

DALE YOUNG

From **WHAT** to **WHY**

Mentors on My Journey to Calling and Legacy

Dale Young is an executive coach specializing in teamwork, leadership, and calling. As an entrepreneur, Dale is familiar with the daily overwhelm, whirlwind, and chaos. He coaches each entrepreneur and business leader through their chaos into clarity to pursue their calling. Dale is also the author of The Identity Key and a professional speaker.

Lessons from Dad

My dad and I had a very complicated relationship. He provided for the family and was physically present. However, he was absent emotionally. I can understand this intellectually, but for many years, it left a hole in my heart.

Dad was 45 when I was born. Mom was 36. I have two siblings, a sister that is 14 years older and a brother that is 12 years older. Being the “late-life miracle” and a “momma’s boy,” I always got the feeling from Dad that I was an afterthought, unwanted, and not good enough. This was compounded by the fact that I was a shy introvert and a thinker, the opposite of Dad.

When I had just started first grade the school announced a special evening meeting for the Cub Scouts. I didn’t know anything about Scouts, but my brother had just joined the Army, and I associated the Scouts with the military. I wanted to be like my brother because he was Dad’s favorite. I convinced Mom that I wanted to go to this Cub Scout meeting.

It ended up that Dad drove me. I don’t remember the meeting because of what happened afterward. On the way back home, Dad stopped to talk with somebody. There was nothing to keep me occupied. After what felt like hours (probably less than 10 minutes) I went up to Dad and pulled a couple of times on his pants leg.

He barked out, “WHAT?”

And I timidly said, “I’m tired. Can we go home?”

Silence.

In my memory, it feels like a cold blast of freezing air was emanating

from Dad. He marched me to the car, and we drove home. I went to bed wondering what I had done wrong.

We never talked about it. In fact, I don't recall ever talking to Dad about anything going on in my emotional life. And yet, his approval was what I wanted the most.

When I was nine, Dad started a lawn mower repair business. He started teaching me to work on lawn mowers. I had very little interest in lawn mowers per se, but I always wanted to learn new things, and I really wanted my dad's approval, so I jumped into it. By age 12, I could take a lawn mower that wasn't running, tear it apart, find what was wrong, fix it, and put it back together. And it would run. With no parts leftover! Did I get any praise or appreciation from Dad?

Silence.

I knew something wasn't right, and it hurt, but I could not have put into words at the time what it was. I've since learned that my primary love language is words of appreciation, and that is what I needed but did not get. Ironically, I later found out through my brother that Dad would brag about me to other people.

Although I didn't know the term at the time, Dad was my first mentor. I learned both good and bad things from Dad.

Three things I learned from Dad:

- Persistence—you can do almost anything when you stick with it.
- Money gives you options.
- Feelings are irrelevant.

An Exciting and Profitable Offer

After college, my WHAT had developed to be: make a lot of money and have a good time. Then, a friend I knew called to tell me he had taken a new job. Then he asked, "Dale, have you ever thought about going to Australia?"

I thought back to fourth grade. Our music teacher had taught us "Waltzing Matilda" and told us about kangaroos, koalas, and platypuses. It had always been a deep-seated desire of mine to someday see these things.

It turned out, the company he went to work for, E-Systems, was a defense contractor working for the US government. They were hiring and

wanted someone with exactly my experience to move to Australia. They would supply travel there and back, plus housing and utilities, plus a 30% bonus on the base pay!

I applied. They flew me to Dallas for an interview. They offered me a job on the spot, and the base was more than I was making at the time. It was a no-brainer.

Australia

In January 1982, I moved to Australia. My first boss was great, but he was replaced in 1983 with the worst boss of my entire career, who was a liar, a fraud, and a poser. I decided to move back to the States in December 1984. Interestingly enough, this worst boss was fired six months later.

After two years back in the States, an opportunity came up, and I was able to return to Australia. I had a series of bosses but no mentors.

In 1992, our office announced that the government was going to start taxing the housing and utilities benefits we had been enjoying. A group of us were sitting around the lunch table griping about this tax, when out of my mouth came: “You know, we really shouldn’t be griping. After all, **this is JUST a job, not a career.**”

At that moment, I realized my **WHAT** had changed and my heart wanted something much bigger.

In the next four years, I moved back to Dallas, Texas, and changed jobs, all while looking for my next big thing.

Lessons from Gary Tatsch

That’s when Gary Tatsch came into my life. We met at a DFW Unix User’s group meeting; I was helping run the group, and he came in looking for IT talent. Gary offered me a computer consultant job, which I accepted. Over the next 13 years, across four companies, he was my boss and mentor.

In late 1998, Gary was recruited by a company to start a new division that would sell hardware and do consulting. I joined him. We moved a lot of hardware and were profitable. A year later, the company wanted to get out of the hardware business and focus on website development. Gary negotiated a deal to roll the division into a new company, take the existing hardware clients, and pay them a referral fee for the first year.

In January 2000, I, Gary, and eight others created a new startup company, Applied Solutions Incorporated (ASI). Gary was president, I was

vice president. As a new company, we started with no revenue. But as a team that had been together for a year with a pre-built pipeline in the hardware business, we hit the ground running and ended the year with millions of dollars in revenue, albeit a relatively small profit. It was enough for us to place number 10 in the *Entrepreneur Magazine* Hot 100, the 100 fastest-growing privately owned companies in America.

Lessons from Hugh Jones

In 2001, a group of us in the company were involved in a vigorous debate about how to proceed. Tensions were high. Voices were getting louder and louder. Several people were getting red-faced. It felt like a thunderstorm was about to break out in the room.

Then a quiet, firm, crystal-clear voice echoed from the back of the room. “Gentlemen, you are in **VIOLENT AGREEMENT**.”

Even though he said it only once, it was as if that phrase was still reverberating around the room. I know it was echoing inside my head.

Violent agreement.

The argument was over. The way forward was clear.

The clear voice from the back of the room was Hugh Jones. Hugh had joined ASI to mentor Gary and me. At first, I wasn’t sure about Hugh. He was often blunt and he told me things about myself that I didn’t want to hear. As it turned out, those were things I **needed** to hear.

Hugh had a whole vocabulary of phrases that would grab your attention. In addition to “violent agreement,” some others were:

- Communication is a bilateral responsibility.
- Lead with facade and fill with substance.
- Leadership commands, not demands.
- Management is adult day care.

Although I worked with Hugh for less than three years, I would go on to refer to the wisdom I learned many times.

Three things I learned from Hugh:

- When everyone else is losing their head, the leader keeps his and focuses on the next right move.

- A short, memorable phrase can communicate a deep philosophy—and becomes a verbal shorthand.
- Feelings are critical. The leader takes care of their people.

Between Gary and Hugh's mentoring, my craving for personal development had exploded. Prior to that point, I had read a lot of technical books. Now, I was devouring books on leadership and self-development by John Maxwell, Jim Collins, Stephen Covey, Patrick Lencioni, Rick Warren, Bob Buford, Bob Beaudine, Zig Ziglar, John Eldredge, and a host of others.

Lessons from Gary Tatsch, Part Two

Despite Hugh's guidance and hitting number 23 on the Entrepreneur Hot 100 in 2002, we ended up shutting down ASI in September 2004.

Gary took over as a division lead for Stonebridge, another company in the same industry. I was his right-hand man with no direct management responsibilities. Within a couple of years, we sold a major consulting contract to a company in Houston. I put a team together and delivered some great outcomes. As a result, the contract was annualized for the calendar year 2007. That year, this one contract contributed almost 10% of Stonebridge's revenue.

The 2008 recession hit the company hard in 2009, and Stonebridge had to reduce the headcount. Gary recommended that they keep me, since I was managing the major contract and the team. Gary was let go, and I was assigned a lot of his responsibilities. After 13 years, I had a new boss. Gary got a job within a couple of months.

Three things I learned from Gary:

- There's likely a way to turn what looks like an impossible situation into a win. Be creative.
- Give your people plenty of room to grow and they (usually) will.
- Don't let a few bad apples sour your faith in humanity.

My Transition to Calling

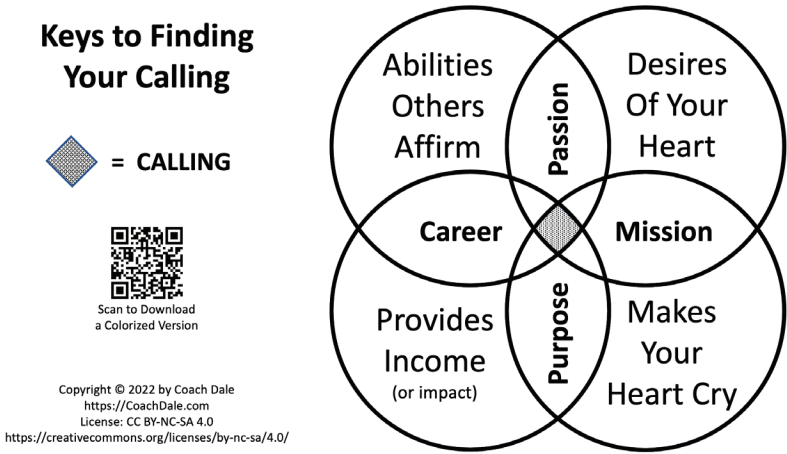
These mentors and others have led me on a path of continual growth and self-improvement. This has had a major impact on my life. In 2011, I started training as a life coach. I have had multiple mentors on my coaching journey: Chris McCluskey, Dave Mead, Michael Marx, John Ramstead,

Kim Avery, Kyle Wilson, and many others. Their mentorship not only accelerated my growth but also launched a desire in me to start passing on the lessons I’ve been privileged to learn. There was yet another level I was being pulled toward.

In November 2017, I heard a book review of Simon Sinek’s *Start with Why*. This led me to read the book and to view and recommend his TED Talk of the same name multiple times. **WHY** was the core question that everything kept circling around. And yet, as big as it was, it still wasn’t big enough.

Finally, in 2022, the word **CALLING** took center stage. To me, **calling** is an upward pull, something that is not of yourself, and it adds a necessary spiritual component to the equation.

In November 2022, I saw a diagram in a flash—a “God download” as Kyle Wilson likes to say. Although I had seen it, it took me two weeks of struggle to get the words correct. It took another two weeks to put together the basics of a presentation that enabled me to talk about and explain the framework of this message.



A colorized version with more detail is available at <http://CoachDale.com/calling>.

This is my gift and message to the world. I feel like God gave this to me to pass along, not to keep. To that end, the diagram and the framework are licensed under the Creative Commons license, which allows use and modifications with an acknowledgment that it originated with me. This is part of my legacy.

In the months since this God download, I have developed and tested a coaching process using this framework. I've named it The Calling Experience, and it integrates the calling framework with my previous coaching experience to bring remarkable clarity to the future path and calling of each of my clients. It's exciting to see the progress! I look forward to helping others get clear on their unique calling and the next steps in their journey for years to come. That is my calling!



To find out more about The Calling Experience, the results that have been achieved, and whether it might be right for you, send an email to dale@coachdale.com and mention The Calling Experience. Website is www.CoachDale.com. Follow Dale on [LinkedIn.com/in/CoachDale](https://www.linkedin.com/in/CoachDale) or [Facebook.com/CoachDaleYoung](https://www.facebook.com/CoachDaleYoung).

Quotable: What's the difference between an inheritance and a legacy? One word of two characters:
An inheritance is something you leave TO someone.
A legacy is something you leave IN someone.



Coach Dale – The Calling Experience