

FROM INSIDE OUT

is an invitation to a new way of approaching our creations, our enterprises, and our organisations. Approaching everything 17DM Creative does from inside out is a process of continual evaluation and adjustment and a deeply satisfying experience. We suspect that if you choose to explore the Inside Out approach, it will be both challenging and exciting for you too. We would need to write a book to cover all four layers adequately but we hope this short guide will intrigue you enough to consider applying the Inside Out approach to your work and organisations.

FROM INSIDE OUT was born from frustration.

The frustration of being employed in organisations that didn't nurture the human spirit and instead had high levels of turnover and employee dissatisfaction and disengagement. The frustration of being involved in start-ups and projects that didn't get very far. The frustration of experiencing clients making decisions that we could see weren't aligned with their work but not knowing how to help them see what we did, or know how to navigate supporting them to bring alignment to the centre of their decision-making.

And finally, the frustration of knowing that individuals have the potential to create extraordinary things, especially when working together, but not being able to pinpoint exactly what was getting in the way of harnessing that potential group intelligence.

But not only frustration.

FROM INSIDE OUT was also born from studying organisations that do things really, really well. These organisations make sure that all members have the authority to work autonomously and to utilise their intelligence, learned experience, creativity, and their 'whole' self. They create environments of clarity, role-ationships, efficiency, and effectiveness, in organisations that are able to respond to key, real-time information; and they have fun doing it! People want to be a part of their team, and together they work hard to bring shared visions to life. And their lives are infinitely improved from being a part of it.

It was also born from believing that each of us has the potential to bring to life something unique; to birth it and nurture it and send it out into the world. Something that matters to us and that is particular to each of us, because nobody else would do it just like we would. Something that has the potential to bring us satisfaction and purpose, and make us feel that whole-body 'yes!'. We just don't always know how to do it *well*, or how to align our work from the inside out; and through that alignment, find clarity and direction.

Starting to bring 17DM and our other projects into alignment is the outcome of many years of being a part of numerous unsuccessful start ups as well as lots of 'what not to do', reading business and (non) management books that grabbed our attention, studying how people and organisations we admire do what they do, spending a lot of time working out what's important to us and what success looks and feels like for us, and trying new approaches internally and with clients to see what works and what doesn't.

We know that we're only at the very beginning of this journey into clarity and alignment. We hope you'll join us.

WHEN WE BRING ALIGNMENT TO OUR WORK, MAGIC HAPPENS

There's a glorious thing that happens when people or organisations **1.** have an articulated **core belief**, **2.** pay attention to **how** they bring that core belief into the world, **3.** create products and services (**output**) from this place of clarity and alignment, and then **4.** choose words and design that clearly communicate this to the world (**attraction**):

They resonate with other people.

Their core belief attracts people with similar beliefs and these people feel, on a gut level, that this is the right service, person, or product for them.

Because of this feeling of 'rightness', these people choose to work with them or buy their product.

And they haven't tried to sell a single thing.

For 17DM Creative, Simon Sinek's '**Start With Why**' was a key part of understanding the importance of aligning from inside out. In particular, it goes into far greater detail than we can about the following rules::

1. Most of us respond to life on a **gut feeling level**, not logically.

2. We naturally (and often without noticing) navigate towards what and who **resonates with** our beliefs.

3. Focusing all our time and energy on our products and services - and trying really hard to convince people that these are the best option for them - is ultimately a **losing battle in the long term.**

These three rules are, for 17DM, the foundation of aligning everything from inside out because we have repeatedly found them to be true. If you find differently, we'd love to hear about your experiences.

So! Let's dive in.

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BRINGING EVERYTHING WE DO INTO ALIGNMENT

From individuals to organisations to groups working together for a specific purpose, we normally start crafting our enterprises with a focus on what products we're going to make or what services we're going to offer.

And why not? It seems to make sense to do so.

After all, most enterprises start with an idea: an idea inspired by **1.** a need or problem we had that we couldn't find a solution for, **2.** an idea inspired by a gap in the market that doesn't appear to have been met, or **3.** the desire to make a living from something we care about or enjoy doing.

We then focus **all** our time and energy on achieving success by making the best products or services we can, and then try to sell them, mostly by trying to convince them ours are the best products or services.

If someone asks us about our work, we'll likely be able to spend hours talking them through our products and services; how it works, why we're doing it, why our product or service is so good, and what we hope our work will bring us.

When we look to make a successful living out of what we're doing we'll be mainly focusing on:

Making the very best products or services we can and selling them by telling the world how great these products and services are.

And the rest of it (the teams we build, for example, to support our work) will simply be a means to that end.

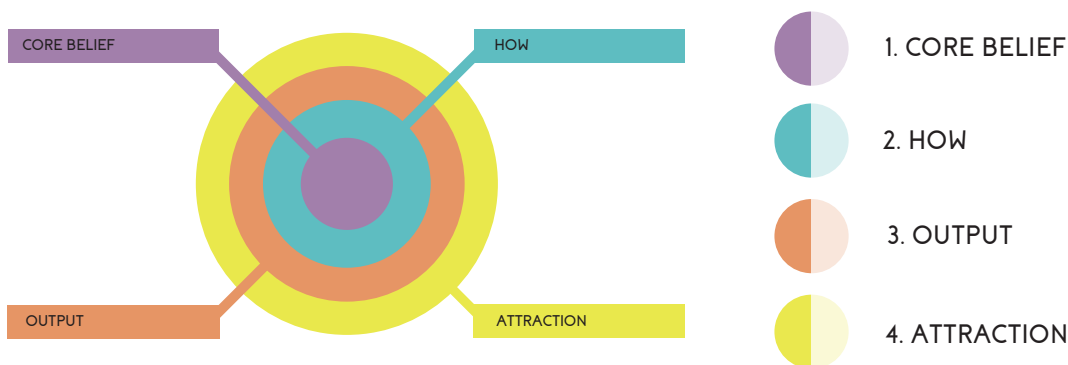
Because **that's** how you become successful. Right?

Sometimes. And mostly, **nope.**

What 17DM hopes to show you is that if you follow the road most travelled - and either start with or focus most of your time and attention solely on your services and products - you might be missing out on an approach that will:

1. help you connect with the people you want to buy your products or use your services, **and 2.** win you fans for life, **3.** enable your work to be responsive and flexible, while responding to key, real-time information, and **4.** bring you and everyone you work with a level of satisfaction, engagement, and success that goes far beyond monetary success.

WELCOME TO THE 4 LAYERS OF ALIGNMENT:



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THE 4 LAYERS OF ALIGNMENT

CORE BELIEF

Every decision that we make – and everything that we do – comes from a **core belief**.

You likely already have one, even if you don't realise it. It'll be the reason that you do what you do, whether you're self-employed or are part of a team, group, or organisation. Most of the time our core belief is fuzzy (since it's not elucidated). And when it's fuzzy, that fuzziness will permeate into the rest of our work.

When we take the time to discover what our core belief actually is, and then elucidate it and centre our work around it, we can start to bring **clarity** and **alignment** into all of our work and all of our decision-making (and working as a team or organisation, if applicable).

Our core belief then literally becomes our core. From just one clear statement, we have the basis for all our decisions **and** a solid pivot point. It then becomes an absolute powerhouse of focus and energy and

creativity. Our core *leads us into* our **how**, which *leads us into* our **output**, and out into how we attract our clients and customers. When we let our core resonate into everything we do ... **BOOM**.

PS: *our core belief is not about making money*. That sits (if you want it to) in the next layer: your **how**.

If we think of a building project, this layer is like our foundation, which needs to be well-designed and well-built, since it will support the entire building and make it safe.

Or, if we think of a garden centre business, we can say that our core belief is like a seed. If we want to grow a healthy and strong plant we need to know that our seed is healthy and strong. We also need to know exactly what type of seed we have, otherwise we'll never know what nourishment it will need or what kind of plant it's going to grow into and we're just hoping for the best!

17DM Creative's core belief is: **When our words and design choices clearly communicate who we are and what we do, magic happens.**

If we now look at some well-known global organisations and brands, we can imagine what their core belief might be. We can imagine them so easily because their core belief permeates through everything they do:

Apple: Challenging the status quo leads to revolutionary innovation.

Harley Davidson: When we find our wild, we find our freedom.

The United Nations: If we work together we can improve all our lives.

Red Bull: Every second of every day should be lived to its maximum.

Clarifying your core belief is **not** about finding your next advertising or marketing line. And it is **not** about finding a way to sell 'better'.

Clarifying your core belief **is** articulating the heart of what you do and then utilising this as your core, pivoting around it, and encouraging it to resonate into everything you do.

What's your core belief?

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HOW

The next step is to look at our **how**.

Our how is literally **how** our core belief translates into something material.

For all of us, we'll need to answer:

What is this work's current **purpose** or **purposes**? *and*

What is our **desired impact**?

The answers to these two questions give us the **specifics** of our work.

Teams and organisations will **also** benefit greatly from exploring how to build a considered and nurturing internal environment as part of their **how**. This could include exploring *how* we can work better together, what agreements we all commit to, and/or what our values are, so bringing clarity to our expectations and communication.

When/*if* we do grow into larger organisations, our internal

environment will also include our approach to remuneration, our hiring practices, and our internal processes.

You can think of our how as **focusing** and **nurturing** our core belief, so that it does something in the world.

Oh, and for all of us, making a good living lives *here* (if we want it to), in our desires or values.

If we think of the plant, this is where we decide where we place it so it grows well, where it will best fit in our household or garden, and how we'll ensure it has the right nutrition.

With our building project, this is where we decide the specifics of the building, such as how many rooms and floors, and all the other internal layout decisions, depending on what it's to be used for.

If our building project's core belief is: 'People deserve a strong, safe home to raise their family', many of those decisions become obvious **and**, at the same time, need to make sense to our core belief! We wouldn't decide it shouldn't have a roof, for example, because that wouldn't help us meet the expectation of our core belief of making homes people can live in.

As teams and organisations, when we nurture our internal environment by specifying and agreeing **how** we can work better together, we have the opportunity to create expansive and satisfying environments and partnerships with those we work alongside; *especially* when we choose to create that internal environment together so that they're specific to our team and people **live** them.

We benefit most when we allow our internal environments to **evolve** in response to real-time information from within and without. We'll miss out on the benefits of spending time on this layer of alignment if they're agreed, stuck up on a wall, and forgotten about!

We keep them relevant by bringing them to the very centre of our daily experience so that they **saturate** our decision making and play a **central role** in **1.** who is in our organisation, **2.** what clients we choose to work with, **3.** what work we do, **4.** how we decide to work together **5.** how we allocate roles, and **6.** how we distribute authority within them. (And, if we're a large organisation, **7.** how all of our internal processes and structures are formed.)

Don't forget to return to them regularly; re-evaluating and adjusting as needed for your work and organisation, so that everyone **utilises** and **believes in** them.



These first two layers make up **who we are**.

DESIRES AGREEMENTS PURPOSES VALUES

17DM's **how** is formed of values, desires, agreements, and purposes (because these suit us). We say 'current' because we often refer to them when making decisions, and we update them regularly. This keeps them **useful** and **relevant**.

PURPOSES

17DM is a living, breathing entity. We let it evolve, adapt, and change direction so it can **lead us** where we need to go.

Our main job is to help others see **why** their words and design choices matter so much.

17DM Creative is here to **support** our lives financially, emotionally, and creatively.

VALUES

17DM was founded by an artist and a writer. **This** is what makes our work unique. This uniqueness informs everything we do. We let this uniqueness breathe fully.

Creativity happens in **all** spaces. Watch the birds, go for a walk, play guitar. Have fun! Creativity doesn't come from being chained to a desk.

We explore every idea to its **fullest**. We let our imaginations run wild, and we don't limit ourselves because we can't yet see how it will happen.

We trust in natural rhythms of output and rest. It's **just** as vital to hibernate as to be outwardly creating.

Success is **wider** and **deeper** than society tells us it is.

We listen to our gut instinct, our hearts, and our heads. We do **not** need to justify decisions when they feel right.

WHEN OUR WORDS AND DESIGN
CLEARLY COMMUNICATE
WHO WE ARE
&
WHAT WE OFFER THE WORLD,
MAGIC HAPPENS

We don't undervalue or overcharge. **And** we seek out ways to be generous.

17DM is just one (important) part of living a full and creative life. **Keep everything in perspective.**

We work with clients that get us. **These** are the clients we can help. **These** are the clients that make what we do worth it.

DESIRES

We follow the projects that **call to us** (even if we can't explain why), with the people that we like (we don't need to justify why), and where we can utilise our care, attention, creativity, passion, and critical thinking.

We look to make the **human** connection with clients.

AGREEMENTS

We **know** that words and design matters. We take pride in producing work from this knowledge.

We step back when we find ourselves pushing or forcing anything. And we give it **everything we've got** when it's right to do so.

We are **not** a paint-by-numbers agency.

We want to be doing good in the world. If we are moved or inspired by the work an individual or organisation is doing we **find ways** to support them.

We hold ourselves to highest standards. We expect the same level of professional respect from our clients **and** we have the right to request we fire a client if we are experiencing consistently disrespectful behaviour.

We grab **every** chance to evolve, learn, create, challenge ourselves, face fears, nourish ourselves, and have fun.

We look for the best solutions for our clients. We **don't** design for design's sake.

We do the right thing for **us**, and we work with clients that match that.

We actively **listen** to our clients and each other. We stay curious, ask questions, and keep clarifying.

We walk away if that feels **right**.

We look to make the **bravest** choice (and we ask for support if needed).

We assume that **most** of our assumptions are wrong.

If being a part of 17DM isn't making our lives better, we go and do something that **will**.

Every area of our lives matter. We support each other in bringing as much into 17DM Creative as makes us feel the most whole.

What are your values, agreements, desires, and purpose(s)?

OUTPUT

It's now that we focus outwards, at the products and services that we make/offer the world, ones that make sense with **who we are** and will hopefully feel 'right' to other people.

Once we have clarified our **core belief**, given it material form through our **how** - our purpose(s) and desired impacts, along with a healthy environment (if applicable) - we benefit from aligning our products and services with our previous two layers in at least three immediate ways:

1. Because we now have clarity about **who we are**, we can easily discern which ideas for new products and new services - or even a new direction for us to head in entirely - **make sense**, and which **don't** (and therefore which are likely to work for us, and which aren't!).
We'll stop wasting time going down dead ends, and instead we can **streamline** our creative activities towards ones that resonate and make sense with our core belief.
2. As mentioned at the start, people respond to products and services that make sense on a **gut feeling level**.
It just wouldn't feel right if Harley Davidson built and started selling a computer. But it would feel right if a yoga retreat company started offering other services related to their core belief, like an online yoga shop selling yoga gear.
3. We'll also have **simplified** our next step - communicating with the world and attracting the people we want to connect with.
With a clear core belief - and clarity about our purposes and desired impacts, along with values etc. (if we're a team or organisation) - we'll **already** have the basis for the messages we need to send out to start attracting people.
They become our starting point when we create our websites, our social media messaging, and our branding: i.e. **how** we attract.

17DM Creative's naturally evolving output

Starts as 17 Digital Media, a graphic and web design company.

We introduce content writing, blog writing, and social media services, as these are being requested. To reflect this, we re-brand as 17DM Creative.

We keep experiencing clients making decisions about their graphics, web design, and content that we can see aren't in alignment with 'who they are'.

These experiences help us clarify 17DM's core belief, purposes, and desires, which include helping clients see the importance of clarity and alignment.

From 17DM's internal clarity, we introduce a new client strategy designed to support them understanding the importance of aligning everything they do from the inside out and bringing this clarity into their decision making.

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Patagonia is an excellent example of an organisation that aligns all of their output with **who they are**.

Patagonia is an American outdoor clothing and gear company started by an outdoor enthusiast.

Their **core belief** is:

AT PATAGONIA, WE APPRECIATE THAT ALL LIFE ON EARTH IS UNDER THREAT OF EXTINCTION.

WE AIM TO USE THE RESOURCES WE HAVE — OUR BUSINESS, OUR INVESTMENTS, OUR VOICE AND OUR IMAGINATIONS — TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

This core belief reverberates through their **how** and out into their **output**:

Outdoor Apparel and Gear

They've built robust environmental and animal welfare responsibility programs to guide how they make their materials and products, and they ensure that their products are produced under safe, fair, legal, and humane working conditions.

Worn Wear

One of their beliefs is that the best thing we can do for the planet is cut down on consumption and get more use out of stuff we already own. So they've set up a 'repair, share and recycle your gear' scheme.

Patagonia Provisions

Sells products from like-minded farmers, ranchers, fishermen, artisans, and companies, so offering new ways to eat well while protecting the earth. Their intention is to build a bigger marketplace, a powerful alternative to industrial agriculture, which acts as a path to restore and regenerate our home planet.

1% for the Planet

Since 1985, Patagonia has pledged 1% of sales to the preservation and restoration of the natural environment. They've awarded over \$89 million in cash and in-kind donations to domestic and international grassroots environmental groups making a difference in their local communities. In 2002, founder of Patagonia, Yvon Chouinard, helps set up a non-profit corporation to encourage other businesses to do the same.

Patagonia Action Works

An initiative to connect committed individuals to organizations working on environmental issues in the same community. They also fund individuals and organisations working on issues in the areas of land, water, climate, communities, and biodiversity.

Head to [Patagonia.com](https://www.patagonia.com) to read more about their **core belief** and how this leads into their **output**.

Read this for a exploration of why Patagonia's internal environment is also in complete alignment with their **core belief** (hint: people love working for them).

What are the products and services that align with who you are?

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ATTRACTION

If we clarify our **core belief** and **how**, while nurturing a healthy internal environment, and align our **output** with **who we are**, *and we don't share these with the world, we might as well all go back to bed!*

This final layer of alignment is **attraction**, i.e. resonating with people on a gut feeling level.

We achieve alignment when we clearly communicate **who we are** through our branding, messaging, social media, and all our design choices (such as our websites and the content we have on them) with our **core belief**, purpose(s), and desired impact.

More than just looking for the clever sentences and designs that will sell our products and services, we can re-frame attraction as 'sending our message into the world with **clarity** and **purpose**'.

We shift from selling to **inspiring** and **attracting**. And it's through inspiring and attracting that we gather those fans-for-life.

Sharing **who we are** is *especially* important in a world where many of our choices reflect our ethical and personal beliefs and how we want the world to be. Many of us want to know *everything* about an organisation or an individual that we're spending our money with. We want to know how *authentic* and *aligned* a person or organisation is. We want to see *inside* their office walls and know that if they *say* they are passionate about what they do that they're being passionate!

We want to know what role they're actually playing in making the world the kind of world **we** want to live in.

Because 17DM Creative lives and breathes our values, agreements, desires, and purpose(s), we'll naturally resonate with people that have similar values, agreements, desires, and purpose(s). And the best bit is that they'll be the people that we want to work with. We won't resonate with everyone (We don't all desire a Harley). But when **who we are** resonates with others, we'll have fans for life (as Harley Davidson do).

There's no point building a house that wants to have people live in it and not have people *want* to live in it. If we share just how much focus, care, and attention we've put into perfecting our building skills, how we focus on integrating with local communities and supporting the environment, *and* how important building strong, safe homes is to us, we'll likely get people lining up around the corner to buy our houses because they'll resonate with us.

And if our garden centre shares they years of care and experience it has in growing healthy plants *and* makes our time visiting them fun and informative, they'll easily have regular clients that want to spend time there, clients who'll easily become loyal clients who buy all their plants from them as they find that their plants *are* healthy and strong!

We have **such** an opportunity to attract fans-for-life when our communication is aligned with **who we are** and our **output**. Let's make the most of it!

An inspiring example of an organisation that attracts life-long fans by aligning their **core belief**, their **how** and internal environment, their **output**, and then sharing it with the world is Southwest Airlines. Whether via their website [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com) or their [LinkedIn page](#), they share their values, their purposes, their humour, and their desires; and we can feel their 'realness' and their love for their work.



These last two layers make up **what we do**.

What are the words and designs that clearly communicate who you are and what you do?

FROM INSIDE OUT

IN A NOISY WORLD, THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN CLARITY THAT COMES FROM ALIGNMENT.



Articulating our core belief.



Clarifying our current purposes and goals, set within a healthy environment.



Shaping what we do from who we are.



And sharing it with the world.

Here are just a few organisations that have aligned themselves from inside out. They live and breathe **who they are** and **what they do**. They're inspiring. They obviously love what they do. And their customers are extremely loyal :

- Southwest Airlines
- Corporate Rebels
- HolacracyOne
- Buurtzorg
- Patagonia
- FAVI
- Zappos

Below are just a few of the books that caused seriously exciting a-ha moments about organisational clarity and alignment, leading and supporting decentralised teams, along with practical tips on working better together:

'Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness' Frederic Laloux

'Holacracy: The Revolutionary Management System That Abolishes Hierarchy' Brian J Robertson

'Start with Why' Simon Sinek

'Dare to Lead' Brene Brown

'Freedom Inc: Free Your Employees and Let Them Lead Your Business to Higher Productivity, Profits, and Growth' Brian M. Carney & Isaac Getz

'Better Work Together: How the Power of Community Can Transform Your Business' Anthony Cabraal & Susan Basterfield

If you are more drawn to websites, have a look at:

<https://www.presencing.org/>

<http://richdecibels.com/>

<https://www.sociocracyforall.org/>

<https://www.betterworktogether.co/>

There's also numerous free courses on **Design Thinking**, a framework that can help everyone in your organisation be an innovator

And if you get through those quickly (!) our ever lengthening book pile also includes:

'The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth' Amy C. Edmondson

'Scale: The Universal Laws of Life and Death in Organisms, Cities and Companies' Geoffrey West

'Radical Outcomes: How to Create Extraordinary Teams that Get Tangible Results' Juliana Stancampiano

'Sociocracy 3.0: Unleash the Full Potential of People and Organizations' Jef Cumps

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We're so excited about the potential benefits alignment brings that we offer a free hour of our time to anyone that wants to explore how they can bring more alignment into their enterprise.

If you want to talk through what alignment might bring your work and/or your organisation, and how you currently attract your clients and customers, email us at contact@17dmcreative.com