

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your journey into FISH! Culture. FISH! Culture is a process that helps you and your coworkers decide for yourselves how to bring The FISH! Philosophy® into your work and lives.

It starts with meaningful, practical conversations that provide direction and inspire action. As the poet John Keats once said, “Nothing becomes real until it is experienced.” These experiences lead to reflection, new conversations, and more action.

Your Personal Workbook is your guide to the 10 Essential Conversations in the FISH! Culture process. Use your workbook to:

- Doodle, draw, scribble and brainstorm.
- Reflect on the experiences you are co-creating with your team.
- Inspire you to live The FISH! Philosophy moment to moment.
- Read the FISH! Wisdoms on the four FISH! practices and other crucial elements of workplace culture.
- Ask and discuss questions that will help you co-create the kind of workplace experience you desire.
- Record your thoughts, ideas and questions as well as insights from others.

## HOW FISH! CAME TO BE

Several years ago a filmmaker named John Christensen was visiting Seattle. One of the locals suggested that he visit the Pike Place Market, where thousands of people flocked daily to buy fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers and seafood. As John took in the colorful sights and enticing smells, a commotion on the other side of the open-air market caught his attention.

He followed the sound to a crowd gathered around a small fish market. He saw crabs and salmon being tossed over the counter for wrapping. The crowd cheered every spectacular catch. Employees and customers alike laughed and smiled with one another, and the cash registers rang constantly. The market was crowded and noisy, with constant distractions, but when a fishmonger served a customer, it was as if they were the only two people in the place.

John watched the fishmongers for over an hour, hypnotized by the energy, fun, focus and excitement. At the same time he noticed that the actual work of selling fish was cold, smelly and exhausting. What made this place so *alive*?

Then John remembered an idea he had heard from author David Whyte: We spend more of our waking hours at work than we do with our family or friends. Yet sometimes we leave the best parts of ourselves—our passion, energy and creativity—at home. If we can't bring all of ourselves to work, we're saying it's okay to be unhappy, bored or resigned for a big part of our lives.

John had always been interested in people who choose to work with passion, and he saw the fish market as a metaphor to illustrate his belief that every workplace can be more alive and wholehearted. He brought his cameras to the fish market and with his team created *FISH!*, the film you will see in our first FISH! Culture gathering (and that millions around the world have already seen).

In *FISH!*, John and his team identified four fundamental practices that capture what makes up a fulfilling workplace, great service and effective relationships. These practices—Be There, Play, Make Their Day and Choose Your Attitude—are the foundation of The FISH! Philosophy.

FISH! is all about choices and awareness. What impact do you want to have on others? What kind of person do you want to be? It's easy to forget those things when we're busy, stressed out or self-absorbed, but they make all the difference in the choices we make and the culture we create for ourselves. The FISH! Philosophy gives us a new language to talk about how we want to treat one another, and to keep it in the front of our minds every day.

The FISH! Philosophy certainly wasn't created as a way for anyone, especially leaders, to try to “fix” or “find fault” with others. It isn't a set of rules you impose or mandate. It's an *invitation*. No one can force you to live a philosophy. Instead, you try these ideas out in your life and decide if they are right for you. If they are, you live them because you *believe* in them—not because someone says you *have* to.

FISH! is not a magic pill. Sometimes life and people will be unfair. The FISH! Philosophy is *not* about being passive in the face of what needs to change. Rather, it reminds us that we don't have to be

passive about the power that is already within us. No one can live The FISH! Philosophy *for* you, or simply deliver the culture you want in a box. *You* get to create it for yourself and the people you impact every day.

When you choose to make these practices a part of your life, no matter what is happening around you, you will not be a positive difference in your relationships and within yourself. When a community of people chooses to live The FISH! Philosophy with—and for—one another, they can create a higher quality of life at work.

**THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER: THE FISH! PHILOSOPHY**

Be There: “You’re just being with *them*. Everything else is going on around, but you’re still taking care of just *them*.”

Play: “Any job can be boring if you make it boring. But if you make it fun . . .”

Make Their Day: “We’re not really dealing in fish. We’re dealing with people that we want to serve.”

Choose Your Attitude: “I’m going to be here making a living, so I have a choice. I can either do what I can to have a good time or not.”



*“If you love your job, it’s going to show and if it shows, it’s going to affect somebody.”*

—Sammy, fishmonger

## CONVERSATION

### Conversation Starters

1. What scene did you like the most? Why?
2. What do you think makes the fish market so successful?
3. One of the fishmongers described the market's vision as "World Famous." What did they do differently because of that vision?
4. What do you think our vision for our culture should be? (We're not deciding today, just starting a conversation.)
5. What do they have at the fish market that you would like at work? How can we get more of that in our workplace?

## FISH! WISDOM

We spend the majority of our waking lives at work, as well as thinking about, preparing for and recovering from work. If we can't find some passion, commitment and energy in our work, we may feel like we're just "putting in our time" for the majority of our lives.

Before they began exploring The FISH! Philosophy, the management and employees at Tile Tech, Inc. thought of themselves as people who put roofs on houses. But when they began to see themselves as a team that builds safe and secure homes for families, they discovered a new passion for their important work.

Seeing a greater purpose in their work gave the roofers a desire to be more wholehearted. Think about the times in your life when you are wholehearted—playing with your children, competing in a sport, reading a great book, or maybe even doing the job you love. In each instance, you give all of yourself to that moment. Because you love what you are doing, you have no problem shutting out distractions and focusing on what

matters. And because you give your all, in the end, the experience is much more satisfying.

Every job has its purpose, but sometimes we struggle to see our purpose. To find inspiration in our work, we have to ask ourselves, "How am I serving others; how am I making a difference?" Once we find a reason for our job, choosing wholeheartedness is easier. Then, like the Tile Tech roofers, we can discover the joy and deep satisfaction of passion and energy at work.

**THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER: PASSION & ENGAGEMENT**

“We’re not just working on their car.  
We’re giving them peace of mind.”

“My passion . . . it’s just inside of me. It  
comes from . . . being treated like you’re  
a human being.”

“Guess who’s happiest these days? Guess  
who’s having the most fun? Those

people that have thrown their heart over  
the bar.”



*“Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished  
without passion.”*

—Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

## CONVERSATION

### Conversation Starters

1. Why do you think the people in the film felt so engaged in their work?
2. How does what we do as an organization matter?
3. What would it take for us to be more wholehearted?
4. What is our organization's cause, purpose or mission?

SAMPLE