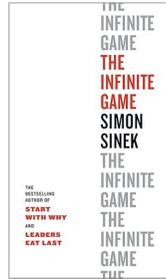


## Your Kindle Notes For:



### The Infinite Game

**Simon Sinek**

127 Highlight(s) | 0 Note(s)

Location: 137

In an infinite game, the primary objective is to keep playing, to perpetuate the game.

Location: 144

No matter how successful we are in life, when we die, none of us will be declared the winner of life. And there is certainly no such thing as winning business. All these things are journeys, not events.

Location: 149

When we lead with a finite mindset in an infinite game, it leads to all kinds of problems, the most common of which include the decline of trust, cooperation and innovation.

Location: 160

The game of business has no finish line.

Location: 177

Which means, to succeed in the Infinite Game of business, we have to stop thinking about who wins or who's the best and start thinking about how to build organizations that are strong enough and healthy enough to stay in the game for many generations to come. The benefits of which, ironically, often make companies stronger in the near term also.

Location: 201

The true value of an organization is measured by the desire others have to contribute to that organization's ability to keep succeeding, not just during the time they are there, but well beyond their own tenure.

Location: 233

He understood that, in the Infinite Game of business, sometimes Apple would have the better product, sometimes another company would have the better product. They weren't trying to outdo Microsoft; Apple was trying to outdo itself.

Location: 245

Indeed, companies led by infinite-minded leaders often enjoy record-making profits. What's more, the inspiration, innovation, cooperation, brand loyalty and profits that result from infinite-minded leadership serve companies not just in times of stability but also in times of instability.

Location: 263

In good times, Victorinox built up reserves of cash, knowing that at some point there would be more difficult times. As CEO Carl Elsener says, "When you look at the history of world economics, it was always like this. Always! And in the future, it will always be like this. It will never go only up. It will never go only down. It will go up and down and up and down. . . . We do not think in quarters," he says. "We think in generations." This kind of infinite thinking put Victorinox in a position where they were both philosophically and financially ready to face what for another company might have been a fatal crisis.

Location: 313

Prioritizing comparison and winning above all else, finite-minded leaders will set corporate strategy, product strategy, incentive structures and hiring decisions to help meet finite goals. And with a finite mindset firmly entrenched in almost all aspects of the organization, a sort of tunnel vision results. The result of which pushes almost everyone inside the company to place excessive focus on the urgent at the expense of the important.

Location: 330

In a turn of events that must have driven Ballmer crazy, after just five years on the market, iPhone sales alone were higher than all of Microsoft's products combined.

Location: 338

A finite-minded leader uses the company's performance to demonstrate the value of their own career. An infinite-minded leader uses their career to enhance the long-term value of the company . . . and only part of that value is counted in money.

Location: 367

Just because a company is big and has enjoyed financial success does not mean it is strong enough to last.

Location: 374

According to a study by McKinsey, the average life span of an S&P 500 company has dropped over forty years since the 1950s, from an average of sixty-one years to less than eighteen years today.

Location: 400

There is no one thing we can do in order to get into shape. We can't simply go to the gym for nine hours and expect to be in shape. However, if we go to the gym every single day for twenty minutes, we will absolutely get into shape. Consistency becomes more important than intensity.

Location: 406

Any leader who wants to adopt an infinite mindset must follow five essential practices: Advance a Just Cause Build Trusting Teams Study your Worthy Rivals Prepare for Existential Flexibility Demonstrate the Courage to Lead

Location: 432

As for us, those who choose to embrace an infinite mindset, our journey is one that will lead us to feel inspired every morning, safe when we are at work and fulfilled at the end of each day.

Location: 507

A Just Cause is not the same as our WHY. A WHY comes from the past. It is an origin story. It is a statement of who we are—the sum total of our values and beliefs. A Just Cause is about the future. It defines where we are going.

Location: 516

For example, my WHY is to inspire people to do what inspires them so that together we can each change our world for the better. It is uniquely mine. My Just Cause is to build a world in which the vast majority of people wake up inspired, feel safe at work and return home fulfilled at the end of the day, and I am looking for as many people as possible who will join me in this Cause.

Location: 557

A Just Cause must be: For something—affirmative and optimistic Inclusive—open to all those who would like to contribute Service oriented—for the primary benefit of others Resilient—able

to endure political, technological and cultural change Idealistic—big, bold and ultimately unachievable

Location: 573

Being for or being against is a subtle but profound difference that the writers of the Declaration of Independence intuitively understood.

Location: 600

“We only hire passionate people” is the oft-recited standard of many a person responsible for hiring. How do they know, however, whether the candidate is passionate for interviewing but not so passionate for the Cause? The reality is, EVERYONE is passionate about something, but we aren't all passionate about the same thing.

Location: 629

No beneficiary, no customer, should be forced to buy a substandard product and no employee should lose their job as a result of cost cutting performed to benefit a shareholder, who is, after all, just one of a group of contributors. Again, only when the primary beneficiary of the Cause is someone other than the organization itself can the Cause be Just.

Location: 642

An infinite-minded investor wants to contribute to advance something bigger than themselves—which, if it is successful, will be highly profitable.

Location: 684

America's Just Cause has yet to be fully realized, and for all practical purposes it never will be. But we will die trying. And that's the point.

Location: 691

This is what the idealized journey of a Just Cause feels like—no matter how much we have achieved, we always feel we have further to go.

Location: 713

A written cause works like a compass. And with a compass in hand, each succession of leaders, their gaze looking beyond the horizon, can more easily navigate the technologies, politics and cultural norms of the day without the founder present.

Location: 747

It's easy to mistake a BHAG for a Just Cause because they can indeed be incredibly inspiring and can often take many years to achieve.

Location: 754

Indeed, leaping from goal to goal can be fun for a while, but if that's all there is, over time the thrill of each achievement becomes less, well, thrilling. I often meet senior executives who seem to suffer from a kind of "finite exhaustion." Because they did well and were paid well for hitting each goal set for them, they kept repeating that pattern. At some point in their careers, they traded any fantasy of feeling like their work would contribute to something bigger than themselves for a rat race or a hamster wheel or some other unfulfilling running rodent metaphor. Racking up finite wins does not lead to something more infinite.

Location: 767

Moon shots are bold, inspiring finite goals within the Infinite Game, not instead of the Infinite Game.

Location: 775

"Being the best" and statements like that are egocentric statements that place the company as the primary subject (and thus the primary beneficiary) of their vision. They don't help make the company relevant to those who buy from the company.

Location: 802

Infinite-minded leaders understand that "best" is not a permanent state. Instead, they strive to be "better." "Better" suggests a journey of constant improvement and makes us feel like we are being invited to contribute our talents and energies to make progress in that journey. "Better," in the Infinite Game, is better than "best."

Location: 816

The reason to grow is so that we have more fuel to advance the Cause. Just as we don't buy a car simply so we can buy more gas, so too must companies offer more value than their ability to make money.

Location: 839

A corporate social responsibility (CSR) program is not a Just Cause.

Location: 844

The way a company makes its money and the way it gives it away must both contribute to advancing the Just Cause. "Cause-related work" is not something an organization does on the side; it is core to their very being. Service is not an ornament. It is a touchstone.

Location: 876

Though he talks about being relevant to customers he doesn't actually mention delivering value to them until the end of his statement. It's a strange quirk of human nature. The order in which a person presents information more often than not reveals their actual priorities and the focus of their strategies. Where Sam Walton started with the people's interests, Mike Duke started with Wall Street's.

Blue highlight | Location: 887

Under pressure from Wall Street, we too often put finite-minded executives in the highest leadership position when what we actually need is a visionary, infinite-minded leader.

Location: 907

Words matter. They give direction and meaning to things.

Location: 974

It is not technology that explains failure; it is less about technology, per se, and more about the leaders' failure to envision the future of their business as the world changes around them. It is the result of shortsightedness. And shortsightedness is an inherent condition of leaders who play with a finite mindset.

Location: 996

Put simply, the company's interests should always be secondary to the interest of the consumer (ironically, a point Smith believed so

Location: 1,035

But business was never just about making money. As Henry Ford said, "A business that makes nothing but money is a poor kind of business." Companies exist to advance something—technology, quality of life or anything else with the potential to ease or enhance our lives in some way, shape or form.

Location: 1,047

The Economic Policy Institute reported that in 1978, the average CEO made approximately 30 times the average worker's salary. By 2016, the average had increased over 800 percent to 271 times the average worker's pay. Where the average CEO has seen a nearly 950 percent increase in their earnings, the American worker, meanwhile, has seen just over 11 percent in theirs. According to the same report, average CEO pay has increased at a rate 70 percent faster than the stock market!

Location: 1,062

Does ethical custom mean that if we do something frequently enough it becomes normalized and is thus no longer unethical? If so many companies use regular rounds of mass layoffs,

using people's livelihoods, to meet arbitrary projections, does that strategy then cease to be unethical? If everyone is doing it, it must be okay.

Location: 1,097

There is no such thing as constant growth, nor is there any rule that says high-speed growth is necessarily a great strategy when building a company to last.

Location: 1,102

Opening stores is not what makes a company successful; having those stores operate well is. It's in a company's interest to get things done right now rather than wait to deal with the problems high-speed growth can cause later.

Location: 1,126

If our goal is to build companies that can keep playing for lifetimes to come, then we must stop automatically thinking of shareholders as owners, and executives must stop thinking that they work solely for them. A healthier way for all shareholders to view themselves is as contributors, be they near-term or long-term focused.

Location: 1,135

The fact is, we all want to feel like our work and our lives have meaning. It's part of what it means to be human. We all want to feel a part of something bigger than ourselves.

Location: 1,144

In 2018, Larry Fink, the founder, chairman and CEO of BlackRock, Inc., caused a bit of a stir in the financial industry when he wrote an open letter to CEOs titled "A Sense of Purpose."

Location: 1,146

"Without a sense of purpose," he explained, "no company, either public or private, can achieve its full potential. It will ultimately lose the license to operate from key stakeholders. It will succumb to short-term pressures to distribute earnings, and, in the process, sacrifice investments in employee development, innovation, and capital expenditures that are necessary for long-term growth."

Location: 1,156

The irony is that everyone who works with or for the public markets understands that when the system becomes too unbalanced, there will always be a correction. That correction is often sudden and violent.

Location: 1,163

Where there is unbalance, there is unrest.

Location: 1,183

And all those in a seat of power—be they in business or in politics—are in a position to effect change. But make no mistake, change is coming. Because that's how the Infinite Game works. This finite system we have now will run itself dry of will and resources eventually. It always does. It always does. Though some may enrich themselves with money or power for now, the system cannot survive under its own weight. If history and almost every stock market crash is any indicator, imbalance is a bitch.

Location: 1,190

And the business heroes of the high flying 1980s and '90s, like Jack Welch, are losing their luster and appeal. It is now self-evident that we need a new definition of the responsibility of business that better aligns with the idea that business is an infinite game. A definition that understands that money is a result and not a purpose. A definition that gives employees and the people who lead them the feeling that their work has value beyond the money they make for themselves, their companies or their shareholders.

Location: 1,201

Simply put: The responsibility of business is to use its will and resources to advance a cause greater than itself, protect the people and places in which it operates and generate more resources so that it can continue doing all those things for as long as possible. An organization can do whatever it likes to build its business so long as it is responsible for the consequences of its actions.

Location: 1,217

We want to know that the company is invested in our growth as much as it is its own.

Location: 1,228

Translated into business terms, it means that a company's goals must also align with people's goals, not simply the goals of shareholders. If we want our work to benefit ourselves, our colleagues, our customers, our communities and the world, then it is right for us to work at companies whose values and goals align with our own.

Location: 1,248

“Like” is rational. We like the people we work with. We like the challenge. We like the work. But “love,” love is emotional.

Blue highlight | Location: 1,263

A better question to ask is, “How do I create an environment in which my people can work to their natural best?”

Location: 1,267

It's not the people doing the job, it's the people who lead the people doing the job who can make the greater difference.

Location: 1,280

Will generally comes from inside sources like the quality of leadership and the clarity and strength of the Just Cause. Will represents the sum of all the human elements that contribute to the health of the organization.

Location: 1,284

The problem is, will and resources can never be equally prioritized. There are always circumstances in which one is pitted against the other, times in which a leader must choose which one they are willing to sacrifice. The question is, which one will they choose? Every leader has a bias.

Location: 1,330

And it is because of that alternative mindset that Apple and Costco enjoy average retention rates around 90 percent, when the average in the rest of retail is 20 to 30 percent.

Location: 1,331

Where finite-minded organizations view people as a cost to be managed, infinite-minded organizations prefer to see employees as human beings whose value cannot be calculated as if they were a piece of machinery. Investing in human beings goes beyond paying them well and offering them a great place to work. It also means treating them like human beings.

Location: 1,365

If only that's all it took to inspire a human being. Money can buy a lot of things. Indeed, we can motivate people with money; we can pay them to work hard. But money can't buy true will. The difference between an organization where people are extrinsically rewarded to give their all and one where people are intrinsically motivated to do so is the difference between an organization filled with mercenaries versus one filled with zealots.

Location: 1,370

Mercenaries are not likely to sacrifice out of love and devotion. In contrast, zealots love being a part of the organization. Though they may get rich doing what they are doing, they aren't doing it to get rich. They're doing it because they believe in the Just Cause.

Location: 1,379

One reason companies that operate with a bias for will ultimately fare better in the Infinite Game has to do with what we can control. Though we have control over how we spend or manage our money, we have a lot less control over how we make it.

Location: 1,382

Leaders can exert only limited control over any of these things. However, leaders have near total control over the source of will. Will is generated by the company culture. Unlike resources, which are ultimately limited, we can generate an endless supply of will.

Location: 1,417

“If there was one thing you could change about me, what would it be?” “[You] don’t listen,” they told him, “you talk too much.” To which he could only reply, “Tell me more.”

Location: 1,423

There is a difference between a group of people who work together and a group of people who trust each other.

Location: 1,431

“Trust is the stacking and layering of small moments and reciprocal vulnerability over time,” says Brené Brown, research professor at the University of Houston in her book *Dare to Lead*. “Trust and vulnerability grow together, and to betray one is to destroy both.”

Location: 1,447

Our ability to trust is not based on our industry. This is human being stuff. Sometimes all we need to do is translate the concepts to fit the cultures in which we work.

Location: 1,462

In other words, to build high-performing teams, trust comes before the performance.

Location: 1,468

Performance is about technical competence.

Location: 1,469

Trust is about character. Their humility and sense of personal accountability. How much they have the backs of their teammates when not in combat.

Location: 1,471

The way one SEAL team member put it, “I may trust you with my life but do I trust you with my money or my wife?” In other words, just because I trust your technical skills doesn’t mean I think you are trustworthy as a person.

Location: 1,501

Performance can easily be quantified in terms of output. Indeed, in business, we have all sorts of metrics to measure someone’s performance, but we have few if any effective metrics to measure someone’s trustworthiness. The

Location: 1,521

Only when a team member proves uncoachable—is resistant to feedback and takes no responsibility for how they show up at work—should we seriously consider removing them from the team.

Location: 1,575

The process of building trust takes risk. We start by taking small risks, and if we feel safe, we take bigger risks. Sometimes there are missteps. Then we try again. Until, eventually, we feel we can be completely ourselves. Trust must be continuously and actively cultivated.

Location: 1,603

And, because we get the behavior we reward, executives were now conditioned to hide problem areas or missed financial targets to protect themselves from the CEO. It didn’t matter that Mulally said he wanted honesty and accountability; until the executives felt safe, he wasn’t going to get it.

Location: 1,622

It is the combination of what we value and how we act that sets the culture of the company.  
Culture = Values + Behavior

Location: 1,670

Infinite games, remember, require infinite strategies. Because crime is an infinite game, the approach Chief Cauley’s officers are taking is much better suited to that game than an attack-and-conquer mindset.

Location: 1,672

The goal is not to win in the overall scheme of things; the objective is to keep your will and resources strong while working to frustrate the will and exhaust the resources of the other players. Police can never “beat” crime. Instead, the police can make it more difficult for the criminals to be criminals.

Location: 1,698

In weak cultures, people find safety in the rules. This is why we get bureaucrats. They believe a strict adherence to the rules provides them with job security. And in the process, they do damage to the trust inside and outside the organization. In strong cultures, people find safety in relationships. Strong relationships are the foundation of high-performing teams. And all high-performing teams start with trust.

Location: 1,712

In other words, the Marine Corps focuses on assessing the inputs, the behaviors, rather than the outcomes.

Location: 1,713

The ability to succeed is not what makes someone a leader. Exhibiting the qualities of leadership is what makes someone an effective leader.

Location: 1,716

A bias for will before resources, trust before performance, increases the probability a team will perform at higher levels over time. The ability for any organization to build new leaders is very important. Think of an organization like a plant. No matter how strong it is, no matter how tall it grows, if it cannot make new seeds, if it is unable to produce new leaders, then its ability to thrive for generations beyond is nil.

Location: 1,719

One of the primary jobs of any leader is to make new leaders.

Location: 1,730

It's a phrase I will repeat again in this book: leaders are not responsible for the results, leaders are responsible for the people who are responsible for the results.

Blue highlight | Location: 1,731

And the best way to drive performance in an organization is to create an environment in which information can flow freely, mistakes can be highlighted and help can be offered and received. In short, an environment in which people feel safe among their own. This is the responsibility of a leader.

Location: 1,753

Ethical fading is a condition in a culture that allows people to act in unethical ways in order to advance their own interests, often at the expense of others, while falsely believing that they have not compromised their own moral principles.

Location: 1,760

Those who meet their goals are given bonuses or promoted often without consideration of the manner in which they met their goals, while those who acted with integrity but missed their targets are penalized by being overlooked for recognition or advancement. This sends a message to everyone else in the organization that making the numbers is more important than acting ethically.

Location: 1,794

One employee remembered her manager telling her, "If you don't meet your solutions you're not a team player. If you're bringing down the team then you will be fired and it will be on your permanent record." The employee told her supervisors that she felt there was no ethical way she could meet their expectations and called the bank's ethics hotline multiple times to say as much. This is the kind of response we would hope for or expect from an employee when there is evidence of ethical lapses inside a large organization. But in the end, Wells Fargo decided to fire her rather than respond to her concerns.

Location: 1,823

None of the company's leaders was held criminally liable for allowing a culture in which their own people committed fraud (which is a crime) to exist. No one went to jail. There wasn't even a single indictment. Indeed, John Stumpf did lose his job and \$41 million of unvested equity, but he was only fired as a response to massive public pressure. What's more, he walked away with over \$134 million in pension accounts and stock.

Location: 1,844

accountability is when we take responsibility for our own actions, not when we blame our actions on the system.) The ethical fading was so complete at Mylan that Bresch didn't seem to perceive that she or her company had done anything wrong.

Location: 1,875

Imagine if we actually started calling things what they are within our organizations. If we did, perhaps we would take the time to find more creative, and indeed more ethical, ways of achieving our goals. And in so doing, actually strengthen our cultures in the process.

Location: 1,886

After we click a box to accept their terms and conditions, for example, many companies believe that they are free of responsibility for what happens next. Legally that may be true, but ethically speaking, they are not.

Location: 1,944

When problems arise, performance lags, mistakes are made or unethical decisions are uncovered, Lazy Leadership chooses to put their efforts into building processes to fix the problems rather than building support for their people.

Location: 1,970

Remember, the very definition of ethical fading is engaging in unethical behavior while believing that we are still acting in line with our own moral or ethical code.

Location: 1,987

The best antidote—and inoculation—against ethical fading is an infinite mindset. Leaders who give their people a Just Cause to advance and give them an opportunity to work with a Trusting Team to advance it will build a culture in which their people can work toward the short-term goals while also considering the morality, ethics and wider impact of the decisions they make to meet those goals.

Location: 1,997

As I've said before, leaders are not, by definition, responsible for the results. Leaders are responsible for the people who are responsible for the results. It's a job that requires constant attention because when little things compound, things eventually break.

Location: 2,003

Ethical fading, however, is not a part of being human. Ethical fading is a failure of leadership and is a controllable element in a corporate culture. Which means the opposite is also true.

Location: 2,038

This is what helps them maintain a culture of high ethical standards. Patagonia is not driven to be the best, they are driven to be better.

Location: 2,061

Indeed, it is the very standard of an effective Just Cause—that we may never reach the ideal we imagine but we will die trying. This gives purpose and meaning to the work we do at the companies we work for and inspires us to keep fighting the good fight.

Location: 2,151

In fact, everyone reading this book should also read Give and Take and Originals; they are both essential reading in and out of the business world. (Fun fact: In an infinite game, we can both succeed. Turns out people can actually buy more than one book.)

Location: 2,186

Henry Ford's original Just Cause: to provide safe and efficient transportation for everyone, to open the highways to all mankind. Henry Ford's Cause also served as a filter for other decisions.

Location: 2,283

Cause Blindness blunts humility and exaggerates arrogance, which in turn stunts innovation and reduces the flexibility we need to play the long game.

Location: 2,320

The Infinite Game is like a stock market; companies list and delist but no one can control the market.

Location: 2,359

What got us here won't get us there, and knowing who our Worthy Rivals are is the best way to help us improve and adapt before it's too late.

Location: 2,419

He didn't leave because he saw an opportunity to make more money. He didn't leave a failing business. He found a better way to advance his Just Cause and he leapt at it.

Location: 2,431

Many start-ups are fueled more by an entrepreneur's passion for a vision than by resources they have to advance it.

Location: 2,473

According to Apple folklore, the executive went on to say: "Steve, if we invest in this, we will blow up our own company." To which Jobs replied, "Better we should blow it up than someone else."

Location: 2,550

Without a Just Cause to guide them, Kodak's executives lacked the vision or courage to know what to do for the long-term success of their company. The most they could do was react to the world around them. George Eastman literally invented mass-market photography. The people who worked at Kodak were pioneers in almost every part of the industry. It was only their finite mindset that left this once great company to be disrupted by the visionary technology they themselves invented.

Location: 2,605

And it takes courage to offer our help so they may fix it. It takes the Courage to Lead to make decisions counter to the current standards of business and it takes the Courage to Lead to ignore the pressure of outside parties who are not invested in or believers in our Just Cause.

Location: 2,653

Bob Chapman, the CEO of the manufacturing company Barry-Wehmiller. Chapman (about whom I wrote extensively in Leaders Eat Last) is an outspoken voice for the idea that the best leaders and the best companies prioritize people before numbers. That his company consistently thrives beyond expectations with a people-before-profit philosophy earns him invitations to speak to the converted and skeptics alike.

Location: 2,680

However, trust is not built by pressure or force, trust is built by acting in a way consistent with one's values, especially when it's least expected. Trust is built when we do the right thing, especially when we aren't forced to.

Location: 2,700

A CEO of a major public company pointed out to me that Wall Street analysts tend to write for the short-term community. So they tend to write the things that promote their interests—finite objectives.

Location: 2,719

It Takes No Courage to Keep a Finite Mindset

Location: 2,733

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. The number of people who die from smoking-related illness each year is greater than all the people who die from HIV, illegal drug use, alcohol use, car accidents and firearm-related incidents combined!

Location: 2,739

The annual health-care total related to smoking costs the country nearly fifty times more than traveling to space!

Location: 2,771

When companies and the people who lead them act with courage and integrity, when they demonstrate that they are honest and of strong character, they are often rewarded with good will and trust from customers and employees.

Location: 2,782

Indeed, the pursuit of a Just Cause is a path of integrity. It means that words and actions must align.

Location: 2,785

When leaders know about something that is unethical and only act after the outcry, that's not integrity. That's damage control. "They wait for public opinion to tell them what to do,"

Location: 2,817

It can't be a good thing when the captain of the ship, who is supposed to be on deck navigating toward the horizon, is now in the ship tinkering with the engine trying to make it go faster.

Location: 2,836

Regardless of the size of the company, the elements of infinite-minded leadership that I've tried to make a case for in this book are the best way to help stay on that infinite journey. Playing the Infinite Game is not a checklist, it's a mindset.

Location: 2,849

Courageous Leaders are strong because they know they don't have all the answers and they don't have total control. They do, however, have each other and a Just Cause to guide them.

Location: 2,866

To live our lives with an infinite mindset means that we are driven to advance a Cause bigger than ourselves. We see those who share our vision as partners in the Cause and we work to build trusting relationships with them so that we may advance the common good together. We are grateful for the success we enjoy. And as we advance we work to help those around us rise. To live our lives with an infinite mindset is to live a life of service.

Location: 2,885

There is no single, greater contribution in the Infinite Game than to raise children who will continue to grow and serve others long after we are gone.