic positivity
- Understand the neuroscience of affirmation practice
- Create 3 personal affirmations aligned with their Identity MVP
- Commit to a daily affirmation practice

Core Content

What Affirmations Actually Do

If the word 'affirmation' makes you cringe, think of this as cognitive weight training.

Affirmations aren't magic. They're **neuroplasticity tools**.

Every time you repeat a statement, your brain strengthens the neural pathway associated with that thought. Over time, repeated affirmations:

- Interrupt shame-based default thinking
- Prime your brain to notice evidence that supports the affirmation
- Shift your baseline self-concept

Research Insight: Neuroplasticity research shows that the brain can form new neural pathways at any age, especially when paired with emotional activation and repetition (Lewis, 2015).^[1]

Grounded Truth vs. Fake Positivity

Not all affirmations work. In fact, some backfire.

Fake Positivity (Your brain rejects this):

- "I am perfect"
- "I have no problems"
- "Everything is easy for me"

Grounded Truth (Your brain accepts this):

- "I am learning"
- "I am capable of hard things"
- "I am building something new"

The difference: **Your brain needs to believe it's possible.** If the affirmation feels like a lie, it will trigger cognitive dissonance and shame.

How to Write Effective Affirmations

Formula: Present tense + Growth-oriented + Evidence-based

Example 1:

-  "I am a millionaire"
-  "I am building a financially sustainable business"

Example 2:

- "I never struggle"
- "I am learning to navigate struggle without shame"

Example 3:

- "I am healed"
- "I am healing, and that's enough"

Affirmations for Cycle-Breakers

Based on research and past cohort feedback, here are affirmations that resonate with cycle-breakers:

1. "I am a cycle-breaker, not a victim"
2. "My obsession is a gift I'm learning to direct"
3. "I am building a life aligned with my values"
4. "I am worthy of support, rest, and success"
5. "I am rewiring patterns that no longer serve me"
6. "I am part of a tribe that sees my potential"
7. "I am learning to trust my gut"
8. "I am Version 1.0, and that's exactly where I need to be"

Daily Affirmation Practice

How to Practice:

1. Choose 3 affirmations that feel true enough
2. Say them out loud every morning (before checking your phone)
3. Say them while looking in a mirror if possible (this activates self-recognition circuits in the brain)
4. Repeat them during moments of doubt or shame spirals

Integration with Builder Types:

- **External Processors:** Say affirmations out loud, record voice memos, share with tribe

- **Internal Processors:** Write affirmations in a journal, repeat them silently during meditation
- **High Stimulation types:** Set 3 phone alarms with affirmations as reminders
- **High Structure types:** Build affirmations into morning routine (after brushing teeth, before coffee, etc.)

Workbook Exercise: Create Your Affirmation Set

1. Review your Identity MVP statement from Unit 4
2. Write 3 affirmations that support that identity
3. Test each affirmation: Does it feel true enough? Does it inspire you? Does it pass the "grounded truth" test?
4. Commit to saying these affirmations out loud for the next 7 days
5. At the end of 7 days, journal: What shifted?

Discussion Prompts

- Have you tried affirmations before? What was your experience?
 - What makes an affirmation feel "true enough" to you?
 - How might daily affirmations support your entrepreneurial journey?
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Module 2 Integration & Next Steps

What You've Learned

In this module, you:

- Conducted a language audit and identified shame-based self-talk
- Rewrote at least one shame script into a builder script
- Explored the power of shared values and contributed to your cohort's Builder's Code
- Created your Identity MVP (Version 1.0)
- Developed 3 personal affirmations to support your new identity

How This Connects to Module 3

In Module 3 (Energy, Frequency & Inner Strategy), you'll learn how your **nervous system state** impacts your ability to embody your new identity. You can have the perfect affirmations, but if you're in a chronic stress state, your brain won't be able to integrate them. Module 3 gives you the regulation tools to make your identity work stick.

Daily Practices to Continue

1. **Language Audit:** Notice and correct shame language (yours and others')
2. **Affirmation Practice:** 3 affirmations every morning
3. **Builder's Code:** Reinforce cohort values in every interaction
4. **Identity Check-In:** Weekly reflection—"Am I living as Version 1.0?"

Tribe Accountability

- Share your Identity MVP with your pod this week
 - Ask one tribe member to be your affirmation accountability partner
 - Practice calling in shame language when you hear it (gently!)
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Research Summary for Module 2

Core Research Citations:

1. **Porges, S. W. (2011).** *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-Regulation.* W. W. Norton & Company.
 - Application: Language impacts nervous system state; shame language triggers defensive responses
2. **Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000).** "The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior." *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268.
 - Application: Autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core needs; identity flexibility supports intrinsic motivation

3. Maté, G. (2008). *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*. North Atlantic Books.
 - Application: Self-concept formed under trauma becomes self-fulfilling; shame scripts operate unconsciously
 4. Brown, B. (2012). *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. Gotham Books.
 - Application: Shame as disconnection; shared values build trust and psychological safety
 5. Vallerand, R. J. (2015). *The Psychology of Passion: A Dualistic Model*. Oxford University Press.
 - Application: Identity flexibility correlates with harmonious passion; identity rigidity correlates with obsessive, brittle patterns
 6. Lewis, M. (2015). *The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease*. PublicAffairs.
 - Application: Neuroplasticity allows for identity rewiring at any age; repetition + emotion = new neural pathways
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Facilitator Notes

Common Challenges in Module 2

1. **Resistance to affirmations ("This feels fake")**
 - Normalize this. Emphasize grounded truth over toxic positivity
 - Encourage participants to start with the smallest true statement
2. **Shame spirals during language audits**
 - Participants may be shocked by how harsh their self-talk is
 - Remind them: Awareness without judgment is the goal
 - Offer co-regulation: "This is hard. You're not alone."
3. **Difficulty letting go of old identity**
 - Old identity may feel safe even if it's painful

- Grief work from Module 1 applies here too
- Reframe: You're not deleting the past, you're integrating it

4. Perfectionism around Identity MVP

- Some participants will want Version 10.0 before they share
- Remind them: The point is to launch, not to perfect
- Model vulnerability by sharing your own messy Version 1.0

Integration with Other Modules

- **Module 1 (Reframing Obsession):** Language audit reveals obsessive thinking patterns
- **Module 1.5 (Builder Types):** Affirmation practice adapted by type
- **Module 3 (Energy & Frequency):** Nervous system regulation makes identity work sustainable
- **Module 4 (Entrepreneurship 101):** Identity MVP mirrors business MVP; both are iterative

Trauma-Informed Considerations

- Identity work can be activating for those with identity-based trauma (e.g., "You'll never be anything")
- Watch for dissociation, withdrawal, or hypervigilance during language audit exercises
- Offer grounding techniques and co-regulation throughout
- Remind participants: You can pause, step away, or modify any exercise to fit your needs

End of Module 2 Lesson Plans