



Values Based Leadership

Developing Inspirational Leaders

Focussing on the “Why”

by John Frost

I have shared Simon Sinek’s Ted Talk, [How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#), with many leaders over recent years. In most cases it has had a profound impact on the way many of them think about their role as leaders and what they pay attention to when leading teams. The talk, which has now had 17.2 million views, focuses on how some leaders and organisations connect people, employees and clients in a different way to others. By codifying this he discovered the “Golden Circle”:

Why?

Do you have a clear understanding of *why* you do what you do?

What is your team’s purpose and why does your team exist?

How will your team add value and contribute to society as a whole (not just to shareholder value)?

How?

How will you go about doing what you do?

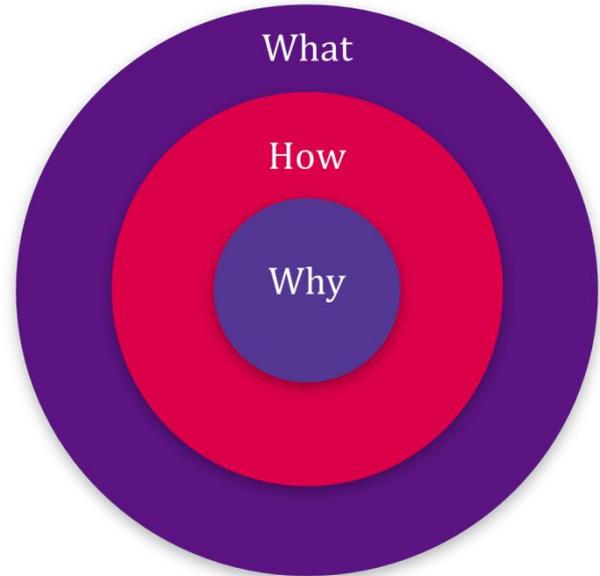
How do you use the company values as a guide to decision making?

How do you want to be remembered as a team and what principles and values does that imply for you?

What?

What are the products and services that reflect your *why* and *how*?

How can you use this focus to connect your people to what you expect of them each day and engage them in the organisation and its vision?



When you work in this order, why, how and then what, you will have a significant impact on the way that the team members connect with each other and with you and a leader.

In the video mentioned above, Simon Sinek specifically notes that organisations like Apple understand and articulate their “why” in a meaningful way. As a result, they have a deeper and more profound connection with employees and clients than those organisations who start with and focus on the “what” (the products and services they deliver, the USP, KPI’s and some measure of profitability).

While Simon Sinek focuses on organisations in the video, we can also think about the golden circle within a team context. I am



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fortunate enough to work with teams from many different cultures in different parts of the world, and, almost without exception, when we first start working together the teams' focus is on *what* they do rather than *why* they do it. Of course the "what" cannot be ignored. Output and results are how most teams are measured, an indication to the larger organisation of a team's success. However, more and more I notice that teams and team leaders are becoming increasingly dis-engaged. Often there is a strong focus on the "what" especially when it overshadows the "why" (the purpose of the team). Sinek himself describes purpose

in this way; "why do you get out of bed in the morning and why should anybody care?"

So, where do you spend your time and energy? Is it on driving at the "what", the KPI's the P&L, the team's output? If so, what changes could you make to your approach so that you also use your team's energy to create a "why" and the "how" that connects and engages them in a culture that routinely delivers outstanding results? Because, here's the good news, more often than not, when you get the "why" and the "how" right the results just come naturally!