

# LIVE 2 >> LEAD

SIMON SINEK • AUTHOR, SPEAKER AND CONSULTANT



## This is the key to finding fulfillment in your career

Feeling unhappy at work? You're not alone. Monster spoke with author Simon Sinek about his new book, which teaches workers how to help each other to help themselves.

If you say your job is something you don't plan on doing forever, then why are you doing it right now? Simon Sinek, an author, speaker and consultant who writes about leadership and management, believes loving your work is a right and not a privilege. In other words, work is not a lottery, and you didn't draw the short stick.

In his latest book, *Together is Better*, Sinek says if you want to change your life, you're going to have to learn to ask for help and accept it when it's offered. Monster recently spoke with Sinek about the advantages of finding a mentor, asking for help and figuring out your "why" when it comes to work.

**Q. In your book, you talk about how we're told to "find a job you love" and "find your passion and do that." What if you don't know what your passion is? How can you figure it out?**

**A.** Talk to your friends, talk to the people who love you, and ask them: "Why do you love me?" You're not going to learn about yourself by going off and living in the Himalayas and just thinking about it. You need to talk to people, you also need to help others find themselves, and in so doing, you will find yourself.

There's an entire section in the bookshop titled "self help," and there's no section in the bookshop titled "help others." It's all about, "How can I find a job I love? How can I lose 10 pounds? How can I find the person of my dreams?" But the reality is you're more likely to find all of those things if you commit yourself to helping your friends find a place where they feel valued and valuable.

**Q. What can people do early on in their career to set themselves up for a lifetime of fulfillment?**

**A.** A lot of people, when they're starting out their careers, are looking to maximize the money they make or the benefits the company will provide them, or sometimes they say things like, "I want to

make an impact, I want to work for a company that will help me make an impact,” which is so abstract. Sure, I think that’s wonderful, but what kind of impact?

What I want people who are starting out in their careers to find is a mentor. A career is a journey, and the impact you want to have in the world won’t happen in your entry-level job in the first four months. You need someone who will guide and teach you as you go.

When I started out my career and was interviewing, HR reps would ask, “What are you looking for?” expecting me to say my salary requirements, and every single time I would say, “I’m looking for a mentor.” I would turn down higher paying opportunities to take a lower-paying job because it would be working for someone who I thought could take better care of me, teach me more, take me under their wing. I didn’t chase the money; I chased the education.

**Q. And what about those who are more advanced in their careers?**

**A.** This is why it’s important to find your “why,” or a sense of purpose, cause or beliefs. When we’re very junior in our careers, the joy of our work comes from pretty simple stuff: our first promotion, our first raise. But as we make it up the ranks, it doesn’t feel the same. The promotions, the money, the advancement, the big wins with the clients are happy for those short moments, but the problem is those feelings don’t last.

True joy and true fulfillment in our work is the feeling that our work is contributing to something bigger than ourselves. This is the reason so many senior people don’t feel as successful as they used to. If they’re only advancing themselves, or some company’s bottom line, they don’t feel like it’s contributing to something bigger. The more a senior person can understand their own “why,” the more fulfillment they can find as they advance in their careers.

**Q. If you’re unhappy in your job, what are some hacks to improve a job you hate?**

**A.** Number one is you don’t have to quit. Sometimes you do, that is absolutely an option. But you should always quit to go to something better, not to get away from something you don’t like. That just means you’ll take anything that’s not that and you won’t necessarily make a better move.

I want people to use a job they are in, even if they don’t love it, as an education until they find something really appealing that they want to go toward. We should always quit to go to something rather than go away from something.

Number two is to be the leader you wish you had. Leadership is not about rank. I know many people who sit at the highest levels in organizations who aren't leaders. They have authority and we do as they tell us, but we would not follow them. And I know many people more junior who have no authority, but they've made the choice to look after the people to the left and to the right of them, and we would follow them anywhere. So regardless of where we are in the hierarchy, every single one of us has the opportunity to become a great leader, and we do that by worrying about and concerning ourselves with the people with whom we work.

**Q. In your book, you compare a playground bully to a horrible boss. What are the best ways to take the stand you've wanted to take for years (without losing your job)?**

**A.** Being a leader does come with real risk. That's why not everyone is cut out for it. When you speak truth to power, you could get in trouble, and when you do the right thing, you could lose your job. That's why we call you leader. It's not because you're at the top of the organization. We call you leader because you have the courage to go first, to go toward the danger.

As you recall in the book, when our young character stands up to the playground bully, what he quickly finds is people supported him, and that's very often what happens. Bullies, like a bad or toxic leader, keep the people divided because that's how they stay in power. As soon as the people come together, that leader loses their authority.

That's why relationships are so important. We will never change our luck and we will never be able to overcome a toxic leader unless we work together to take care of each other.

**Q. How can job seekers find better by "going together?"**

**A.** A job is not an event, our career is not an event; it's a journey. The most important thing is to remember to ask for help and to accept it when it's offered. People who are willing to say, "I don't know what to do, I need help," are the people who actually do better in life because amazingly, we're surrounded by people who want to help us, they just don't think we need it because we're too busy lying, hiding, faking and pretending we've got all the answers figured out.

The minute we admit that we don't have everything figured out and we need help and guidance, it's amazing the resources that show up to help us. The willingness to admit that I am personally better when I let people help me is profound for anyone who is looking for a job.

*By Lily Martis, Monster staff*