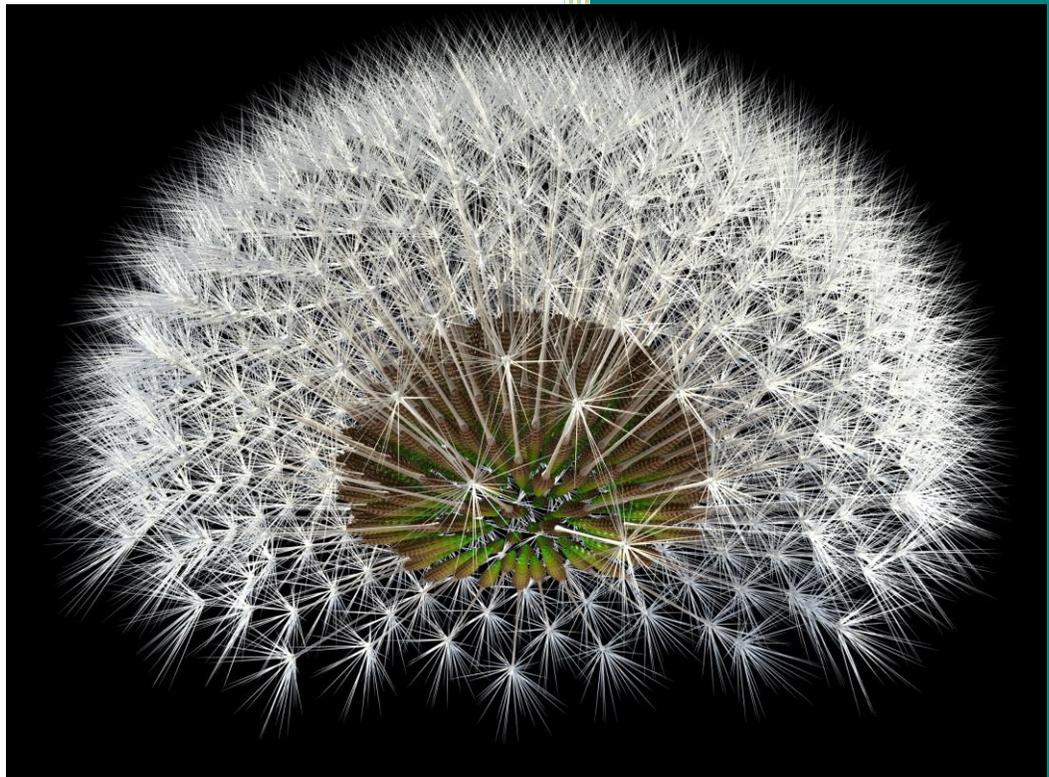


2017

DISCOVERING YOUR WHY AS A LEADER

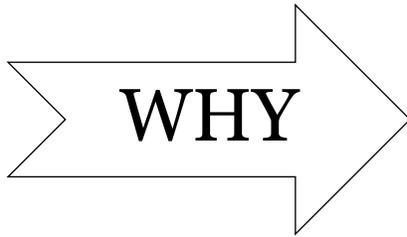


John Thalheimer

True Star Leadership™

9/1/2017

# DISCOVERING YOUR WHY



In Simon Sinek's 2009 Tedx Talk he discusses the importance of organizations and individuals defining their WHY. He suggests that people buy from you not because of what you do but

because of why you do it. He goes on to define why as a purpose, cause or belief. He uses the example of Apple whose "WHY" is "In everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo; we believe in thinking differently."

As I talk to my clients and participants in my seminars, they often wonder, "How do I and my business discover my WHY?" It isn't as easy as going to your local Walmart and pulling one of the shelves. It takes introspection and time to find what is important to you.

To discover our WHY, we cannot rely on logic or reason alone, because our WHY is shaped within the Limbic System where our emotions, memory, learning, and motivation exists or as Sinek explains the part of the brain which allows us to make the right decisions.

## **So how do we discover our WHY?**

Before I answer that let's go back to a time when humans gathered around an open fire and told stories. The storyteller enchanted the villagers by weaving tales of love and war, tragedy and comedy, and real and fantasy. The storyteller knew instinctively that those stories that best tapped into the emotions of the villagers were best remembered.



## DISCOVERING YOUR WHY

When we are defining our WHY, we want it to have the same reaction as those stories of yesteryear. We want it to tap into the emotions of our listeners, whether they are coworkers, customers or investors.

**One way to discover our WHY is to tell our story.** However, instead of starting in the beginning, it is best to write the last page first. Use the questions below to write the last page of your story.

- What did you accomplish?
- What cost (riches, relationships, recognition, or rewards) were you willing to sacrifice?
- At the end of the story, who stands with you?
- What was the greatest lesson you learned?
- What major plot twist changed your life?
- What challenges did you overcome?
- How did you leave the world the better place?
- Paint the scene – where are you at the end of the story?
- What conflict did you triumph over?
- What drove you to achieve his or her dreams?

After you finish answering the questions you should have a better understanding of what you want to accomplish, how you will do it and why it is important for it to happen.

For instance, when I did this exercise it looked like this.

**MY WHY:** Great Leaders Make Organizations Better.

**MY HOW:** Providing the necessary guidance and tools to leaders.

# DISCOVERING YOUR WHY

**MY WHAT:** Executive Coaching, Leadership Workshops, Writing, Keynote Speaking

Your turn, what is your WHY: and how does it relate with your HOW and your WHAT.

**MY WHY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MY HOW:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MY WHAT:** \_\_\_\_\_

In doing my research, about defining our WHY, I came across this quote.

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***Purpose is a definitive statement about the difference you are trying to make in the world.***

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Does your WHY fit with in this above definition?

I recently read a book called, "*Why Should I Choose You? (In Seven Words or Less).*"

It asks us to define our purpose

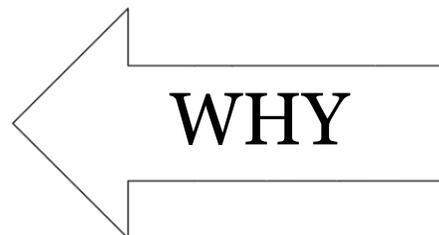
differentiator in seven words. The authors,

Chamandy and Aber, believe that by forcing their clients to identify their

purpose differentiator within seven words, it makes them focus on what is

the most important to them. One example they used in the book was VHA

Home Health Care's core proposition "More Independence." It not only



## DISCOVERING YOUR WHY

works for their aging population but also works for their frontline employees giving them the freedom to make decisions and innovate.

When I finished reading the book, I attempted to do this for my business. And came up with the following: **A Better Guide to Leadership**. I don't think it is perfect and I probably need to continue working on it but it does complement my WHY: **Great Leaders Make Organizations Better**.

**It is your turn now, what is your purpose differentiator and can you write it in seven words or less.**

My Purpose Differentiator is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



As The Leadership Guide, I help small business owners, entrepreneurs, corporate executives and first-time managers achieve better business results through coaching. One of the mistakes I find most leaders make is they try to go it alone. This behavior is due to many factors including believing they have no choice (*they do*), trying to prove their worth (*they won't*) and not knowing guidance is available (*it is*).

When we ask for guidance, we admit to ourselves that we want to get better. And for my clients, this can be very liberating. In my coaching, I specialize in improving successful leaders' behaviors so that they can achieve better

## DISCOVERING YOUR WHY

business results. When a client is willing to grow, I know that they will reach their goal or dream.

Are you ready to become a Great Leader?

Contact me at [John@Johnthalheimer.com](mailto:John@Johnthalheimer.com)

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# Leaders aren't born, they are made.

And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve our goal.

Vince Lombardi

