

Are you a reality writer? How changing thinking frees up work energy

A new season of television shows is starting to air. In addition to reality TV, writers have fresh comedies, dramas and talk shows.

But while the shows we watch on TV are entertaining, the stories we create in our own lives can create unnecessary turmoil. You see, many of us are unwitting "reality" writers – or we may be involuntary cast members in our co-workers' dramas.

Dramas and stories are created in our workplace daily, and we all have roles:

External roles – These are titles that represent objective functions. For example: President, chairman, assistant.

Internal roles – These are emotional. As creative writers, we assign parts to each



BUSINESS PLAYBOOK

MARY ANN MASUR

other. For example: Cynic, cheerleader, naysayer, grandmother.

Ghost roles – These people are gone, but their legacy lingers. For example: The past department head who ruled like a king (and fear still pervades the culture).

I recently asked a client to map out the internal roles of each person on his team. He was able to get a clearer picture and

see how they impacted the team.

We create stories because we assign meaning to everything – and in silence, people make things up. The more you can communicate with your colleagues, the less likely they are to create their own spin and drama.

Here's an example of that. Suzanne, a physician client, began to realize that lack of feedback from her boss didn't mean he thought she was doing a poor job or that he didn't care. In reality, he had several commitments and was preoccupied with his own goals. She began to take things less personally when she stopped putting meaning to the actions of her boss. She also stopped

misattributing meaning to her colleagues' actions.

She said, "I feel less stress, I have less negative energy and my feelings are not hurt as easily. It's just business."

As cast members in our organization, we all play roles in the outcomes that our teams generate. By increasing our awareness of these roles, their impact and the unintended story we write through meanings we attribute, we can ensure that our show, called reality, is positive and will continue to run.

Columbus-based **MARY ANN MASUR** helps teams and individuals who are overwhelmed at the helm to be effective and fulfilled.
synergy-consultants.com