

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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What? How? Why? Who?

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What? How? Why? Who?

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Disciplines

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Comments

Re-posted from The Center for the Advancement of Christian Education (CACE) blog.

Online access: <https://cace.org/what-how-why-who/>

What? How? Why? Who?

August 30, 2018

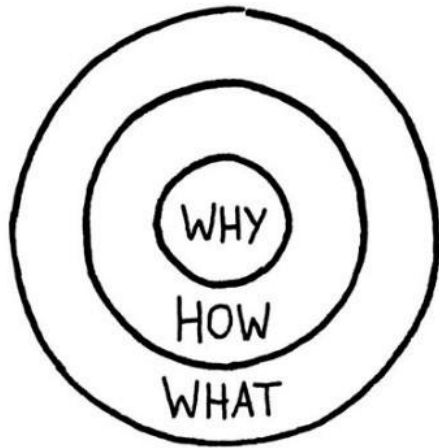
In the last week, my Instagram and Facebook feeds have been inundated with images of the first days of school. Teachers displaying their tidy bulletin boards and kids sporting new outfits and smiling faces grace my screen. I love seeing these beginnings – the new year brings excitement and a re-energizing spirit.

School year beginnings make me think of the deep hopes that teachers hold for their students as they enter the year together: deep hopes that this will be a great year because their students will feel valued and respected as image bearers; deep hopes that students will accept the challenge of living into their gifts; deep hopes that their students will feel invited into deep learning that will change their world and themselves.

School year beginnings make me think of the deep hopes that each student holds entering that classroom: deep hopes that this classroom and this school will be a safe place; deep hopes this will be a year where I feel good about the work I'm doing because it matters; deep hopes that I'll be okay.

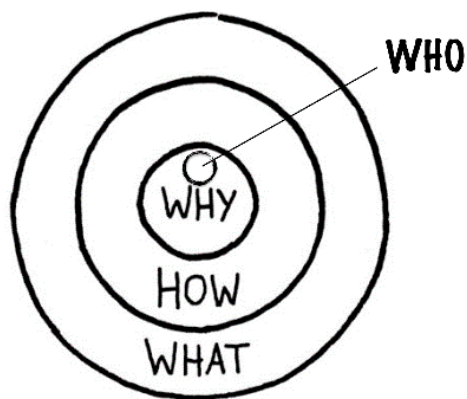
School year beginnings make me think of the deep hopes that parents hold for their children as they send them out the door on that first day: deep hopes that their child will be loved and will love; deep hopes that their child will recognize and embrace their role in God's kingdom; deep hopes that their child will continue to grow into the person God has created them to be.

Simon Sinek (2009), known for his depiction of the Golden Circle, argues that the strongest organizations are those who start with the "why" to determine the "how" and the "what" of their organization. The "why" is their purpose – the answer to the question "Why does our organization exist? Or, as Sinek (2009) describes it, "Why do you get out of bed in the morning? And why should anyone care?"



In the realm of education, we focus a lot of energy on the “how” – how we engage students, how we make learning relevant, how we teach them to embrace a growth mindset and “what” – teaching a specific book, giving a paper and pencil quiz, designing a PBL. The “how” and the “what” are important but they get their importance when driven by the “why.”

The “why” for the beginning of the school year is answered by deep hope – why do teachers come to school each day ready to engage students? Why do parents send their children to that particular school? The “why” matters because it directs and gives purpose to everything that happens from the way the bulletin boards are arranged to the pedagogies chosen to the classroom management and assessment decisions made.



I would argue, though, that Sinek’s model does not go far enough. Sinek’s model doesn’t consider the most important question – Who? Before we can embrace the “why,” we need to recognize the “who.” The purpose of Christian education only has relevance when we recognize who we are – fallen, broken, redeemed and restored Christ followers. Whose we are shapes the “why,” shapes the deep hopes, shapes the every-day actions and interactions we have in our classrooms and schools. Because it shapes the “why,” it directs the

“how” and the “what.” Recognizing that we are participants in God’s redemptive story, that we are agents of restoration, gives us a powerful identity. Our identity in Christ gives purpose to education and is the most powerful argument for Christian education.

So as I scan my social media feeds and enjoy the beginnings, I’m grateful that I can celebrate the “why” in those first days and throughout the school year as Christian teachers, parents and students live into their deep hopes because they are rooted in the understanding of whose they are.

Reference:

Sinek, S. (2009, September). *How great leaders inspire action*. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?language=en