

Eastern Illinois University

From the Selected Works of Lauri J. DeRuiter-Willems

2014

Examining the Why: The relevance of our courses

Lauri J. DeRuiter-Willems, *Eastern Illinois University*

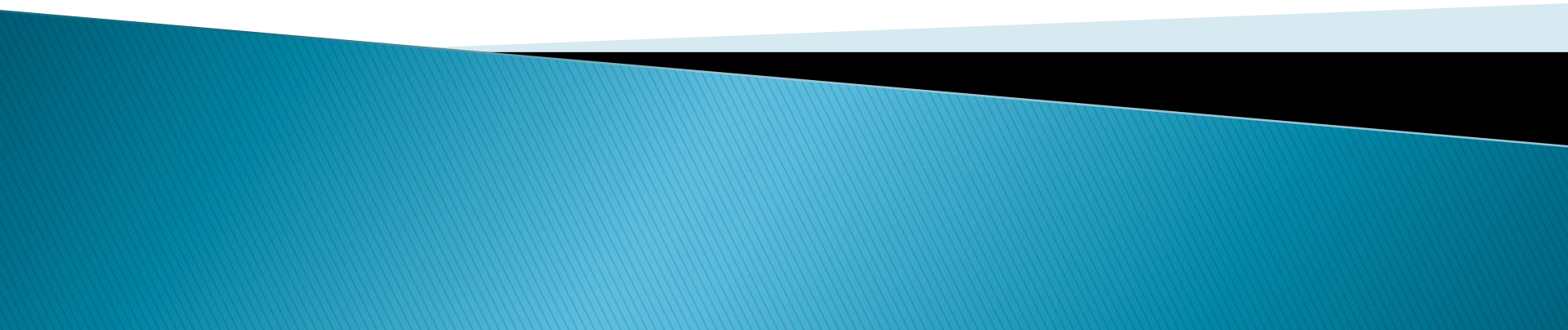


Available at: https://works.bepress.com/lauri_deruiter-willems/7/


Examining the Why

The relevance of our courses

Connecting with our students

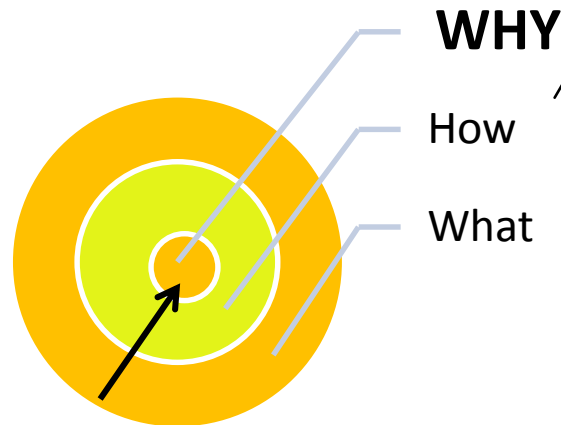


Dr. Kim Lawless,
University of Illinois–Chicago,
FSI keynote speaker

- ▶ Current students are connected on the go
 - Unlimited and instantaneous access to information
 - ▶ Students want to know: WHY...
 - do they need to know X?
 - will this skill help me with Y?
 - ▶ What is the relevance of the content
 - ▶ Challenge for students to appreciate and be active participants in courses
- 

Simon Sinek, *Start with Why*, 2011

- ▶ Traditional information transmission model
 - 1. course objectives
 - 2. course material
 - 3. assessment
 - *The focus is on what and how of the process*

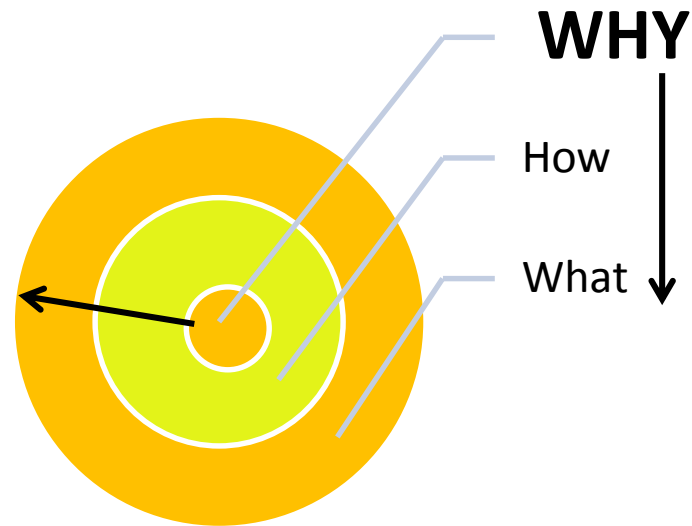


First, explain what the course is about, then how the course will be conducted, and finally why the student may need the information.

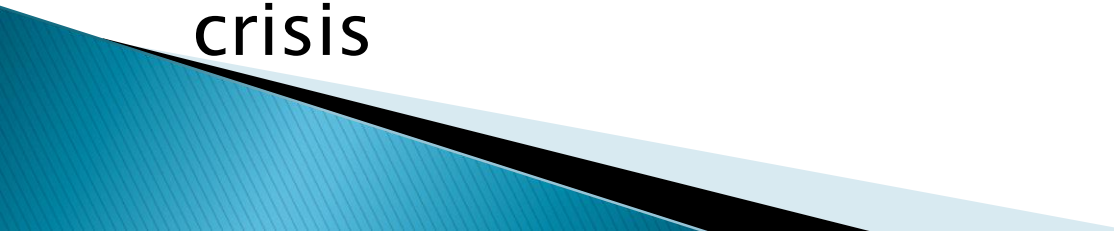
Sinek's transmission model: The Golden Circle

Inspiring leaders start with
WHY
and work their way out.

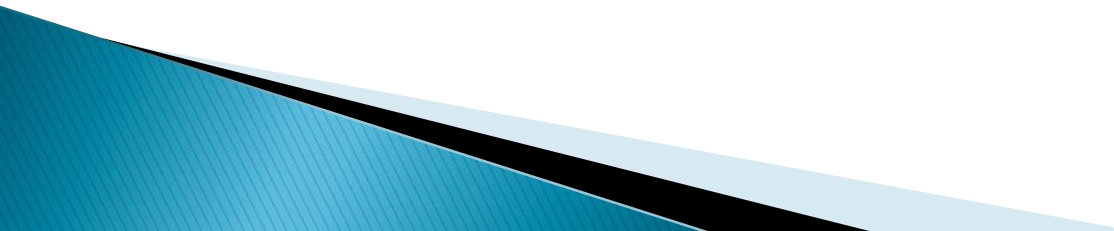
Only *after* the instructor has students excited about the content, and they know how they will benefit or gain, will the instructor share the course details/features and benefits.



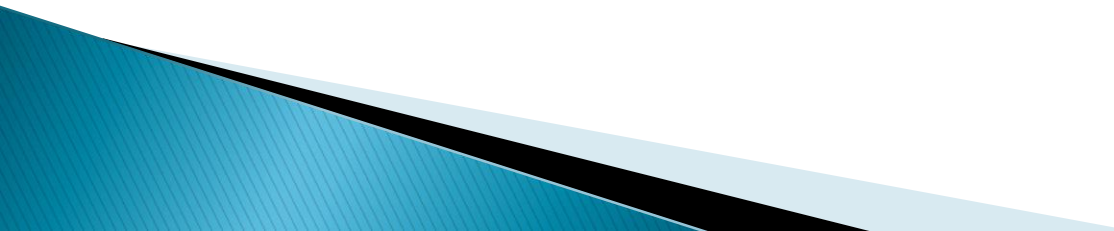
Make a connection between the student and community, career or world

- ▶ It's not enough to tell students they will use this information or skill in their future.
 - ▶ They want to know WHY
 - ▶ They need to be inspired and believe
 - ▶ Example: Math as a tool for social justice in an inner city neighborhood with an AIDS/drug crisis
- 

Buy in to the cause, belief, purpose

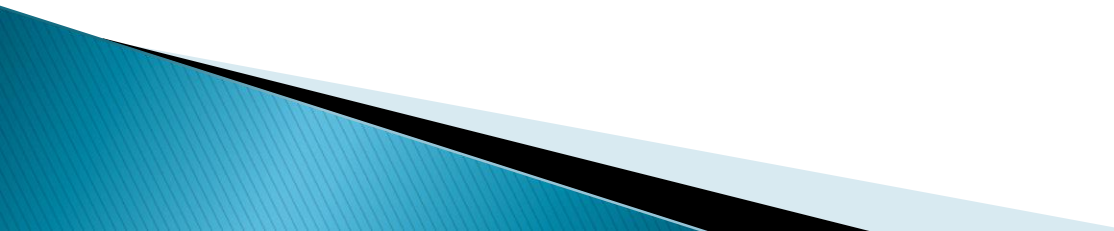
- ▶ Examples from the book:
 - ▶ Wright brothers vs. Samuel Pierpont Langley
 - Wrights believed in possibilities; Langley wanted fame
 - ▶ Apple – a culture, challenge status quo
 - ▶ Dr. Martin Luther King's I have a dream speech
 - Not I have a plan...
 - ▶ Bill Gates, help people fulfill potential
 - ▶ Southwest Airlines, freedom for all, not just wealthy to travel by air
- 

Key points from the book

- ▶ When people TRUST you, they believe, and will follow or participate with commitment
 - ▶ Leaders create the right environment because they feel it is imperative to and have the capacity to do the right thing. These successful leaders accomplish this by creating feelings of trust and cooperation.
 - ▶ Sinek repeats throughout, “People don’t buy what you do or have, they buy why you do it”. Their goal is to do business with others who have what they believe in.
- 

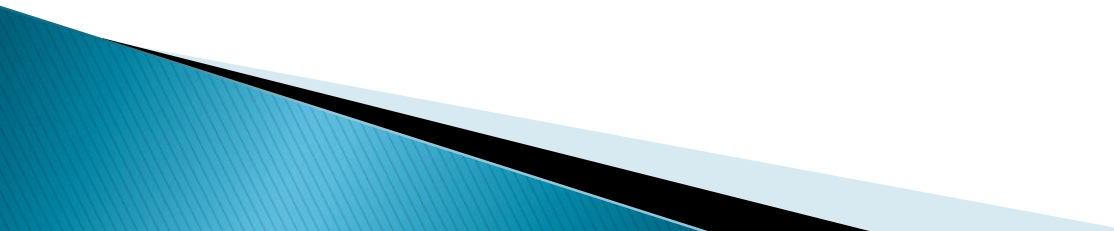
Think about it...

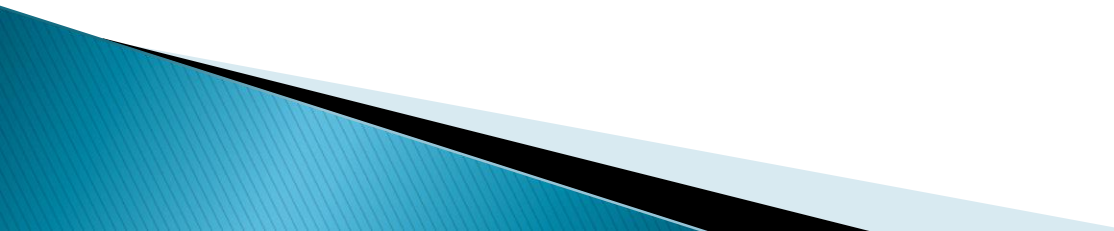
- ▶ In your role at work,
 - What motivates you?
 - Why do you do things the way you do?
 - Who inspires you?
 - How do you inspire others?

 - ▶ Do you have a sense of purpose?
 - Vision statement
 - Mission statement
- 

Think about ...

▶ In your classes

- Do you teach with a purpose?
 - Do your students have a clear picture of the process AND the end point?
 - What could you do to make your purpose more clear?
 - Help your students believe or buy in to your purpose?
- 

- ▶ Take some time to think about your answers, and how you may answer a student's question "Why..."
 - ▶ Are you consistent with your vision, mission, purpose and practice?
 - ▶ Yes, we all get frustrated, and this is "a job", but it is also one we are passionate about and care for the students.
 - ▶ Pausing to consider some of this information will hopefully, result in more engaged students who are more active and willing participants in your classes!
- 

References

- Lawless, K. (2014, May 20). Developing global citizens. Keynote speech at Faculty Summer Institute, Champaign, IL.
- Sinek, S. (2009, September). How great leaders inspire action. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action
- Sinek, S. (2011). Start with why. London, England: Penguin Books
- Sinek, S. (2014, March). Why good leaders make you feel safe. Retrieved June 30, 2014 from http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_why_good_leaders_make_you_feel_safe
- 