



Why Leaders Eat Last

Ellen Rohr and [Simon Sinek](#)

Ellen: Hey, hey, hey it's Ellen Rohr, the Plumber's Wife, turned business makeover expert. Welcome back to Business Makeover 2014. This is our opportunity to make this year our best year yet. We have 21 days and 21 experts, (spoiler alert, there'll be more than 21 because I reached out to my favorite people, experts, business leaders, philosophers and they all said yes). I'm happy to be spending time with them and you, so deep breath, let's get ready to go.

I couldn't be happier to introduce today's experts. This is a best friend of mine forever, Simon Sinek, who I want to introduce. He has a brand new book that is going to rock your world. Let me share a little about Simon before introducing him. I met Simon at a women's conference. I saw him speak and I loved him. He posed this one word question, why? That changed my life and since then we've recorded some training together and got to know each other a little better.

Simon, ever since then I feel like you're on my shoulder everyday. For those of you who don't know who Simon is, he's an optimist. He believes in a bright future and our ability to build it together. He's best known for popularizing the concept of why and for the talk he gave on the subject he became the second most watched talk of all time, on [TED.com](#), it was amazing.

He's described as a visionary thinker with a rare intellect and I know that to be true. Simon teaches leaders and organizations how to inspire people with a bold goal to help build the world in which the vast majority of people go home every day, feeling fulfilled by their work. That's your why. Simon is leading a movement to inspire people to do things that inspire them.

Simon: It's nice to be here.

Ellen: This program is all about breakthrough. As I was putting it together I asked myself what it would take for me to make this my best year yet. I'm feeling older and if I don't focus on those things that I must do or need to do, the time is going to slip away and that's really what put this itch in me together. So I thought that I would start by getting inspired and I would do that by talking to my favorite people and thereby the program was born. I'd love you to start with a moment in your life where it all changed for you, where your philosophy met the reality and you realized you had to move in a different direction.

Simon: It started a few years ago with pain. My story is similar to many. I started a small business. It was a small marketing strategy consulting business and for anyone who starts a business you have the statistic that hangs over your head, in that 90% of all small businesses fail in the first three years and if you're a little competitive that's fun. We did okay the first year with the second being a bit of a struggle, did okay the third year and by the fourth year I had beaten the statistic.

I joined a very small club in America, being a company that had survived. My fourth year was very different, because I lost my passion for what I was doing. People gave me stupid advice, like do what you love and I was doing the same thing but I didn't love it anymore. There was a confluence of events, for which I'm grateful and I made this discovery. I discovered that every single organization on the planet, even our own careers, always function on the same three levels.

1. What you do
2. How you do it
3. Why you do it

Everybody knows what they do, and I knew what I did. I knew the products I sold and the services I offered. Some know how they do it, I knew how I did it and I could tell you how I thought I was better or special or stood out from my competition. However, I couldn't tell you why I was doing it. I became obsessed with that question. Not only was I able to figure out my why, but I was able to help others figure out theirs.

Not only did it restore my passion to levels I had never experienced before, but I was able to pass that passion on to those around me and my friends, who started making crazy life changes and inviting me to their homes to share with their friends. It was very organic.

Ellen: It was fun because I met you when you were early in on the process. You had written a book and crafted your philosophy, but the salons, inviting people over and having conversations about the why was really developing then and it was exciting and inspiring to me. When I describe it to people I say for me it's my mission, my purpose and what I have to do in this lifetime. Maybe you could give an example or two of someone who's really nailed it.

Simon: Sure. It's bigger than what your product will do. It stands on a level above your products or services, just like great leaders seem to stand on a level above their office. Nelson Mandela was bigger than just the President of South Africa. John F. Kennedy was bigger than just the President of the United States. These people stood for something. They became symbols of something.

You look at Apple computers and they aren't just a computer company. They believe in challenging the status quo and thinking differently. They become symbolic for all those who see themselves the same way. That doesn't mean that they're the only people who see themselves that way and drawn to their products, but the most loyal, the people who "love" Apple, really do identify personally with the why.

Southwest Airlines is the champion for the common man. Lots of people fly Southwest but those who really love Southwest, the loyal ones, they are the ones who see themselves in the same light.

Ellen: Let me ask this regarding Apple, for instance. Sometimes the leader of the organization or leadership, the person who has the most compelling why really is the one who drives it through the organization. In Apple's case, Steve Jobs really was that guy. **What does it mean to a company like Apple when the leader is gone?**

Simon: It means the standard is higher to maintain that banner. It's not an instantaneous death sentence when the founder or leader of the why leaves or dies, but it does make for a higher standard. Many companies have done it, but it does make for a struggle. Usually, unfortunately, what they do often in these large companies is promote their COO or CFO. They promote the operations person into a visionary position and that's where things start to falter.

There are plenty of companies that have survived and in fact, Southwest is a great example of that, they continue to carry the banner.

Ellen: So if the why becomes compelling enough then we have a movement?

Simon: Correct.

Ellen: With our relationship, I focused and you even helped me do it, we did a series of training sessions. How great was this, I got to work with you, we recorded it and made it available. The coolest part of it was that I got to go through the work that's required to nail down what your why is. I believe that business is a path to peace, prosperity and freedom. Freedom is why I do what I do. I believe that if you are at all inclined to have a business of your own than you should pursue, because you can have a deep resonating affect on your own freedom, financial lifestyle, your family's freedom and across the planet, because there's only a few ways to distribute goods and services.

- There's crime, which is sometimes an approachable way to get things done.
- There's government, which I believe in. The government should take a role in distributing goods and services.
- There's business, and when we trade freely with one another, that is a path to greatest freedom on this planet.

That's why I do what I do. You can tell we haven't talked for a while I'm even more fired up than ever about it. Thank you so much for dragging me through the process.

Simon: I'm sitting here feeling very inspired.

Ellen: Isn't that the point?

Simon: It's wonderful.

Ellen: That's the thing is that... what struck me as you were talking about as being an entrepreneur where you lose the passion for it. You can't get up and out of bed if all it's going to mean is checking your voicemail for a customer issue or trying to get someone on your team in uniform. These things will suck the life out of you unless there's something more.

Simon: That's the opposite of freedom that's drudgery, slavery.

Ellen: You never needed to go further than your first book, because the message is so pure, simple and clean and I think that's evidenced by what happened with your TED talk. Tell me about that, because last time I checked there were 13 plus million views.

Simon: That's true.

Ellen: How did that come together?

Simon: Once again it was organic. I believe that the reason to show up and do anything is with a giving mentality and attitude. When you show up to take people sense it and when you show up to give, people can sense it. At the end of the day the human brain evaluates all the information that's coming at it in terms of life and death, safety and survival, so we don't trust the takers and we want to be around the givers and it has to be genuine.

So, when you show up to pitch your business, are you showing up to win or to help someone? When you show up to give your talk are you showing up to look smart or get people to follow you on Twitter or are you showing up to give them information that would benefit them? I learned that a long time ago and no matter when I show up to give a talk I show up to give. On that day it was no exception. I showed up to give not to the greater TED audience, but to give to the 50 people in the room.

Ellen: Let me also point out that yours does not dazzle, in terms of its technical display.

Simon: No and that's what's funny about it. I meet so many people who get upset because their PowerPoint was on the wrong slide and they think it has destroyed their chance of having any popularity on TED. Let me tell you, the video quality of mine is terrible and at the beginning of the talk the microphone broke on camera and they have to give me an entirely new microphone in the middle of the talk. Everything went technically wrong, and yet it doesn't seem to bother people because the message stands out.

At the end of the day I didn't expect that it would be as popular as it has and didn't even expect them to put it onto the main website on TED.com, it was a TED x I gave. I found out about it the week they did it, so everything has been very organic. There's no PR company and like I said, when you show up to give to an audience and you connect with them, people watching it online can feel that as well.

Ellen: One of the things that inspires me about you is your willingness to be detached to the outcome. You're going to do what it is that you need to do. You're going to focus on your why. Why don't you share your why and then go back to this point. **How do you express your why?**

Simon: It's to inspire people to do what inspires them, so together we can change our world. I wake up everyday to do that. I believe in a world in which the vast majority of people can wake-up every single morning inspired to go to work and come home everyday feeling safe and fulfilled by the work that they've done.

Ellen: **So it's not just entrepreneurs, your message is farther reaching?**

Simon: It's for anybody.

Ellen: **Do you set goals and have a business plan? Do you move in that direction?**

Simon: I do have goals, not so much in a specific business plan. For better or for worse, I believe in the destination and that the path is windy. Most business plans set the path absent to destination. I have a destination set and I'm open to any path to take. There are a few projects I'm working on. We're building our own MBA program, literally a fully accredited MBA. We're dissatisfied and frustrated that the current business schools are teaching people how to be managers but they aren't teaching people how to be leaders.

Instead of trying to rage against the machine we figured that we should just do it ourselves. So I have an amazing entrepreneur who's doing it with me, as well as a retired three-star Marine Corp. general who believes this needs to be done also. The three of us are going to do it. We're going to build this program from scratch.

Ellen: I'm so excited to hear that and I know this is going to sound low brow. On Shark Tank the other day, they had a couple MBA students who were presenting their product and it was a cute woman's accessory thing to the Shark's. The product wasn't mind boggling, there may be a market for it, but the arrogance these two young people had in facing these people who had real

world experience, whether or not you like Mark Cuban or Barbara Corcoran, you have to give it to them that they've been in the game on the field.

It was so fascinating to me that no one in their career told these young people about how to have humility and to watch the hubris when you're 22 years old. I was shocked that this was the brightest and the best and I know they were just young people.

Simon: They're bright but may not be the best.

Ellen: Yes, but it dawned on me that we aren't doing it the right way, that was the thought I had. There has to be a better way to train kids to go out and play.

Simon: That's true. Let's get back to this idea of disconnection, because it was an important lesson learned and I learned it the hard way. As an entrepreneur I was very emotionally connected to all the advice I gave. I had a genuine desire for my clients to do well and the advice I gave them I believed was the right advice. Sometimes as an outsider I could more easily see the forest for the trees of their own business and see the mistakes they were making. I wanted them to do well so I would give them advice and if they wouldn't follow it I would get upset.

I would give them options and we'd discuss things and I remember getting angry and upset, I'd go home and when I was off the phone I'd be like, why are they being such idiots. Then it occurred to me, it's not my business it's theirs and I'm getting stressed out about something that, at the end of the day, the minute they stop paying my bills and saying we're done, I don't talk to them anymore. The minute I started emotionally disconnecting myself from it, not only was I a happier person but I found that I accidentally shifted the accountability.

For example, someone would call and I'd say listen, based on my opinion I think you should do XY&Z. They would say Simon I'm not going to do that. So I'd say okay it's your business do whatever you want. They said what? So I'd say I want you to do well, but I have to be honest with you, if you make all the decisions and you go bankrupt I'm not going to lose sleep because it's your business and every decision you make for your business is the right decision because it's yours.

As soon as I did that, suddenly they started listening to me more, not because I wanted them to but because I shifted the accountability. When we fight hard and start screaming, yelling and taking emotional ownership over the advice we give, we are accountable. When we let go of it we're shifting the accountability and ultimately you want the business owner to be accountable for their own business.

Ellen: Can I share something that springboards from that, to an experience that I had with one of my clients who was dealing with one of their team members? The client and I were in the office and one of the team members comes and says listen, I want to green light this particular decision, etc. The owner says great let me know what happens with that, we'll visit when we meet next about that. The employee left and I turned to my client and said, that doesn't sound like a decision that you would green light to me, it sounds counter to how I would assume you would make that decision. He said to me, I can live with whatever happens there. I loved it.

Simon: What it teaches when you find is when you shift accountability, people actually take the work more seriously because it's their butts on the line. When you make all the decisions, do this, don't do this, let me see it, I want to have final approval then what you're saying is my ass is on the line. People don't feel emotionally vested because you're the one who's going to make the final decision. If you let them make the final decision the quality goes up because the accountability goes up.

Ellen: Yes, and I'm okay with the winding road me too. Often it's the detour that's interesting. That's where the story is and where the books are written and legends told, it's okay to take a little bit of a winding road to see where we come out, because if it doesn't work, and I know you've worked with people so I'm not just being flip here, but if someone dies it's a different standard than if we have to call someone back and give them their money because the order didn't go through.

For most of the time someone's life isn't on the line. People don't stop breathing or start bleeding uncontrollably. Sometimes they do and you've been in situations like that. Let's shift to that, because you talked about being an entrepreneur and that big breakthrough moment for you. Like I said, you had the TED talk and the direction your career was going, you really could have raised that flag and marched forward forever in this lifetime and have done all of us a tremendous service on this planet.

However, something else happened to you a few years ago and you were telling me about a trip to Afghanistan. **Would you share that?**

Simon: Sure. I do a lot of work with the Air Force and the general in charge of the mobility forces said, 'Simon, you've gotten to know us quite well but I would really love for you to see our men and women perform their duty in theater. Would you be willing to go to Iraq or Afghanistan?' I said sure. They sent me to Afghanistan. The goal was for me to experience different kinds of missions and do an air drop while we were in the country and then get out of dodge and come home.

Ellen: You were jumping from a plane?

Simon: No, an air drop meaning we deliver supplies out of the planes. We parachuted supplies, huge drums of gas and water and ammunition, which slide from the back of the plane and get delivered to the forward operating base. It was interesting.

It was an intense trip because basically everything went wrong. I was traveling with two officer escorts from the Air Force. On our way down, we landed in the middle of the night and weren't on the ground 10 minutes, hadn't even gotten off the plane and the base came under rocket attack. Three rockets hit the base, 100 yards off our nose. This is how my experience began.

Strangely I was relaxed, probably because everyone else was but it starts your brain thinking, what else could happen? We went on the air drop the next morning, which was incredible. We flew out about an hour, dropped to 2000 feet or lower and delivered supplies to the Army and flew to base. Then the goal was to get out of dodge. We tried to get on a plane and got bumped because they needed more space for wounded warriors.

We tried to grab another flight and that's when we found out there weren't any other flights leaving and there wouldn't be another one leaving for where we needed to go for another four days. This was Saturday and there was nothing until Tuesday and there was no guarantee we'd get on that. Remember, I hadn't told my family where I was going because I didn't want them to worry and all of a sudden, everything in my body sank. I remember being completely depressed and becoming obsessed with my own comfort and happiness and safety, not caring about anyone else.

We went back to our room and I lay down and closed my eyes. We'd barely slept the previous few days, so I was exhausted. I couldn't sleep my mind was rushing and then suddenly my mind started playing tricks on me. I became paranoid and convinced there would be another rocket attack, except the next one would land wherever I was. I was convinced. I hated my life and

realized I was living a full life compressed into a day, that we mistake the exciting experiences we have for being happy with our lives and being fulfilled.

I had an amazing day that day and saw things most people never get to see and yet, here I was I wasn't happy, so we mistake these exciting moments for fulfillment but they aren't the same. I realized it was because I lack purpose. I had no reason to be there, so I'm in the purpose business and I decided to start trying to invent a purpose. You're here to tell their story and go back to share with people. It didn't work. I literally lay there completely depressed, regretting saying yes and everything.

At that time I realized what it was like to live in an unfulfilling job where you wake up everyday and don't want to go to work. Then I gave up. I decided that if I had to be stuck there, then at least I would volunteer and give talks to whomever they wanted me to talk to and then go back to those I'd met and help them carry boxes, sweep floors, no matter how menial the labor, I just wanted to serve those who served others.

As soon as I made that decision I was completely calm and relaxed, even excited to stay there. It was an amazing experience where I learned that fulfillment comes from service. As if it were a movie the timing was uncanny, just as I had come to this conclusion the door flies open with Major Throckmorton and he says I have us on a plane, it's been redirected we have to go now! So we rushed out the door and grabbed the other officer who was in the gym, he can't shower, he just grabs on his uniform and we literally run to the flight line.

Just as we get to the flight line, we can see the C17 that will take us home and the flight line shuts down out of respect in ceremony for a fallen soldier. Whenever they have these ceremonies they stop everything out of respect, so we sat on the curb and waited. I told the guys what I went through in the bed and cried like a baby. Most people don't realize this about the military but crying is fine. Finally, when the cord went up and we walked to get on the plane we would be the only three passengers aboard this empty C17 and we'd be carrying one piece of cargo, and that was the fallen soldier for whom they'd had the ceremony.

We stood on the plane as the Army brought on the flag draped casket and flew an overnight flight for 9 ½ hours just us, the crew and this single casket in the middle of the cargo bay. Once we got in the air we all sort of staked out some real estate to try and sleep. I blew up my air mattress and pulled out my sleeping bag and slept 10-15 feet from this casket. It was the greatest honor I'd ever had in my entire life, to bring home someone who knows a lot more about service than I ever will. It taught me this lesson by the time I reached home, just how much it matters to serve those who serve others.

It didn't happen immediately. For a few months after I'd returned home I was really short-tempered and was in a bad place. I kept thinking it was because I was exhausted and it wasn't, it was because I was taking business from people who were takers. It's because I was working with people who only wanted to take-take-take from others and I didn't know why but it made me feel sick. It made me angry. I didn't want to be there and all I would do was think about the money. As soon as I realized that we completely changed all our systems so I would never work with people like that again or at least try very hard not to.

We work now using a very strict screening process, where anyone we work with has to be devoted to the good of others. They may not have it down perfect or be good at it and the organization may be dysfunctional, but they have a genuine desire to do the right thing for people. We've never looked back ever since making those changes, we've been able to maintain our passion and our work has been more fulfilling because of it.

It was all because of this trip to Afghanistan and I'm eternally grateful for it.

Ellen: What a fantastic story.

Simon: Yes. It also set me on this path to try and understand trust and cooperation, because the trust and cooperation these amazing men and women in uniform have for each other when they're in a situation in combat is incredible. I met people who risked their lives for others, who may not have come home for their families so that others may survive. I asked them, why did you do it? They all gave me the same answer, which was, because they would have done it for me.

Ellen: It's interesting, when we talk about why we're in a country, it may be a complete disconnect to why these men and women are doing what they do.

Simon: They do it for each other.

Ellen: Yes.

Simon: In the military they give medals to people who are willing to sacrifice themselves so others may gain. In business we give bonuses to people who are willing to sacrifice others so we may gain. We have it backwards.

Ellen: That's a moving story, thank you for sharing.

Simon: You're welcome.

Ellen: So now you have to tell the tale and talk about leadership, which causes you to write *Leaders Eat Last*. Let's talk about how you moved that into a way to not only tell their story but to capture your refined purpose.

Simon: I was inspired by them and the lessons they learn and the lessons of leadership in the military are valuable to all of us. They are very exaggerated in the military because it truly is a matter of life and death, whereas, for us it's not. But the biology and anthropology of the trust and cooperation are the same, so their lessons are much more stark when you're in a life and death situation.

I spent a lot of time with the Air Force and with the Marines to try and understand what makes them tick. I sat with a Marine Corp General and asked him, why are the Marines better at what they do than everyone else? He looked at me and said, 'officers eat last.' Basically, if you go to any chow hall on any Marine base in the world, you'll see they line up in rank order. Nobody tells them they have to it's not in any rule book, it's just that they do and the most junior eat first.

It's a symbolic gesture but it's almost like a parent feeds their children before they feed themselves. When you're thirsty you give water to your child before taking any yourself. It's a symbol of caring, of sacrifice and the cost of leadership is self interest, a biological, anthropological fact. So, it's the leaders who eat last and it's the opposite of what we're told in the entrepreneurial world. In the entrepreneurial world we're always told pay yourself first, but here the Marines are saying the exact opposite.

The reality is it's the opportunity to put the well-being of those in your care before yourself and that's what biologically and anthropologically is the underpinning of trust and cooperation.

Ellen: It allows the people whom you're leading to learn and understand how it is they're to lead, because in the armed services when you lose a leader, we know who the next leader will be and how they know what to do.

Simon: Everybody steps up, correct. The funny thing is, they don't make movies about good leaders because the movie would be boring, about Bradley, Marshall or Eisenhower, there are no movies about them, because everything just gets done. They make movies about bad leaders like Patton, Master and Commander. They make movies of the guys who bark orders and become such heroes where without them nothing would have worked. That's not good leadership that's bad leadership, this command and control nonsense. It makes for an exciting movie and therefore, we model ourselves after these characters.

Ellen: You're right. I didn't even think of it in terms of the bad military leaders. Again, because I'm kind of low brow, I go to cartoons and the funnies in the Sunday paper where Dagwood Bumsted is still being yelled at by his boss. Fred Flintstones boss would have steam pouring out of his ears and we have this image. When you get handed the keys now you're a manager that that's like your default understanding of what leadership really is.

Simon: That's exactly right. So, what I attempted to do with *Leaders Eat Last* is two things.

First, explain the biology and anthropology of trust and cooperation. Why do we trust each other? You can't just tell people to trust you. You can't just give a PowerPoint and they'll trust you, and you can't instruct two people to cooperate it doesn't work that way they're feelings. So where do those feelings come from and how do you create an environment in which those feelings of trust and cooperation naturally thrive? Where does that come from? Why do we have leaders in the first place? What is the historical background, the anthropological background of leadership?

I attempted to uncover that and armed with that information, then take a stark look at our current work society and say, why isn't it working? Why are most people not fulfilled? Why do we have layoffs, they are counter to the concept of *Leaders Eat Last* and really breaking down how the unfortunate, uncomfortably high number of company cultures are actually more likely to breed paranoia, cynicism and self-interest than they are trust and cooperation. What is our responsibility as business owners and quite frankly, as a society, to change the course that we're on?

Ellen: So, one of the simple ways to demonstrate that kind of leadership is *Leaders Eat Last*. **What are some other suggestions or tactics for someone who's listening today and is inspired to question how they're doing things and maybe consider doing things in a different way? What are some other ways you could recommend that a leader might discipline themselves to change their approach to have a better more leadership-centric as opposed to intimidation-centric relationship with their team?**

Simon: The best analogy is a parent. Long before there were companies or before there were even nation states, we had the tribe. All we had were families. The best analogy to good leadership is good parenting, which is that the responsibility of a parent is to educate and look after and fill their child with all the skills and open opportunities necessary, discipline them when necessary so that they may grow up to achieve more than we could have achieved for ourselves.

Every parent wants the same thing and every leader should want the same thing as well, which is to look after their people, offer them a safe place where they may build their confidence, learn how to do things, be allowed to fail and be picked up with the confidence that their parents will be there to look after them if something goes horribly wrong, discipline them when necessary so that they may also achieve something greater than you could have achieved yourself. That is true leadership.

Ellen: And to achieve independence. Like, I told my son once upon a time, you're always welcome to move back home because here's the deal, I know you don't want to but I want you to know you could. They want to be independent and move on.

Simon: At the end of the day we don't do everything for our children. We don't do their homework for them. We teach them how to do it. There are multiple ways to teach them things. You can let them fail and try again. You can pick them up. You can show them how to do it. There are numbers of ways and we do all of them. Like I said, good parenting isn't an instantaneous process. You have a child and you're not instantly a good parent, it's the same for good leadership there's no re-org and no sudden dramatic large scale implementation of anything it's a practice of trial and error with lots and lots of little things.

It starts by putting the good of others first. The practice of it can come in many facets of your life. For example, say please and thank you to the barista. Ask them how they're doing and genuinely care about the answer. Great leaders ask you how you're doing and they genuinely care about the answer. When you see someone rushing for the elevator, consider pretending you can't reach the open button, reach for it and hit the open button. If you're going to be late for your meeting because of it fine, that's called sacrifice and when you walk in two minutes late and everyone looks at you like you've done something wrong, say sorry I'm late guys held the elevator for someone.

It's inspiring to hear that you did something nice for someone. That doesn't mean to be a martyr. It doesn't mean to continue doing things that leaves you in pain, but it does mean that you do things that when it counts that you're willing to sacrifice your comfort so that others may gain, when it counts.

Ellen: One of my favorite go-to things to do is if I don't know what to do and even when I do I've learned so much by doing this so I do it all the time, but I ride along. I work with plumbing, heating, cooling, electrical, the dirty jobs guys. I love to ride along with the service technician and glove up to carry stuff. I have no technical skills, but what I find is the stuff that's happening in the office is often really stupid when you get out in the field, which is great to know, but the most important part is that you make a friend.

You may find that they're into Frisbee golf and you didn't know that or what their kids are and that one has a learning disability that they're dealing with. You get to know who they are and then they trust you and they say this video we're supposed to plug in at the customer's house it's really stupid and then you go oh, I'll take it. Riding along, if you don't spend time with them it's like your kids, the concept of quality time...

Simon: And the more you do that for them, the more the leader does that for their people, the more the people feel safe and feel that their leader has their back, the more likely they are to do the same for the customer. It has nothing to do with who you hire that produces great customer service, it's how people feel when they come to work that produces great customer service. I have flown on an airline and boarded not in my boarding class number, I had the audacity to go one early and the gate agent screamed at me, sir it's not your turn.

I said why do you have to talk to me that way? She said sir if I don't follow the rules I'm going to lose my job. In other words, what she told me was, she doesn't feel safe from her own leaders. Whereas, the reason everybody who flies Southwest Airlines is in such a good mood and the reason they're so good at customer service is because they don't fear their own leaders. If our people fear us that will trickle down into terrible customer service.

If our people feel that we have their backs then that will trickle down into the best customer service, because they feel empowered to make the right decisions and not feel afraid of us.

Ellen: That's so beautiful. It's easier than what we're making it, perhaps but it does require that we set down this stereotype of what we think a leader, a boss or manager is supposed to be.

Simon: Yes, stop watching movies for free keys on how to be a good leader. Don't watch Master and Commander.

Ellen: We have time for a story and then we'll have to wrap up. A story of someone who captured this or what moment caused you to go, that guy gets it.

Simon: There's a guy named Charlie Kim, who runs a company called Next Jump in New York City. Charlie runs a tech company and every year he would know at the end of the financial year he would notice people start getting nervous. He could feel this fear, because in the industry it's common you would have layoffs to make the numbers. Charlie is a different kind of leader. He understood that you aren't supposed to sacrifice the people to save the numbers you're supposed to sacrifice the numbers to save the people.

Charlie came up with this bold plan called 'lifetime employment', which is if you want to, you can work at the company forever and no one gets fired because the numbers are down. No one is laid off. He did away with the concept of layoffs and you won't even get fired if you have performance issues, just like a player who goes through a slump, you get coached that's what happens. The only thing that can have you removed from the company is if you harm others and violate their high standards.

Ellen: Or if you choose to go.

Simon: Right and if you choose to go then they'll give you company resources to help you find a new job. They'll give you an office and a computer and say go ahead and find a new job, on company time. What started to happen was remarkable. As people started feeling safe, the quality of work went up, productivity went up and it was remarkable. They used to do 25% growth every year and it went up to 65% growth simply because, when people didn't have to come in and worry about their own hide and protecting themselves from each other, they invested their energy on working to help advance the company and the leader's vision. It was amazing.

Ellen: It's a ballsy move. It's not business as usual.

Simon: Every now and then you do carry some dead weight it's true, but the cost of that is lower than the sacrifice in productivity and innovation and all the rest by destroying the other workers.

Ellen: One of the things I maintain Simon is that it is not ethical to carry someone who isn't winning, we don't want someone to not be successful at whatever it is they're doing, so we find a place to help them do that.

Simon: It's our job to help them.

Ellen: Right, but what I find is if you're candid about that conversation then they will come to the realization that I can't be successful here because I don't like doing it and I should be into glass blowing or I wanted to be a rock star.

Simon: They may be a bad fit.

Ellen: Yes, but they'll uncover that if we're willing to have that conversation that, on my watch my responsibility is to help you be successful.

Simon: By the way, it's the company owner's responsibility to take care of this person because they hired them. If you hired the wrong person who's the wrong fit or poorly qualified than shame on you, because we hire too quickly. Hiring is like adopting a child, you're going to let someone into your family, into your home and give them keys to the house and even give them responsibility over your other children. You better do it damn slowly. Get to know the person. You better socialize with them and find out what they're like when they aren't putting on their best behavior at an interview.

Hang out with them and see what they're like as human beings, have a drink with them. Do you like them? Do you trust them? Are you going to let them into your home? Hiring should be a slow process, because once they're in they're in, they're in the family and just because you have a bad year doesn't mean you start getting rid of your children. Those kids are expensive.

Ellen: I love this conversation. I was so motivated to have these conversations with the experts I've invited, because I thought it's time for me to shake up the way I think and you've shaken me up today. I love it.

I know you have the book and when the interview airs the book will be available. We'll also make the link available online on the webcast page. Go to BusinessMakeover2014.com/sinek. That will take you to Simon's page where you'll find the link for you to buy his book. Simon, as we were talking you said you were going to make an offer for a course you have going as well, would you care to talk about that for a minute?

Simon: We have a course to help people find their why. It's The Why Discovery Course. We took my entire process, like I took Ellen through and we put it online to help others. It's around \$120, but we're making it available to Ellen's audience for \$97.

Ellen: Because you're a peach and you're nice to me.

Simon: It's because you do so much to help me spread my message, it's the least I can do.

Ellen: The next time I come to New York I'll give you some heads up time so we can connect. I'll give you a big hug and a lot of love, which I do everyday because everyday I consider why I do and sometimes I fail but it always inspires me and that's the point. Thank you so much, I can't wait to read more about the leaders you interviewed.

One other thought, it is so important to recognize the leadership and training and character of veterans as they come back to the U.S. and to be kind and careful with them, because what you described that you went through, how it tripped you up psychologically and emotionally in just a few days that you were there, these guys/gals have carried a tremendous burden and with cooperation we may be able to integrate them into our businesses in some powerful and successful ways.

I just wanted to remind folks of that.

Simon: Thank you.

Ellen: You are wonderful. Any last words to share?

Simon: Go look after each other.

Ellen: You're so wonderful. Thank you for joining us today for Business Makeover 2014. I'm inspired and I hope you are too. Bye-bye.