

Inspiring Successes - start with why and keep asking!

If you don't define what success means to you, someone else will.

Being a successful musician isn't one thing, but there are certain images of what a successful musician might look like, that take the front stage. The dream of making it big still lives and it puts a lot of pressure on students trying to find their own career path.

The phrase "Start with why" was made famous by Simon Sinek. He argues that focusing on why we do something, rather than what we do or how we do it, is the key to long-term success.

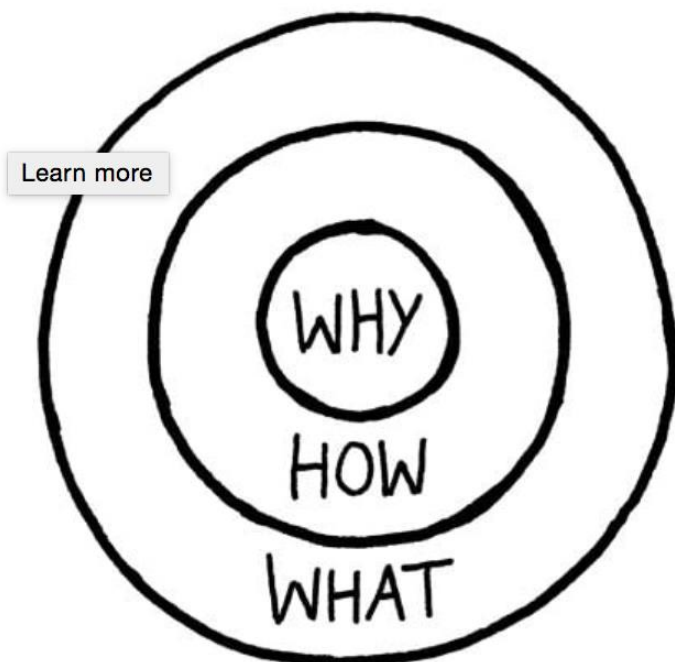
In this workshop participants are invited to join an open brainstorm session about;

- What ideal images of success exist in our academies and how can they be broadened?
- In general, the participants in the workshop agreed that ideal images of success are present in the academies and that they are part of creating a hierarchy between different study programmes/professions. Often the pedagogical students are in the bottom of the hierarchy.
- How to support students in succeeding on their own terms and in finding out what those terms might be?

Summary of the workshop content

The golden circle is a simple, but very interesting idea developed by author and entrepreneur Simon Sinek, about purpose. This idea became quite famous when he presented it in his TED Talk called "Start with why" in 2009 with over 40 million views.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4ZoJKF_VuA



Furthest away from the core of the circle, is 'what' we do. We all have many different 'what's' and they tend to change pretty often. A couple could be, playing concerts, teaching the guitar or writing songs. It tells you something about how a someone's time is occupied, but not very much about who that someone is as a person.

One layer deeper into the circle, is the how. This contains our strengths, values and guiding principles. In other words, this is what sets us apart from someone who does something similar. Maybe someone plays a concert in complete darkness to have the audience focus entirely on what they hear while someone else turns on the lights and teach them a second voice to their song, turning them into one big choir. Essentially, they have the same 'what', namely playing concerts, but it is expressed very differently. In this layer, we show more of who we are.

Now we reach the 'Why'. This is the purpose, cause or belief that drives us and our contribution and impact to serve others. It is highly personal, it inspires us and it makes us want to get out of bed in the morning.

But how often do we talk about it in our institutions?

If we want to empower students to define their own success, take risks and be different, we need to go beyond what we do and how we do it. Talking about why is also daring to be vulnerable. This calls for a different relationship between student and teacher than the master and the apprentice. By starting to talk about why we break down the hierarchy and step forward as people rather than specialists."