



## What's the Story?

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### **The Infinite Game – Simon Sinek**

We saw Simon Sinek [optimist teacher, writer and worldwide public speaker] deliver his talk about his latest leadership theory – The Infinite Game.

You may have already heard some of what he said on the net – Talks at Google gives you a pretty good idea and his new book will be out in June.

He is quoted as saying: “In finite games, like football or chess, the players are known, the rules are fixed, and the endpoint is clear. The winners and losers are easily identified.

In infinite games, like business or politics or life itself, the players come and go, the rules are changeable, and there is no defined endpoint. There are no winners or losers in an infinite game; there is only ahead and behind.”

So what did we take out of it?

From a leader's viewpoint – start with the why and stick to your purpose. Although intangible and difficult to measure unlike market share or profit returns, your purpose will keep you in the infinite game. However be prepared to be flexible - sometimes you need to bin an idea which you may have heavily invested in because something new has come up. He cites the difference between Apple and Microsoft - Apple looks to their vision, Microsoft looks to Apple. It's not about winning but continuing in the game and staying ahead.

But from a more personal viewpoint his theory of “the circle of safety” resonated with us. In order to be able to keep flourishing in the Infinite Game, you need people around you who believe in your vision. And to get people to believe you need them to feel safe. They know they can disagree or suggest an alternative way forward because their organisation has shown they put their people first, And so the company vision becomes the individual's vision and as a result everyone can stay in the game.

**The benefit? Everyone loves their work.**

**Fit and polish.**

There's a new book just been published called “The Class Ceiling” by Sam Friedman & Daniel Laurison. [www.goo.gl/gC5QZk](http://www.goo.gl/gC5QZk) In it they argue that the class ceiling nowadays is more about your ‘fit and polish’ to be ‘just like us’ than money, contacts and schooling.

Lightness is essential. Earnestness to be avoided. Confidence to make statements to assert a point of view rather than to speak with a question mark at the end of each thought.

Speaking clearly and loudly, looking a person in the eye, being able to laugh and be amusing – being at ease with yourself in whatever the company.

It's not just about your knowledge and experience, it's about whether you're right for the company – one of us.

Like it or not, people from advantaged backgrounds still find it easier to get to the top of their professions – but you can help yourself to break the class ceiling if you follow these golden rules to work on your personal **‘fit and polish’**.

## **Selling yourself and your ideas**

The universities of California and Stanford ran a 5 year study into the Hollywood pitch process. Here are their results which have a clear link and relevance to anyone wanting to sell themselves and their ideas. [The pitchers are the writers and the catchers are the producers – the clients.]

The catchers liked the pitchers when they used passion, wit and quirkiness. They were negative when they were too slick, trying too hard, offering lots of different ideas.

The most successful pitches happened when the pitcher doesn't push their idea until they have extracted a YES. At that point they invite their counterpart in as a collaborator. Once the catcher feels like a creative collaborator the odds of rejection diminish.

### **Work on your "fit and polish".**

#### **Focus**

The ability to make powerful speeches rarely comes naturally. It was learnt the hard way by Bill Clinton who as Governor of Arkansas addressed the Democratic Convention in 1988.

His speech was so diffuse that delegates cheered wildly when he uttered the phrase: "In conclusion..."

President Clinton never forgot the humiliation. Instead, he was determined to become a great speaker which he achieved.

#### **A deal maker**

A matchmaker visits the family of a peasant and says: "I am making a match - your son and the daughter of the Tsar."

"Our son and the Tsar's daughter?" replies the peasant? "But our son is dim, ugly and poor."

"Never mind that" says the matchmaker. "Do you agree to the match?"

So the peasant says: "Yes, certainly I agree to the match."

"Excellent" replies the matchmaker. "I'm halfway there."

### **Good luck with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2019.**

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