

Find Your “Why” to Keep You Motivated

After the excitement of a new year and all the changes it brings starts to wear off, we can become a little lacklustre in our enthusiasm for work. Finding your “why” helps you avoid the rut, giving you clarity, purpose and direction... and is often just what you need when the going gets a little tougher, repetition sets in and the holidays still seem a long way off!

Aside from helping us amidst the rhythms of the school and work year, finding your why is an important step to help you set goals, take risks, maintain motivation and move forward – personally AND professionally.

So, how DO you find your “why”? Well, it requires a bit of work – part of its beauty and equally its challenge is that your “why” can be very different to that of others, even close colleagues who work in the same or similar roles to you. Here’s some tips on how you can find yours:

He who has a why can endure any how.

1. Go within, be quiet with yourself.
2. Think about the times when you are your best self – what are you doing and thinking and feeling in these moments?
3. Ask yourself: what am I innately good at?
4. Identify where you most add value.

Nietzsche

Another strategy to find your “why” is one designed by Simon Sinek, using a scaffolded sentence. He suggests you identify how you want to contribute and what kind of impact you wish to make using the formula:

I want to _____ [contribution] so that _____ [impact].
eg I want to **inspire children** so that they **love learning**.

Your “why” doesn’t need to be complex or groundbreakingly original, it just needs to be authentic and meaningful to YOU. Aligning it with non-tangible rewards, ie personal, internal and/or intrinsic measures of success will also ensure your “why” continues to resonate and motivate. Sometimes, your “why” is simply about showing up and being present.

Once you find your “why”, you don’t necessarily have to change anything. This Zen proverb offers a useful approach to how to be “be” after you’ve found your “why” – and what you need to “do” next.

Before enlightenment – chop wood, carry water.

After enlightenment – chop wood, carry water.

Simply making the commitment to finding your “why” and embracing it in your day-to-day life is often enough. Take the time to try it out today.

Key points

Avoid the rut.

Gain clarity, purpose and direction.

Maintain motivation.

Move forward professionally and personally.

Take the time to go within – don’t just “copy” your colleagues’ “why”.

Use your “why” to boost your confidence and remind you that the work you are doing is important and worthy – both to you and others.

Change doesn’t need to be outwardly evident for it to take place or be successful.

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