

The Career Change Formula Teleseminar Series

Know Your WHY, The Missing Ingredient For Career Change Success

Simon Sinek

Participants:

OA = Olive Amoh, Interviewer

SS = Simon Sinek, Interviewee

OA: Today's expert call is Know Your Why, the missing ingredient for career success, and our expert today is Simon Sinek, who teaches leaders and companies how to inspire people. Simon is leading a movement to inspire people to do the things that inspire them. He writes, consults and speaks all over the world about the concept of Why; the purpose, cause or belief that drives every one of us. If everyone knew why they do what they do and if everyone only did the things that inspired them, what an amazing place the world would be.

He created the simple model, The Golden Circle, that codifies what makes the most inspiring people and organisations so successful. The concept is so powerful that it is changing the way that people think and act. Simon's been invited to talk about The Golden Circle across the United States and around the world. From Members of Congress to foreign ambassadors, from small businesses to corporations like Microsoft, from Hollywood to the Pentagon, more and more people are learning to become more effective, more efficient and more inspiring by discovering the power of Why and following their Golden Circle. He's author of the book, *Start with Why* - how great leaders inspire everyone to take action. Simon, a very warm welcome to you.

SS: Thanks Olive, how are you?

OA: Very well, thank you. A number of our listeners would like to change job but they don't know what to do. What would you say to them?

SS: Well, a lot of people when they're looking to change their jobs I think ask themselves the wrong question. We ask ourselves: 'what do I want to do next?' and the problem is there's almost an overwhelming number of options. And I think a lot of people also discover that even though they might know what they do, the question is where should they do it, which company, or where would they get the most out of that job?

And really the question to ask yourself is: why do you do what you do? Because what you do is incidental. So many of our careers are sort of by accident. You went to school for something, or somebody suggested you should do something and somebody got you a job because they knew somebody in a company and all of a sudden, that's your career. So the question is: why do you do what you do? There's a pattern to the way we all think, the way we act, the way we communicate and the times where we're most energised, the times when we're most inspired, when we love to do what we do – there's actually a pattern in what we do. So the question is not what do you do or what do you want to do, the question is why do you do what you do?

OA: So, Simon, why does people knowing why they do what they do become an important ingredient for career change success?

SS: Well, we spend more time at our jobs than we do at home. And it's always amazing to me when people say 'yes, I like my job, it's okay' but very few people can say I love my job. And if you're going to spend more time at work than you are at home, wouldn't you want to do something that you absolutely love? And the feeling of love exists in the part of the brain, the limbic brain, that also controls the why. That purpose, that cause or that belief that drives everything we do, exists in the same part of the brain that controls all of our feelings and all of our decision making, the limbic brain.

The problem is it doesn't control language, which is why it's hard to say why we love what we love. Why do you love your husband or why do you love your wife? That's actually a very hard question and we rationalise usually. It's just a feeling that we have. Whereas if somebody says, 'oh, I like my job', they point to the people they work with or the challenge that they have or the benefits that they get – it's very rational. So it's important to understand why you do what you do for your job, because that's where the feeling of inspiration, that's where the feeling of enjoyment and saying I love my job comes from – it's the same part of the brain.

OA: So could you share with us some examples of Why to illustrate this?

SS: Absolutely. I think I'll talk about mine. I went through a big career change myself. I've always known what I did, and I had a little company a few years ago and I knew what we did. I did marketing and strategy consulting and I knew how I did it and I could tell you how we were better, how we were smarter, how we were faster than the competition, but I couldn't tell you why I was doing what I was doing. It was sort of just to make a living or I wanted to build a business. These vague concepts that I used as well to justify it. And over the course of time, I started to lose my passion for what I was doing and then I went through the same thing, which is what do I want to do? I'm not enjoying this. What do I want to do? And I started wracking my brains for the kinds of clients I wanted to take on or the kinds of work I wanted to take on. It was the same issue.

But then once I discovered this idea called The Golden Circle. And, to be clear, The Golden Circle – imagine a bull's eye. In the middle of the bull's eye is the word Why. One ring out is the word How, and the outside ring is the word What? And just to define the terms really quickly – every single person and company on the planet knows What they do, some know How they do it but very, very few know Why they do what they do. And by why, I don't mean to make money. I mean what's your purpose, what's your cause, what's your belief? Why do you get out of bed in the morning, and why should anybody care? What I learned is that the most inspiring organisations and the most inspiring people, they all know why they do what they do – every single one of them; and they think, act and communicate based on that purpose, cause or belief.

So for me, once I discovered that, I literally became obsessed with why I do what I do and I stopped telling people what I do. I completely stopped telling people what I do. And so when people said to me, or even now, why do you do what you do? – my answer is 'I inspire people to do the things that inspire them.' I get up every single day to inspire people to do the things that inspire them. Now, I do many things. I speak and I teach and I write, but to me, all of those things have to help me inspire people to do the things that inspire them; and that's what energises me every morning.

OA: And what impact has that had for you?

SS: Well, for one, my passion has been through the roof since I started understanding why I do what I do. There's barely been a single day where I don't wake up and say that I love what I do. More importantly, I've been able to expand the work that I'm doing to a degree that I never ever, ever imagined. When I defined myself by what I did – when I said, 'oh, I do marketing consulting', that's all I could ever do and I could only sell consulting services to people who did marketing, and that's all I could do. And now that I'm talking about what I believe, the people who've taken an interest in my work, everything from military to government to big businesses to small businesses has gone through the roof. And there's been international interest and I was offered the opportunity to write a book and so I wrote a book. I go on TV now and I blog now.

And all of these things happened because what I learned is that people don't really care what you do, they care why you do it. Nobody cares that I do strategic marketing consulting. That's just me. People want to be inspired and so the reason they want me to come speak or talk to them or consult with them is not because they're interested in what I can do, but they're interested in what they can get. And what they want is to be inspired and anybody who believes in that, they take an interest in my work. It's completely expanded the interest, simply by me talking about why I do what I do, not just what I do.

OA: Simon, what are some of the things that our listeners could start to do to get in touch with their Why?

SS: So there's a few things you can do. One is take a look back at your own life and your own career, and I don't distinguish between your personal life and your career. To me, they're the same. You are who you are. The reason your employers like you or your customers like you or your colleagues like you is the same reason your friends like you; it's because it's you. And so anybody who says, 'oh, I'm different at work than I am at home', then in one of those two places, you're lying and, again, it's because it's you.

So the first thing to do is make a list of the things you love to do, whether they're professionally organised or whether personally organised. What are the things that you absolutely love that you would do it and not get paid for it, something that you're passionate about? Just make a list. Throughout your life all the jobs that you loved - not liked, loved. Or the places that you've lived that you've loved. Write those things down. And as you start to write them down, look for the patterns. You start to find some commonalities as to why those things are on your list, and that starts to give you a hint as to what you believe and why you do what you do.

Another little test that I like to use, which is a really fun one, is to go ask your friends. Think of your closest friends – the friends, again, who you love, the friends who they would be there for you any time of day or night, no matter what you needed, and you'd be there for them at the same levels. Think of those people and then go and ask them 'why are you my friend? Why are we friends?' And they'll look at you like you're crazy and they'll say, 'well, why are you asking me that? I don't know'. Well, of course they know, they're your close friends, but the reason they say I don't know is because the part of the brain that controls the feeling doesn't control language. So again, it's hard to put into words. But then you push them – don't let them off the hook and say 'no, no, what is it about me that's so special that we're so close?' And they'll stress and they'll struggle and say 'why are you asking me this? I don't know, I don't know' and they'll say 'I don't know, it's because you're fun, it's because you're loyal. It's because I can trust you' and 'well, that's the definition of a close friend. That's everybody. Why me? What is it about me that's so special to you in your life?'

And they will struggle and they will stress and don't let them off the hook and don't help them and eventually, at some point, they'll start talking about themselves. And they'll start saying 'I don't know, all I know is when I'm around you, I feel inspired. I don't even have to talk to you. I can just be in the same room as you and I feel inspired.' That's what my friends told me and that gives you a clue as to the value you have in their lives. And the value you have in their lives is the value you provide in the world. That is your Why.

OA: Simon, thank you for that. What are some of the roadblocks that typically prevent people from getting started and exploring their why?

SS: I think the things that prevent us are strangely basic. Again, I go back to this limbic brain. The part of the brain where our why exists is also the part of the brain that controls our feelings but it doesn't control language, where our neocortex which controls all of our rational and analytical thought, that's the part of the brain that controls the language. And so I think one of the reasons that we struggle to put our Why into words, or to even stay aware of it is, frankly, because it exists in the part of the brain that's hard to talk about things. It's easy to talk about the rational things. It's easy to talk about money and it's easy to talk about paying the bills, which is usually how many people justify the jobs that I have. 'Well, I've got to pay the bills. Well, it's a job. Well, it's a good living.'

So I think one of the reasons we don't talk about the Why is just, frankly, it's hard to talk about. It's a feeling we get. That's where gut feelings come from. We trust our guts more than we often trust the facts and figures. Very often, it'll happen where we say 'I know the facts and figures say that I should make this decision, but my gut feels differently, and if I trust my gut, I'll do this', even though it goes contrary to all the facts and figures. In other words, we trust that part of the brain. We trust our gut – there's no part of your stomach, by the way, that controls decision making, and the reason we say the decision *feels* right is because it exists in the part of the brain that controls feeling. So the more that we learn to trust our gut, the more that we learn to trust those feelings, the better our decisions get. And that's really the reason we don't do it is because it's hard to put into words. It's seemingly basic, it's just hard to talk about.

OA: So if we were to give some of our listeners some keys to unlock this roadblock, what would you suggest?

SS: Talking about it is one. Trying to put into words. As I said, doing that exercise with your friends, asking them why they're your friends is a great one. And if they say something that gives you goose bumps, then the odds are very high that they've just tapped in your Why. Goose bumps are an emotional reaction to something. It's a little sign that something has touched you. So the more you talk about it the better.

So for me, for example, once I learned that my Why is to inspire people to do the things that inspire them, I started talking about it and I started practising, and I wrote it on everything I own practically. You look at my computer and it has a little label on the top that says 'to inspire' and I had cufflinks made that say 'to inspire' on them, and on my desk I have a sort of a plaque that says 'inspire'. And I'm reminded of it every day. I'm surrounded by it because, again, it exists in the part of the brain that controls our feeling and our behaviour but not our language. So surrounding yourself with the pictures or the ideas – why do people put pictures of families all over their desk? It's because they love their families, and their families remind them why they love what they do and they want to get home to their families. So it's not just our

families, you can surround yourself in your home or in your office with the things that inspire you, with the people that inspire you, with the stories that inspire you, pictures. It's all very, very important stuff.

OA: Simon, I know that some of our listeners have been saying that their dream job is not out there. What would you say to them?

SS: I will quote Henry Ford. He said, 'If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right.' If you believe that your dream job is not out there, then you would be correct, it's not because you wouldn't know where to look or how to find it. But if you believe that your dream job IS out there but maybe it's not in the form that you think, then you'll have a much more open mind to find it. When I was a kid, I wanted to be an astronaut. That's what I wanted to be, I wanted to grow up and be an astronaut and somebody asked me recently why did you want to be an astronaut? And I thought about it for a second and I thought the reason I wanted to be an astronaut was because I wanted to have a perspective of the world, and see things and do things that very few people will ever get to see and do.

And now, if I look at my life right now, I never got into space but I can tell you I am an astronaut. I definitely see the world from a different perspective than everybody else and I'm definitely getting to do things and see things that a lot of people don't get to see and do. So I'm living my dream job – I just didn't go to space. So the question again is: what is your dream job if you know what it is, and why is it your dream job? Why did I want to be an astronaut? What did you want to do when you were a little kid and why did you want to do it? And the question is, you don't have to do that, you can do it in another form. Again, it doesn't matter what you do, what matters is why you do it. So the job can take many forms but the reason why that's your dream job will remain the same.

OA: Simon, some of our listeners are worried or fear making another career mistake. How could they practically use their Why to help them more confidently make a career change?

SS: Well, the clarity of Why is what provides confidence. Again, when all we do is make decisions based on what we want and what we hope to do, then it's almost like gambling. You say, 'oh, I've always wanted to work in that industry, I've wanted that job' and you go get the job and you hate it, it's not necessarily the industry or the job, it could be the company, the culture of the company. There's so many factors. So when you make What based decisions, it all sounds good and you do the pros and the cons list and it comes up well. It's all very rational but does it feel right? Are you drawn to it?

And so the fear and the confidence comes from the clarity or lack of clarity of Why. So the clearer you have a sense of why you do what you do, the next question is: does this job help me bring my Why to life? Does this job fulfil my Why? Does the culture of this company reflect what I believe? Are the people there people that I want to be with?

I'm amazed how many people take a good job when they're not really very fond of the people. I mean, we are people. That's who we are. We're social animals and I like to remind people that 100% of customers are people and 100% of employees are people, and if you don't understand people, you don't understand business. So if you don't get along at the job, then you won't enjoy it. So whenever I've interviewed at a job or I recommend to people when they interview at jobs, really get to know the people who you're going to be working with. Interview them as much as they're

interviewing you. Ask them what they like to do on the weekends. Would you like to hang out with them after work? And if the answer's yes, then the job is probably going to be a lot better one. If they're just smart, then that may or may not be a perfect job. Remember that you're going to be working with people every day and the better the people, the more likely you are to want to take the challenge that they have. If you don't like the people, you're not going to like whatever they do, even if you love the work.

OA: That's so true. Simon, for the listeners who are interested in finding out about more about their Why and what you do and teach, what would you say to them?

SS: There's a few options. I have a blog at www.simonsinek.com and I tend to write about examples and people and give ideas on how to live your Why, what it looks like when your Why comes to life. In addition, you can go to www.startwithwhy.com and very shortly, we'll be launching our Why University where you can learn your Why through our online course. And for those who want to learn more about Why, I wrote a book called *Start with Why*, which reveals much more about this pattern and this idea about the leaders and the companies and the people who wake up every single day inspired to do the things that inspire them.

OA: Simon, on behalf of myself and our listeners, thank you ever so much for giving up your time to share such incredible content with us. Thank you.

SS: It's my pleasure and my hope is that the more people that discover the power of Why, that they'll share it with other people, because I know that the more people that understand this concept of Why – our businesses and our lives and our careers are based on three pieces. What we do, how we do it and why we do it. And the problem is most of us are only even aware of two of those pieces. So we obsess with what we're doing and we obsess with how we're doing it, but we don't even remember why we do what we do. So when you're only operating on two pieces of a three piece puzzle, your career's inherently out of balance. So the goal is to find out all three pieces and live and operate based on all three pieces. So for those who do discover the Why, I hope that they share it with others because the more people that understand it, the better that this world gets. So thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to share it with your listeners.

OA: Thank you Simon.