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YOUR WHY

INTRODUCTION

In this session, we address your why. You may know this concept of “why” by other names: Life purpose or meaning. No matter what you call it, the questions we ask ourselves to discover our why, our life purpose, are the same:

- “Why am I here?”
- “Why do I want to be healthy?”
- “Why do I do what I do?”

Regardless of what you call it, this is the thing that provides the driving force for your life. Think of it as your internal GPS.

It might be useful to share my own WHY by answering the question: Why I am doing this?

My answer: Learning, practicing, and passing on these skills saved my daughter’s life, changed my life and my entire family’s life and I want to share the teachings with you because I believe they will change your life as well! So that’s my life purpose, at least for now. I sum up my WHY? In the statement “passing on what I have learned and applied over the past 10 years to help others help themselves and live their best possible life”.

When you know your WHY, things generally make sense. However, the process of finding your WHY can be challenging. Even when you’re aware of your WHY, keeping it front and center can create a different type of challenge. It’s like turning the sound off on your GPS.

The Japanese call it IKIGAI – IKIGAI is the intersection of the Venn diagram that is created when what you love, what you are good at, what you can be paid for, and what the world needs, all come together. This is an incredibly important definition.



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The primary benefit to knowing and living by your WHY is that you will be happier and healthier. In fact, you are likely to live up to 7 years longer than if you didn't know and live by your WHY.

In this module, you will have the opportunity to learn 3 “discovering your WHY” techniques. It will only take 3 minutes to learn each one, so try them all and determine which one works best for you! I have found that the exercises work better when you use more than one process. The 3 techniques are:

- VVMS, Values, Vision, Mission Statement
- Q&A with your gut
- Do you resonate? [with your org's “WHY”?]

THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE PURPOSE

Research shows that people who know their “WHY” or life purpose:

- Spend less time in the hospital
- Have stronger immune systems
- Have a lower risk of many chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure and stroke
- And for older adults who develop Alzheimer's, those with an established WHY have a slower decline.

The mechanism which allows your “WHY” to make a positive contribution to your life and health is the enteric nervous system, or the brain that resides in your gut. There are 100 million neurons and every class of neurotransmitter in your gut used to process external stimuli and send signals to your brain. One function of the enteric nervous system is to allow you to act in tandem with your gut feelings. People who act consistently with their gut, or their intuition, are more likely utilizing their WHY or life purpose more than those who don't follow their gut.

HOW TO PRACTICE THESE LIFE PURPOSE SKILLS

A typical WHY session may last anywhere from just a few minutes to several hours. You do not need to identify your full and final “WHY” today, or even tomorrow. Simply committing to the exploration process is key. You may identify the essence of your WHY in a short period of time, but give yourself the grace and time you need to get to your final WHY statement. If you are already crystal clear about your life purpose, then use these exercises to validate your WHY and strengthen your resolve even more. If this is the first time you are formally addressing your WHY, then enjoy the journey!

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There are many exercises to help uncover, clarify, and strengthen your WHY. I have chosen three research-backed practices that have worked for me, my clients, and my patients.

PRACTICE 1: VVMS

The formula for your WHY is the following:

My Values + My Vision + My Mission = My WHY

- VALUES are your WHAT? In other words, what do you value?
- VISION is your WHERE? In other words, where are you going?
- Mission is your HOW? In other words, how will you get there?

WHAT + WHERE + HOW = WHY



I can share my own formula to demonstrate the details in this formula.

WHAT: My Values are lifelong learning, a high vibe lifestyle, collaboration, and innovation.

WHERE: My Vision is to make health available to everyone.

HOW: My Mission is to improve the health of organizations by improving the health of every member of the organization. I will do this using lifelong learning, a high vibe lifestyle, collaboration, and innovation.

WHY: I am here to pass on what I have learned and help others help themselves.

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Here are the questions you need to answer in order to create your own WHY formula:

- What do I believe in? What are my values?
- Where am I going? Where do I see myself in the future?
- How am I going to get to that future?



If you already know your WHY, ask yourself:

- Is it consistent with what I value and see as the vision and mission for my life?
- If not, how can I align my values, vision, and mission with my WHY?

If you do not know your WHY, start with by identifying your values, your vision for yourself, and your mission. Your mission, or how you are going to get to your future, is generally just a statement about how you will get to your imagined future using your values.

Because mission is derived from vision and values, the essence of your WHY are your values and your vision. So, if you haven't already responded when I asked the questions initially, respond now to these 2 questions:

- What do I believe in?
- In other words, What are my values?
- Second, where am I going? Where do I see myself in the future

If you are not there yet, don't worry! Move on to exercise 2. The next exercise will help you validate or go deeper with your WHY if you already know it. If not, it will help you with further exploration. Enjoy this process as it unfolds! It is a once in a lifetime experience!

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PRACTICE 2: Q&A WITH YOUR GUT

- Questioning is the art of learning.
- Asking questions leads to innovation.
- Asking questions of yourself helps you to gain insight and make decisions.
- Asking better questions generates better answers.



I am going to read 6 questions that can help you go deeper into yourself to come up with the components for your WHY formula. Write down whatever comes to mind. This process of answering without thinking is designed to allow you to access your gut or your intuition. Once you are finished, you can go back and see what came from your gut. This is the raw material of your WHY formula.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Who or what matters most to me?
- What does success look like to me?
- What impact do I want to have on others?
- What are my talents, what am I really good at doing?
- When my life is ideal, I am....
- What makes me forget to eat, i.e. puts me “in the flow” (passion)?

MY WHY:

Now you have your material to move forward with your life purpose! At the very least, you have more information about yourself!

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PRACTICE 3: DO YOU RESONATE?

This exercise allows you to look at and use the WHY formula of the organization you work for as a way to validate your own WHY formula. If you do not already know it, you will need to Find your organization's VVMS on the internet or wherever you can access it within the organization.

- For each statement, you will ask yourself whether or not you agree with the statement. In other words: Are these beliefs and actions that you can get behind?
- If yes, then, on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being not excited at all and 10 being the most excited you can be, you will rate how you feel about the Values, Vision, and Mission.
- Finally, you will ask yourself: How can my organization's VVMS fit with my own VVMS? (Or, if you are still in the process of creating your WVMW, at least what you know so far about your VVMS).

First, let's do an example using Google's vision, values, and mission statements.

EXAMPLE: Google

- **Vision:** *"to provide access to the world's information in one click."* (When you do this with your own organization's vision, you will rate on a scale of 1-10 how excited you are about the vision. The same for values and mission. Please also write any other notes you about your feelings).
- **Mission:** *"to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."*
- **Values:** *"Creating opportunity for everyone: We believe everyone deserves the chance to learn, succeed, and be heard."*
- **Purpose:** To make information available to everyone. Google doesn't have a formal purpose statement, but you can surmise their purpose from their vision, mission and values.



Now do this for your own company's values, vision and mission, and if they have one, purpose statements.

How can you use this exercise to help you deepen your own WHY formula? (Values + Vision + Mission = Purpose).

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NOTES