

Please don't say "I'm only a ..."

In many conversations I've heard people – often women – describe themselves in this way. Every time, I cringe because of all this phrase implies. Even if that's not what you meant it to mean.

When you say, for example, 'I'm just a receptionist', notice what you are saying to the world – and yourself. It sounds like you believe:

1. The work of a receptionist is not very important;
2. You think you could/should be doing a more important job; and
3. This is not the job you would choose to do if you had a choice.

Whichever way you look at it these are negative messages if you believe them. What if you had some other beliefs instead. Beliefs like these:

- All work is important;
- You do have a choice – perhaps not in the short term, but definitely in the long term; and
- How you feel about your job is affected by how you talk about it to others. You don't need to do that to yourself!

Everyone has a handful of jobs they are 'born to do'. If you are lucky enough to have found what that is for you and you're in that job, no matter how lowly you perceive it to be, please don't talk it down.

If you actually love what you do, tell the world about it with enthusiasm and pride.

On the other hand, if you really do hate your job and wish you weren't doing it, you can express that without denigrating the role in general or the industry you work in.

Some industries have trouble attracting younger people. Part of the reason is that people already working in those industries just don't promote what they do in a positive way – even when they do love their jobs!

No wonder young people, if they do happen to find their way into these jobs, often have no idea of what they're getting into. They have probably never met anyone with experience in the role who has told them what it's really like – both good and bad.

Next time someone asks you 'What do you do?' please remove the 'only' or the 'just' from your answer, even if you feel your work is insignificant.

By speaking about your job as if it's important – because every job is! – you'll feel better about it.

You might even be the catalyst to someone else finding the career of their dreams because you didn't talk it down.

What do you think?

Does how we talk about our job affect us and others?