

Start With Why Summary

By Simon Sinek

What do you think makes a leader both successful and influential?

Start With Why shows us that successful and influential leaders have one thing in common, they start with "why." Inspired leadership is something that all of us can learn. Sinek's intuitive discovery asserts that connecting others to your "why," inspires action and transformation.

But what is "why"? Well, Sinek explains the why, as the deeply held beliefs and values that inform and drive your behavior.

You may know Simon Sinek from his blockbuster TED talk, which gained him worldwide recognition, or you may have read some of his other bestsellers. Before becoming a bestselling author and motivational speaker, he worked in advertising. Sinek's focus is on inspiration and fulfillment, and how this has a snowball effect.

Sinek argues that everyone has the right to wake up feeling inspired, to find safety and comfort at work, and ultimately to be fulfilled through one's career. Furthermore, he places great importance on inspiring people that you work with, because this will have a knock-on effect. But how do you inspire those around you? Sinek says that for this to happen, we need to re-evaluate how we think, act, and communicate.

This summary will briefly provide insight into how to think, act, and communicate in order to affect positive change. Furthermore, Sinek's conceptualization of the Golden Circle, unpacks this "why" in detail,

showing how it builds trust and loyalty, and encourages people to embrace change. This gives us valuable insight into what creates successful businesses and individuals.

Understanding the Golden Circle

The Golden Circle consists of three concentric circles, which helps to conceptualize why some organizations inspire change and exceptional results, while others don't.

The first critical insight in understanding what Sinek calls the Golden Circle, is how it's rooted in biology. To understand its real-life applications, he turns to Apple, the Wright Brothers, and Martin Luther King to illustrate just how powerful starting with "why" can be.

He conveys the power of "why" in three statements. Firstly, people don't buy what you do; they buy *why* you do it. Secondly, hire people who don't buy into your what, but rather, your *why*. And finally, great leaders inspire action because they start with *why*.

The Golden Circle is based on the mathematical concept of the golden ratio, which purports that there's some order in disorder. Successful results have an element of predictability, and are not random. To understand this, picture three concentric circles. The outer circle is the What, the middle circle is the How, and the inner circle is the most crucial aspect; it's the Why. Most of us know what we do, some of us know how we do it, but very few of us are actually aware of why we do what we do.

If we apply this to business, the outer circle describes what a company does. What is easy to define, because usually we know what a business

does, and what the roles might be within the business. The how is less obvious, because it's the factors that make a business unique in the market and differentiate it from competitors.

The why of the inner circle is critical and it's what makes us persevere. It's what drives us, and why we ultimately care whether our business succeeds. In reality though, it's often surprisingly difficult to define. Yet Sinek believes that focusing on the inner circle is the way every inspired and successful company operates. In other words, work inside out. Start with Why.

Most leaders and companies think, act, and communicate from the outside in. We move from the most obvious thing, which is the tangible what, and then explain how we're different or better. But our why is seldom clearly defined or communicated. However, if you look toward some of the great organizations and leaders for inspiration, you'll notice that most of them all think, act, and communicate from the inside out. In other words, they start with a clearly defined "why."

And why doesn't just mean to make a profit. A profit is just a result, The message is that we need to emphasize a sense of purpose. So our why should encompass the core values and mission statement, and it's often a profoundly powerful and emotive message that drives us to act.

The Power of Articulating Our Why

Neurobiology helps us to understand how to identify why. The very structure of our brains reveals sections that correlate with the Golden Circle. The brain's outer layer is the neocortex, responsible for our reasoning, logic, and language. This corresponds with the what - the

outer part of the golden circle. When we communicate from the neocortex, we're working from the outside in. Therefore, people can easily understand what we do; but this doesn't necessarily create loyalty, or drive consumer behavior.

Our brain's inner structures make up our limbic system. This houses our emotions - our strongest feelings, such as love, trust, and loyalty. Our gut responses as it were. The limbic system largely determines how we behave and make decisions. But here's the interesting thing: it has no capacity for language. We don't need language in order to respond emotionally. So what does this tell us? If we start with the what and how, and not with why, people will comprehend the data and information we share, but they won't necessarily feel inspired or committed to what we have to offer.

On the other hand, from a scientific point of view, when we start with why, the brain's emotive centers are activated. We directly access the limbic region - the part of the brain that drives our behavior. It's how we establish a more profound connection of loyalty and trust. With this as a foundation, people connect emotionally first, and then logically process the how and the what.

Creating an emotional connection is crucial, and some of the most successful leaders and businesses have used this strategy to influence, and even change the world.

**People Don't Buy What You Do, They Buy Why
You Do It**

So many influential companies, innovators, and leaders who have inspired change have begun with why. Apple is a notable example of a business that demonstrates that people don't buy what you do - they buy why you do it. Apple's goal isn't to do business with everyone who needs what they have to offer; rather, it's to do business with people who believe what they believe.

If Apple was just another computer business, its marketing message could be something that focuses on the fact that they produce beautifully designed, and user-friendly computers. And, this is usually how most marketing is done. It's usually a straight forward pitch that describes what you do and how it's better than your competitors. But are you inspired by this message? Probably not. The success of Apple's marketing, and with the message that they communicate, is based on the idea that, as a company, they think differently. Apple is a company that challenges the status quo, and their mission statement and ethos encompasses these core values.

What Apple has done, is to reverse the order of information. They start with why. The emphasis is on what they believe, not on their actual products. The message is, if you believe in creativity and innovation, then this is the company to do business with. Therefore, companies like Apple don't just sell products; they affirm customers' values and beliefs. They're also unrivaled in many ways because they have been successful at innovating across a range of product categories. This is the reason why so many people queue for hours just to get the latest iPhone. They have inspired brand loyalty.

And, inspiring loyalty and trust are equally important when it comes to the people with whom we work.

Hire People Who Buy into Your Why

Creating a unified sense of purpose, a clear "why," is a powerful driving force behind formidable teamwork and innovation. The Wright brothers for example, had the desire to build airplanes. But, the question is, why did the Wright brothers succeed, when others, who were better resourced, did not? Samuel Pierpont Langley, a competitor of the Wright brothers, appeared to have the recipe for success, he had financial backing, human capital, and just the right market conditions. Langley landed a research grant, he assembled the brightest minds for the job, and he had the press and public rooting for him. Yet, on December 17 1903, it wasn't Langley, but the Wright brothers and their team who made history, with the first motor operated flight. The brothers had none of the advantages that Langley had, but they were highly motivated, had a strong work ethic, and keen scientific minds. But the major difference was a powerful sense of purpose that motivated the Wright brothers and their team. Each one of them shared an insatiable scientific curiosity. Their sense of purpose and vision was paramount to their success. Their ultimate goal was to create the possibility of safe, man-powered aviation.

Their core belief was that if they could make man-powered flight a reality, then it would change the course of the world. Langley's motives appeared to be different and were perhaps more focussed on fame and fortune.

One of the key truths is that extraordinary achievements become possible when teams believe in the why, rather than what. Furthermore, if

you hire people with the same work ethic, and ethos, then they will become part of a formidable team.

So, while a clear and compelling why, inspires employee commitment, customer loyalty, and a work ethic, it's particularly critical if you're a leader seeking to inspire change.

Great Leaders Inspire Action because They Start with Why

What makes a great leader? Leaders hold a position of power or influence and most importantly, they inspire us.

We support an inspiring leader whose beliefs resonate with us, and therefore we follow them, not because we have to, but because we want to. That was why, in the summer of 1963, 250,000 people stood in the scorching sun in Washington, DC, to hear Martin Luther King, Jr. speak. Dr. King wasn't the only man who had suffered in pre-civil rights America, nor was he the only great orator in the nation, but he believed in his message, and so the people believed along with him. Martin Luther King Jr. didn't focus on his plans for America - his speech was based on what he believed, and it started with a universal human experience. The experience was, 'I have a dream.'

The universality of his message, the unifying dream, and the profound weight of his beliefs, meant that people showed up. And, importantly, they believed what he believed, so they took his cause, and made it their own. And ultimately they showed up as a testimony to what they thought about America and human rights.

In Conclusion

Simon Sinek gives us a framework for designing organizations for success and how to inspire employees and customers. He shows us that you could have the best product in the world, or a brilliant idea, but if you have no sense of purpose, and no clear mission, then success isn't guaranteed.

Apple's co-founder Steve Jobs, the Wright Brothers, and Martin Luther King Jr., are from different eras, and had different spheres of influence. However, what they have in common, is that they all started with a clear why. They intuitively knew that people will not buy into a product, service, movement, or idea, until they identify with the why behind it. Sinek explains: 'All the inspiring leaders and companies, regardless of size or industry, think, act and communicate exactly alike. And it's the complete opposite of everyone else. What if we could all learn to think, act, and communicate like those who inspire? I imagine a world where the ability to inspire is practiced not just by a chosen few, but by the majority.'