



# FROM CAREER TO CALLING

Thirty days out, a calendar hold came from the president of the San Francisco 49ers. Executive Leadership Retreat. CordeValle Golf Resort. August 2–3, 2016. No details on the agenda.

The afternoon of August 3, just as the retreat was about to close, we were each asked to share two words or less in reflection. As we went down the line, I heard “inspired,” “encouraged,” “motivated.” Then came my turn, and I answered, “Life-changing.”

Immediately, heads snapped up in shock. Even the facilitators did double-takes. I didn’t know how my life would change, but I was convinced something special had just happened.

*“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born, and the day you find out why.”*

MARK TWAIN

humorist, known as the father of American literature

## FINDING MY ‘WHY’

It was at this retreat that I found my ‘Why.’ Through an immersive two-day experience, we each explored our individual life journeys. We revealed life’s biggest moments to ourselves and to each other, triumph and tragedy, our most significant peaks and valleys, where we knew life would never be the same. This emotional arc was the backdrop, and every participant got out what they put in.

In my case, I was ALL IN, turning over every significant stone of life. I left transformed and inspired.

From the drive home through the coming weeks, I shared what I’d experienced with my inner circle. As you would expect, they were excited to hear my passion, and they could sense the curiosity and bullish eagerness for what would lie ahead. Some even asked what they had spiked the punch with.

That following Monday, I secretly was hoping to feel something magical on the inside, expecting the transformation I had just experienced to infuse each day with my newly found purpose. Instead, it was more of the same. Back to the firefighting. Back to business planning. Back to the grind, as we always used to say. This repetitive reality started to bother me, significantly. I began to feel an uneasy tension I had never sensed.

Why the tension? Life was good. Nothing was broke, so why fix it?

But now my life lens had a different shade. I sought purpose. I became fixated on my ‘Why,’ which was “to inspire purpose in others so they can play offense in life.” I started to imagine a world where I could bring this to life each day—inspired to get out of bed and make a difference, all to be fulfilled at the end of the day, then equally excited to do it again the next.

As I snapped back into reality, I fell back in line, laboring and drifting one day at a time. Over the coming weeks, the only constant was the continued internal tension.

It became apparent that my ‘What’ was not aligned with my ‘Why.’ Pre–Why, I would have let this feeling sit and linger, and my daily actions would simply get done as they got done; I’d have had no resolve to shape them into something with meaning. Post–Why, this uneasiness became unacceptable. I was on a mission to play offense and live my purpose—and not a damn thing could get in the way.

I knew what I had to do.

## WITH PURPOSE COMES OPPORTUNITY

In January 2020 I became the proud founder of Purpose Labs. I was graced with a Rolodex of relationships I wouldn’t trade for the world, and my first client was a rising NFL executive whom I had met while training his leadership team years after my fateful retreat. He later admitted there was something that struck him as I introduced myself to his group that day. As he recalls, I shared how “finding my Why” had changed my life and that I’d never “felt more alive.” My enthusiasm prompted him to call me. “That’s exactly what I’m after,” he said—and with those words, a partnership toward purpose kicked off.

As we developed a relationship, his performance and potential were unquestioned. What was missing was his deeper meaning, his North Star, his ‘Why.’ Without that sense of purpose, his contributions felt limited, his impact unclear. This led to a lack of fulfillment and inspiration within the work he was doing. While he was grateful for the opportunity to be a leader in the NFL, the initial feeling of being a kid in a candy store was waning, and he wanted to reignite the spark he knew was inside. But it had to be tied to something bigger than himself. It had to be fused to purpose.

I asked him to meet me at the 50, which is my philosophy for all partnerships. It takes two equally invested individuals or parties to come together, lock arms, and run through the wall together.

Our partnership was off to the races. Personal and professional vision exercises. Understanding who he was on his best day. A deep dive on strengths, gifts,

talents, and passions . . . all intertwined with life reflection. We then shifted our energies from personal to professional development, including executive branding, job and career crafting, goal and impact alignment, coupled with clarity around legacy.

Over months, we accomplished what we had set out to do. We unearthed his ‘Why’ and core values, and he left empowered with a lens on how to push forward on life’s most significant actions and decisions. As a cherry on top, he was promoted months later to an opportunity significantly more aligned with his purpose.

“Paul walked me through a life-discovery process, delivering a true aha’ moment in which I uncovered my ‘Why,’ and I have never felt more alive,” he said in his assessment of our time together.

This is *why* I do what I do. Purpose can deliver opportunity for us all—and we all deserve to feel alive.

*“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”*

HOWARD THURMAN

author, educator, and civil rights leader

## BECOMING THE WHY COACH OF THE 49ERS

Purpose Labs would have never formed had it not been for my experience at the 49ers. Post-Why, I had to tackle my tension head on.

I called a team meeting and revealed the transformation I had experienced at the retreat weeks earlier. Seeing the intrigue in the room, I then asked if anybody would like to find their ‘Why.’ Some hands went up; others emailed me later in the day. Bring it on.

Over the coming months, we individually found a private space in Levi’s Stadium where I could help my committed teammates find their respective ‘Whys.’

It immediately rekindled the sensation I’d felt leaving the retreat earlier in the month. I FELT ALIVE. I could see it in the eyes of others as they lit up with purpose and meaning. Our time together unearthed numerous North Stars and personal missions. I sensed the energy that sparked from them to gain clarity on *why* they do what they do and what gets them out of bed each morning—which, in turn, became the spark for me to invest myself even further as a Why Coach.

In the hours invested together during each Why Discovery Process, our relationships and connections surpassed what we had built over the course of working together for years.

Titles were out the window. There was no longer a boss–subordinate relationship. It was a partnership. It was an opportunity to meet at the 50, where I could serve as a coach rather than a manager. Interestingly, the closer our connections became, the less I had to “manage.” This authentic trust brought out a side of others’ gifts, talents, and passions that I had not seen. It also exposed to me a flaw in many people’s leadership styles, including my own to that point. When we don’t know our people from the inside out, our relationships are thin, are only built for the good times, and will crumble in the bad. This surface-based approach will typically lead to disappointing results and dispiriting work lives if we let it spiral out of control.

In this case, post–Why discoveries, purpose became embedded in our team DNA, and the tangible impact became evident. Engagement and productivity skyrocketed, and performance followed. We simultaneously experienced significant growth in revenues. While I would never suggest that it was wholly based on these transformations, it became evident that personal growth can be a catalyst for fiscal growth, and that became difficult to ignore.

I started to obsess about scaling this impact beyond my team. How could we infuse the power of purpose throughout the 49ers organization?

With that, the business plan that led to the foundation of the 49ers Academy was authored around the ethos of *People-Purpose-Performance*. Weeks later, we were approved to start the venture!

Beyond it getting approved, it ignited my own sense of purpose where I finally felt I could live my ‘Why’ each and every day. The most liberating part was I no longer felt like it was the “next step” on a career escalator. I was no longer focused

on the treadmill I had been on for over a decade. I now felt like I was contributing to “a calling”—to serve as Why Coach for the 49ers.

This calling led me to facilitate ‘Why’ discoveries for every member of the 49ers Academy. Once others in the organization caught wind, I was approached by dozens of individuals. The momentum only grew from there. Though I’ll keep names confidential, I was able to coach people throughout the 49ers front office, both from the business and the football side of the organization. Each ‘Why’ experience felt like a dream come true. While others thanked me after our time together, I felt even more thankful to them—for allowing me to live my ‘Why’ and step into my calling.

*“Finding my ‘Why’ fundamentally changed my life. It’s the greatest gift I’ve ever received, and now I’ve dedicated the rest of my life to share this gift of purpose with others.”*

**PAUL EPSTEIN**

## THE ROI OF PURPOSE

While many view purpose as a “nice to have,” the evidence of its connection to the bottom line is more transparent by the day; the business case for purpose is quite clear. At a high level, purpose-driven companies outperform the S&P by 400 percent, purpose-driven employees are 225 percent more productive, and consumers would prefer to spend their money with a company nine out of ten times.<sup>1</sup>

Still not convinced?

Here’s more on the ROI of Purpose. In the following two graphics, you’ll see some examples of research about the monumental impact when purpose is taken seriously—for internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include you, your team, and all employees. External stakeholders include shareholders, the marketplace, and consumers.

*“If you aren’t fully embracing the Purpose Economy by now and transforming your entire organization, you are going to join the likes of Blockbuster, RadioShack, Sears, Kodak, and Tower Records.”*

**AARON HURST**

author of *The Purpose Economy*

# THE ROI OF PURPOSE FOR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

# THE ROI OF PURPOSE FOR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



<b>30%</b> of purpose-driven professionals are <b>MORE LIKELY TO BE HIGH PERFORMERS</b> <sup>2</sup>	<b>50%</b> of purpose-driven professionals are <b>MORE LIKELY TO BE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS</b> <sup>3</sup>	<b>64%</b> of purpose-driven professionals have <b>HIGHER LEVELS OF FULFILLMENT AT WORK</b> <sup>4</sup>
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<b>15:1</b> Purpose-driven company <b>STOCK PRICES OUTPERFORM THE MARKET</b> <sup>7</sup>	<b>202%</b> <b>HIGHER LIKELIHOOD REVENUE GROWTH</b> for purpose-driven companies <sup>8</sup>	<b>73%</b> of global consumers will <b>SWITCH TO HIGHER-PURPOSE BRANDS</b> <sup>9</sup>
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More than **9 out of 10** employees are **WILLING TO TRADE A PERCENTAGE OF THEIR LIFETIME EARNINGS** for greater meaning at work.<sup>5</sup>

**HIGHEST-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES ARE 3x MORE LIKELY TO WORK FOR A COMPANY WITH A STRONG SENSE OF PURPOSE.**  
Yet only **13%** said their organization is differentiated by a "purpose-driven mission."<sup>6</sup>

Purpose-led brands saw their **VALUATION SURGE BY 175%** over the past 12 years, versus a growth rate of just **70%** for listless brands uncertain of their role.<sup>10</sup>

Purpose-driven enterprises **GREW BY 1681%** COMPARED TO THE S&P 500 AVERAGE OF **118%.**<sup>11</sup>

## PAYCHECK-DRIVEN TO PURPOSE-DRIVEN

If money were no object, what would you do? Would your career path, industry, and organization stay the course? Call a slight audible? Or do a complete 180?

The Japanese model of *ikigai* (reason for being) provides an illustration of this pickle we often find ourselves in—is it about the paycheck or the purpose? Frankly, the majority of the world finds itself in the paycheck bucket. We do what we do not because we love it, but because we have to. It puts food on the table. Others rely on us.



Consequently, using the *ikigai* model, we largely fall in the “profession” space. Some of us sneak into a “vocation.” Rarely do we feel “passion,” and “mission” seems like a pipe dream. Until we find our reason for being, our *ikigai*—that

bullseye that we discover is our calling—we will live in a world that feels scarce instead of abundant. We will lose sight of what authentically matters, hollow from purpose, with a lack of vitality and enthusiasm to launch into each day. Ultimately, we all want to make a difference and feel part of something bigger than ourselves. The challenge is that our profession can only take us so far unless we believe in *why* we do it.

## SIX FIGURES TO SEVEN DOLLARS

Straight from undergrad at USC, I found myself working for a Fortune 10 company as a territory sales manager with six-figure earning potential. Part of that experience had me riding around in a sporty Dodge Caravan from retail to wholesale accounts anywhere they sold our products. On the drive between accounts, I would keep myself entertained with ESPN Radio, never missing a beat of the action. Whoever said radio ads don’t work, I’d beg to differ.

NFL Draft guru Mel Kiper’s loud, energetic voice came through my speakers: “Have you ever wanted to work in sports? Have you ever dreamed of working for your favorite NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL team?”

I flew down the road yelling, “YES, YES, YES!” at the top of my lungs.

Mel said, “Call 1-877-SMWW-NOW.”

I pulled over immediately while catching a glimpse of the speedometer, driving 70 in a 35mph zone. Safe and sound, juices flowing, I made the call.

SMWW stood for Sports Management Worldwide. I got the intel: an eight-week online course on how to learn the business of sports revenue management. If you turned some heads, SMWW would introduce you to their network of sports industry contacts.

I didn’t even know this was possible. You can actually work in sports?!

Eight weeks later, they made true to their word and called the LA Clippers on my behalf. It was for an inside sales position, making seven dollars an hour, starting at a four-hour shift to earn your way up to an eight-hour shift, with minimal commissions, no benefits, and less than a 25 percent success rate to get promoted into the full-time ranks. I felt blessed and grateful to even be considered.

Back to *ikigai*—I’m doing what I love, I’m doing what I’m good at; of course the world needs sports, and they’re actually paying me for it. Dream come true!

Until it wasn’t.

A year later and multiple promotions in, I decided to leave sports (the first time) for a very clear and simple reason. I felt drawn to something that was evading me: money.

In sports, as great as it is, you sacrifice two things compared to other industries: time and money. The first I could live with, but the second became bothersome for a young sports pro at the top of the sales board feeling like he was making pennies on the dollar. At the time, my friends were killing it in commercial real estate. After a late night at Staples Center, we would always meet and hit the downtown LA scene. I wanted the lifestyle. So, I decided to jump ship.

I joined a top commercial brokerage in LA and got through the onboarding gauntlet. Within my first year, I held the largest single paycheck that I’ve seen in my life (to this day), and I expected to feel like I had “made it.” The feeling never came. The zeros at the end of the check felt worthless. I knew I had made a mistake. The realization shaped what I have valued ever since and has helped me make decisions that reflect those values.

## PURPOSE IS THE FUEL OF COURAGE

It takes courage to stand tallest when fear and risk are highest. Courage is not the absence of these elements; it is acting in spite of them. Easier said than done. The first step is the hardest one of all. When faced with major decisions in life, we often fall back to a place of psychological safety. Our brains are wired to prevent pain, danger, and suffering; thus, we avoid risk at all costs. Our default is to gravitate toward comfort, stability, and security above all else. While this may have been useful for a caveman looking for dinner, for a young person in a world of opportunities, it can hinder your attempt to find what will fill your days with purpose.

So, how do you burst through this barrier to action when your mind tells you to be content with what you have, but your gut and heart tell you to go for it?

This is where we can bank on the power of purpose. Purpose gives us the motive behind the curtain. It’s the meaning beneath the surface. It’s *why* we are urged and moved to do it.

Purpose gives us the courage to start the journey. To empower a growth mindset. To seek a more inspiring vision. To expand our potential. To take massive action when we’re *called* to. Purpose shifts our mindset from hurdles, obstacles, and why we canNOT do something to possibilities, opportunities, and why we CAN do something.

## MY JERRY MAGUIRE MOMENT

In the spring of 2017, I was riding a natural high coming off of the prior year’s ‘Why’ discovery, now well into my chapter of serving as the Why Coach within the 49ers. This passion project provided the jolts of purpose and passion that I needed while I continued to serve as head of sales and business development for the team.

My ultimate aspiration was to one day run the entire business operation for a professional sports franchise, and I knew I’d have some holes to plug if I wanted to earn respect from every seat in the boardroom. So, I decided to accelerate this process by pursuing my Executive MBA at the University of Michigan, to surround myself with a tribe of leaders across industries and engulf myself in a two-year crash course in leadership development and a top MBA curriculum, all while juggling my responsibilities at the 49ers.

Little did I know that two months into the program, I would have a conversation with my new executive coach that would alter the trajectory of my career and life as a whole.

As I shared in the prologue, my coach asked me the simple, yet profound question, “So, what are you after?” It kept me up at night for weeks.

Professionally, I had everything I could dream of. Dream industry, dream career path, dream organization, dream team—what could be better?

Turns out I had an answer. I wanted to *feel alive*.

This life-altering conversation with my coach enlightened me that I need to feel energized by living with purpose and passion every day. Life is too short to not play offense.

Even though I was perfectly happy doing what I did—I felt great about where I worked and who I was doing it for—I only *loved* 20 percent of my day-to-day. The other 80 percent was filled with meetings, administrative duties, closed-door strategy, and putting out fires. What I *really* wanted to do was be a coach for my team, in the trenches of the locker room right by my players' sides, to develop their full potential and build an inspiring culture of purpose and impact.

Realizing that every daily activity either gives you fuel or depletes it was game-changing. Now, I analyze what I do in those two buckets; there's no in-between. We're all likely to work more than 100,000 hours over the course of our lives (more hours than we sleep or spend with our family). Why would we go through that journey without purpose?

*“In the end, it is impossible to have a great life unless it is a meaningful life. And it is very difficult to have a meaningful life without meaningful work.”*

JIM COLLINS

author of *Good to Great*

Jerry Maguire famously made his bold decision to leave his agency and asked, “Who wants to come with me?” In my case, I just had to be true to the mirror. Purpose gave me the courage to take the first step toward my calling, and I haven't looked back since. I decided to join the Chapman and Co. Leadership Institute, the same group that facilitated my Why Discovery with the 49ers. Fascinating how it all came back full circle.

## PURPOSE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

Bob Chapman, CEO of Barry-Wehmiller (the \$3 billion parent organization of the Leadership Institute), wrote *Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring for Your People Like Family*. I had the pleasure of getting to know Bob over the years, and this describes his philosophy to a tee. He didn't call his ten thousand-plus global employees “reports.” He referred to them as his “span of care.” He viewed every person in his organization not as a faceless worker but as somebody's son or daughter. Bob is one of the pioneers in the quickly accelerating purpose movement and believes that purpose is not in opposition to profit. Rather, people, purpose, and performance exist in harmony.

The way Bob treated people and let everybody know they mattered reminded me of my former boss at the NFL League Office. I once referred to my former boss as a “father figure” because he treated me like a second son behind closed doors. With the intensity of a Super Bowl record-breaking campaign upon us, it was the private, late-night conversations I'll always remember. He took an interest in my life in ways other leaders hadn't. I wasn't a producer. I was just Paul, the whole person—and I felt like I mattered.

## WHO HAS ACCESS TO PURPOSE?

To feel like we matter, our contributions must have meaning. Once we have meaning, our purpose comes to life, and the impact we create can be even greater. A life of purpose is a life of making a difference—isn't that what we're after?

The great news is purpose is accessible to us all. Unfortunately, not everybody feels this way.

There are barriers to purpose for some. In my opinion, these are solely barriers in the mind. In reality, we all have access to purpose. It's at our fingertips right now.

Below are the top perceived barriers to purpose. I'll call them “myths.” I'll then counter each myth with a “truth” to ease our minds, with a hope to activate purpose for us all.

**MYTH #1**

*Purpose is only for “high society” or people that are “well-to-do.”*

**TRUTH #1**

Purpose has no correlation to external riches or status in life. Authentic purpose is tied to your intrinsic sense of meaning. If you feel that your daily contributions and impact matter, you have already taken the initial steps of living with purpose. Purpose doesn't cost a cent.

**MYTH #2**

*I'm in a junior role and don't have the opportunity to build purpose into my job.*

**TRUTH #2**

Look no further than the global pandemic of 2020 and ask yourself, did every employee in our hospitals matter? Did the front lines of our first responders make a difference? Did the back-of-house staff at restaurants serve a purpose? How about the brave delivery women and men that risked their own health for all of us? Purpose does not discriminate based on role. It's the mindset with which we approach our roles.

**MYTH #3**

*Purpose has to be around a major cause.*

**TRUTH #3**

While this is a common belief, major causes are only a small fraction of the purposeful work done in the world. Perhaps major humanitarian or social impact causes are the most publicized aspects of purpose, but there are countless options and ways for us to contribute in other service and purpose-oriented ways. Take what I do as an example. I help people, teams, and organizations find their purpose. My clients and partners then integrate purpose in their daily work. We largely serve in the business space. Major cause or not, there is purpose in the work we do.

**MYTH #4**

*I want to follow my purpose but can't take a financial step back.*

**TRUTH #4**

I hear this all the time, from my inner circle to my business network at large. Purpose-related opportunities have minimal correlation with income. Purpose is less about the opportunity itself and more about why you want the opportunity and what the opportunity means to you. If anything, purpose will have a positive impact on income because you'll believe in the meaning of the work and be more fulfilled by the work. When you love what you do, you won't feel like you are working a day in your life. You tend to do well for yourself (financially and beyond) when you're living and working with purpose.

**KNOWING YOUR TEAM INSIDE OUT**

How well do you REALLY know each person on your team?

- Do you know their personal motivations?
- What gets them out of bed?
- Their biggest life moments and memories?
- Why they do what they do?
- Whether they love what they do?
- What they REALLY want to do?
- Greatest mentor in life?
- What inspires them?
- What impact they want to make?
- What would bring them true joy?
- What fulfillment looks like?

These are some heady questions, no doubt. Did I know this about every player in my business locker room? Absolutely not. Until I did. That's when the game changed.

The beauty of the questions above is you can ask them immediately.

You can engage over lunch, on a walk during a one-on-one outside of your office, or over an off-site coffee before you start your day. Knowing who somebody is on the inside will build trust, holistic connection, and authentic relationships. With this foundation in place, a formal Purpose Discovery to follow (see Purpose Discovery FAQ at [WWW.POWEROFPLAYINGOFFENSE.COM](http://WWW.POWEROFPLAYINGOFFENSE.COM)) will have even more impact. Here's a quick time out to prime the conversations.



**TIME-OUT:** Schedule an impromptu team huddle for an upcoming Friday morning. Bring in some coffee and bagels. Title the meeting "Who's in Our Locker Room?" Ask each person to come prepared to share three things NOT on their LinkedIn profile. Guess who's going first? You are. The deeper you share, the higher you will raise the bar and set the tone for the entire group. By the end of the session, be prepared to see the side of people they always wanted you to see.

# APPLYING THE PLAYBOOK

## CHAPTER 1: KNOW WHAT INSPIRES YOU

Welcome to “Applying the Playbook.” Consider each application of the playbook an opportunity to activate *The Power of Playing Offense* so you can implement each exercise and practice inside your team and in your daily culture, immediately.

**NOTE:** *My suggestion is to read through each playbook activity as you naturally navigate through the book, dog-ear the ones that you would like to activate in the next thirty days, then come back to it so you can fully process the details of the process and instructions.*

Batting leadoff is one of my personal favorites. The exercise is called “Know What Inspires You.”

I’ve used this exercise to start workshop engagements with senior leaders in Fortune 500 companies, kick off team meetings in the NFL, as well as set the table for an inspiring off-site retreat.

It is anchored on this foundational thought: **IN ORDER TO INSPIRE OTHERS, YOU MUST FIRST KNOW WHAT INSPIRES YOU.**

With that I challenge you to maximize your proficiency and brand as an inspirational leader.

Many of us have focused on how to inspire others, but do we know what inspires us? This exercise is a start to that introspective journey.

If we’re going to talk about inspiration, let’s at least define it.

*In Latin: to breathe life into.*

So now the question becomes, what breathes life into you?

Once you identify this inspirational link and share the experience with others, it can have tremendous impact toward knowing what breathes life into the people that you lock arms with each and every day.

It’s time to play offense and get to work.

### FIRST ACTION

Set a thirty-minute meeting with your team (no up-front agenda shared—this activity should be a surprise to maximize the impact).

### RECOMMENDED TIME

Thirty minutes (five-minute introduction, fifteen-minute activity, five-minute debrief discussion, and five-minute buffer).

### SUPPLIES NEEDED/SETUP

One sticky-back name tag and Sharpie marker (or pen) per person—you provide the supplies versus asking the team to bring them (keeps the surprise element). Lay the supplies out (one tag and marker per person) in advance of the meeting.

### PRE-MEETING PROCESS

**STEP ONE:** Think of a word that inspires you.

**STEP TWO:** Think of a story or memory that made you think of the word that inspires you.

*A quick time-out to share a personal example. My word is “impact.” Impact is meaningful to me because I saw the way my dad impacted countless lives as an educator, mentor, and coach to students that had largely been given up on in a continuation high school. When his former students approached*

*me years after my dad passed, I heard firsthand how he impacted their lives, and it gave me a glimpse into understanding the impact that's possible when you believe in people wholeheartedly. That is why impact is so important to me.*

Now it's your turn.

### IN-MEETING PROCESS

**STEP ONE:** Kick off the meeting with an introduction message on why you're gathered (center around the theme of inspiration). Proceed to share your "inspire word" and accompanying story/memory.

**STEP TWO:** Once done, ask each team member to think of their "inspire word" and the story/memory behind it. Once their word is identified, have them write it on their sticky name tag and place the tag high on their person (i.e., over the heart). Give them one minute for this step.

**STEP THREE:** Once everybody has their tag on, explain these quick introduction steps.

- Connect with as many people in the room as possible over the next ten minutes (leaving a few-minute buffer). The goal is three to five conversations at minimum.
- Walk them through the process. One person will share their word and story, then the other person will share (in the same pair).
- Once the second person has shared, move on to another person versus continuing the conversation with the first. Remember, the goal is to connect with three to five people versus connecting deeply with one.
- Ask if anybody has questions. If not, it's game time.

- Start the stopwatch or timer on your phone. Participate through at least a few conversations, then step aside to keep an eye on time, call a one-minute warning at the ten-minute mark, and call it a wrap at the twelve-minute mark (warning—it will be difficult to corral people based on the high energy in the room). Happens *every* time.

### POST-ACTIVITY/DEBRIEFING DISCUSSION

After the group takes their seats, ask these questions:

- How was that? You'll get one-word answers such as "good." Then push. "Tell me more." After a handful of open-ended responses, then ask:
  - » What themes or similarities did you notice during the exercise?
  - » While some people may say they wrote similar words down, like "family," keep probing beyond the specific words chosen, and focus more on the meaning behind the words. The response you'll eventually get is that all inspire words tie back to "people."

That's the anchor of the whole exercise. People are inspired by people. Even when I've seen a client write the word "cash" down as his word of inspiration (which was a first), on the side I asked him why. He immediately shared a story about his three daughters and wanting to provide a better childhood for them than he had. It always comes back to people.

Now that you know what inspires you and each member of your team, think of where else and with whom else you can share this same experience. Your leadership team? Customer gathering? Personal reunion?

Hope you enjoyed the first round of "Applying the Playbook." Onward.