

Why?

As coaches we are trained to ask questions. As leaders and managers it feels like we have been programmed to give answers. Perhaps leaders and managers could shift their thinking slightly to tell less and ask more. There are so many questions we can ask but the one I would like to focus on in this article is the question, **“Why?”**

If you have ever spent any time around a three or four year old you may observe that they know how to ask this question. In fact they may follow every answer to a “why” question with the question “why? Maybe it is before the tenth “why” that is asked that they begin their training on not asking “why”. By the time we get to be adults we have learned to suppress the “why” and just accept the way it is.

We have heard leaders say that they are tired of the younger generation needing to know why they need to do something, they should just do it. Beyond being trained to not ask “why” we are now training others to not ask “why”. Maybe it is because we don’t want to take the time to answer, maybe it is because we don’t know the answer; maybe it is because keeping them in the dark makes us feel more powerful. Maybe we don’t even know why we don’t want to tell them why.

When we coach someone who has just lost a job, an obvious question that needs to be asked is “Why?”

In most cases the first answer to the question has something to do with the people who did the firing. It often has something to do with their judgment, their character, or their unfairness. It might have something to do with conditions that are beyond anyone’s control like the economy or an organization’s decision to close something down. When a person gets beyond the defensiveness perhaps the why can be attributed to some mistakes the person made, maybe there was some complacency, maybe they were in a job they should never have been in, or maybe they didn’t even like the job they had.

When it comes to living an extraordinary life or being an extraordinary leader the ability to ask the “why” questions makes a big difference. We often get caught up in the “what” and the “how”. When we tell people this is what we do and this is how we do it, they might find it interesting. When they understand the why it connects to emotion and inspiration.

I recently talked to a former club manager who is getting into the management of facilities for senior citizens. They build and maintain residences that are affordable, clean and compassionate. That is the “what” and the “how”. They do it because they believe they can change way seniors are viewed in North American Culture. That is the “why”.

Here are some “why” questions that you might consider:

Why did you get into this business?
Why have you stayed in it all this time?

Why do you believe what you believe?
Why do you tolerate what you tolerate?
Why do you continue to do things that aren't working for you?
Why do you feel upset with me for asking these questions?
Why would it make sense to consider that it might be the right time to answer them?
Why do you have the specific team that you work with?
Why is it that you work? Do you work to make money to support your life or does your life support your work?
Why don't you make more time for the things you love to do in life?
Why do we spend more time designing a holiday or a business plan than we do designing our own life?
Why are we reluctant to ask "why"?
Why don't we help our people connect to a compelling "why"?
Why are you living a life where your needs are not met?

Those might be enough questions to get you started on this process. Why not give your coach a call when you have the answers and are ready to ask more "why" questions. When we as human beings or we as organizations know our purpose we save a lot of wasted effort and energy and choose our actions in a more focused way. If we have a limited amount of time to get to where we want to go, why would we want to waste energy, time and actions getting there?

If you have big goals, big dreams and desires, perhaps this article has helped to answer the question, "why would I want to use a coach to help me get there"? If it has, please use the toll free coaching line, 1-866-822-3481 to get started.