

The WHY Principle

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I remember the day like yesterday; my brother, Kyle, and I had set a goal of writing our first book while we were still teenagers. It was a lofty goal that definitely required we step out of our comfort zone . . . way out! Part of us was unsure if we were capable of achieving this goal we had set. But our uncertainty was not about to stop us from trying.

Although we began this process with what seemed to be an endless supply of enthusiasm, we were quickly humbled when the long hours, hot days, and unexpected frustration had emptied our emotional tanks. We needed inspiration and we needed it fast!

Kyle and I put the project on hold as we searched for the enthusiasm we once had. It was then that I noticed something interesting. We had become so focused on all the obstacles and all of the work still ahead of us that we had forgotten what had initially inspired us.

We reminded ourselves of all the reasons why we started writing in the first place: To help thousands of other students succeed, earn enough money to buy our first car, meet extraordinary individuals, travel around the world on surf trips, and so on. As we listed all the benefits of completing the book, we could feel our enthusiasm and inspiration return. The more we talked about it, the more "real" and life- like each outcome became to us. As a result, we felt more excited about following through with our goal. We picked up where we left off and we continued working with the same passion we had begun with.

However, a short while later, we had a sobering thought that created another challenge. Kyle and I realized that completing our book meant that we would be put in situations where we would have to speak in public in front of large audiences . . . our greatest fear. This was a sobering thought that, once again, curbed our enthusiasm and tested our commitment. Before this realization, we had done everything in our power to avoid any speech or presentation in front of two or more people! We found ourselves feeling vulnerable and scared. We knew this fear was not going to be easy to overcome so we needed all the motivation possible.

Unsure how to deal with this fear we continued working on our book, focusing on all of the benefits of completing it. As our book neared completion and more people knew about it, we received our first request to speak at a school. Gulp; this was it. We timidly accepted the opportunity, but convinced the school to delay the date for two months.

Instead of thinking about how scary public speaking was, we focused on all the positive benefits that this new skill would bring. Our fears never entirely disappeared, but we did have the courage to take the next step forward. We called Toastmasters, found our local club, and attended our first meeting the next Monday.

By attending regularly, we gradually gained confidence. We didn't recognize the pattern at the time, but the only way we summoned enough courage to attend the meetings each week was the list of rewards that we always kept in mind. We knew exactly "why" we were doing it.

Our first speech was far from perfect, but it was still a victory. We took action despite our fear. Although the challenges of writing a book and speaking publicly are different, the remedy was the same.

Looking back, the real value of these two early experiences was the discovery of what we now call, "The Why Principle." Whether it was writing a book, speaking in public, trying out for a team, asking someone out on a date, or participating in a job interview, we noticed that The Why Principle generated our motivation and persistence to follow through.

Today, Kyle and I travel all over and speak to people of all ages and demographics. We've been fortunate enough to be guests on numerous TV and radio shows. And we've been able to team up with some of the top authors in the world to co-author more books-- all experiences that can be traced back to key moments when we used The Why Principle.

If we know exactly "why" we want something, we can figure out how to make it happen. It's not the goal itself that holds the power, but rather the benefits of achieving the goal that matters most. Too often we lose sight of our original goal and get lost in the various obstacles--or we may back out because of fear. But the key to achievement is reminding ourselves of the reasons WHY our lives will be better as a result of following through.

We can nurture our inspiration and renew our drive by asking ourselves these key questions:

• Why do I want to achieve this outcome?

• How will my life be better as a result?

Those are two very powerful questions. For extra motivation, you may also want to become aware of what you might lose by not following through. The final question to ask would be: What will I miss out on in my life by not following through? Sometimes knowing what we might miss out on is enough of a motivator to take new actions toward success.

The clearer your answers to these three questions, the more motivation you will have. By knowing what you really want and WHY you want it, you can get the most out of yourself, your relationships, your time, and your life.

Much success to you,

- Kent Healy

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