



Book Review

THE INFINITE GAME

SIMON SINEK



IDENTIFY A "JUST CAUSE"

A vision of a far future.

A "Just Cause" fulfills these requirements:

- has to be for something positive
- everyone who wants can participate
- is for the benefit of others
- is able to withstand change
- is ultimately unattainable

IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

- What is your dream version of a research administrative office? What gets you out of bed in the morning and motivates you?
- A "Just Cause" in your office is NOT research metrics
- Where is your office going (think far future)
- Describe the world you would like to live in, or the research office you'd like to have
- Stick to your "just cause"

FINITE VS. INFINITE GAMES

Finite Games have (a) known players, (b) rules, (c) an agreed-upon goal that when met, ends the game; clear winners & losers are identified

Infinite Games have unknown players, are played without rules and the way the game is played can change at any time; no clear winners exist, and the goal is to keep playing for as long as possible

Obsession with short-term metrics prioritizes urgency over importance, resulting in disastrous strategies

IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

Research Metrics are the goals of a finite game with universities being the players. The goal disappears when the metric is met.

Finite games provide short-term gain, not long-term success

Shift from the thought of "winning" or reaching a certain metric every month, quarter or year to a more infinite mindset to become resilient

Identify what is truly important rather than going after short-term metrics

ETHICAL FADING

A culture that allows people to act in unethical ways to advance their own interests, even if this is at the expense of others

The individuals (falsely) believe that they have not compromised their own morals in doing so

IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

Treat your employees like family and create an environment of trust, regardless of any lack of short-term gain

- ADVANCE A JUST CAUSE.
- BUILD TRUSTING TEAMS.
- STUDY YOUR WORTHY RIVALS.
- PREPARE FOR EXISTENTIAL FLEXIBILITY.
- SHOW THE COURAGE TO LEAD.

LEADERSHIP

Sticking to the "Just Cause" requires courage

The "Just cause" is prioritized above all else

Create a "vulnerable team" where everyone feels safe to voice when they do not know something, and be their true self

Have an "open playbook": many leaders are afraid that if they are too transparent, individuals will use that knowledge against them. However, not being transparent results in employees making sub-optimal decisions, because they don't know the entire story

IN RESEARCH/UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

Sticking to a "just cause" will require the leaders of the university be in agreement not to go after short-term gain in favor of e.g. short-term reaching of certain metrics, but stick to their goal of creating that "dream" version of a university they try to build

Create a safe environment in which trust prevails

Be transparent with your strategies, how you are planning on reaching your "just cause" and how those strategies may change with changing times

COMPETITION

In the Infinite Game, other players exist, but you are not competing with them

You are competing against yourself

The goal is not to beat your competition, but to outlast them

IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

We have a large number of rankings most of us look to for measuring success.

Instead, define a true goal, a "just cause", and improve yourself, rather than ranking your research or your university against others

Make decisions based on years to come, not short-term goals

PLAYERS OF THE INFINITE GAME WILL LEAVE A CULTURE THAT WILL OUTLAST THE LEADER'S TENURE