

“Keen insight into how leaders can build high-performing teams the right way, without wasting time or resources fitting square pegs into round holes.”

—Brian Cotton, Global Vice President, Frost & Sullivan

# WHAT TO WHY



**The Fundamental Shift in the Way Leaders  
Build High-Performing Teams**

ClearFit Founder and CEO

**JAMIE SCHNEIDERMAN  
AND DONALD COWPER**

## Praise for *What to Why*

“*What to Why* will change how you think about creating a world-class team.”

—Anna Carney  
Partner, Innovative HR

“I would strongly recommend this book for any leader who wants to learn how to create a world-class team. I will be taking it back to my organization immediately.”

—Shirley Porjes, MBA  
CFO, Finance and Administration, Western Plastics

“In 20 minutes *What to Why* will guide you on transforming the way you approach your most strategic hires.”

—Allan Kates  
COO, BA's Real Estate Management

“*What to Why* is an insightful read and provides leaders with a complementary solution for finding the right people for their teams in today's talent marketplace.”

—Peter Gilfillan  
Senior Vice President and General Manager, Canada at Monster Worldwide

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The Fundamental Shift in the Way Leaders  
Build High-Performing Teams

**JAMIE SCHNEIDERMAN AND DONALD COWPER**

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# The Authors



## **Jamie Schneiderman**

Jamie believes job performance depends on people working in roles in which they are built to succeed. He has long been an advocate of creating a world where the right people are in the right jobs, resulting in happier employees and more productive organizations.

He is the Founder and CEO of ClearFit, the leader in people performance insights that allows organizations to easily and consistently select, develop, and promote top talent.

Jamie has spent over 20 years building companies like Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and Rogers, along with several technology start-ups.

Jamie has a Commerce Degree from the University of British Columbia and an MBA from Harvard University.

He currently lives in Toronto, Canada, with his wife and two children.



## **Donald Cowper**

Donald is a best-selling author of several business books who has spent his career using a storytelling approach to help grow organizations. He has written several business advice columns on popular sites such as Inc.com. He currently heads up content at ClearFit.

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# Why I'm Writing About *Why*

I (Jamie) am writing this book because I'm hoping my personal experience, and the experiences I've had with leaders in a wide variety of industries, can help you build a high-performing team.

Let me tell you how I got here.

## **Saying No to the Dream**

In 2006, I received an offer for the dream job that I had spent the previous dozen years working toward.

I turned it down.

The path to that decision began six months earlier when my daughter was born. Time spent with her was special and

made me reflect on my life in a way I hadn't before. The one area that consumed my thoughts was work.

Since graduating with a degree in business, I had gone on to work in senior roles at major brands. I was following the path that made logical sense. Although I had moments when I was passionate about what I was doing, I often found work frustrating and unfulfilling.

I wondered if there was a better path for me. And so I set off on a journey to discover work that I would both love and excel at.

## **The “Aha” Moment**

I got lots of advice. Most of the people who gave me guidance pointed me in the direction of my past experiences—more of the same.

But somewhere along the way, I met some experts who were discovering new insights around work, happiness, people, and performance. After spending just a short amount of time with them, they were able to show me why I was unhappy with my career. There was a big disconnect between the work I preferred and the work I was actually

doing. These were insights about myself I wished I had known years earlier. This was powerful stuff. It was a lightbulb moment when I realized how many other people must be in the same situation.

I knew that insights like this could radically improve the way organizations and people came together.

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**“I knew that insights like this could radically improve the way organizations and people came together.”**

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And so, by the time the offer for my dream job came in, I decided to not go down a path I knew wasn't a fit for me. Instead, I founded ClearFit to take these new insights to businesses everywhere—and help create a world with happy employees and more productive organizations.

## **Nine Years Later**

It's been nine years since that decision. While building a business has certainly had its moments, I am definitely in the right job and have been able to be true to myself. In these same nine years, thousands of organizations have begun to use these new insights to improve the happiness

of their employees as well as increase the performance of their teams. It has created a shift that I call “WHAT TO WHY.”

So what exactly do I mean by WHAT TO WHY? This book is a twenty-minute story based on a leader I know that will answer that question. Although the leader is the head of a sales team, the insights are applicable to any team in any industry.

So, if you are a leader who wants to learn about a new approach to increasing the performance of your team, this book is for you. If you are an individual who is struggling to find your path, as I was nine years ago, I have no doubt you’ll find the insights helpful too.

In the meantime, let’s meet Mario, the leader who went from WHAT TO WHY.

—Jamie

Jamie Schneiderman

Founder & CEO

ClearFit

# The Leader Who Went From *What to Why*

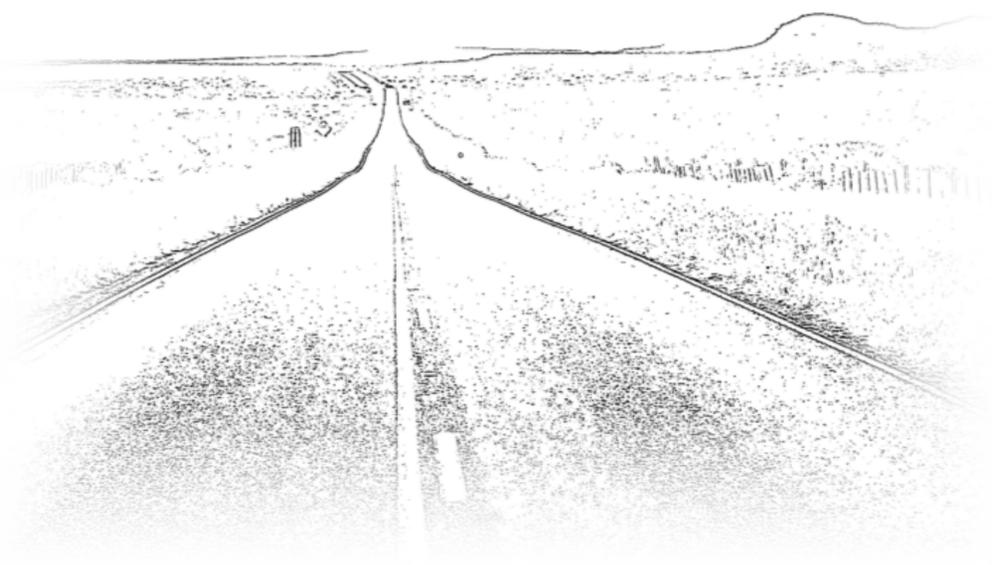
“It’s tough to build a high-performing team.”

Mario, the VP of sales at a software company, said those words to me (Jamie) three years ago.

Like so many leaders across the world, Mario believed this was a true statement. And why not? The evidence to support it seems to be all around us. Leaders everywhere struggle to build high-performing teams. Some never manage to create teams that perform at world-class levels. If they do, it has frequently come from a great deal of effort, expense, and time. But for Mario, the most compelling evidence was his own personal story as a leader up till that time—a story similar to ones I’ve heard from countless leaders.



A year earlier, Mario had been a successful director of sales at an international tech company, where he had led several years of 25 percent annual sales growth for his team. That success had caught the attention of the CEO of TLZ, a large software company, where sales in one of their key divisions had been flat for a couple years. The CEO of TLZ was looking for someone to lead dramatic sales growth in that division and offered Mario the VP Sales position.



## **The Big Opportunity**

Mario saw the move as a career-making opportunity. He believed in TLZ's product line and thought that as a senior leader in one of their key divisions with control over building and developing the sales team of 25 reps, he could play a big part in establishing TLZ as a global leader. He also believed that as someone who had studied best practices for building a high-performance team—particularly a sales team—and who'd implemented many

of them, he could deploy the right plan for turning things around at TLZ.

So Mario accepted, and after moving his young family across the country to TLZ's head office, he quickly got to work rolling out the various strategies of his plan.

## **Hitting a Pothole**

But Mario found it harder than he had expected to turn around TLZ's sales team. After a year, sales growth was nowhere near his target of 25 percent. The poor results were a blow to Mario's confidence, and to his job security.

The CEO was obviously disappointed, but was willing to give Mario more time. However, if Mario couldn't start to improve sales in the next couple quarters, enough to demonstrate that he could hit 25 percent annual growth, he knew he would be looking elsewhere for work. Mario also knew that opportunities would be harder to find with the failure to deliver at TLZ on his record.

## A Chance Encounter

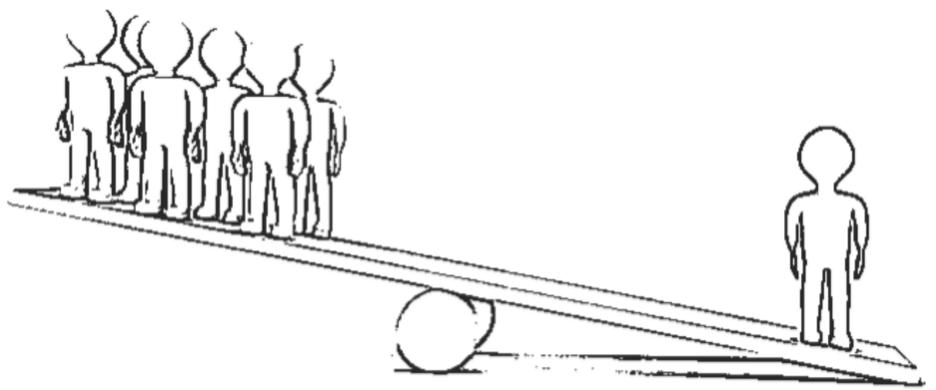
Around this time, a mutual friend who had heard me speak on the latest in people performance insights suggested Mario call me for advice.

When Mario and I got together, one of the first things I asked was why he had originally thought he could turn the sales team around. What made him think there was any potential for growth?

## A Lopsided Team

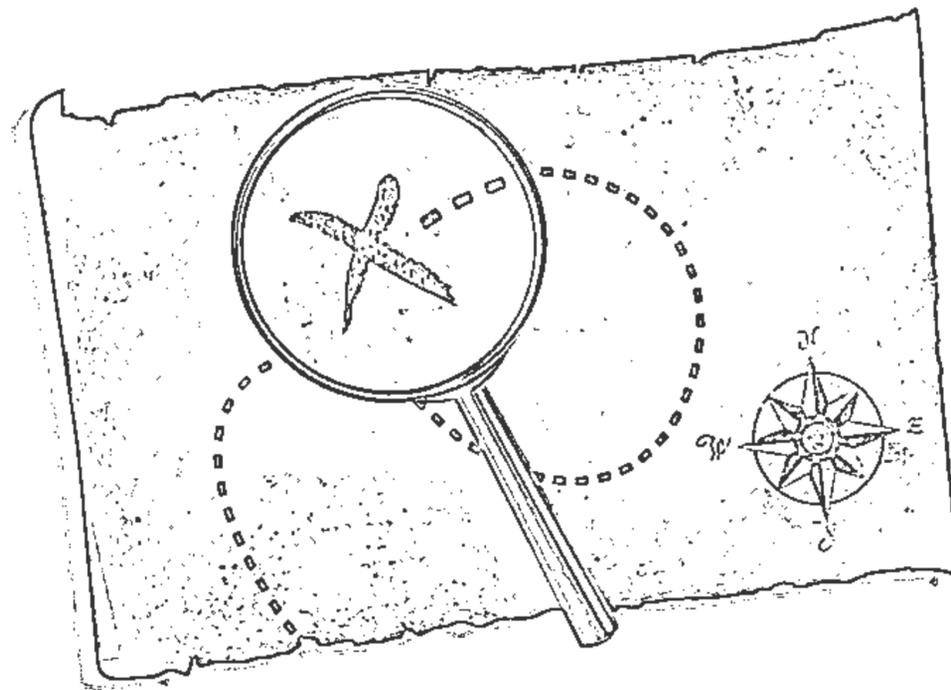
As Mario explained, he thought there was a huge opportunity at TLZ

because of how lopsided the team was. Five out of the 25 sales reps were responsible for 65 percent of the revenue. Some sales reps were barely making sales, and the vast majority showed inconsistent or underwhelming results. Mario knew that this was actually typical of many sales teams, but it also pointed to the potential for growth: get more sales reps performing like the top five and results would improve.



Mario had just laid out a very simple and effective strategy for dramatically improving performance and growth in any team. All teams, sales or otherwise, have a range of performance levels—usually a small number of top performers, followed by a long tail of mid-range performers, and some low performers. Clearly, getting more top performers and more people performing closer to the top level will lift up any team. It's the right strategy to turning around a team in a relatively short time period. However, executing it successfully requires that the leader base their plan on a full understanding about what underlies performance at work.

In order to help Mario, I needed to get a clearer picture of what his beliefs on high performance were and where he might have gone wrong. To flush these out, I asked him to tell me about his plan and what his experience had been so far.



## The Best Laid Plan

Mario had two essential parts to his plan. One was simply to let some low performers go and replace them by hiring high performers. The other part of his plan was to raise the performance of everyone on the team with a number of initiatives. These ranged from improving processes, like how marketing supported sales, to upgrading or adding things like onboarding and training programs, sales support systems, mentoring, and coaching. Another key initiative was restructuring the team into differentiated sales roles—having some reps specializing in new business and others in account management.

Mario's plan made perfect sense—bring in high performers, while also creating the structure and systems to develop high potentials into high performers.

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