



DOING THE HARD WORK

The hardest work of leadership is often the work within.

How Will You Know It Mattered?

Clarifying how you will measure your life can change what deserves your time today

We measure a lot of things: revenue, profit, acres, net worth, customers, employees, growth, projects completed, and goals accomplished. Those measurements matter. They tell us whether businesses are healthy and whether strategies are working.

But there is a larger question that does not fit neatly on a dashboard: **How will you measure whether your life was successful?** Clayton Christensen explored this question in *How Will You Measure Your Life?* Simon Sinek's work around starting with *why* asks us to understand the deeper purpose behind what we do. Together they point toward an important leadership challenge: **know what ultimately matters so you can make better decisions about what matters today.** Someday is not when you build a meaningful life. You build it through a collection of ordinary todays.

1 Decide what you are actually trying to accomplish

Most ambitious people have goals: build the company, grow the farm, reach financial independence, sell the business, create something significant. There is nothing wrong with those goals. But ask one more question: **Why?** Why do I want the money, growth, influence, or accomplishment? Keep going. Underneath the goal may be security, freedom, recognition, stewardship, belonging, service, curiosity, impact, proving something, or providing for people you love. **The goal tells you what you are pursuing. Your why begins telling you why it is worth pursuing.**

ASK YOURSELF: If I accomplished my biggest current goal, what do I believe it would allow me to experience, become, give, or do?

2 Be careful what you put on the scoreboard

Business gives us wonderfully clear scoreboards. Life does not. You can measure revenue precisely. It is harder to measure whether your children experience you as present. You can measure net worth, but not easily the number of people who became better because you invested in them. You can count acres; you cannot easily count trust. That matters because **what gets measured becomes visible, and what is visible can begin feeling important.** A person can sincerely say family is the highest priority while spending decades optimizing the business because the business produces a scoreboard every month. The family does not - until eventually it does.

ASK YOURSELF: Are the things I measure most often actually the things I say matter most?

3 Start at the end - and look backward

Imagine yourself late in life. The business chapter is largely finished. Your career is behind you. Nobody particularly cares about your last quarterly numbers. Now ask: **What would make me believe I used my life well?** Maybe you raised children who knew they were loved, built something that continued serving people, developed capable leaders, were a good spouse, used what you were entrusted with well, maintained friendships, lived according to your faith and values, or left the farm, company, organization, or community healthier than you found it. Once you know what you hope remains, you can work backward.

ASK YOURSELF: If I were looking backward at my life rather than forward at my goals, what would I wish I had given more attention to?



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4 Recognize the competition for your resources

Christensen's resource-allocation thinking is especially useful here. Organizations do not execute strategy merely by saying what matters; they execute by allocating resources. So do people. Your resources include **time, attention, energy, money, relationships, and emotional capacity**. You can say family matters, developing people matters, faith matters, or health matters. Where do the resources actually go? Your stated priorities tell one story. **Your resource allocation tells another.** The issue is not perfect daily balance. Seasons legitimately demand disproportionate resources. The danger is when temporary allocation quietly becomes permanent direction.

ASK YOURSELF: If someone could see only my calendar, bank account, and attention - not hear what I say - what would they conclude I believe matters?

5 Use the end to decide what matters today

Purpose does not only tell you where you hope to end up. It changes how you inhabit today. If developing people is part of how you measure your life, the conversation with the young employee matters differently. If being a present parent matters, tonight matters. If stewardship matters, today's financial decision matters. If building healthy organizations matters, how you treat someone during conflict matters. **The big life does not exist separately from the small moments. The small moments eventually become the life.** Instead of only asking, 'Will this move me toward my goals?' ask, 'Is the way I am living this moment consistent with the life I say I want to have lived?'

ASK YOURSELF: What would I do differently today if today actually counted toward the way I intend to measure my life?

Two Scoreboards

The problem is not that the first scoreboard does not matter.

The problem is allowing it to become the only scoreboard.

THE EASY SCOREBOARD

Easy to see. Easy to measure.
Immediate feedback.

Revenue
Profit
Net worth
Acres
Growth
Title
Recognition
Achievement

THE LIFE SCOREBOARD

Harder to measure. Slower feedback.
Possibly more important.

Character
Relationships
People developed
Family
Trust
Service
Stewardship
Impact

You are already keeping score. The question is whether the scoreboard you are watching is measuring the game you actually want to win.

WHY Why does this matter? > **MEASURE** What is a life well lived? > **ALLOCATE** Where should resources go? > **TODAY** What does this require now?

THE LIFE-MEASURE TEST

WHY - Why am I doing all of this? If I keep asking why beneath my goals, what do I eventually find?

SUCCESS - What does enough look like? How will I know when achievement has accomplished what I originally wanted from it?

SCOREBOARD - What am I currently measuring? Are those measures influencing my priorities more than I realize?

END - What do I hope remains? When career, business, titles, and accumulation matter less, what do I hope is still true?

PEOPLE - Who do I want to have affected? Who should be different because our lives intersected?

RESOURCES - What does my allocation reveal? Where are my time, money, energy, attention, and emotional capacity actually going?

TODAY - What deserves my attention now? What small decision in front of me is part of the larger life I say I want?

If I continue living and allocating my life exactly as I am today, will it produce the life I say I ultimately want to have lived?

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Your why gives direction. Your definition of a life well lived gives you a scoreboard.

AgStrat helps founders build stronger organizations with clarity about what they are ultimately building them for.

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