

Drilling Down: Your Super Objective

So, you've read *Brave Leadership* and now you want to do the hard work of identifying your Super Objective! Congratulations! For many people, identifying their Super Objective can be very liberating, validating, and empowering—it has the power to change lives.

Because the Super Objective begins in language and then lives in action, one of the best ways to gain clarity is to talk it through with a thought-partner or coach to get to a meaningful and actionable outcome. Ideally, your partner/coach will be someone who has also read *Brave Leadership* and is equally committed to identifying their own Super Objective, so you are both fully invested in the process.

A partner/coach's job is to help you put into *language* what drives you at your core. Not what you *should* want. Not something that goes on a marketing brochure—but a brief, actionable statement that helps you connect quickly to what you're about and determine whether or not you're doing it. It's designed to ignite energy *within* you.

Before you start this process, I encourage both you and your coach to read through this guide to set you up for success. This is written to support your coach in the process.

Coaching Guide

NUMBER ONE RULE: You are a coach, you are not a consultant. Your job is to ask questions and to listen intently with the aim of helping *them* find their best answer.

NUMBER TWO RULE: No judgment! You may not *get* what they find so exciting about something, or the words that they love the most, and that's okay. You don't have to get it. You have to make sure that *they do*.

Listen for the “End” not the “Means” We often use many tactics to get to the end result we're looking to achieve, and tend to confuse the tactics with what we really want. For example, you may hear someone say:

(participant) “I want to push my team to exceed expectations” (Means).

(coach) “Why?”

(participant) “Because, I believe if people are challenged to exceed expectations then they'll bring their best to the game” (Ends).

What that person is really after is challenging people (although I might coach them around constructive tactics to “challenge”) to bring their best to the game. Exceeding expectations is simply a tactic, or means to that end.

Watch for jargon! Help them simplify and use language that they would use if they had to explain it to a child. Intellectualized language doesn't help us access our passion and energy, which is what a Super Objective is designed to trigger.

Keep it short The shorter it is, the more accessible it is. Watch for run-on sentences. They should be able to say it in one breath and easily by memory. If they have to read it, it's likely too long!

Aim for rich, juicy language that mirrors the person The words don't have to resonate with you as the coach – they have to resonate with the person you're coaching. That said, sometimes people are uncomfortable owning their own power and allow themselves to settle for language that doesn't fully excite them. Help them explore alternatives.

Steer away from trite/over-used words Words like “empower”, “inspire”, “motivate” are all wonderful words, *and* they're also so over-used that they often lose their meaning. Industry-related words are similar. “To innovate” or “to create” in your world, may not be as effective for you since they are so commonly used in your world. If someone is about “empowering others” or wishes “to innovate” they have to be able to clearly paint a picture of what that looks like. Do they know when they're empowering and when they're not? If they land on words like these, coach them to explore alternatives to bring about the picture they're seeing their heads. Thoroughly excavate other paths – before deciding on which words work best.

Aim for Purpose If what you're hearing sounds like someone trying to “prove themselves” or “gain validation,” they're focused on external validation rather than purpose. A Super Objective should not be self-focused. Ask them to imagine that they didn't have to *prove* anything to anyone - that they already *are* all they need to be. Then, what would the *impact* they'd like to have (on someone or something outside themselves) be?

Frame it positively We often look at life as damage control. Instead of naming what they want to *keep* from happening, help them explore what it would look like if things were as they'd like them to be.

Listen Deeply Pay attention to everything they are saying (the specific words they use), how they are saying it (listen to their inflection, pace of speaking, when they pause/for how long, etc), and watch their body language (When do they make eye contact? Are they in an open/closed posture).

Pay attention to what “lights them up” and brings them energy You're watching for shifts in energy. When people “hit” on their Super Objective – or what is most meaningful to them – you will see and feel

a change in them. They will appear more joyful, more at peace, more centered – more themselves. Use your instincts. You'll know it when you see it.

Don't let them off the hook We get very uncomfortable when being asked to explore ourselves deeply – as if we're afraid of what we might find (or at the prospect that we might not find anything!). We *all* have deep desires and needs, and yet many of us have buried them away, or have masked them. Be prepared to let the person you're coaching "be" with their discomfort and hold them as able to handle it. Gently keep focusing them in on what's underneath the surface. Be prepared to "be" with your own discomfort in the process and don't let yourself try and solve it for them. Together, keep digging to get to the core of who they are and what drives them.

Simple questions to dig deeper:

Why do you care about that? You many need to go down this path for quite some time.

Example:

(participant) "I'm after results."

(coach) "Why do you care about results?"

(participant) "So I can..."

(coach) "Why does *that* matter to you?"

(participant) "So I can..."

What do you want to be remembered for? (follow that up with "Why do you care about that?")

If they keep getting caught up in the business results, drill down around:

What impact do you want to have on the *people* you work with?

What difference would that make to your clients?