

### Premise

There are leaders, and there are those who lead. Leaders hold a position of power or influence.

Those who lead inspire us. Whether as individuals or as organisations, we follow those who lead not because we have to, but because we want to. We follow those who lead not for them, but for ourselves.

**Start with Why** notes that there is a way of thinking, acting and communicating that gives some leaders the ability to inspire those around them. Although there may be some ‘natural-born leaders’ who have an innate ability to inspire, this ability is not reserved to them exclusively. Everyone can learn the pattern, and, with a little discipline, any leader can inspire others (both inside and outside their organisation) to help advance their ideas and their vision.

**Start with Why** is a book for those who want to inspire others, and for those who want to find someone to inspire them.

### THIS IS NOT OPINION, THIS IS BIOLOGY

It is human nature to desire to belong. This desire drives us to pursue others who share the same Why as us.

When a company clearly communicates their Why, what they believe, and we believe what they believe, we will go to extraordinary lengths to include those products or brands in our lives.

We are drawn to leaders and organizations that are good at communicating what they believe. Their ability to make us feel like we belong, to make us feel special, safe and not alone is part of what gives them the ability to inspire us.

The Golden Circle matches the way our brain operates:

- The limbic brain is responsible for all our feelings, such as trust and loyalty. It is also responsible for all human behaviour and all our decision-making.
- Our limbic brain is powerful enough to drive behaviour that sometimes contradicts our rational and analytical understanding of a situation.
- Companies that clearly communicate a sense of Why drive our limbic brain.

Decisions should start with Why – the emotional component of the decision – and then the rational components allowed the buyer to verbalise the reasons for their decision.

Please forward this summary to friends / colleagues for their private educational purposes. If you wish to stop receiving future summaries then simply press unsubscribe in the covering email or email me at [wietp@quest-worldwide.com.au](mailto:wietp@quest-worldwide.com.au).

Obviously, I still recommend that you purchase and read it plus other seminal books I've summarised, including ...

Happy reading,

Wiet Pruijm

+61 400 665 901



### ASSUME YOU KNOW

This chapter explores the assumptions we make and the impact they have on our actions.

- Even where assumptions are made based on a wealth of data, they can still go wrong.
- We can slice and dice all the options, but at the end of all the good advice and compelling evidence, we're left where we started: how do you decide a course of action that yields a desired effect that is repeatable? How can we have 20/20 foresight?

There are two types of leaders: those who use short-term tactics to achieve an end result (those who respond to problems), and those who start with the end result in mind and design their process with that goal in mind (those who eliminate problems before they arise).

### CARROTS AND STICKS

There are two ways to attract the customers: inspiring the carrots (giving people something positive to look forward to) or manipulating the sticks (creating some fear of loss or harm).

**Manipulation** is not necessarily a bad thing: it's a fairly common and benign tactic. It includes tactics like:

- Manipulating prices, promotions, fear, aspirations, peer pressure and novelty.
- Pricing and promotions are the most commonly identified forms of sales manipulation, but fear, aspirations, peer pressure and novelty tend to be more discrete.

Manipulations work in the short-term. However, they do not breed loyalty, cost more and more over the course of time, the gains are only short term and they increase the level of stress for the buyer and seller.

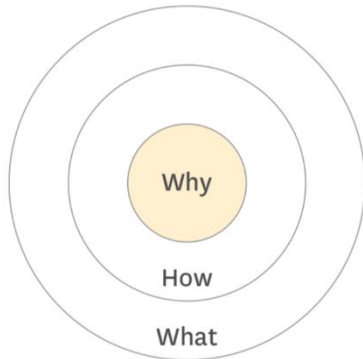
If you are looking to build long-term loyalty, manipulations do not help.

### THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

The Golden Circle is the core of Start with Why.

There are three parts of The Golden Circle: Why, How and What.

- **Why:** very few people or companies can clearly articulate why they do what they do. This isn't about running a profitable company – that's a result. 'Why' is all about your purpose.
  - Why does your company exist?
  - Why should anyone care?
- **How:** some people and companies know how they do what they do. Whether you call them a 'differentiating value proposition' or a 'unique selling proposition', Hows are often given to explain how something is different or better.
- **What:** every single company knows what they do. Everyone can easily describe the product or services their company sells or the job function they have within the system.



### CLARITY, DISCIPLINE AND CONSISTENCY

The power of Why is that it puts into words the emotional context for decisions. It offers greater confidence than just relying on a What or a How.

- When we make a purely rational decision, the highest level of confidence we can give is: "I think this is the right decision."
- When we make a decision purely based on emotion, the highest level of confidence is: "the decision feels right, even if it flies in the face of all the facts and figures."

When you know your Why, the highest level of confidence you can offer is, "I know it's right." When you know the decision is right, not only does it feel right, but you can rationalise it and easily put it into words.

The goal of business should not be to do business with anyone who simply wants what you have. It should be to focus on the people who believe what you believe. When we are selective about doing business only with those who believe in our Why, we get trust.

### THE EMERGENCE OF TRUST

Trust begins when we have a sense that another person or organisation is driven by things other than their own self-gain. Aligning Why, How and What is a way to build that trust.

Those who lead are able to do so because those who follow trust that the decisions made at the top have the best interest of the group at heart.

Trust matters. Trust comes from being a part of a culture or organisation with a common set of values and beliefs. Trust is maintained when the values and beliefs are actively managed. If companies do not actively work to keep their Golden Circle in balance – clarity, discipline and consistency – then trust starts to break down.

A company must work actively to remind everyone Why the company exists. They need to hold everyone in the company accountable to the values and guiding principles.

### Why and Hiring

Starting with Why when hiring dramatically increases your ability to attract those who are passionate for what you believe.

The goal is to hire those who are passionate for your Why, your purpose, cause or belief, and who have the attitude that fits your culture. Once that is established, only then should their skillset and experience be evaluated.

Great companies don't hire skilled people and motivate them, they hire already motivated people and inspire them.

### Why and Keeping Employees Engaged

Companies with a strong sense of Why are able to inspire their employees. Those employees are more productive and innovative, and the feeling they bring to work attracts other people eager to work there as well.

The role of a leader is not to come up with all the great ideas. The role of a leader is to create an environment in which great ideas can happen. It is the people inside the company, those on the front lines, who are best qualified to find new ways of doing things. If the people are constantly reminded Why the company was founded and told to always look for ways to bring that cause to life while performing their job, however, then they will do more than their job.

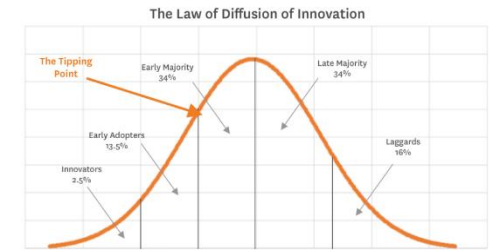
### THE NEW COMPETITION

When you compete against everyone else, no one wants to help you. But when you compete against yourself, everyone wants to help you.

All organisations start with Why, but only the great ones keep their Why clear year after year. Those who forget Why they were founded show up to the race everyday to outdo someone else instead of to outdo themselves. The pursuit, for those who lose sight of Why they are running the race, is for the medal or to beat someone else.

### HOW A TIPPING POINT TIPS

People fall into the categories set out in the graph below, based on how likely they are to participate in the spread of a new idea.



The goal of business should not be to simply to sell to anyone who wants what you have – the majority – but rather to find people who believe what you believe, the left side of the bell curve.

These people will perceive greater value in what you do, pay a premium to be a part of your cause, and will tell others about what you do.

Businesses should not focus on the groups on the right of the curve, as they will do business with you if you meet your practical requirements, but will never be loyal to you if you don't.

The innovators and early adopters are the people who share your beliefs and want to incorporate your ideas, products and services into their own lives .

### START WITH WHY BUT KNOW HOW

What a great leader does is simplify the tangible way to breathe life into their Why.

When a Why is clear, those who share that belief will be drawn to it and want to take part in bringing it to life.

However, a leader with a clear sense of Why they are doing something, must also have a clear idea of How they are going to achieve that Why, or rely on another leader who does.

### Why and How Types of Leaders

Behind every Why type of leader, is a How type of leader who brings the Why to life.

Why leaders are the visionaries with overactive imaginations. They tend to be optimists who believe that everything they can imagine can be accomplished and that they tend to be focused on things like the future. They imagine the destination.

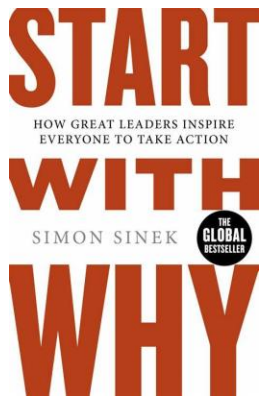
How leaders are more practical and more realistic and tend to be focused on the things most people can see and tend to be better at building them. The How leaders take the Why leaders' imagined destinations and work out how to get there.

### COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT LISTENING

The Celery Test: what is good for your competition is not necessarily good for you. To work out what is good for you, Sinek recommends the Celery Test:

- People will make a lot of recommendations to you. The way to narrow down what you need to do is to filter everything through your Why.
- With a Why clearly stated in an organisation, anyone within the organisation can make a decision as clearly and as accurately as the founder. A Why provides the clear filter for decision-making.

Symbols help us make tangible that which is intangible. And the only reason symbols have meaning is because we infuse them with meaning. That meaning lives in our minds, not in the item itself. Only when the purpose, cause or belief is clear can a symbol command great power. For a logo to become a symbol, people must be inspired to use that logo to say something about who they are.



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#### WHEN WHY GOES FUZZY

Achievement comes when you pursue and attain What you want. Success comes when you are clear in pursuit of Why you want it.

Success comes when we wake up every day in that never ending pursuit of Why we do What we do. Our achievements, What we do, serve as the milestones to indicate we are on the right path.

The great leaders are those with the ability to never lose sight of Why and also achieve the milestones that keep everyone focused in the right direction.

Their Golden Circle is in balance:

- They are in pursuit of Why, they hold themselves accountable to How they do it and What they do serves as the tangible proof of what they believe.

The Why gets fuzzy when What we are doing and Why we are doing it eventually fall out of balance.

#### SPLIT HAPPENS

At the beginning, ideas are fuelled by passion – that very compelling emotion that causes us to do quite irrational things. However, the reason issues arise, is that passion alone can’t cut it. For passion to survive, it needs structure. A Why without the Hows has a very high probability of failure.

To ensure that a Why continues, Sinek suggests applying the School Bus Test: if the founder or leader were hit by a school bus, would the organisation continue to thrive at the same pace without them at the helm?

For an organisation to continue to inspire and lead, the founder’s Why must be extracted and integrated into the culture of the company.

#### THE ORIGINS OF A WHY

A Why does not originate from looking ahead to what you want to achieve, then figuring out an appropriate strategy to get there. It comes from looking in the completely opposite direction from where you are right now. Finding the Why is a process of discovery, not invention.

The Why is within you. And once you find and know your Why, the hardest part is to remain true to it.

Gaining clarity of Why, ironically, is not the hard part. It is the discipline to trust one’s gut, to stay true to one’s purpose, cause or beliefs. Remaining completely in balance and authentic is the most difficult part.