

PORTFOLIO / PENGUIN

START WITH WHY

Simon Sinek is leading a movement to inspire people to do what inspires them.

With a bold goal to build a world in which the vast majority of people go home every day feeling fulfilled by their work, he is invited to share the concept of WHY with a dizzying array of organizations. From members of Congress to foreign ambassadors, from small businesses to corporations Microsoft and Wal-Mart, from Hollywood to NASA to the Pentagon, those who want to inspire people want to learn about the WHY. His TEDx Talk about WHY is one of the top twenty most viewed talks on [TED.com](https://www.ted.com).

Sinek is also an adjunct staff member of the RAND Corporation, teaches graduate level strategic communications at Columbia University, and is active in the arts and not-for-profit world. When not living in hotels, he lives in New York City.

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For Victoria,
who finds good ideas
and makes them great

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

Whether individuals or organizations, 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.

This is a book for those who want to inspire others and
for those who want to find someone to inspire them.

PREFACE

THE POWER OF WHY

When I first discovered this thing called the WHY, it came at a time in my life when I needed it. It wasn't an academic or intellectual pursuit; I had fallen out of love with my work and found myself in a very dark place. There was nothing wrong with the quality of my work or my job, per se; it was the enjoyment I had for that work that I'd lost. By all superficial measurements, I should have been happy. I made a good living. I worked with great clients. The problem was, I didn't feel it. I was no longer fulfilled by my work and I needed to find a way to rekindle my passion.

The discovery of WHY completely changed my view of the world and discovering my own WHY restored my passion to a degree multiple times greater than at any other time in my life. It was such a simple, powerful, and actionable idea, that I shared it with my friends. That's what we do when we find something of value, we share it with the people we love. Inspired, my friends started making big life changes. In turn, they invited me to share this idea with their friends, the people they loved. And so the idea started to spread.

It was at this point I decided to turn myself into the guinea pig. It didn't seem right that I would share or promote a concept that I didn't practice myself. So I was going to practice it as wholly as I could. The only reason I am where I am today, this representative of WHY, is for one reason and one reason only: because of other people.

I have no publicist. I have had only very little national press coverage. Yet the concept of WHY is spreading far and wide because it resonates with people on such a visceral level that they share it with those they love and care about. That I was given the opportunity to write a book about the concept has allowed the depth idea to spread without me. The TEDx Talk I gave that was posted on ted.com continues to spread far and wide not because of any social media strategy. It spreads because this message is inherently optimistic. It is inherently human. And those who believe in it share it.

The more organizations and people who learn to also start with WHY, the more people there will be who wake up feeling fulfilled by the work they do. And that's about the best reason I can think of to continue sharing this idea.

Inspire on!

Simon Sinek
New York

July 28, 2011

INTRODUCTION

WHY START WITH WHY?

This book is about a naturally occurring pattern, a way of thinking, acting and communicating that gives some leaders the ability to inspire those around them. Although these “natural-born leaders” may have come into the world with a predisposition to inspire, the ability is not reserved for them exclusively. We can all learn this pattern. With a little discipline, any leader or organization can inspire others, both inside and outside their organization, to help advance their ideas and their vision. We can all learn to lead.

The goal of this book is not simply to try to fix the things that aren’t working. Rather, I wrote this book as a guide to focus on and amplify the things that do work. I do not aim to upset the solutions offered by others. Most of the answers we get, when based on sound evidence, are perfectly valid. However, if we’re starting with the wrong questions, if we don’t understand the cause, then even the right answers will always steer us wrong . . . eventually. The truth, you see, is always revealed . . . eventually.

The stories that follow are of those individuals and organizations that naturally embody this pattern. They are the ones that start with Why.