

Momentum

Day 1

Revisit Your WHY?

By Maria Rass

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Day 1:

Revisit Your WHY?

I have some tough love to drop on you.

When people need what you offer, they have many choices for how to fill their need. And often, when they make a decision, they may choose based on something more than just “what they get.”

People decide to buy from you not just because of what you sell, but because of *how you make them feel*.

While this might not be the case for all commodities like salt or garbage bags, I’ll bet you still buy certain products because here’s “just something about that brand” that puts them a cut above their competition.

[Dawn](#) promotes how their soap is used to clean and care for wildlife affected by oil spills and pollution. If given the choice, who wouldn’t want to support a company who cleans those innocent, adorable little critters?

For every pair of shoes it sells, [Tom’s](#) donates one pair to a child in need. They call this effort One for One™. When you buy from them, you help others.

[Jeni’s Splendid Ice Creams](#) is devoted to making the very best ice cream in the world, using natural ingredients, supporting sustainable suppliers and offering unique flavors not available anywhere else. You can feel good about indulging in this tasty treat.

And let’s not forget personal brands we know and love....

[Marie Forleo](#) is committed to helping women succeed in business and in life. She not only provides quality content, she often rallies her base to support causes such as clean water or educational opportunities for girls. When you join her tribe, you become part of something bigger.

[Hiro Boga](#) teaches people how to create businesses with soul; businesses that connect with who you are as a sacred gift. She passionately believes this and shares her inspirations and nourishment so you immediately what she’s all about. If you want to feel aligned and fulfilled in your business, she’s your gal.

[Kris Carr](#) shares her experience as a crazy sexy cancer survivor to coach you to a healthy and thriving life of your own. She is more than just products, recipes and health tips. Her fans are part of a “healthy living” movement and they love her sassy swagger.

These companies and people do not necessarily provide something no one else can provide.

But one thing they clearly communicate? Their WHY.

What's Your WHY?

You may have already heard of Simon Sinek and his Golden Circle. If not, he did a pretty awesome [TED talk](#) about it—and I was lucky enough to hear him speak at a conference years ago before he got really big. Simon's message is that powerful leaders (and brands) are born when you stop focusing so much on WHAT you do but instead, on WHY you do it.

Your Mission Statement. Your Raison D'etre. Your WHY. Whatever you call it, it's the key to a successful brand and powerful marketing. It's why we're going to start here, before diving into anything else.

There is a deeper reason you started your business or do your work. What lies underneath everything? Yes, yes, we all are in business to make money. But as my brand mentor Marty Neumeier once shared with me when I was writing, [Branding Basics for Small Business](#), if your only driver is money you won't get very far. It won't sustain you, attract loyal fans or keep the fire burning long-term.

People want to support something. They want to believe. And, frankly, so do you.

There are lots of ways to make money. But why are you choosing this particular path? Why did you launch this business/write that book/study this work? What is the real reason behind why—and how—you do it?

If this is not clear to you, the rest is a flimsy house of cards. In order to build a business that can evolve and sustain you, let's get crystal clear on your WHY.

In Case You're Wondering: Why I Do What I Do

Let me pull back the curtain and reveal something: I have struggled over the years to get my arms around my own WHY. And I found the answer to be quite simple: ***I am a storyteller who believes in the power of stories.*** Stories can shape, motivate, teach, ignite, delight, provoke and move people beyond anything we thought possible. A well-told, witty, clever story is incredibly sexy.

I also believe that businesses can stand for something more than profits because they have influential power to enhance the world and improve lives, if they so choose. No matter how big or small, businesses have the power to use marketing and communication to share amazing stories that highlight good instead of evil. And I want to use my platform to share even more stories: to shine a light on and give back to worthy causes, rally people together and inspire them to make the world better.

My WHY is to share stories that engage, inform and delight. PS, that's my mission statement, both personally and professionally.

WHAT I do supports that WHY. And all the different avenues I take help fulfill that WHY: consulting, writing, speaking, acting. But always, the WHY behind is my never-changing cornerstone. *"I am a storyteller because stories inspire us and the world needs more love."*

With my WHY in hand, I can confidently create new offerings, projects or speaking topics- all related to this core belief. My hope is that today's assignment helps you do the same.

Your WHY Is Not Just For You

Your WHY can do even more than just steer your own internal efforts. It can be the bright light that attracts your ideal audience to you like a moth to flame, and makes them rally behind you over someone else.

When you communicate your WHY, you tell the world: *This is who I am; this is how I work; If you dig it, great! Let's chat. If not, thanks for stopping by.*

Your WHY filters out people who are not a good match for you because they can self-select if they want to be part of your tribe. It's your nightclub bouncer: You only want to get into this party if you're down with what I'm all about.

Please understand: This means you cannot-and should not-please everyone. Building an irresistible brand is not about being pleasing the masses. You want to put a stake in the ground and stand for something. Once you do, the exact people will be drawn to you like moths to flame. But only if you're clear. As I always love to say...

If you try to be all things to all people, you will be nothing to no one.

How a Manifesto Helps You Stand Out

Once you articulate your WHY, it's a lot easier to craft a manifesto.

What is a manifesto? It's your personal philosophy that encapsulates your WHY but also your vibe. Who are you? What are you all about? What is your tone? This is not just a vanity play. It's gives people a sense of what it's like to work with you and will attract the right people-and repel the wrong ones. **This unique philosophy is how you differentiate your brand and stand out.**

You can post a Manifesto on your website's About page, or as a hybrid bio/manifesto, [as I have](#), lovingly called a *Biofesto*) or as a completely separate page called "Manifesto", "Philosophy", or "How I Work." You can also share links to it in your social media profiles or your email newsletter. It might also be helpful to include this with your bio at the end of proposals. However you share it is up to you!

Some examples:

The queen of manifesto-writing, [Alexandra Franzen](#)

Here's [one](#) we crafted with my amazing client, Renee Metty of With PAUSE.

Here's [another](#) from a client, Karen Ross and her fabulous coaching firm Start With You

And [an awe-inspiring one](#) for my client, Souldust.

Your Assignment: Articulate Your WHY

NOTE: *If you are just starting out, this may be a new exercise for you. But...if your business is in full-swing, you might be thinking, "Yawn, Maria, I've already done this!" Trust me: there is huge value in revisiting this often to ensure you haven't strayed. If you're here, you're committed to reinvigorating your business—and yourself—and revisiting your WHY is the place to start.*

Here are some prompts to help you land on your WHY. You don't have to answer them all but they may get your creative juices flowing! Feel free to be soulful, swearsy, poignant, light, profound, funny, snarky....answer these in your own authentic inner voice:

I value _____

Nothing makes me feel more alive than when _____

I may call myself a _____ *but what I really do is* _____

The most important people or things in my life are _____

My greatest hero is _____ *because* _____

I could not live without _____

My approach to work is _____

_____ *was a profound turning point in my life and it taught me that the world needs more* _____

My goal is for every client/customer to _____, _____

and _____

I adore/crave/enjoy _____

I despise/loathe/hate _____

Someday, I'd like to _____

If I could teach people one thing, it would be _____

The best part of my work is _____

I chose this calling (or, This calling chose me) because _____

When I'm not working, my biggest joys are _____

If only _____ *, my work would be complete and I would feel whole.*

My very best friends would say that I am _____

_____ *is something that lights me up inside.*

My magic superpowers are _____

I work best with people who are _____ *,* _____ *and* _____

I truly believe I was put on this Earth to _____

My favorite motto/mantra/quote is _____ *and I live that out every day by* _____

My deepest wish is that when I die, people will say I _____

Your Big WHY:

A the end of the day, my mission/purpose/why is to _____

BONUS Assignment: Craft Your Manifesto

If you have time now, please feel free to take this extra step and share it with us. Or save this for later...

Use your answers to craft your Manifesto draft. This does not have to be perfect! Just write what comes to you, as it comes. Do not edit yourself!:

Congratulations! You have just completed your first MOMENTUM lesson. Did you feel that little heart flutter? That's your energy sparking and your creative train starting down the track. WOO WOO!

But wait, you're not quite done....

Now: post either your Big WHY statement (or draft Manifesto, if you took that extra step) in our [nurturing Facebook group](#) for a chance to win a fabulous prize!

We are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward the most engaging and irresistible WHY so don't lose your MOMENTUM: Post it now and keep that train moving!

One Last Thing

If writing is not "your thing," please don't worry. This is about getting the right concept. Do NOT stress if your WHY or even your Manifesto, if you gave it a shot, is not perfectly written. We're talking raw instincts, here. You can always revisit this or hire a copywriter for sparkle and shine.

Your WHY is the foundation of your brand's success. It's *your* foundation. How you live out that WHY, how you do what you do and what approach you take to your work are all what differentiates you from the crowd.

If you've lost your way or things are just not clicking with your brand or business, getting back to your WHY will get you back on track every single time.

Here's to finding your way again!

Maria