

# Re:Focus

simple ideas to help you thrive

by Simon Sinek

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## Outside vs inside

Ah...the spa. A place of serenity, calm and oneness with the universe. A place where we can go to escape the hustle and bustle and be treated as human beings. A place where looking after your mind, body and spirit is of the utmost importance. Well...for paying customers, anyway.

It turns out that all that Zen idealism doesn't apply to all living things. There's a high-end spa I know in a major metropolis that doesn't treat its employees very well. I was talking to one of the massage therapists who is quitting because she can't take the abuse any more. Apparently her boss manipulates and berates those tasked with pampering their guests.

She told me she became a masseuse because she wanted to give to people, to look after them. She says she can't do her job properly when she's constantly holding in her anger or feeling disrespected or disgusted. So she's leaving to find another job at a spa that practices what it preaches...a place she can feel proud to work.

So many companies are obsessed with trying to be or act "authentically," when it seems so many don't to know what "authentic" means. Authenticity means that the way we present ourselves to the outside is a perfectly accurate representation of who we really are. That means, the outside world should be able to guess what it would be like to work there based on their experience. In the case of the spa, how they present themselves is clearly not who they are.

For all those companies that preach customer before profit, I hope they are putting employee before profit, too. If a company wants to stand for innovation, to be seen as challenging their customers to think differently, then they need to be open to new ways of doing things inside their company also. If a company wants to be seen as a leader in their category, then they need to stop obsessing about their competition's every move or wondering "how will they react if we make this decision." Leaders lead; they don't worry about what those behind are thinking. And, most importantly, what's right for the customer must also be right for the employee.

This is not idealism, it's good business. The more the inside and the outside match, the more those on the inside will invest of their own blood, sweat and tears to see the company succeed. This makes it much easier to match the

expectations a customer has with the experience they will actually get. And when that happens, when authenticity really exists, loyalty results.

As for the fancy spa in the fancy part of the city? All their best masseuses, those who are trying to be authentic in all they do, are leaving. Profit is down, equipment is broken and the business is coming apart at the seams. So I guess they are being authentic after all. They are starting to look like exactly who they really are.