

TED Talks Worth Talking About | Simon Sinek on How Great Leaders Inspire Action

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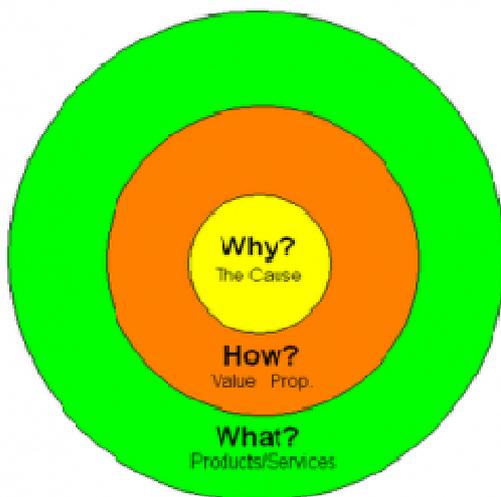
Also his book, [Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action](#).



So, why does Apple, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Wright Brothers inspire when there are so many others doing the same thing? There's something else at play here.

There's a pattern. All the great inspiring leaders think, act, and communicate the exact same way, and it is the complete opposite to everyone else. It's probably the world's simplest idea. I call it the Golden Circle.

Golden Circle Concept



This little idea explains why some organizations and some leaders inspire where others aren't. Let me define the terms.

Everyone on the planet knows what they do. Some know how. But very few know "why." By "why," I don't mean a "profit." That's a result, and it's always been a result. By "why," I mean "cause," or "belief," or "purpose." Why do you get out of bed in the morning, and why should anyone care.

Most communicate from the outside in. This makes sense. We go from the clearest thing to the fuzziest thing. But great leaders, regardless of their size and industry all think, act, and communicate from the inside out.

People don't buy "what" you do, they buy "why" you do it.

The goal is not to do business with everyone who needs what you have, the goal is to do business with people who believe what you believe.

All of this grounded in the tenets of biology. Not psychology, *biology*. If you look at a cross-section of a brain top down, you find three major components that correlate perfectly with the Golden Circle. Our **neo-cortex** corresponds with the “**what**” level, rational, analytical, etc.. The middle two make up our “limbic” brains, “feelings of trust, loyalty, behavior, decision making, and **it has no capacity for language.**” In other words, when we communicate from the outside in, yes people are able to understand, it just doesn’t drive behavior. When we communicate from the inside out, we’re talking directly to the part of the brain that controls behavior, and then we allow people to rationalize it with the tangible things we say and do. This is where gut decisions come from. “**It just doesn’t feel right.**” Sometimes we’ll say, “leading with your heart, or leading with your soul.”

If *you* don’t know why you do what you do, how will you get others to buy what you do?

The goal is not to hire people to need a job, but to hire people who believe what you believe. If you hire people because they can do a job, they’ll work for your money. If you hire people who believe what you believe, they’ll work for you with blood, sweat, and tears.

Ever heard of [Samuel Pierpont Langley](#)? Given \$50k, well-connected, hired the best minds money can find, and the market conditions were fantastic, and the NYTimes followed him around everywhere. Why haven’t we heard of him? A few hundred miles away, Orville and Wilbur Wright had no money, paid for their dream out of the proceeds from their bicycle shop, not a single person on their team had a college education, including the Wright brothers, and the NYTimes followed them around nowhere. The difference? The Wright Brothers were driven by a belief that if they could figure out this flying machine, it could change the course of the world.

Eventually, December 17, 1903, the Wright Brothers took flight, and no one was there to witness it. We found out about it days later. Further proof that Langley was motivated by the wrong thing, the day the Wright Brothers took flight, he quit.

Talk about what you believe, so you will attract those who believe what you believe.

Law of Diffusion of Innovation

2-3% of our population are innovators

13.5% are early adopters

34% are early majority

34% are late majority

16 % are laggards (the only reason why these people buy touch tone is ‘cause you can’t buy rotary phones anymore!)

The law tells us that you cannot have market success until you reach the tipping point, between 15-18%, and then the system tips. The early majority will not try something unless someone else has tried it first. Innovators and early adopters are comfortable making gut decisions, trusting what you believe about the world.

People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it, and what you do simply serves as the proof of what you believe. How they behave, then, proves what **they** believe about the world.

Famous failure: **Tivo**. A household name, and even a cultural verb, but they've never made money. Why? They told us what they had. A device that pauses live TV, skips commercials, etc. What if they had said, "If you're the kind of person that likes to have total control over every aspect of your life, do we have a product for you"?

Famous success: **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** Summer of 1963, 250,000 people showed up for his speech at the Lincoln Memorial. He didn't go around telling people what needed to change, he went around telling people what he believed. How many people showed up for him? Zero. They all showed up for *themselves*. It's what *they believed* about America that got them to show up. Dr. King believed in two types of laws in the world, the laws of man, and the laws of the higher authority. And until the laws of man match the laws of the higher authority will we never live in a just world. By the way, **he gave the "I have a dream speech," not the "I have a plan" speech.**

There are leaders, and then there are those who lead. Leaders hold a position of power, or authority. But those who lead, *inspire* us. We follow those who lead, not because we *have* to, but because we *want* to. We follow, not for them, but for ourselves. It's those that start with "why" that have the ability to inspire those around them, or find others who inspire them.

— VIA —

Fantastic.

The Purpose-Driven Life? The Great Commission, and the Great Commandment? Love? This all sounds familiar. These principles resonate. I was mostly struck with the biology, that the limbic areas of the brain *have no language*. Yet, somehow, language is still the vehicle for this kind of communication. While this is quite an art, to discover, define, and delineate the "why," I believe it is the most challenging, difficult, and elusive element of a person's life, or an organization's identity. This is an art, but it's really hard. Perhaps why so few do this so well. But if it can be done, it can really be powerful, not just for transforming the way a company exists, but for why humanity exists.

Reminds me of [Visioneering](#) by Andy Stanley.

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