AMA IOWA OPENING KEYNOTE · OCTOBER 29, 2026

Harnessing Purpose

Meaning for the Marketer, Trust for the Brand

Your one-page guide for this week.

THREE THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK

1. **Keep who you serve front and center.**
   Name one person you serve. Write their name down and keep it where you will see it. When the work gets busy, they are who it is for.
2. **Give one more hour to your red thread.**
   Your red thread is the part of the work you would do more of if anyone let you. Block one more hour on your calendar this week and give it to that.
3. **Ask the three questions with your team, or one coworker.**
   They are below. You do not need to be the boss to ask them. Thirty minutes is enough, and the agenda is on the right.

USE THE THIRTY MINUTES

Bring: your last three campaigns, ten real things customers have said about you, and your company's mission and values.

10 min	What do we stand for?
10 min	What are we proud of?
10 min	Where could our purpose show up that it doesn't yet?

Leave with: your best proof points and the first gap to close. At an agency? Run it on your client.

THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR BRAND

QUESTION ONE

What do we stand for?

Can your team say your mission and values in their own words, without looking them up? Can they name one decision those values actually changed?

QUESTION TWO

What are we proud of?

Where do what you say and how you act already match? Ask what your people brag about and what customers thank you for. That is your best content.

QUESTION THREE

Where could our purpose show up that it doesn't yet?

Look at your ads, website, emails, even invoices. Pick one place where what you stand for is missing, and put it there.

ONE HABIT FOR EVERY DAY

Check before you send. Before the next email, post, deck or report goes out, ask one question: does this sound like what we say we stand for? You do not need a meeting or anyone's permission to start.

BOOKS I MENTIONED

Harnessing Purpose
Melissa Fors Shackelford

Love + Work
Marcus Buckingham

Give and Take
Adam Grant

Take what a company believes.
Make a real person feel it.

Melissa Fors Shackelford
Author, Harnessing Purpose:
A Marketer's Guide to Inspiring Connection
melissaforsshackelford.com
Connect with me on LinkedIn