

# S. Hourston & Associates

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For immediate release

## Gift for new or soon-to-be graduates lasts a lifetime

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In a five week one-on-one training program, story and communication facilitator Shelley Hourston guides recent or soon-to-be graduates through a process that highlights their strengths and expertise, significantly increasing their confidence. Participants develop a 'portfolio' or collection of stories demonstrating their experience and skills. They can then use these stories to communicate their strengths to potential employers. In the words of one participant: "Today's interview was such a testament to our sessions! I used story examples to answer a lot of the questions and did not have any problems with the 'big' questions as I usually do." Gift certificates for *Career Kick Start for Recent Graduates* are now available.

When people begin a new profession or occupation they often lack confidence because they usually have little field experience to offer employers. In *Career Kick Start for Recent Graduates*, participants examine their life and work experiences to discover or recall scenarios when their attributes and skills played a role in their success. They also identify examples of situations in which they could have used their newly developed expertise, demonstrating a practical understanding of how to apply their skills. In addition, they re-examine trials and challenging experiences that have contributed to their character. As a result, participants feel confident about what they bring to employers and how to communicate that in a way that is clear and memorable.

"Every person I've worked with has a bank of knowledge, strengths and experience that is buried or unrecognized. People forget how much they know or don't recognize the value of their knowledge. Consequently, they don't use these examples while under stress in a job interview," says Hourston. "The nuggets we've forgotten about are often the very things that make us stand out from the crowd—the things that make us a memorable candidate."

As a story and communication facilitator, Hourston offers one-on-one training and workshops in person and by teleconference for individuals who want to strengthen their confidence and communication skills for career development. Using an Appreciative Inquiry strength-based coaching model, she helps people discover and rediscover their capabilities. During the training sessions, communication skills are honed through personal narrative and storytelling techniques that enable humour, creativity, and values to be woven throughout.

*Career Kick Start for Recent Graduates* is designed for highly committed people who are seeking a workplace where individual strengths and contributions are valued and nurtured. Individuals who benefit most from the program are those who are dedicated to using their personal strengths and skills to make a difference in their workplace and the world at large. The five week program includes five hours of one-on-one sessions, and additional exercises and activities.

Shelley Hourston has studied creativity coaching with Eric Maisel and has a certificate in leadership coaching. She melds her coaching and creativity training with her information expertise and experience as a librarian working in corporate, educational and disability arenas. Hourston also offers workshops on creativity in the workplace.

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