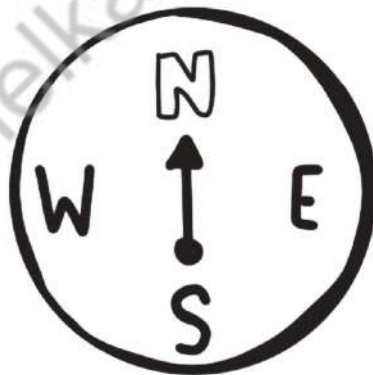


# - TRUTH # 1 -

A purpose-driven culture is  
a culture worth living



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## The Doors of Heaven

I was once presenting at a general manager conference in Burj Al Arab, UAE. At the end of my keynote, the doorman of the hotel who was assigned the task of opening and closing the ballroom door to ensure the attendees' seamless entrance and exit approached me.

"I overheard your keynote and I loved it, but I am just a doorman," he said. "I don't think I am that important. I just open and close doors."

I could see how unhappy he was.

"Do you have a house?" I asked.

"Well, yes, I do," he said.

"If I go knock on the door of that house right now, who will open the door?" I asked.

"My father," he whispered.

"Why?" I enquired.

"Well, because my father owns the house," he said.

"You see, when you open the doors of Burj Al Arab, it is not because you are a doorman, it is because you OWN the house," I proclaimed.

"Really?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," I replied. "Truth be told, you are more important than your general manager," I said.

"Really?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," I replied. "If your general manager doesn't show up to work, many might not even pay attention. But if you don't, the guests will feel it, your team will feel it, and results will be affected. In fact, you are more important than anyone else in this entire building," I said.

"Really?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," I replied. "You are the first and last impression of this entire hotel. You are a vital part of the guest experience. You are the beginning and the end," I passionately proclaimed.

I could certainly spot a twinkle in his eyes. He thanked me and left inspired, energized, and with a sense of purpose. That afternoon, while passing by the lobby, I saw him opening the doors of Burj Al Arab as if they were the doors of heaven.

## A Barber with a Purpose

Another unique encounter that moved me took place during an evening walk in Singapore. I visited a very modest two-chair barbershop called The Western Salon, managed by a 60-plus year old barber. This gentleman was the most zealous, vigorous, and enchanting barber. He had such a fascination with hair, but most importantly he had a genuine approach, humble character, and engaging passion. He asked me about my family and work, and together we debated life's most interesting topics. I looked at this barber and thought to myself, "Maybe someone at his age would rather be anywhere in the world than cutting hair for \$12 in a two-chair barber shop," so I couldn't help but ask him, "What is your secret to creating such amazing connections over cutting hair?"

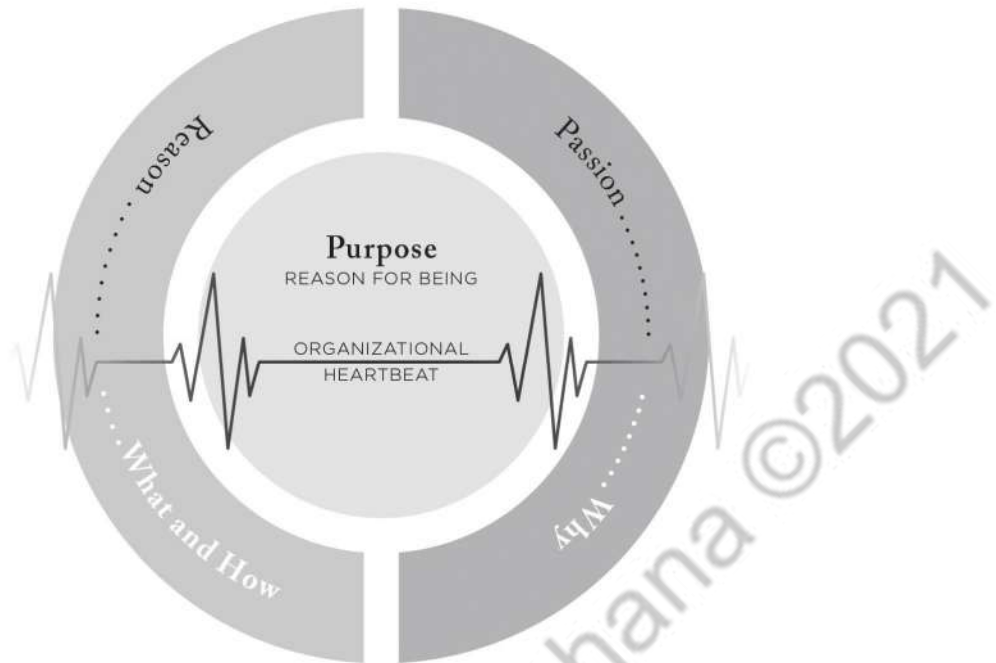
"I am not cutting hair," he said. "I beautify people."

He went on to passionately describe that it is never about cutting hair; it is about making people happy, building relationships, and touching lives, one person at a time. This barber's purpose empowers him to sing his song and be his best self, every day.

*When you find your purpose,  
you will show up constantly as  
the best version of yourself to uplift those  
you serve, lead, and love.*

## The One Key Ingredient to Endure and Thrive

Your organization's core purpose is by far the one key ingredient for it to endure and thrive. This is not your vision, mission, or values, but it incorporates the essence of these labels to describe in few words the organization's heartbeat, reason for being, and noble aim. The truth is, your purpose powers your **Reason** (forming effective judgment about what and how you do what you do) and **Passion** (powering why you do what you do).



**Figure 1.** The Integration of What and How (Reason) With Why (Passion)

As my fellow Lebanese philosopher Gibran Khalil Gibran says in his book *The Prophet*, “Your reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul. If either your sails or your rudder be broken, you can but toss and drift, or else be held at a standstill in mid-seas.”<sup>18</sup> Sustaining your true identity as well as stimulating progress requires you to be guided by a purpose. It is that same purpose that will integrate your reason (what and how) with your passion (why) to guide your organizational drive and impact.

### **True North**

During my workshops, I ask participants to close their eyes and point north with their right hands. Once done, I ask them to open their eyes and look around the room. In addition to the confusion and laughter generated by hands pointing in all directions, they then realize how vital it is to be aligned and have a clear purpose to bring into line with their talents, resources, and energy.

In 2004, a group of my colleagues and I were escorted to visit the construction site of Burj Khalifa in Dubai, UAE. I saw hundreds of workers engaged in what looked like building a fence. I approached one of the builders and asked him what he was doing, and he said clearly, “I am building a wall.” I then asked the person next to him, engaged in exactly the same activity, the same question, but this person looked at me with a sense of pride and said, “I am building the tallest tower in the entire world.” You see, the first worker was only focused on the “what and how” part of the job (**Reason**, as in building a wall), while the other integrated the what and how with the “why” of the job (**Passion**, as in building the tallest tower in the entire world). This is one of the major reasons why some companies or individuals fail while others compete, grow, and multiply. The problem is that most companies around the globe know “what and how” they do what they do, but few make that integration with “why” they do what they do in order to unlock their core purpose.

$$\textit{Purpose} = \textit{Reason} + \textit{Passion}$$

### **The Eternal Shape of Success**

It is time to find your true north—your purpose, the vital condition of success. Your purpose is your legacy and impact— that inner compass that enables you to reorient your actions when needed and ensure you remain grounded and true to who you really are. It is the idea of *who* you are as a company and *why* you exist.<sup>19</sup> Working for a greater objective, a noble goal, ignites people’s passion, motivation, and energy.<sup>20</sup> It shapes your long-term choices, calibrates your actions, feelings, and thinking, enables emotional self-mastery, and drives you to be and live your best.<sup>21</sup>

The EY Beacon Institute and *Harvard Business Review* conducted research that revealed that organizations with a strong sense of purpose promote employee satisfaction, loyalty, and engagement, are able to transform and innovate better, achieve sustainable growth, and deliver higher-quality products and services.<sup>22</sup> Jim Collins and Jerry Porras, authors of *Built to Last*, did a great job over a six-year research period to show the positive impact of a core purpose on organizations’ capabilities

to win and ensure sustainable performance. The authors revealed that visionary companies are not centered around great ideas or charismatic leadership, but are first and foremost driven by a core ideology, inspired by a purpose to enable ideas, leadership, progress, and enduring success.<sup>23</sup> In his book *Excellence Wins*, the legend and leader in the service world, and cofounder of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company Horst Schulze writes, “The most important thing a new employee can learn is not how to tighten a bolt or log into the network or find the first-aid kit on the wall. It is rather to grasp who we are, what our dreams are, and why we exist as an organization.”<sup>24</sup> He adds, “If you don’t believe people have a bedrock yearning for purpose and relationship, then you may turn into something very dark—an exploiter of people...people quickly come to distrust you...they begin to shrivel on the inside, or else they run away to a healthier environment.”<sup>25</sup>

One of the most inspiring characterizations of purpose comes from theologian Theodore Thornton Munger in his 1880 book *On the Threshold*, in which he states, “A purpose is the eternal condition of success. Nothing will take its place. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men of talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is a proverb; the ‘mute, inglorious Milton’ is not a poetic creation. The chance of events, the ‘push of circumstances,’ will not. The natural unfolding of faculties will not. Education will not.... There is no road to success but through a clear, strong purpose. Purpose underlies character, culture, position—attainment of whatever sort.”<sup>26</sup>

## **The Journey**

To enable greatness, you have to clearly integrate the reason (what and how) with passion (why), and then weave that purpose into the DNA of your people’s jobs. For example, you are not in the business of cooking meals, selling cars, or nursing patients. That’s the functional part of the job. Instead, you are in the business of inspiring senses, selling memories, and saving lives. It is a totally different mindset that will transform the way you cook, sell cars, or take care of your patients.

Truth #1 - A purpose-driven culture is a culture worth living

**Starbucks** is not in the business of selling coffee; they are in the business of “inspiring and nurturing the human spirit—one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time.”

**Uber** is not in the business of transportation; they are in the business of “setting the world in motion.”

**Google** is not in the business of selling Internet-related services and products; they are in the business of “organizing the world’s information and making it universally accessible and useful.”

**Microsoft** is not in the business of selling computer products, software, and related services; they are in the business of “empowering every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.”

**Nike** is not in the business of selling sports footwear, apparel, equipment, accessories, and services; they are in the business of “bringing inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.”

**The Ritz-Carlton** is not in the business of managing luxury hotels; they are in the business of “inspiring life’s most meaningful journeys.”

**Nordstrom** is not in the business of selling clothing, shoes, and accessories; they are in the business of “being relevant in the customers’ lives and to form lifelong relationships.”

**Kellogg’s** is not in the business of manufacturing food; they are in the business of “nourishing families so they can flourish and thrive.”

The beauty of the core purpose lies in the fact that you can translate it to every position within your organization. During our workshops, I ask participants to define the “what” of their jobs (Reason) and then identify the “Why” (Passion). I can’t sufficiently describe the internal drive participants exhibit when they integrate reason with passion to craft their purpose. Think of it; imagine you work as a hotel’s doorman,

opening and closing doors all day long. That's depressing isn't it? Unless you think of it differently.

## Crafting Your Purpose

### Step 1. Define the “what” (Reason)

Start by defining what you do (the what). The organization's “what” revolves around the products you sell and services you offer. Your people's “what” is represented by their job titles or roles.

### Step 2. Define the “why” (Passion)

Now that you have defined the what, think of the rationale for why you do what you do (the why, your noble goal). Find and write down all your answers, as long as it revolves around your noble goal or the contribution you make.

### Step 3. Connect the dots

Find the patterns in your answers and blend it into a holistic six- to eight-word statement; the core purpose. Ensure that the statement fits the criteria below.

<b>P</b>	<i>Purposeful</i>	Highlights the most important reason for being and embodies all dimensions of your business.
<b>U</b>	<i>Uplifting</i>	Connects with the hearts and heads of your people.
<b>R</b>	<i>Relevant</i>	Aligns with what you believe and stand for; your ideology.
<b>P</b>	<i>Persuasive</i>	Convincing, authentic, genuine, and concise (six to eight words).
<b>O</b>	<i>Outward focus</i>	Focused on those you lead and serve.
<b>S</b>	<i>Stimulative</i>	Inspires progress and stretches aspirations.
<b>E</b>	<i>Enduring</i>	Permanent and timeless source of guidance.



## Truth #1 - A purpose-driven culture is a culture worth living

At the end of this Truth, you will find two worksheets. The first will guide you to craft the purpose of your organization, and the second will guide your people to find purpose in their own specific jobs and devise a few vital actions to bring that purpose to life.

For example, a luxury resort I worked with considers their “what” (Step 1/Reason) as renting beach villas and selling tailor-made hospitality products and services. When I asked “why” (Step 2/Passion), the team came up with answers such as:

- To help guests disconnect with the world and connect with what really matters.
- To build strong relationships and gain truly loyal guests who will come back again for more memories.
- To enable others to live unique moments and discover the true meaning of life.
- To deliver unique experiences that last a lifetime.
- To inspire guests with enriched experiences.

We debated those statements, blended them, and ultimately the organization crafted the core purpose (Step 3) as *“Inspiring lives and creating endless memories.”* Following the launch of the ideology, the colleagues used the second worksheet to craft their own job’s purpose and in the process identified three winning habits to bring their job purpose to life and contribute to the success of the organization.

I recently coached an executive who identified his role as a hotel manager, a great citizen, and a proud father (Step 1/Reason). When I asked why (Step 2/Passion), he shared the below:

- To love my son deeply and be a vital part of his life.
- To be remembered as someone who instills the right principles in others.

- To define my professional success through the growth of those I work with.
- To influence my community and leave a productive mark in the world.
- To enjoy the moment, keep moving forward in a positive fashion, and become the best person I can be.

Together we blended those statements, and ultimately, he crafted his core purpose (Step 3) as “*To be a positive force in the lives of others.*” He then identified five winning habits to bring his purpose to life.

### **Final Note: Stimulating Progress**

What is your purpose? Once you discover the answer to this question, you and your organization will never stop stimulating change and progress as long as there is reason and passion left in our world. Gibran Khalil Gibran said it best: “Among the hills, when you sit in the cool shade of the white poplars, sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows—then let your heart say in silence, ‘God rests in reason.’ And when the storm comes, and the mighty wind shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky—then let your heart say in awe, ‘God moves in passion.’ And since you are a breath in God’s sphere, and a leaf in God’s forest, you too should rest in reason and move in passion.”<sup>18</sup>

Don’t fall into complacency in today’s fast-paced world.

There is more to your organization than making money.

There is more to your job than a title.

Yes! God rests in reason.

Yes! God moves in passion.

Whatever your occupation, title, or status might be, walk, lead, and serve with purpose.

Purpose...NOW, more than ever.

Truth #1 - A purpose-driven culture is a culture worth living

### Tool # 1: Organizational Purpose Worksheet

**Instructions:** Use this worksheet to craft the purpose of the organization. Ensure that the final statement fits the shared criteria (refer to the fundamentals of a core purpose above).

**Step 1. Define the “what” (Reason)**

Define what your organization offers. The “what” revolves around the products you sell and services you offer.

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**Step 2. Define the “why” (Passion)**

Jot down the rationale for why you do what you do (the why); your noble goal.

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**Patterns:**

Find the patterns from the reasons you jotted down in Step 2.

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**Step 3. Connect the dots (Purpose)**

Blend your answers/patterns into a holistic six- to eight-word statement.

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### Tool # 2: Job Purpose Worksheet

**Instructions:** Use this worksheet to guide your team members to find the purpose of their job. First, define the main function of the job (job title, job role) then explore the “purpose” (six- to eight-word statement). Finally, determine three to five winning habits to bring the purpose to life.

FUNCTION	PURPOSE
List the <b>Function</b> of your job (What you do?)	List the <b>Purpose</b> of your job (Why do you do what you do?)
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTRIBUTION</b></p> (List the few vital winning <b>habits</b> to translate the purpose into action?)	

# SUCCESS

"WORKING"  
FOR A GREATER  
OBJECTIVE



"I AM BUILDING  
THE TALLEST TOWER"  
IN THE ENTIRE WORLD



## PURPOSE

What?

Why?

How?

## PASSION

## REASON

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