

10 Principles for Multiplier Leaders

Coaching Your Team Through the Lens of Simon Sinek

Grounded in Start With Why · Leaders Eat Last · The Infinite Game

Multiplier leaders amplify the intelligence and capability of everyone around them. Simon Sinek's body of work gives us the language to understand why some leaders earn that kind of impact, and others don't. These 10 principles bring those frameworks into your coaching conversations with direct reports. Use them as prompts, as a self-assessment, or as a compass for the kind of leader you are committed to becoming.

WHY — *Start With Why*

People don't follow a title — they follow a leader whose purpose is clear and felt. When you coach through Why, you connect your team member's work to meaning that is bigger than any single task.

01 **Begin every coaching conversation with purpose, not performance.**

Before discussing outcomes or results, ask: "What matters most to you about this work?" When a direct report is anchored to their Why, performance follows. When they're not, no amount of accountability will sustain it.

02 **Help them articulate their leadership Why.**

Sinek argues that most leaders can describe what they do and how they do it, but few can say why. Give your direct report the gift of that question: "Why do you lead? What do you believe about people that drives how you show up?" Sit with the answer together.

03 **Connect daily decisions back to a shared belief.**

A Multiplier leader doesn't just assign work; they make the purpose of the work visible. In your next one-on-one, try: "How does the decision you're wrestling with connect to what we're ultimately trying to build?" Watch the thinking expand.

HOW — *Leaders Eat Last*

Safety is not a perk — it is the precondition for everything else. Leaders who create a Circle of Safety unlock the risk-taking, honesty, and collaboration that drive real results. Coaching is one of the most powerful ways to build that circle.

04 **Make your coaching conversations the safest place on their calendar.**

If your direct report edits themselves in your presence - softening concerns, hiding struggles, performing confidence they don't feel - you don't have a coaching relationship yet. Ask: "Is there anything you're not telling me because you're not sure how I'll respond?" Then receive the answer without defense.

05 **Go first with vulnerability.**

Sinek's research shows that leaders who acknowledge their own uncertainty and limitations build far greater trust than those who project certainty. Share what you don't know. Admit when you were wrong. Your willingness to be human gives your team member permission to be human too.

06 **Protect your people, especially when it's costly.**

The leaders who earn the deepest loyalty are those who shield their teams from organizational pressure, political friction, and unfair criticism. Ask yourself: "Does my direct report know I have their back? Have I shown it recently, not just said it?"

WHAT — *Start With Why* — *The Golden Circle*

The What is where leadership becomes visible. Coaching at the level of What means helping your direct reports translate purpose and values into clear decisions, skilled communication, and consistent action.

07 **Coach the decision, not just the outcome.**

When a direct report brings you a problem, resist solving it. Instead, coach the decision-making process itself: “What are your options? What are you weighing? What would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail?” The goal is not the right answer this time - it’s a stronger decision-maker over time.

08 **Hold them accountable to their own commitments.**

Sinek observes that great leaders follow through on what they say. Model this, and hold your direct reports to it as well. Ask: “Last time we spoke, you said you were going to do X. How did that go?” Accountability, done with warmth, is one of the greatest gifts a leader can give.

THE INFINITE GAME — *The Infinite Game*

Finite players play to win. Infinite players play to keep playing. Coaching your direct reports through an Infinite Game lens means developing leaders who build for the long term, stay resilient through setbacks, and invest in something beyond their own career arc.

09 **Develop them for a future you may not be part of.**

The highest expression of leader-as-coach is preparing your direct report to lead without you. Ask: “What skills do you need to develop to be ready for your next role?” Then actively invest in closing those gaps, even if it means they outgrow your team.

10 **Coach resilience, not just performance.**

In the Infinite Game, setbacks are not failures, they are data. When your direct report hits a wall, don’t rush past the difficulty. Ask: “What is this moment teaching you?” and “What kind of leader do you want to be on the other side of this?” That is where character is built.