

Know your why

Activity: Why is it difficult to persuade someone to change?

Listening to “This American Life,” and thinking of your own experiences, why is so difficult to change someone’s opinion?

Challenges to persuasion:

- Personal anxiety
- Interpersonal differences
- Fractured political context
- The ‘ask’ typically associated

Simon Sinek’s Framework: The Golden Circle

WHAT

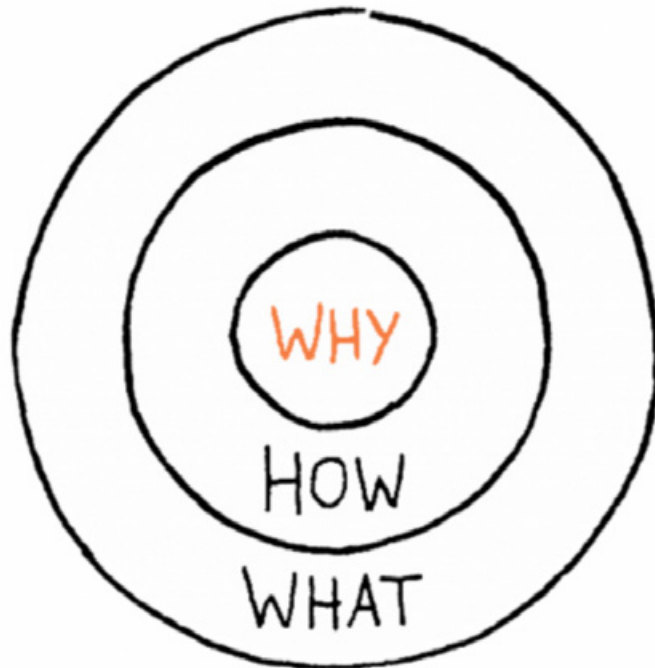
Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services

HOW

Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

WHY

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That’s a result. WHY is a purpose, cause or belief. It’s the very reason your organization exists.



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Critical incidents: “Events in your life that you recall being an important moment for you in clarifying what you believe.”
—Stephen Brookfield

Activity: A framework to knowing your why

Step 1: Your critical incident

- When was the first time you remember standing up for something you believe in?
- When was the first time you saw something unjust?
- When do you remember feeling pride in something you worked hard for?

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Step 2: Root values

- Looking at your critical incident, what are the root values that you believe in?

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Step 3: Why is this important to you?

- Practice sharing your critical incident, as well as the root values that underlie it.
- How can you share this in a way that resonates deeply for **others**?

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Activity: Synthesis

What changes will you make in conversations if you are trying to identify someone else’s why?

What changes will you make in conversations if you are trying to communicate your why?

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Resource #1: Values List [\(original source\)](#)

Use this list of values to inform your critical incident—which values resonate with your critical incident?

Abundance	Fairness	Safety
Acceptance	Family	Security
Accountability	Friendships	Service
Achievement	Flexibility	Spirituality
Advancement	Freedom	Stability
Adventure	Fun	Peace
Advocacy	Generosity	Perfection
Ambition	Grace	Playfulness
Appreciation	Growth	Popularity
Attractiveness	Flexibility	Power
Autonomy	Happiness	Preparedness
Balance	Health	Proactivity
Being the Best	Honesty	Professionalism
Benevolence	Humility	Punctuality
Boldness	Humor	Recognition
Brilliance	Inclusiveness	Relationships
Calmness	Independence	Reliability
Caring	Individuality	Resilience
Challenge	Innovation	Resourcefulness
Charity	Inspiration	Responsibility
Cheerfulness	Intelligence	Responsiveness
Cleverness	Intuition	Security
Community	Joy	Self-Control
Commitment	Kindness	Selflessness
Compassion	Knowledge	Simplicity
Cooperation	Leadership	Stability
Collaboration	Learning	Success
Consistency	Love	Teamwork
Contribution	Loyalty	Thankfulness
Creativity	Making a Difference	Thoughtfulness
Credibility	Mindfulness	Traditionalism
Curiosity	Motivation	Trustworthiness
Daring	Optimism	Understanding
Decisiveness	Open-Mindedness	Uniqueness
Dedication	Originality	Usefulness
Dependability	Passion	Versatility
Diversity	Performance	Vision
Empathy	Personal Development	Warmth
Encouragement	Proactive	Wealth
Enthusiasm	Professionalism	Well-Being
Ethics	Quality	Wisdom
Excellence	Recognition	Zeal
Expressiveness	Risk Taking	

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Writing your personal story

As an organizer, you will be in direct contact with elected officials, constituents, community leaders, and volunteers with whom you will need to form a personal connection—and quickly. You will need to connect your personal story to the issue you care about and the person you’re asking to take action on the issue, too. Your story will help others in the organization feel connected to you and willing to work with you. Stories build relationships, which is essential to effective organizing.

For this exercise, think of one issue you care about and the audience you want to take action with you on that issue. Write it below to help focus your personal story:

YOUR ISSUE

YOUR AUDIENCE

Using the challenge, choice, outcome, ask framework, begin writing a personal story about the issue you care about with the audience you identified above. Remember: personal stories are short (no more than 2 minutes), focus on connecting on a shared value, and inspire action.

CHALLENGE

What is your central reason for taking action?

CHOICE

What did you do to confront your challenge?

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OUTCOME

What happened next as a result of your choice?

ASK

How can your audience join you to become part of the story?

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