

# START

HOW GREAT LEADERS INSPIRE  
EVERYONE TO TAKE ACTION

# WITH

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# WHY

MORE THAN  
ONE MILLION  
COPIES SOLD

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## PREFACE

# THE POWER OF WHY

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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 of the 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?

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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.

# PART I

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## A WORLD THAT DOESN'T START WITH WHY

# 2

## CARROTS AND STICKS

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### Manipulation vs. Inspiration

There's barely a product or service on the market today that customers can't buy from someone else for about the same price, about the same quality, about the same level of service and about the same features. If you truly have a first-mover's advantage, it's probably lost in a matter of months. If you offer something truly novel, someone else will soon come up with something similar and maybe even better.

But if you ask most businesses why their customers are their customers, most will tell you it's because of superior quality, features, price or service. In other words, most companies have no clue why their customers are their customers. This is a fascinating realization. If companies don't know why their customers are their customers, odds are good that they don't know why their employees are their employees either.

If most companies don't really know why their customers are their customers or why their employees are their employees, then how do they know how to attract more employees and encourage loyalty among those they already have? The reality is, most businesses today are making decisions based on a set of incomplete or,