READY TO USE MENTORING

# Find your why

So, another standard evening in for me – cup of tea, watch some telly, apply for a 300km dog sled expedition across the polar north…In applying for this expedition, I have to state what my motivation is for applying. It’s forcing me to delve into my ‘why’. Not wanting to trot out predictable cliches, it has reminded me to know personally what makes me tick. What is my unique motivation, my personal vision, my goal and God-inspired purpose in life? Such a hard and scary question for most of us – especially for our young people – but it’s massive for mental health, self-esteem, aspiration, growth and the search for meaning. All big, big questions in the process of adolescence.

A quote often attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt reads: “Do one thing every day that scares you.” I love that. I encourage people I mentor to also adopt that mentality. It doesn’t have to be big. It’s about stepping outside your comfort zone – stretching yourself, attempting things you may not be able to achieve. Maybe it’s praying out loud in a youth group, the high ropes course on a residential, offering to pray for a sick friend or putting your hand up first in class.

Whatever it is, it’s in this zone that you learn most about yourself. Look at it the other way round: doing things you know you can easily handle doesn’t force you to delve deeper inside yourself. It doesn’t ask hard questions. When we feel slightly out of our usual control we unleash an extra level of adrenaline; you have to commit more of yourself to the task. It awakens heightened effort.

When you exercise physically, you stretch and essentially micro-damage your muscles – it’s the repairing process that improves and grows these muscles bigger and stronger than they were before.

## What is your ‘why’?

Talk this through with your mentee. Asking “What is your ‘why’?” probably won’t yield an easy response – but break it down and you might be surprised at what you can uncover.

1. List as many things as you can that you did this week out of choice – things you weren’t asked to do and had no responsibility to do. For example, putting next door’s bin out, googling BASE jumping or watching a movie.

* Why did you do these things? What prompted you do them? Are they good, bad or indifferent motivations? What values do they reveal? Are you proud of those values?

2. What makes you stressed? What makes you feel crushed, boxed in or trapped?

* What is the opposite of those?
* What does that teach you about what motivates and demotivates you?

3. Why do you work? Why do you do your schoolwork?

4. Why do you try to earn money? What do you spend your money on?

5. What things do you always say you want to do but don’t have time for? Are those things genuinely aspirations, or is that a ‘borrowed’ aspiration, or an aspiration you somehow feel you ought to have?

* What things *do* you make time for?

6. Can you condense down your motivations and vision for your life into a few low-level actions? For example, to be kind, generous, healthy, competent? Be specific.

7. How would I like to change the world in some way?

* What opportunity in life do I have that I would like to make the most of (upbringing, wealth, privilege, specific knowledge, experience, expertise etc)?
* What passions has God given you that you can’t ignore?
* How can I give back to the world?
* If you were a company, not a person, what would your business vision statement sound like?

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