

S C O T T D E M I N G

POWERED PURPOSE BY

*Identify Your Values, Discover Your Purpose,
and Build Success for Life!*



GREENLEAF
BOOK GROUP PRESS

Published by Greenleaf Book Group Press
Austin, Texas
www.greenleafbookgroup.com

Copyright ©2014 Scott Deming

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher.

Distributed by Greenleaf Book Group LLC

For ordering information or special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Greenleaf Book Group LLC at PO Box 91869, Austin, TX 78709, 512.891.6100.

Design and composition by Greenleaf Book Group LLC

Cover design by Greenleaf Book Group LLC

Cataloging-in-Publication data

ISBN 13: 978-1-62634-125-8

Part of the Tree Neutral® program, which offsets the number of trees consumed in the production and printing of this book by taking proactive steps, such as planting trees in direct proportion to the number of trees used: www.treeneutral.com



Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

14 15 16 17 18 19 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE ~ 1

INTRODUCTION ~ 9

CHAPTER 1: *Define Success in Terms of Values, Then Lead* ~ 15

CHAPTER 2: *Identify Your Values* ~ 21

CHAPTER 3: *Determine the Source of Your Values* ~ 33

CHAPTER 4: *How I Uncovered My Purpose* ~ 43

CHAPTER 5: *Pursuing Your Purpose Through Critical Thinking* ~ 57

CHAPTER 6: *Achieving Your Purpose Through Refined Critical Thinking* ~ 67

CHAPTER 7: *Surround Yourself With People Who Share Your Values, Believe in Your Purpose, and Aren't Afraid to Speak Their Minds* ~ 79

CHAPTER 8: *A Culture Flourishes Around Shared Values* ~ 91

CHAPTER 9: *How to Build a Flourishing Culture Around Your Values* ~ 105

CHAPTER 10: *Do Only What Supports Your Values and Achieves Your Purpose* ~ 121

CHAPTER 11: *The Heart of Getting Others Involved in Your Purpose* ~ 137

CHAPTER 12: *Good, Better, and Best Ways to Get Others on Board to Achieve Your Purpose* ~ 151

CHAPTER 13: *To Promote Your Purpose, Create Intrigue* ~ 165

CHAPTER 14: *Your Values and Purpose Can Cover the World* ~ 179

NOTES ~ 195

ABOUT THE AUTHOR ~ 207

PROLOGUE

It was approximately 6:30 on the evening of September 11, 2012. I had just sat down in an airport terminal restaurant and taken a bite of my sandwich and a sip of beer when my wife called.

“Hi, Honey!” I said happily.

“Hi!” Deb said. “I’m just calling to say I’m on my way to Philly to pick you up.”

I had just finished a half-day training program for AT&T in Dallas, Texas, and was awaiting my next flight to Philadelphia. My wife, Debbie, and I had plans to meet there and then drive to Atlantic City, where I had another speaking engagement for a bank group the following afternoon. We were going to spend an extra day after my event to have some fun.

“I can’t wait to see you,” I said. “I’ll call you as soon as the plane touches down.”

We hung up. Less than thirty minutes later, as I stood in line to board the plane, my phone rang again. Before I had a chance to say anything, I heard my wife’s frantic screams. I immediately thought she was hurt.

“Slow down!” I yelled. “What’s wrong?”

She continued screaming and rambling, as I tried desperately to

understand what she was saying. Finally, I heard it. “Amaya’s dead!” she screamed. “She’s dead!”

I was dumbfounded. This was impossible. Our granddaughter, not yet three years old, could not be dead. “What? What are you talking about?”

She screamed again, “Amaya’s dead!”

I stood there, stunned and numb as people moved past me onto the plane. That was the longest, worst moment of my entire life, which turned into the longest, worst week I’ve ever experienced.

Our granddaughter Amaya, just one month shy of turning three years old, died suddenly and tragically. She was with her mom, our daughter Danielle, at home. They had just finished dinner. Her mom was cleaning up in the kitchen and Amaya asked if they could watch Madagascar.

“Sure” her mom told her. “Go get the movie, and Mommy will be right in.”

Everything was going as it normally did, night after night. Danielle would quickly do the dishes, and Amaya would pick out a DVD from the drawer of the television stand. Except on this particular night, Amaya decided she wanted to put the movie into the DVD player herself. It was sitting on top of a large tube-style television, which was sitting on the television stand. She pulled the bottom drawer of the stand out, stood on it to reach the DVD player, and the television came down on top of her, killing her instantly. Our lives will never be the same.

The day of her funeral, we all painted our fingernails hot pink. This was to honor Amaya, as hot pink was her favorite color. She wore pink ribbons, pink clothes, pink shoes, and, of course, pink nail polish. So the decision was made that the ladies would paint all of their

nails, while the guys painted just their pinky. It was a wonderful tribute to Amaya.

About one month after the funeral, my good friend Wayne Irons came into town, and we went to lunch. He had joined in and put pink polish on his pinky, and he told me that he left it on after the funeral, and that people kept asking him why he wore it. Wayne is a tall, muscular, rather intimidating-looking man and a successful executive, highly professional. To see someone like him wearing pink nail polish instantly begs the question, “What’s up?” Whenever someone asked him about his pink pinky, he told the story about Amaya. And the story invariably drew a gasp from his horror-stricken listener.

As Wayne told me about his repeated experiences, a plan started forming in my mind. “I’m going to paint my pinky pink again,” I said. “People will ask me why I’m wearing it—but I don’t want gasps, and I don’t want sympathy. All I want is to tell my story. I want to get a conversation going.” I knew this was not just Amaya’s story but also an account of how this same exact type of accident happens every eleven to fourteen days in the US alone.¹

That’s a shocking figure, but it’s true. Every eleven to fourteen days, a television or other piece of furniture falls and kills a child. I decided I would tell this story with a single purpose in mind: to prevent things like that from occurring again. Shortly after Amaya’s death, I started researching how this terrible event could happen in an age of child-safety awareness. Products promoting child safety abound—everything from electrical outlet covers to cabinet locks and baby gates. Yet it is staggering how frequently toddlers are killed by preventable accidents. That knowledge led me to another decision.

It wasn’t long after Amaya’s death that my wife and I were sitting

at home, still overcome with grief and stunned by disbelief. We were sad, confused, and angry—no, we were really pissed off! We couldn't understand it. The only thing we could really get our heads around was the fact that we didn't want anyone to ever go through what we were experiencing.

I looked at my wife and said, "We need to do something to keep this from happening. We need to protect children and save other parents and grandparents from the pain we're going through."

To save lives, Deborah and I started a foundation called Safe and Sound with Amaya.² From the outset, our goal has been to raise awareness of the dangers that lie in and around otherwise safe homes. And we're getting the word out in many different ways. I don't walk around lecturing about the subject on a day-to-day basis, nor do I ever bring it up to anyone sitting or standing next to me. I simply wear my pink nail polish, along with my pink bracelet, and just wait for the curious person near me to ask the inevitable question, "Do you mind me asking you a question? Why are you wearing pink nail polish on your pinky?"

Then I say, "I wear it so you would ask me why I wear it. Here's why." I tell my story, educate people, send them to our foundation for information, and, I hope, save a life.

When I'm on stage making my corporate presentations, people in the audience can easily see the hot pink polish. I can read their faces as they sit and look curiously at my pink finger waving around as I speak. As I begin to talk about emotional branding I point out that people do not respond to policy and procedure and features and benefits—they respond to something that is meaningful, personal, relevant, and emotional.

At this point I stop and say, "Raise your hands if you noticed this."

I put my hand out for all to see my pinky. Almost everyone in the audience raises their hands. I say, “Good, I’m going to demonstrate how emotion and relevance to your life trumps policies, procedures, features, and benefits. I’m going to present the same information to you twice. You decide which presentation generates interest. Here’s the first. I am involved in an organization that teaches child safety in and around the home. Our foundation has a website and hands out brochures and furniture safety straps at meetings and trade shows. We speak at parent groups and day care council meetings. We are educating parents and caretakers and spreading the word on child safety. Now, based on that presentation, how inclined would you be to want to get involved? Please raise your hands if this sounds intriguing to you.”

Of course, no one raises a hand. Then I say, “Of course not. There are hundreds of organizations and foundations out there vying for your attention. Why would this particular one be any different, right? Now let me show you how I’m going to get your attention and get your interest. Remember, I’m doing this to demonstrate the power of emotion and the importance of relating to another person’s values. Here is the second presentation: Please raise your hands if you have children or grandchildren.”

The majority of the audience always raises their hand. “Good. Now, I want you all to close your eyes. I want you to picture your child or one of your children. Now, please recall what it feels like when you’re with your child: if the child is small, how you feel holding him or her, tucking your baby into bed, giving your baby a bath. If the child is older, imagine how you feel just spending time with him or her, laughing, hugging, telling that child of yours how much you love

them. Feel it! Good. Now, I want you to imagine you just got a phone call, and you will never see that child again. Please open your eyes. That's the call I got." And I go on to tell how I heard what happened to Amaya, ending, "She was one month shy of turning three."

The entire room lets out an audible gasp, and I can instantly see and feel the sympathy. Then I say, "Please, I don't want your sympathy. I don't need it. But I want to tell you that after my wife and I emerged from shock, we asked ourselves how this freakish, once-in-a-lifetime tragedy could happen to us. This has to be the freakiest of freak accidents!" But of course it's not. And I reel off the horrifying statistics and talk about what we do in our unrelenting mission to make sure this preventable disaster comes to an end.

"Now, based on that presentation, how many of you would be inclined to get involved in my foundation?" Every hand in the room goes up.

I don't give them the name of the foundation, because I'm not on stage to push my agenda. I'm hired by my client to teach their attendees how to better communicate, manage and grow their business, and prosper. This is merely one example of how to do just that.

I continue, "I'm telling you this for one very simple reason. Every person and every organization must have a core purpose. Along with that core purpose comes a set of core values. I know my purpose in life. It's two-fold. First, I am on a mission to help organizations and individuals create a meaningful, profitable, and sustainable professional life. Second, I am on a mission to save young children from preventable and horrific tip-over deaths. Once you know your purpose and you believe in it with all your heart, you must surround yourself with people who believe in your purpose as well. Then you must

communicate to your employees, friends, colleagues, customers, loved ones, and the media in a way that is laced with emotion, relevance, and intrigue. Every conversation, advertising message, and interaction must make people around you ask, ‘What’s up with that?’ ‘Why are you doing that?’ ‘Tell me more.’ ‘You’re kidding!’ ‘Can I help?’ ‘Do you have any openings?’ ‘I want some, how can I get it?’”

After all that I pause, raise my hand, showing my pinky, and I say to my audience, “Here’s my question to you: What’s your purpose?”

CHAPTER 2

IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES

*IT IS NOT IN THE STILL CALM OF LIFE, OR THE REPOSE OF A
PACIFIC STATION, THAT GREAT CHARACTERS ARE FORMED.*

*THE HABITS OF A VIGOROUS MIND ARE FORMED IN
CONTENDING WITH DIFFICULTIES. GREAT NECESSITIES CALL
OUT GREAT VIRTUES . . . QUALITIES WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE
LAY DORMANT WAKE INTO LIFE AND FORM THE CHARACTER OF
THE HERO AND THE STATESMAN.*

—ABIGAIL ADAMS

The dictionary defines “value” as a principle or quality that is valuable or desirable. I can’t say that is a particularly helpful definition, but it does describe the quandary that many of us face when we try to articulate our values.

It may be that you need to point to some example. It’s sort of like the famous quip from Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart: “I can’t define it, but I know it when I see it.”¹ The “it” he was referring to was pornography, but, really, there are many things we can’t define formally but seem to be able to identify in action with no trouble. That’s odd, isn’t it? Yes and no. It’s strange, but it’s also rather common.

For example, you might not be able to define “good,” as in morally good, but you may be successful at consistently identifying those actions you call good. This is a difficulty facing most of us who try to define values, among other things. I was in a café in Rome when a couple sat down next to me. I overheard them talking and pegged them as American. As it happened, they were from somewhere around Chicago. We started chatting, and since we were all navigating our way in a foreign country, the conversation turned to language.

“It’s the strangest thing,” the husband said with a laugh. “I met someone in a store and was trying to explain ‘cheesy.’ It took me something like five or six times—and not because the guy didn’t speak some English or I didn’t speak some Italian. We were able to communicate fairly well. The problem,” he continued, “was that I had trouble defining it. I know cheesy when I see it and hear it, but for the life of me, I couldn’t explain it!”

This happens sometimes with concepts that imply some kind of critical assessment, like “cheesy,” and it frequently occurs with more subtle and abstract terms. For example, I could define “value” as a guiding principle of action. But a “guiding principle of action” generally means morally correct attitudes or behaviors. So, the definition of “value” as morally correct attitude or behavior doesn’t really get us very far. After all, what does “morally correct attitude or behavior” mean? As we will see, there are quite a few ways in which we can answer that question, and each answer is mainly an intellectual framework within which to understand existing beliefs.

So, let’s go back to some examples. Notice the way each question is answered, and consider whether or not you think the answer defines one of your values:

1. If you make a mistake that you know has or will yield a negative result for your employer, do you tell your supervisor or someone at work?
 - a. Yes. I am the sort of person who does not like negative consequences.
 - b. Yes. I am the sort of person who believes I must be honest in my interactions.
 - c. No. I am the sort of person who protects my own self-interests.
2. Have you ever taken office supplies home with you for your personal use?
 - a. Yes. I am the sort of person who believes it's okay to take a little from work because I give back in many ways.
 - b. No. I am the sort of person who does not take what is not mine.
3. If your supervisor treats a subordinate poorly, what would you do?
 - a. I would not say anything because I am the sort of person who believes it's not a good idea to get involved in the business of others.
 - b. I would say something because I am the sort of person who believes no one should treat others poorly.

4. If you see or hear an employee undermining a supervisor's directions, what would you do?
 - a. I would not say anything, because I am the sort of person who believes it's not a good idea to get involved in the business of others.
 - b. I would say something because I am the sort of person who believes that undermining the chain of command leads to problems.
5. Have you ever felt as if your employer didn't value your contributions?
 - a. Yes. I am the sort of person who wants to be acknowledged for what I contribute.
 - b. No. I am not the sort of person who needs to be acknowledged for what I contribute.
6. If you're late for work, are you honest about why you're late?
 - a. Sometimes, so long as it's a good reason. I am the sort of person who doesn't like to look bad.
 - b. Yes. I am the sort of person who believes that being honest in all my interactions is good.
 - c. Never. I am the sort of person who doesn't like to look bad. I'll say whatever is necessary to make my reason acceptable.

The important thing to focus on here is whether or not you believe the reason or reasons given are good ones, because that is often very helpful to the process of defining your values apart from some context. Moreover, the process of defining values helps you get a clearer idea about the sort of person you want to have in your business, whether

they are employees, colleagues, suppliers, or clients. All this is part of defining values.

So far I haven't been very explicit about the values I think are important; I wanted to concentrate on how you identify your values and your purpose. But I do think there are some basics that are essential for anyone's success. First is respect for other human beings. All people are equally valuable. Second is honesty. Deceiving others may seem like a short-term solution to a problem, but it ultimately harms both you and the person you deceive. If nothing else, deception steals choice. If I deceive you, I am essentially preventing you from making a choice; in my deception, I'm making your choice for you. These are my values and I know without a shadow of a doubt where they come from.

"Know Thyself"

The saying that forms the title of this section was inscribed above the entrance to the ancient temple of Apollo at Delphi, in Greece. I believe this states one of the most important principles for understanding your values.

Bar none, my father was the greatest gentleman on the planet. He instilled in me respect for others—especially women—in ways that showed how ahead of his time he was. "If I ever find out you treated a woman as less than a woman, you'll have me to answer to," he often admonished my brothers and me, in his steady and clear voice. From the time we were little, he expected us to adhere to certain values that he believed were timeless, even if others hadn't yet caught on.

His belief about treating women well wasn't a macho thing; it was about equality, fairness, and respect. My father lived in an era when women had to fight for their place in business, and they were often

treated disparagingly. In my area of expertise, advertising and marketing, sexual harassment was par for the course well into the 1980s. (If you've ever seen the television show *Mad Men*, you know what I'm talking about.) So, by the time I had become an adult and started my own business, I had internalized the lessons my father taught me.

For example, my agency had a distributor client in the Southeast who supplied products to several hundred independent contractors throughout the region. When we ran advertising programs for the distributor, we were essentially creating and managing the advertising for all of the distributors' contractors. During a specific campaign, one of his contractors felt the need to contact our office on a regular basis. This guy had always been rather abrasive and bombastic, but one day he crossed the line. He was remarkably abusive to one of my employees, who happened to be a woman. She came to me extremely upset and said she was unwilling to work with him and was concerned about how the client would respond and how her decision would impact my relationship with my client.

"Doesn't matter," I told her. "No one treats people at this company the way this guy treated you and gets away with it."

"I don't know, Scott. Are you sure?" She was well aware that this distributor account was worth almost half a million dollars per year.

"If we lose 'em, we lose 'em," I told her. I wanted her and everyone in my agency to know that I valued them as people, not just as employees, or worse yet as the client's servants.

The next thing I did was to get on the phone with this particular contractor.

"We've got a problem," I told him. "You crossed the line. You're abusive and offensive. You're out of the campaign."

He didn't believe me at first. Instead, he joked a bit. Then when he realized I was not kidding around, he started pleading, trying his best to get me to change my decision. I would not.

The next thing I knew, my distributor client, Roger, called me.

"Scott, what's going on? I just got a call from one of my guys. He says you cut him off at the knees."

I told him the story, and, like his contractor, he tried to make light of it. Finally, I said, "Listen, Roger, if you need to drop my agency in order to save face with your customer, then do so, but I'm not going to allow anyone to treat my people badly."

In the end, the contractor was cut from the campaign, and we held onto the distributor account. Eventually, Roger applauded my decision, telling me he respected what I did and would have done the same thing. None of this would have happened, though, if I hadn't known myself well enough to know what I stand for. In other words, I know my values. And I value treating people with decency more than I value a buck—in business as in life.

Come On! Is There Really Any Such Thing as "Business Values"?

A simple Internet search using the key words "business values" will get you an amazing array of hits. Some involve financial values—things like low-cost goods and services—but most involve corporate or company values. This reflects an increasing trend in current thinking about business values to tie together the individual and the value, and collections of individuals around values.²

A 2011 USA Today column by Steve Strauss focuses on the crucial connection between individual and business values. "Businesses are run by people," he writes, "people have values that are important to

them, and those values are reflected in those businesses.”³ Strauss finds it easiest to see the connection in smaller businesses, like TOMS Shoes. TOMS adopted a practice of giving away one pair of shoes to a needy child for each pair purchased. That resonated with customers, and the company took off.

Big companies can also live out the values of their founders. Strauss points to Starbucks, which purchases health insurance for employees who work for the company a minimum of twenty hours per week. That’s because, as a child, founder Howard Schultz and his family were deeply impacted by a lack of health insurance.

Strauss is correct when he claims, “If making a buck is your bottom line, you will make different choices than, say, if building a brand or creating mutual value is your priority.” Wherever your values inform your decision-making processes, so, too, will they inform the sorts of choices you make. And that, in turn, colors the experience your customers have every time they step into your store, navigate to your Web site, or call your company. That experience is part and parcel of the culture of your business.

Culture is another thing that can be difficult to define. In its most comprehensive terms, culture is a set of practices and institutions that reflect the group’s beliefs—such as religion and morality—as well as their artistic, intellectual, and technological accomplishments. For a business, culture is typically discussed in directional terms: It can be “bottom-up” or “top-down.” A bottom-up approach to an organization’s culture means that those whose boots are on the ground are setting the tone for how things are done, both substantively and stylistically, within parameters provided from above. A top-down approach, on the other hand, involves an organization’s leaders setting standards

for everything from office conduct to office décor. The reality for most enterprises is probably somewhere in the middle. After all, culture is developmental and fluid.

This is not to say culture is as fickle as this year's fashions, but with myriad personalities involved in a business's daily operations, there are bound to be adjustments. At the core of the culture, however, are values that do not change. Values dictate what people do and also often how they decide to do what they do. In other words, values involve ethical decision-making.

A Case Study in Defining Values: My Ad Agency

Many years ago, I was working with a large utility company headquartered in southern New York. We had just been hired to create and run several promotions. My client contact—a woman I initially thought was wonderful and very bright—was the marketing director. The first time I met her in my offices, she exuded confidence, knowledge, and creativity. I loved working with her.

Not long after we had begun working together, we scheduled a meeting at the client's headquarters. I was to meet with her and her boss, the vice president. We had agreed on a date and a very specific time. Now the one thing I have always been, if anything, is practically neurotic about being early at every meeting and every event. So I drove to my meeting and arrived twenty minutes early.

No sooner had I walked in the door than the marketing director came out and exclaimed, "You're late! You were supposed to be here forty-five minutes ago!"

"Hang on," I responded, feeling a bit flummoxed. I took out my calendar and showed her the time I had written down while she was

in my office at our initial meeting. I also reminded her of the call I had made to her two days earlier to confirm the meeting time.

“Well,” she said, “just tell Brian your car broke down.”

“What?” I asked her, incredulous. “I can’t tell him that. Why don’t I just tell him I got the time mixed up?”

“No!” she responded emphatically. “You can’t tell him that, because I’m responsible for setting the meeting times. Just tell him your car broke down.”

So we went into the meeting with her boss, Brian, and I began to apologize for being late, even though I knew I wasn’t. I then proceeded to tell this story of how my car broke down.

Things went downhill from there. He then started asking what happened. I couldn’t think how to respond, because I’m not good with cars, so I said, “The fan belt snapped.” It was all I could come up with.

“No problem. We have some guys here who can look at your car to make sure you’re okay heading back.”

“Thanks, that’s really generous, but no. I’m all set. I’m good with cars.”

At this point, I just wanted to crawl under a rock. This was one of the most uncomfortable situations I have ever been in. First, I had to ad lib a lie to a brand-new client whom I had just met. Second, I now knew my contact at this company was the type of person who looked out only for herself, no matter what. She valued her own image more than the truth. She would not admit she made a mistake with the time, even if it meant compromising another person.

As our business relationship grew, there were more and more instances of her saying things like, “I never told you that,” when she had, or “Why didn’t you ship that out?” when she had told me to hold

off. The situation became very difficult, and eventually, we mutually decided it was best to part ways. We clearly had very different values.

Now, for just a minute, I want you to consider your values. Think, for example, about the way you treat your kids, your employees, your grocer, or your dry cleaner. Why do you treat them the way you do? Now remember some of your recent decisions—in business or in daily life. What were they? How did they reflect your values? Did anyone disagree with your decision because his values were fundamentally different from yours? Or did anyone agree with your decision because her values were fundamentally in line with yours?

The source of our values is the topic of our next chapter, to which we will turn once you've had some time to reflect on these questions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In his twenty-year career, Scott Deming has owned businesses, held board positions, and worked with small, independently owned companies as well as multinational corporations. An expert in employee relationships and customer experience, and author previously of *The Brand Who Cried Wolf*—an entertaining look at emotional brand building—Deming leads programs for business owners, CEOs, managers, and salespeople across the globe in just about every industry, teaching them the real process for increasing customer evangelism and lasting customer loyalty.