

Insights from Start with Why & Find Your Why by Simon Sinek



Great Businesses Start with Why

In 2018, Nike released an ad with the face of the quarterback and civil rights activist Colin Kaepernick, and the caption, "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything." No product, just Kaepernick's face and those words.

Nike's stock fell 3% the day after the ad was released. But over the next week, Nike's online sales jumped 25%.

Nike made it clear what they believe and what they stand for, and those who believe what Nike believe went out and bought a bunch of Nike products.

Great businesses, like Nike, start by telling you what they stand for, not what they're selling.

"People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it." – Simon Sinek



Great Leaders Start with Why

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did NOT stand in front of 250,000 people in Washington DC and say, "I have a 10-step plan to end racial segregation in the South." Dr. King told the crowd about an inspiring vision – his WHY - he was willing to die for: "I dream of a world where little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and little white girls as sisters and brothers..."

Dr. King motivated thousands of people to join the civil rights movement because he started with inspiration, not instruction.

Finding Your WHY

Find your WHY and you'll not only be able to inspire others to buy your product or join your cause, you'll inspire yourself to get out of bed and take on challenging tasks.

"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." – Friedrich Nietzsche

"Discovering your WHY is like panning for gold in the river of the past: the gold is there, lost in the debris of the river, hidden by rushing water." – Simon Sinek

As you search through the river of your past, your goal is to fill the following WHY statement:

My WHY is:

TO _____ (contribution)

SO THAT _____ (impact)

Examples:

"My WHY is TO propel people forward SO THAT they can make their mark on the world." – David Mead (co-author of Find Your Why)

"My WHY is TO inspire people to do what inspires them, SO THAT together we can change the world for the better." – Simon Sinek

Method #1: The Friend Exercise

Author Simon Sinek found his WHY asking close friends: "Why do you consider me a good friend?"

One friend said, "I can trust you to be there for me," and "You're fun to be around." But Sinek encouraged him to go deeper, and asked, "What is it that makes me a unique friend?"

After a few uncomfortable moments, his friend said something that gave him goosebumps: "When I talk to you, I feel inspired."

Sinek felt a surge of energy and knew he was close to finding his WHY. He thought more about it and experimented with different wording until he came up with the statement "My WHY is TO inspire people to do what inspires them, SO THAT together we can change the world."

Once Sinek could articulate his WHY, every decision filtered through his WHY. As a result, he shut down his marketing business and started writing 'Start with Why'...the rest is history.

Method #2: Impactful People Exercise

Create a list of people who have helped you become the person you are today.

- Did your grandma give you the confidence to be yourself when most people thought you were weird?
- Did your middle school teacher change the way you see the world and your role in it?
- Did a coach help you realize your potential?

Find a partner and tell them about the specific impact each person had on you. Your partner's job is to notice when you talk about an impact that makes you come alive. Your WHY is to have that impact on others. Fill in your WHY statement accordingly.

"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." – Mark Twain