

Inspiring the best version of you. Part 2

Know your why

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In this LinkedIn paper, I continue a conversation about inspiring the best version of you and in turn inspiring the best in your people. In my March post, I discussed the use of the personal profile and particularly the process of understanding personal motivators to ensure alignment with job fit and future development. Building on the personal profile and understanding what gets you out of bed in the morning and aligning that to your role, career objectives, development and personal growth will significantly improve your chances of realising your career aspirations and just as importantly the journey to get you there will be that much more enjoyable. Fundamentally this is about focussing on your strengths.

If you want to build a high-performance culture where great results are “come to work” and achieving the impossible becomes a habit, then mastering personal motivation will not be enough. The secret sauce is about connecting a talented group of individuals to a team vision and a collective why. Now I would suggest you grab some popcorn because today we are going on a TED tour. Now you may be tempted to kick out now as reading this article will take you 5 minutes, then watching all the TED talks will consume another 35-40 minutes but if you are truly interested in people, high performance teams and motivation, I promise it will be worth your while.

Who hasn't seen Simon Sinek's famous TED talk Start with Why? If you haven't it is compulsory viewing for any aspiring leader that would like to lead an inspired high performance team. Team's that seem to “find a way” despite the challenges. These teams have a common vision that resonates with their personal motivators and binds them through thick and thin. The why also resonates more strongly when it connects with a higher purpose that has an element of selflessness and is intrinsically motivated. If you would like more evidence, check out Dan Pink's RED Talk “The Puzzle of Motivation.” Dan Pink argues that

“there is a mismatch between what science knows and what business does and what worries me as we stand here in the rubble of the economic collapse is that too many organisations are making their decisions, their policies about talent and people based on assumptions that are outdated, unexamined and rooted more in folklore than in science, and if we really want to get out of this economic mess and if we really want high performance on those definitional tasks of the 21st century, the solution is not to do more of the wrong things, to entice people with a sweeter carrot, or threaten them with a sharper stick. We need a whole new approach. The good news about all this is that scientists that have been studying motivation have given us this new approach. It’s an approach built much more around intrinsic motivation. Around the desire to do things because they matter, because we like it, because they’re interesting, because they’re part of something important.”

Dan Pink goes on to say that these intrinsic motivations “can be summed up by Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose.

- **Autonomy:** The urge to direct our own lives.
- **Mastery:** The desire to get better and better at something that matters.
- **Purpose:** The yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.”

If you require more proof, then I suggest you read “Legacy” by James Kerr. James Kerr makes a study of the most successful sporting team of all time, the New Zealand All Blacks. As I said in my November post this is one of the best business texts I have read. James Kerr provides a unique insight into how the All Blacks went from a 75% winning record to 86%. Every time I read this book I pick up something new. Whilst there are 15 key principles in this book many are consistent with the above. In the context of a high-performance team like the All Blacks “Autonomy” expresses itself as knowing my job and having the trust of the team to “play what is in front of me” and having the ability to make decisions very quickly under pressure and trust your intuition. “Mastery” is about creating an environment of constant learning and coaches and leaders that do not tell, but take a Socratic approach and ask questions allowing players to find a way and work it out for them self thus

building problem solving skills and confidence. “Purpose” for the All Blacks is about simply “been a caretaker for the jersey and leaving the jersey in a better place.”

Do you want to get inspired and have some fun at the same time? Here’s what it looks, feels and sounds like when you connect with the why. Check out Michael Jr: Know Your Why. This is the last popcorn moment, I promise.

“When you know you’re why you’re what has more impact, because you’re walking in, or toward your purpose.” Michael Jr.

If you watched all the TED’s and you made it through, well played!

I hope you enjoyed it and I would love to start a conversation and hear your thoughts and feedback.