



Leadership Emails

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Today...Choose to Be Extraordinary!

November 17 - December 15, 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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Average vs. Extraordinary

Today, we continue to prepare for “2023...The Year of Excellence” with the third consecutive message focused on planning, preparing, and displaying a higher level of effort in pursuit of giving our best and savoring the benefits of living our best lives.

My message today originated from my preparation for our 2022 Doctor Retreat in Montana. The presentation, “Excellence...Living a Life Worth Remembering,” was built on the foundation of my personal journey to level-up what my best is, and, will be. I spoke on 7 Pillars of Excellence, with one being “Preparation with the Proper Expectations.” I will provide the summary for this pillar, including questions to ponder and discuss as you prepare for what’s next in your journey.

Let’s begin by stating the obvious...

Average Effort = Average Results vs. Extraordinary Effort = Extraordinary Results

What will it take to achieve Excellence on a daily basis?

- Preparation (Planning)
- Confidence
- Belief
- Practice
- Unrelenting Mindset

A big piece of overcoming the Resistance that stands in the way of your pursuit of excellence is having a realistic view of your goals and what is required to hit them. Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos once told a story about a friend who wanted to learn how to do a “perfect handstand.” Initially, Jeff’s friend took a workshop and practiced, but was not making progress. *“So, she hired a handstand coach. Yes, I know what you’re thinking, but evidently this is an actual thing that exists,”* Bezos wrote in his 2017 annual shareholder letter.

The handstand coach gave Bezos’s friend a bit of wisdom that applies to far more than just mastering the perfect handstand. *“Most people,” he said, “think that if they work hard, they should be able to master a handstand in about two weeks. The reality is that it takes about six months of daily practice. If you think you should be able to do it in two weeks, you’re just going to end up quitting.”* Unrealistic expectations can be as fatal to great achievement as having no expectations at all. This lesson resonated with Bezos.

A common element in “failure” and/or disappointment is due to lack of clarity on what proper expectations are for what you are going to apply effort and energy to. In some cases there are no expectations established whatsoever, which is guaranteed to lead to unwelcome results. This is why preparation and planning, along with setting appropriate expectations, is critical to give yourself the best chance of being on an ideal path on your journey.

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Let's take this journey together by following the path I am creating for you to answer questions to help you identify potential pitfalls to reaching a successful outcome with your defined objectives.

In your daily pursuit of Excellence...

Do you have a fear of failing?

- If "YES," what fuels your fear?
- If "NO," what fuels your confidence?
- Identify any doubts that currently exist in your mind.
- Identify the questions you are constantly asking yourself.

It is helpful to identify your strengths while documenting your areas of opportunity to shore up where you are weak. This gives you awareness of where to seek support and guidance while being able to help others who are weak in the areas where you are strong.

John Wooden took a measured approach to balancing out mindset.

"You can't let praise or criticism get to you. It's a weakness to get caught up in either one."

I understand how good it feels to receive positive commentary about our efforts, so please know I am not advocating to diminish the importance of receiving good words from others. I am simply stating it is important to avoid getting to the point you NEED praise to continue your pursuit in your profession and personal life.

When it comes to criticism, if you struggle with this...please, please, please...have this become one of your top personal objectives because you will forever be limited if you cannot accept comments about how you can grow and advance in your efforts.

There is an obvious difference between someone who is intentionally trying to be hurtful with their words versus someone who is trying to acknowledge an opportunity for you to make a change for the good. Seek the message while giving grace and mercy for the delivery...I know you would appreciate the same consideration.

Personal sensitivity is the #1 reason why team drama exists.

I spend far too much time mediating situations that arise because someone decided to escalate a situation that had no ill-willed intentions. Not only does it disrupt the day, but each time it happens you will find your team members having less and less empathy for you because you become known as the source of drama.

Do you want to be known as the person who creates such negativity in the office?

The answer to this question will say a lot about your priorities and willingness to add to the value your team provides to those you serve.

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Let's continue on with additional exploratory questions...

Are you worried about criticism from others?

- If "YES"...What worries you?
- What is your typical response when hearing criticism from others?
- Do you need praise to press on as you endure the journey towards EXCELLENCE?
- If "YES," What is missing in your life that has you desiring praise?
- If "YES," why do you feel the need for another's approval?
- If "NO," what offsets the praise of others?

Another aspect of planning is how you use the 24-hours given to you each day. How you use these hours each day will determine the joy you feel when you place your head on your pillow to give yourself rest in preparation for the day to come. Jack London says it well...

"The proper function of man is to live, not exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time."

The following are questions you can use to begin assessing your use of time. Please allow these questions to be the catalyst for more in-depth study of how you use your time. You all have systems and processes for what you do professionally. Creating intentional study and awareness of these processes will give you an excellent platform to begin building out, or advancing, processes in your life. The beginning point being what takes place when you arise from a night's rest...the way you start your morning sets the pace for the rest of your day!

What is your process to prepare yourself to deliver your best for TODAY?

Let's take a moment to rate ourselves on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest) as we continue to find opportunities to help ourselves (low scores) and others (high scores).

How aligned are your thoughts to your ideal life?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How intentional are you in all you do every day?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How aligned are your actions to your attention for the benefit of future growth and outcomes?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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Your ratings will give you clear indications for putting your focus to build a stronger foundation for giving your best TODAY and every day!

I would recommend having a journal you can use to document this journey we are on. It will make the experience more valuable, important, and personal. If you take this seriously, you will be amazed at the results you will achieve when effort is placed in the areas of opportunity in your life that you identify as we unfold this study.

Together, we can achieve extraordinary results!

Together, we can create a tidal wave of goodness in our communities and beyond!

Together, we can shine a bright light on many!

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Grateful For...

Today, in the good ol' USA, we have the opportunity to celebrate Thanksgiving. Although I am grateful every day, and do all I can to start my day with gratitude, today is a day where I amplify my effort to be thankful for all the blessings bestowed upon me and my family.

Having gone through a flurry of traumatic events in my personal life this year, I am counting my blessings more than any other year. The list is long. How fortunate I am to be able to say this?

I am blessed.

I am blessed to have the opportunity to serve you on your mission to spread the good news of health to those in your community.

I am blessed to have developed close bonds with so many of you who have opened up and connected with me on a personal level.

I am blessed to have created lasting friendships with extraordinary people who I would not have met had God not led me to team up with Scott Manning to do something extraordinary in the dental and specialty industry.

I am blessed to contribute to an incredible team of people at Dental Success Today.

I am blessed to have officially been with Scott, my chosen brother, and his brother, Ryan, for well over a decade; advancing the mission of creating customized support for those of you with the courage to want to achieve extraordinary results in ways the average team would never consider possible.

God has blessed me beyond measure, so I will finish with this...

I am blessed because of ALL OF YOU...today...and every day!

Happy Thanksgiving to those of you celebrating today!

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A Letter I Once Wrote

Many years ago, I was encouraged to write a note to my “future self” where I described my ideal life with great detail. I recall the first time I opened it, many years after first writing it, and realized I had brought to life a significant portion of what I believed, at the time, was important to me. It was a powerful exercise that proved the importance of setting clear expectations and intentions for myself. If I could go back, I would not wait years to read the letter to my “future self.” I would instead keep it on display to use as a guide for all the effort and decisions I would make on the mission to make my vision a reality.

Today, I am going to encourage you to take time to write yourself a letter describing in detail what you want to see come to life in 2023 and beyond. December is now upon us, so time is of the essence in order to create the game plan for what the future holds. I know what you are thinking right now, *“Do I really have control over my future to the degree you are stating?”* The answer is a resounding, emphatic, unequivocal *“YES!”*

Begin preparing to write your letter by asking yourself the following questions, along with any others that come to mind. It is important to define the “what” and the “why” in order to attach tangible meaning to your mission.

- What do you want your life to look like?
- Why do you want your life to look the way you described it?
- What is the significance to bringing your vision to life?
- How will this change you in a positive way?

An example of the letter I am describing could be in the following format:

Dear Future Self,

Here is what I want to do...

This is why I want to do it...

This is the significance that will come from pursuing these goals/dreams/desires...

Here is what my ideal daily life looks like...

With Love,

Current Self

Write a letter or dismiss the idea. The choice is yours. Regardless of whether you immerse yourself in this exercise, I encourage you to spend time taking control of your life and give yourself a fighting chance to have it be more ideal than ever before.

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In order to steer your life in a more desirable direction, you must begin by being specific in identifying what you want it to become and why you want it to be so.

Of course, the other option is to do nothing and carry on with what exists today. If this is your choice, please, let there be no more complaining about what is happening in your life, as no one wants to hear about it.

As with everything in life, you get to choose your path. Choose wisely, friends!

By the way, the only detail of the letter I wrote to my future self that did not come to life, yet, is waking up to the backdrop of the mountains. Every other detail has become my reality because I put intention to it and attached meaning to why it was important to do so. By God's grace, I am living my best life because I choose to have a say in what my life becomes!

Give yourself the best platform to do your best every day and live a life striving for excellence in all you do. It is our focus for 2023. Let's get ready!

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Experience “The Shift” From Fear to Desire

Last week, we set the precedent for taking responsibility for your future like never before with my recommendation of writing a letter to your “future self,” where you describe in great detail your life as you wish to see it.

The number one reason why the majority of people will not partake in this journey is out of fear:

- Fear of the unknown.
- Fear of change.
- Fear of what you might be capable of achieving.
- Fear of being uncomfortable.
- Fear of success.
- Fear of failure.

The list is long, unfortunately.

I would encourage you to consider moving beyond fear by experiencing “The Shift” from Fear to Desire. Please allow me to remind you of all our beginnings and explain the possibility of experiencing this transformation...

The day we were born into this world, we all took our first breath with our mind, body, spirit, and soul filled with love and innocence. At some point in our early years, we were taught the feeling of fear. We could debate where the learned feelings of fear originate, however, I am convinced we are born with an innate essence of peace and love. The experiences we all have create the shift to the unfamiliar that dominate our thoughts and feelings. What we are taught and exposed to determines the degree of significance one feeling has over another.

Here are five different ways to identify any existing fears and how fear may be impacting you. It is a good starting point to explore the impact fear has in your life currently:

1. What are you afraid of?
2. What are you afraid of losing?
3. What are you afraid of never having?
4. Where has fear gotten you into trouble?
5. How has fear distracted you?

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To move beyond fear and manage it better than you are today, it is our responsibility to “unlearn” our willingness to allow fear to dominate our decisions and actions in life. It is possible to gain authority over our fears by committing to the management of these feelings when they arise. I was blessed to experience “The Shift” as I was climbing out of my deepest valley a decade ago. The formula I used to strip all the power away from fear and manage it effectively is as follows:

1. Have the courage to acknowledge the fear you are feeling and “name it” for what it is. By ignoring it or avoiding it, we fuel its power. We begin to diffuse its influence when we are willing to attack it head on.
2. Release the feeling of fear by stating its deceitful intentions and how its falsehood is not reality, but a distortion of thought at a vulnerable moment we happen to find ourselves in temporarily.
3. Create a new vision for what is possible beyond the constraints of the feelings of fear once held over you. You want to paint the picture of a successful outcome in order to see your way out of the fray.
4. Allow yourself to bask in the feeling of freedom over which you were previously held in bond. Let your mind begin to visualize the successful pathway to the outcome you want to experience. You want to see it all as if it is possible without limitations to have an opportunity to make it a reality.
5. As you begin to experience the moment without a fearful thought or feeling, allow your mind, body and spirit to rest in the truth you have discovered.
6. Proactively remind yourself of your conquests as the basis for continuing to effectively manage and dissolve fearful feelings as they come about.

In order to live out each day to the level of excellence you have within you, you must first begin by harnessing the control of your feelings to stay centered and mindful of all that goes on around you. Please be aware of your pace in life as it will dictate how effective you are at managing your feelings and emotions. If your pace is “too fast,” then you will lack the proper time to work through the thoughts and feelings you have to manage them appropriately. Likewise, if your pace is “too slow,” you can find yourself with too much time on your hands where you allow your mind to spin out of control.

As with nature, it is important to find balance and harmony in your daily life. Create a vision for your ideal day and be realistic. I am not asking you to describe sitting on the beach sipping Mai Tai cocktails all day while being fanned by a cabana attendant.

Visualize what each day of the week looks like, Sunday through Saturday:

- How do you start your day?
- How do you end your day?
- Who is with you on your daily journey?

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- What goes through your mind?
- What are you feeding your body to provide the proper nutrition and nutrients to be healthy?

The more detailed you are willing to notate, the more likely it is to happen. Creating your ideal day, followed by legitimate effort to bring it to reality, will give you more confidence to live life with courage and avoid a fear-driven experience.

When “The Shift” happens, you can more easily focus on what will fill up your life based upon healthy desire (not greed or vanities that lead to the destruction of self-worth) to create good opportunities to fill up your mind and soul, rather than strip it down to nothing, which is where fear thrives and comes alive.

My highest priority in life, my deep-seated desire, is to create as much opportunity to have quality moments with my wife and children in order to give and receive true love. This desire is what drives my decision-making in all that I do. Since I have clarity on this driving force in my life, I am able to maintain integrity, more often than not, while making choices.

I encourage you to spend time reflecting on this message, as it will strengthen your current efforts to maintain a healthy approach to managing fear when it rears its ugly head. Whether you are making your first attempt at regaining control of your thoughts and emotions, or you are a seasoned veteran of mind management, this message is intended to be a catalyst for good work to be done by all!

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Experience “The Shift” From Accepting to Embracing

Last week, “The Shift” ignited a fire that led to insightful commentary from a number of people who felt a strong connection to the message from all aspects of the spectrum.

There were those who have a command on keeping fear at bay who appreciated the encouragement to stand firm and endure the relentless onslaught that fear deploys on a daily basis. Congratulations on developing this valuable skill! For those of you who associate with this side of the spectrum, please use the messages to offer aid to those in your life who do not have the command of such a destructive force. You can become the catalyst for a life-changing shift in someone’s mindset.

There were also those who have not waged war against fear where they feel defeated, yet want to begin taking back control. Today’s message is going to help you continue moving in the right direction to exert more control over what you experience internally. I welcome all responses and appreciate being with all of you on this journey.

I want to share one of the follow up questions I received on “The Shift,” as it inspired me to expand on the topic here today:

“Kevin, I am finally accepting the fact I live from a place of fear and want to move past it, as I am tired and worn out from it all. What would you recommend I do next?”

I applaud this person for their willingness to be honest and ask for help. The mere fact she asked for help is the step that is necessary to breathe life into “The Shift.” Since she has taken the step of “Acceptance,” it is now time to move from Accepting to Embracing the moments you feel fear (or any other emotion) so you can extinguish the momentum of power it is trying to create over your mind, body, and spirit.

There is great understanding in deciphering the difference between “Accept” and “Embrace.” This is the time to turn to the formal definitions to create clarity on crossing the bridge between the two.

Accept: Believe or come to recognize (an opinion, explanation, etc.) as valid or correct.

Embrace: Accept or support (a belief, theory, or change) willingly and enthusiastically.

If the difference is not immediately evident, please take a moment to reread the definitions above until the spark ignites within you.

There is a cavernous difference between the two statuses. One is more static than the other and one is less passionate than the other. Acceptance is important as it is where it all begins when developing a plan of action. When you cross the chasm to Embrace the mission, you become more committed to creating the outcome you desire to achieve, “willingly and enthusiastically.”

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Acceptance, to me, is a fact-based moment where we realize something has occurred and there is nothing that can be done to undo reality. Nothing more, nothing less.

When you shift to embracing a factual reality, you are willing to alter its future and diminish the stranglehold it could have on you when you take a passive or submissive role in its engagement. I would prefer to Accept a reality (the fear of doing something that is uncomfortable to me) and alter fear's DNA by embracing its existence, lighting a match, and watching all the fear burn away; taking its ashes and turning them into fertile ground for good to come from the current state I find myself in.

When any unwelcome emotion arises (we simply happen to be highlighting fear in this series) I encourage you to quiet your mind and allow a place for your soul to rest so you can listen closely to what the Spirit inside you is trying to convey. Emotions can lead to breakthroughs if we allow them through the act of embracing the moment.

When you commit to living a life of excellence, it is vital to have the fortitude to minimize the impact any one person or circumstance can have on you. This requires a new level of mind management to ward off the evil forces that want to take you out!

You have the power and ability to do so.

You will either make the decision to accept fear, embrace it, and turn it into something you desire more than what you are currently experiencing, or you will succumb to the pressure and become a victim of fear's vicious nature.

The good news is you have a say in the matter and get to choose the path you take while trying to create the most favorable outcome!

What choice will you make?

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