



# Leadership Emails

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**Today...Choose to Be Extraordinary!**

**June 22 - July 13, 2023**

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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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## Keep Digging

We are on the cusp of the halfway point on our yearlong journey focused on our personal Excellence. Over the course of the next several weeks, I am going to share with you valuable lessons from my studies of stoicism and do my best to share my experiences in a way that will lead to goodness for each of you join me for that journey.

As we ponder our own definitions of Excellence and the impact we have on the world around us, it is equally important to focus on what can help us personally. I know this is stating the obvious, yet how many of us can say with certainty that we are taking care of ourselves as well as we are attempting to take care of others?

I had this shift in focus after a conversation with a friend of mine who just welcomed his first child into the world. Having a common connection in our Faith, we both reveled in the pure beauty and goodness each child is born with. His daughter entered this world immersed in true love and pure joy. Goodness is built into our DNA, which we may forget about as we become thrust into the realities of what goes on around us as we go through each phase of our journey in life.

I was reminded of this innate goodness over a decade ago after reaching my darkest valley. I was awakened to realize I had a choice as to who I was, how I felt, and what kind of life I could create without limitations from people and circumstances I would encounter on my journey. To recreate this goodness in life, I simply chose to fight for it. I had faith that this new approach to life would lead to great things.

The philosopher, Epictetus, said this about protecting your good...

*"Protect your own good in all that you do, and as concerns everything else take what is given as far as you can make reasoned use of it. If you don't, you'll be unlucky, prone to failure, hindered, and stymied."*

The first time I read his thoughts about our personal good, I was astonished about the connection between what we value, what we fight for, and the choices we make in life. It became so obvious to me why so much "bad" had happened to me up to this moment of awakening. Through my choice of who I spent time with and what I did with that time, I now realized why I was stuck in an eternal vortex of disappointment and misery. What became so obvious to me, what a mystery before.

Marcus Aurelius weighs in with complementary comments on goodness...

*"Dig deep within yourself, for there is a fountain of goodness ever ready to flow if you will keep digging."*

I believe this to be true. Sadly, I also believe most people go through life giving up, thinking that living life by choice is not possible. Simply making the choice to protect the good within you will lead to so much outward goodness that your level of Excellence cannot help but expand.

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As the years go by, my awareness of how much good exists within me grows more and more, and in ways I never recognized before. I regularly pray for God to use me in all ways possible to be a light. I fight to ward off the negativity and evil that shows up on my doorstep to protect all the work I have done to cultivate the good within. It has been worth every ounce of energy I have put into it.

You deserve to experience a heightened level of Excellence for yourself.

You deserve to take the time to explore the depths of good that exists within you.

You deserve to have a say in the outcomes of your life.

I hope you choose to fight for yourself with a deeper commitment than ever before.

**Keep digging!**

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## A Well-Tuned Soul

Last week, I received two simple, yet powerful responses to my “Keep Digging” message, which focused on “finding the good within you.” I’d like to share those couple responses with you to help support the momentum we are building together. I believe these replies highlight the importance of being active in our own self-discovery. Personal and professional breakthroughs rarely show up without a catalyst...and when they do, the catalyst tends to feel unwelcome (which I know all too well).

*“Kevin, your timing is impeccable...I will just leave it at that. Thank you for your email.”*

I share this message first because it is from a doctor who is committed to seeking out opportunities to keep evolving, growing, and expanding in life. This posture has and will continue to lead to powerful personal and professional advancements. He is choosing to stay active in his own well-being because he knows the far-reaching impact his efforts will have.

The “Keep Digging” message was a total of 661 words. The average person reading non-fiction writing can take in 238 words per minute (yes, I looked it up). So think of it this way: your next breakthrough, reset or revelation can be less than 3 minutes of intentionality away. And there are countless messages and resources available to us all if we’re willing to engage with others’ wisdom, apply it, and seriously go after becoming our best selves.

The second message I received was equally as powerful with an insightful observation that most people choose to ignore.

*“Good message, Kevin. Too bad the vast majority of people never take the time for self-reflection like you did. Most are too caught up in daily living and never give it a second thought.”*

Are you “too caught up” in your daily living, with your focus being on the outside rather than the inside? I know it can be difficult to reflect and admit to where we are in life, especially during the not-so-great moments. When you make a commitment to yourself, the days ahead become more enjoyable as you see your efforts paying off. What was once an arduous task of self-admission can become a celebration of the good you can create for YOU!

I want to end this friendly reminder of how important YOU are by sharing another brilliant observation by Marcus Aurelius, who states...

*“You say, good fortune used to meet you at every corner. But the fortunate person is the one who gives themselves a good fortune. And good fortunes are a well-tuned soul, good impulses, and good actions.”*

Another way to say this is, “You create your own luck.” My good friend Scott says this all the time, and it rings in my ears, echoes in my being. Having a well-tuned soul is vitally important, just as you preach to your patients the importance of having well-maintained (well-tuned) oral health, in conjunction with overall health.

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**This is a moment where you can ask yourself...**

- Do I have “good impulses?”
- Am I putting effort into “good actions?”
- Do I have a “well-tuned soul?”

**What a graceful way to explore your own level of GOOD! It reminds me of a verse from the beautiful hymn, “It Is Well With My Soul...”**

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to know,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

**Whether you are in a season of peace or a season in turmoil, you can choose to be well!**

**I will wrap up this message on that note. Please, take a moment to reflect on the choices available to you that can lead to more peace, joy and comfort with your journey in life.**

**It is well, it is well with MY soul! I pray it is for you as well!**

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## We Are a Product of Our Habits

Staying in the spirit of creating our own good fortune, it is important to take inventory of our daily habits and routines, as they have a tremendous influence on how we are perceived by others and the outcomes we will experience in life.

People use the excuse, “Habits are hard to break.” I disagree. People use this worn out excuse because they can say it and receive little resistance in return. Why oh why does the majority agree and affirm this pernicious excuse? It is so simple: because they are too lazy to put in the effort to create real change in their own lives. If you are committed to living a life of Excellence, it begins and ends with your own thoughts and actions. It is about taking personal ownership of the impact you have on others by having self-control.

Let’s use a moment to study these wise words from the Greek Stoic philosopher, Epictetus:

*“Every habit and capability is confirmed and grows in its corresponding actions, walking by walking, running by running...therefore, if you want to do something, make a habit of it; if you don’t want to do that, don’t, but make a habit of something else instead. The same principle is at work in our state of mind. When you get angry, you’ve not only experienced that evil, but you’ve also reinforced a bad habit, adding fuel to the fire.”*

He goes on to elaborate his point...

*“If you don’t wish to be a hothead, don’t feed your habit. Try as a first step to remain calm and count the days you haven’t been angry. I used to be angry every day, now every other day, then every third or fourth...if you make it as far as thirty days, thank God! For habit is first weakened and then obliterated. When you can say, ‘I didn’t lose my temper today, or the next day, or for three or four months, but kept cool under provocation,’ you will know you are in better health.”*

One of the key points is simply to begin, and, to begin with a new way of thinking or doing. It is easy to falter and flame out simply due to holding unreasonable, unhelpful expectations that we will instantly go from “A to B.” We all know we change habits and routines through practice, but so often we forget that includes trial and error. If creating personal change means something to you, then by all means, put in the effort and try something different.

If you were to identify one change in a habit or routine, what would it be?

If you changed this habit or routine, what would be the good that came from it?

If you changed this habit or routine, how would others benefit from your efforts?

Find the “why” that supports your change and you will create a source of inspiration; a powerful mechanism to lean on when you want to fall back on unwanted habits and routines.

So, where will you begin...TODAY?

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## Breaking a Habit

After delivering last week's message, "We are a Product of Our Habits," I received an insightful response from a close friend of mine who has more wisdom and brilliance inside of him than any other human I know. He was kind enough to give me another way of bringing energy and action to the task of breaking a habit.

*"Good one Kevin...Here is what I do. I ask myself, 'Is this action going to benefit my future self?' For instance, is eating this doughnut going to benefit my future self? Maybe yes, or maybe no, depending on what I'm trying to be in the future. I've started asking myself this question quite often and I find it helps me break habits I wasn't even aware of."*

**Is this action going to benefit my future self?**

This is a powerful lens to look through to gain perspective on the benefit of applying effort to changing a habit to create more good in your life, for yourself and others.

I would like to pose a simple challenge to all of you right here, right now.

Please take a moment to create your own question, followed by your response after you ponder the habit you want to break and the benefit you could achieve from the effort you apply to making a positive change.

"Is \_\_\_\_\_ going to benefit my future self?"

**Hint, you may want to take a moment of solitude to answer this question first...**

"Who/What am I trying to be in the future?"

To throw even more fuel on fire, I will leave you with Stephen R. Covey's 8th Habit (yes, Covey went beyond "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"), which states...

"Find Your Voice and Inspire Others to Find Theirs."

**Excellence personified! By acting upon your desire to create change, you will effortlessly inspire others to want to do the same!**

**Your light will shine brighter!**

Send your responses my way. I would love to read them and offer up any encouragement or advice that could act as a catalyst for you to act on something you believe will lead to a greater level of Good and Excellence in the future!

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