



Leadership Emails

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Today...Choose to Be Extraordinary!

July 21 - August 11, 2022

Kevin's Leadership Emails are powerful explorations into personal development, both inside and outside of the practice.

Enjoy reviewing all this transformational, thought-provoking content.

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Renewal (Part 4)

If you have been following along over the past few weeks, you have been challenged to take a fresh, new look at yourself and the world around you in an attempt to feel a sense of renewal. Today, I want to ask you a question with various perspectives hoping it helps to tie the content of the messages all together.

What do your fellow team members say about you when you're not around?

How would your fellow team members describe you in three sentences or less?

(You could easily replace "team members" with friends, family members, or anyone else who you would be curious to know what they say of you when you are not in the room.)

The way someone describes you when you are not in their presence is based upon how your actions, your words, your way of being, translates into your reputation.

For some of you, the words spoken about you are positive and encouraging.

For others, you may not be so pleased to know what words are expressed about you.

I am both delighted when I hear glowing testimony about someone as well as disappointed when I hear of the negative impact someone is having on their fellow team members. Of course, I wish they all could be glowing testimonies, but unfortunately, they are not.

The good news is we all have the choice to act in a manner of how we want to be perceived. Whether you are happy with your current state of being or not, you have the ability to enhance (positive) or change (negative) the reputation that precedes you.

For those of you who find yourself in a place of struggle or discontent, this could be your moment of renewal. Make today the day you choose to be different and get more out of life while leaving behind a shining light.

For those of you who find yourself in a good place, take this opportunity to amplify the positive impact you have on others. You can find opportunities to strengthen the good, while minimizing your blindspots.

I am a walking testimony that you can change the way you are perceived. I believe I have always had a "good" reputation but in the past it would come with a disclaimer.

"Kevin is a great guy, BUT, be careful because he can get moody and angry and you do not want to be on his bad side. Otherwise, he is a good guy."

The dreaded "BUT" word, which diminishes all the good said previous to its utterance.

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My example is okay, but far from what I would want people to say about me. I would estimate that 90% of the time I was the “good guy,” yet the other 10% of the time I tarnished my efforts to be a force for good.

After my most significant personal breakthrough (around late 2011 to early 2012) I became hyper-aware of myself and fully understood the impact of my moments of weakness when people would witness a side of me I was not proud of at all.

By no means is my attitude and approach at a state of ideal 100% of the time. I would say the times when I am not the best version of myself have less negativity attached to them than ever before. When I am not at my best it tends to show up as being low in energy or distracted. Rarely will I be accused of being mean-spirited, angry or any other aggressive personality trait, which to me is a significant victory from where I was in the not-so-distant past.

Through the work I did with my therapist, with my mentors and my Faith, I was able to identify the areas to work on in order to harness the aspects of my reputation that were casting a negative light.

- I worked on my patience.
- I worked on increasing my level of empathy and understanding of others.
- I worked on being a better listener.
- I worked on my humility.
- I worked on being present in my interactions with others.
- I worked on my attitude of positivity and abundance, versus seeing the world as a place of misery and disappointment.
- I worked on managing my long-standing biases in an attempt to see everything with a fresh perspective.
- I worked on living a life that would lead to others viewing me as a source of light and positivity. I wanted everyone to be better off for having spent time with me.

The list goes on and on, and I can only hope it gets even longer.

I want those I love the most to be proud of me and the impact I have on others.

I want people to speak well of me when I am not in the room, not because I need validation, but because those I interact with deserve to be treated with kindness and respect.

I was able to recreate myself through my own process of renewal, which I have been sharing through my recent messages.

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My 5-Step Process of Renewal:

1. I looked at all things with a fresh perspective.
2. I looked deep on the inside to question the alignment of my core values with my actions.
3. I became cognizant of my word choices.
4. I created an ideal vision of what I wanted others to say about me when I was not in the room.
5. ...I'm leaving you with a cliffhanger and will share this final step in-depth next week...stay tuned!

I encourage you to take time to write out your ideal description of YOU and you use it as your compass when it comes to your words and actions. You can use it as a guide to know if you are on the right pathway to a life filled with joy and meaning.

You have more influence than you know when it comes to the outcomes you want to experience and achieve. It starts with your commitment to living with intention and less as an unconscious habit. Choose to be extraordinary and see what happens!

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Renewal (Part 5)

Today we conclude our series on Renewal. There have been a number of people who have talked with me each week, sharing their feedback as a result of time in self-reflection. A special THANK YOU to those “weekly warriors,” as your messages were my fuel to press on with a reminder of the importance of these messages. Additionally, THANK YOU to those who shared one-off thoughts and to those who were engaging without my knowledge. I believe it is important for all of you to know how much I appreciate you!

I want to wrap up this series focusing on the fifth element of Renewal I used to create the man I am today. The final high-level component of Renewal is to create an unwavering belief in who you are no longer, who you are at your core, and who you want to become.

We begin with acknowledging our past beliefs about ourselves. It is important to begin where it all started. For me, it was the lack of a genuine father-son relationship that led to my lack of self-confidence and self-worth, which evolved into me being a people pleaser to an unhealthy degree. All of my decisions were based upon the perceived notion of someone else’s happiness, even at the expense of mine. The story is long and most of you have heard a version of it to understand the foundation of my personal breakthrough.

The key in laying the new foundation is to be honest without judgment. If you are not prepared to face the past without judgment, then please do not attempt this final element because it is likely you will go further in the wrong direction. Personally, I wasn’t ready to do so until I was 38 years old and had experienced the most damaging thing anyone could do to me. We’re all on different paths, but that is what I needed in order to be real with myself.

It was difficult to admit my weakness and failures, yet it was the most freeing moment of my life. The tears of pain and joy poured out of me simultaneously because I knew I was facing my past for the last time and would no longer be bound to those false agreements.

Once you have come to peace with establishing your true, authentic self, then you can begin to design your new lease on life. My therapist, Mary Ann, was the catalyst for who I am today. She led me down a path of telling her who I believed I was at my core without any attachment to 38 years of negative bias.

For the first time in my life, I verbally painted a picture, and that picture is who I believe I now am today. To say this moment was surreal is an understatement. There are no words to describe what I experienced. At this moment, I took the final step by adding to the vision for who I was to become.

I identified 7 main components I wanted to work on:

1. Release my ego.
2. Increase my level of empathy for others while releasing judgement.

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3. Become a better listener in order to be a better person for those who choose to spend time with me, both personally and professionally.
4. Become more vocal with my opinions in a kind and respectful way after gaining approval to share my thoughts and ideas, rather than forcing them on others, even when I believe I am trying to be helpful.
5. Become more comfortable expressing my love and appreciation for others without seeing this as a sign of weakness, but instead understand how powerful words of affirmation can be.
6. Be confident in sharing my faith in a natural way since it is the core foundation of who I am and why I choose to be the man I am today.
7. Be comfortable sharing my story with others, regardless of the pain it brings me, in order to be a genuine light unto the world by giving others hope they can have their own moment of Renewal.

The above list includes the overarching components leading to many finer points I used to guide me through my studies and transformation. I continue to maintain a list to keep myself in check and remind myself there is always work to be done!

We all deserve to be free of our past in order to more clearly and intentionally define our future. My prayer for all of you who are on this journey with me, or want to begin the journey, is to hold tightly the belief that you are valuable beyond measure and have more to offer than you can imagine. It is up to you to determine whether you want to put in the time and effort to realize the beginning of your potential.

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Endure

As we phase out of our series focused on Renewal, it is time to fan the flame of momentum as we bring a renewed sense of energy, focus and excitement to our daily efforts. This is the defining moment in order to make progress and not turn back to your old ways.

Over the course of the last 4-5 months, I have been consuming an epic amount of information that has inspired me in the creation of my newest presentation, which I will deliver at our annual doctor retreat in September. I lost count of the number of blog posts I have read, podcasts I have listened to, and books I have studied in an effort to bring a valuable message to those who will be in attendance.

During my time of study, I decided to dive deeper into the story of Cameron Hanes. He is especially well-known in the bowhunting community and has a reputation of being one of the most committed and tenacious human beings on the planet. He wrote a book titled, “Endure,” and I am devoting today’s message to his story.

Not everyone will connect with Hanes as he is intense and extreme, so I took it upon myself to extract meaningful messages from his 300+ page book, as well as additional material he has created over the years. I want to begin with a brief message that adds to the effort we put into Renewal so you can keep your focus on designing a life you feel good about and deeply enjoy.

“Don’t make excuses.

Give it your all.

Show up when you’re supposed to show up.

Speak your mind.

Own up to your mistakes.

Think with perspective.

This is how you live a life worth remembering.”

Hanes’ words create the framework to identify one of two mindsets you can adopt: either you are committed to the mission in your life or you are not...meaning you choose to truly “live” or merely “exist.”

In our professional context, those who champion the mission and put in the effort to consistently improve match most, if not all, of what Hanes describes. Those who coast, put in the least amount of effort, and/or choose to be average, do the exact opposite. The difference between the two is clear—palpable—from an outsider’s perspective.

We all can add our own commentary to Hanes’ quote, and I encourage you to do so, both privately and as a team. If you personally create a description of the characteristics and

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actions of a Champion, you will more than likely own it and follow through with the vision you documented, creating a “life worth remembering.”

He goes on to say:

“Love the journey and ignore thoughts of the finish line, as this is a race that never ends.”

I will end with this quote because it is another comment that creates a clear divide in mindset, especially in the context of the work we do together. There is a reason DST does not provide you with “checklists,” “templates,” or “scripts.” What we design together is intended to have specific meaning to each team building off of our foundational principles in a personalized way.

Our approach is one where you can act upon your chosen philosophy so it can endure the test of time. There is no finish line to the work we do. The decisions you make and the actions you take will continue far beyond our time together. Taking care of patients is a commitment that has no end. Therefore, establishing the necessary support system to endure the plateaus and valleys is key. The peaks? Those are easy to navigate. It is the other moments in time where we must endure.

When we are at our peaks, it is important to store up some fuel in our minds and our souls as we know the other moments will arrive. Do the work necessary to be prepared and ready to be at your best regardless of the season of life you happen to be experiencing.

Michael Chandler says it well:

“Life is all about the ups and downs, the peaks and the valleys. How much mental toughness we store up on the peaks will determine how triumphant we are in the valleys.”

I speak with individuals who are experiencing seasons of life that span the full spectrum we are discussing in today's message. The Champions are seeking advice on how to do more, be better, and endure. Those who choose to be average—or worse—complain and make excuses, have no real desire to be different. They expect others to make it all better.

Which team do you want to be part of: Team Champion or Team Average?

That question may seem harsh, but we answer it every day, consciously or not.

My prayer is for you to Choose to Be Extraordinary...Today and Every Day!

If you are in this state of mind, let me know how I can continue to fan the flame of excellence.

If you are not in this state of mind, let me know what I can do to help you get there.

The effort is worth it!

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The Best and the Worst

Last week's message, *Endure*, focused on the approach to take when experiencing all the different stages of the typical practice lifecycle. There will be peaks and valleys as well as plateaus: some will be brief, others will be lengthy. One comment I received was insightful and set the stage for this message's focus:

"Kevin,

Your message about how to endure hit home with me in a way I never experienced before. Although it was helpful to be reminded about enduring when the peaks and plateaus come about, I was mostly awakened about enduring during the good times, which no one ever seems to think about and connect with this state of mind.

Our practice is doing quite well and has been for an extended period of time. I am so grateful to be part of a wonderful team with a doctor who cares and does everything to give us all an opportunity to do our best. What I have found most interesting is I have noticed our team struggling a bit, while in a stretch of success, in trying to figure out what to do next in fear of messing up the good work we have already done. I never would have thought success could lead to a moment where we have to endure what comes with it, but I can see it clear as day now after reflecting on your message.

What suggestions do you have to push through without taking major steps backwards? Thank you for all your messages as they are inspiring. Please know I read them all even though I do not always comment. I appreciate your effort to help so many people. Your authenticity is encouraging and has helped me through some interesting moments during our time with DST."

I am impressed with this team member's ability to have foresight on what could be an unanticipated setback in the momentum her team has created. I also appreciate her kind words as each message I receive is appreciated beyond words.

In my response, I offered up a simple, yet profound suggestion I was told early on in my business career that has served me well in my personal as much as my professional life.

The two questions you can use to bring perspective to a particular situation and pending decision are:

- 1. What is the best that can happen?**
- 2. What is the worst that can happen?**

In my experience, I find people tend to spend too little time making decisions or too much time making decisions, which often leads to no decision at all. When we rush decisions without giving thought to the action we are about to take, it tends to create more problems than it could potentially solve. When we take too much time, whether a decision is made or not, it tends to create more stress and anxiety because we get spun up in emotion when a resolution is not happening, fearing it will lead to additional problems or unhappiness to those needing the answers.

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This can be solved by asking the questions above. When you take a moment to identify the potential outcomes, it becomes easier to make decisions in a more timely fashion. The most obvious epiphany is when you ask the second question and realize the “worst that can happen” is not so bad after all...so why delay?!

Taking a moment to explore your best guess as to the potential outcomes will help you make more effective decisions, in a more timely manner, leave you with less worry, all while giving you the confidence to charge ahead in the direction you have decided. Note that this applies extremely well in the scenarios where everything is going well and you do not want to derail your momentum.

I encourage you to print these two questions out and have them visible at all of your meetings as a gentle reminder, just in case you find yourself at an impasse on making a decision of how to handle a particular situation.

When you are experiencing plateaus or valleys, these questions become even more powerful, as people tend to avoid new decisions in fear of making things even worse than they perceive them to be in the current moment of time.

Today's message is meant to be encouraging and supportive when you find yourself in a moment of indecision, whatever the reason may be. Taking action and being decisive is what creates an atmosphere of confidence, which is the best environment to be in when wanting to press on in a positive way.

I hope you are able to see the benefit in asking these questions when you find yourself in situations of uncertainty, both personally and professionally. Sometimes, having all the confidence in the world to act will be enough to tip the scales in your favor for a positive outcome.

Thank you again for all your comments and engagement with these messages. Your words of encouragement and gratitude are fuel for continuing to create an opportunity of goodness for us all!

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