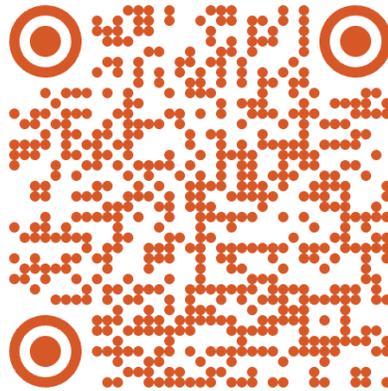


# Leadership Emails



## November 20 – December 13

### Today...Choose to Be Extraordinary!

Five Hundred? No Chance!

Once a Decision Is Made...a Message of Gratitude

You've Been Called to Be of Influence

Make Room for Good Things to Begin

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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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# Leadership Emails

## Five Hundred? No Chance!

*“A man on a thousand-mile walk has to forget his goal and say to himself every morning, ‘Today I’m going to cover twenty-five miles and then rest up and sleep.’”*

— Leo Tolstoy

If you had asked me ten years ago if I could see myself writing five hundred weekly messages on the topic of personal growth and development, I would have said, *“Five hundred? No Chance!”*

Well, here we are, ten years later, at message number 500!

As I sit at the computer, pondering the significance of this milestone, I find myself drawn to connecting this experience to each of you and the role you play in your mission to perform at a high standard of excellence when it comes to patient care.

I can imagine starting out a career in the dental industry as a hygienist and having someone say to me:

*“Today, you will begin a journey to serve your community, where you will impact the health of patients 35,000 times before your career comes to an end.”*

I am certain I would have looked on in disbelief.

So, how do you bring yourself to believe you could ever reach such a milestone?

- One patient at a time.
- One appointment at a time.
- One cleaning at a time.
- One connected conversation at a time.
- One day at a time.

One: such a simple number, without an ounce of intimidation.

Starting with “one” is how you begin the adventure into the unknown.

Here’s the math based on estimates over the course of a career:

- 7 patients per day x 4 days per week = 28 patients
- 28 patients per week x 50 weeks per year = 1,400 patients
- 1,400 patients per year x 25 years = 35,000 patients

Let that example sink in for a moment.

Now, apply this to your own role within the practice, using your own estimates of how many people you interact with on a daily basis.

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Better yet, apply it to a situation in your personal life.

I pray for my children every day. By the time they turn eighteen, I will have prayed at least 6,574 prayers (including four leap years in that math).

If you had asked me to begin praying for my kids with the goal of reaching 6,574 prayers, I would have been overwhelmed and intimidated to say the least!

However, said another way by Lao Tzu in the Tao Te Ching, *"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."*

Truly, every number begins with one.

As I conclude this message and reflect on reaching such a significant personal milestone, I want you to believe that you can achieve anything you set your mind to if you simply choose to begin by taking the first step; no matter what the journey may be.

I would like to end with gratitude.

Thank you to Scott Manning and his brother, Ryan Manning, for having the trust and confidence in me to represent them well in their mission to make a significant impact on such a worthy industry.

Thank you to all past and present Dental Success Today team members who have fervently supported and cheered me on in the role I play in this mission.

Thank you to all of you who so graciously allow me to be part of your life in my pursuit to leave you better off for having spent time with me than without me; my pursuit to honor God by shining my light brightly.

Now, it's time to carry on toward message number 1,000.

How on earth will I ever get there?

One message at a time, beginning next week!

*Today...Choose to Take a Single Step!*

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## Once a Decision Is Made...a Message of Gratitude

Leading up to this Thanksgiving weekend, I had a text message exchange with a friend of mine who has had tremendous success in virtually every aspect of his life. I believe his success can be credited to his commitment to working on himself as a man on a mission to have a positive impact on those he interacts with daily. I've always been impressed with his self-awareness and ability to course-correct when circumstances arise.

As he was sharing an example of a recent shift he made in his business to correct a problem he was facing, he referenced a quote from Dr. Maxwell Maltz's famous book, "The New Psycho-Cybernetics," which many of my friends and I have read based on a recommendation from a former mentor.

The topic revolves around making decisions and how to properly support them. Here is the message for your reflection:

*"Once a decision is made, focus on supporting it, not second-guessing it."*

When I first read Maxwell's book, this message hit home in a significant way. Before coming to this clear epiphany, I would agonize over decisions, often second-guessing myself rather than going for it with full focus and energy.

I suddenly realized that the time for agonizing is while making the decision, not after it's been made. There's nothing wrong with feeling pressure and anxiety leading up to a decision, big or small; it simply shows how much you care about the outcome.

The brilliance of Maxwell's observation is this: to know if you've made the right decision to reach your desired outcome, it's critical to give 100% effort toward success, as you define it. Far too often, we sabotage ourselves and begin to believe things like *"This isn't going to work..."* or *"I can't do this..."*

As those of you who've participated in one of DST's live events already know, we require you to make decisions and summarize them in an orderly fashion so you can return to your office and take action. There's a significant difference between those who get results and those who do not.

Those who get results are best at formulating next steps and putting them into action. After executing the changes, they debrief and document what went well and what could have gone better. They report this information back to the DST team so we can help them adjust and achieve a better outcome.

Those who don't get results typically fall into one of two categories:

1. **They take no action at all and complain, saying, "This isn't going to work," or "Our patients are different," or "There's no time to add this/do this..." Well, of course you won't get results if you're not willing to even try. You own your lack of desired outcomes.**

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2. Their effort is half-hearted, with a subconscious intention for the action to fail. They secretly hope to fail so they can complain and say, *"I told you so."*

There are many other factors that can lead to failure, but these two are the most significant. The challenge our team at DST faces is that we actually call people out on their lack of effort. We know what we teach works; everything we teach is aimed at getting the best results for your patients and for your team.

So, defiance and non-compliance won't benefit anyone. Knowing this, I believe it's obvious that everyone would benefit from giving their best effort to see real results. If we get the desired outcome, we continue. If not, we correct our actions and try again until we do.

Simple.

I could go on, sharing stories of resistance, defiance, and plain old bad attitudes. Fortunately, this describes a small percentage of the people we work with, and we remain hopeful for positive change.

However, I prefer to end today's message on a positive note: by giving thanks and extending the spirit of Thanksgiving.

THANK YOU...to all of you who go for it with blind faith, trusting that it will all work out positively for everyone involved. Because of you, more patients will advance to a more optimal state of health, and you and your team will be rewarded with greater personal satisfaction. Collectively, we are improving the communities in which you live, and for all the right reasons.

This is a WIN for everyone!

As always, I encourage you to spend time in personal reflection to assess how you're supporting decisions rather than combating them. After reflecting, take the step to have a meaningful group discussion with your team to support one another in strengthening your commitment to the right mindset in the work we're doing together.

I appreciate all of you who go for it every day. Please know that we're all cheering for you from the sidelines!

*Happy Thanksgiving, Everyone!*

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## You've Been Called to Be of Influence...

My wife, Julie, and I were reminiscing about the early days of our relationship and how it has evolved into something truly special, especially with the additions of Addison and Owen in our lives.

It's hard to believe Addison is eight and Owen is five. Many of you in our DST family have been with us since the day our family grew with the birth of our miracle baby, Addison!

This moment of reflection reminded me of a time when Julie co-founded and led a professional women's group with a friend of ours back in Wisconsin. I was always fascinated by the wisdom in her writings as she channeled her experiences as a successful commercial banker...who happened to specialize in financing dentists!

After our stroll down memory lane, I asked Julie to send me one of her favorite pieces that she believed would apply to the work we now do with all of you in the dental industry.

Please keep in mind this was originally written for entrepreneurs and traditional W-2 wage employees. The common denominator between these two groups was the desire to become better leaders within their industries and personal circles.

Since I'm currently working on brand new leadership material, I was excited to share a message Julie composed several years ago; it's still relevant today and always will be.

Remember: we are ALL leaders, whether we hold a formal title or not.

The most important group we lead each and every day is our patients. Yes, your patients are looking to you for leadership in their pursuit of optimal oral health; we all play a part in their success.

Below you'll find an insightful message from Julie. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!

Thank you, Julie, for your wisdom and willingness to share!

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While I was in college at Marquette University, I took a position working at the largest newspaper in town. At the time, I definitely wasn't seeking a leadership role. My main goal was to make money by working as many hours as I could handle while pushing through 21 credits of coursework.

It wasn't long after I started that I transferred departments and soon found myself emerging as a leader on my team through the trials and tribulations of the bleeding ink of the newspaper world.

I never had the title of supervisor, manager, or even team lead. Yet it was clear—to myself, my sales manager, and my team—that I was determined to be great, and I wanted to bring the team to that same level of greatness or higher.

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I'm sure some of you can relate. You take a job to fulfill a need, never expecting to take on a leadership role. Some of you were anointed with a leadership title out of necessity, others out of a desire to lead.

Perhaps you were courageous enough to go into business for yourself, and in that moment, you became the leader of your company. Big or small, it doesn't matter. The common denominator is the fact that you have skills within you that led to your position of influence.

I'll make an assumption here: I believe most of you are not receiving formal leadership training on a regular basis. In fact, I'm fairly certain your "training" consists of being thrust into situations where you must make gut decisions to handle whatever shows up at your door.

For this, I commend you.

In this article, I'll do my best to help you gain clarity around what this all means and how to harness the power you've been given.

I believe in being a servant leader.

As leaders, if we serve first, we will ultimately receive the effort and results we desire from others.

Jim Collins, author of the bestselling book *"Good to Great,"* identifies characteristics of leaders within highly effective companies.

He calls them *"Level 5 Leaders."* Here's a summary of his research and findings:

1) Embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will.

There's one personal quality crucial in leadership: the will, the desire to achieve success no matter what it takes, without needing all the glory.

There's power and beauty in humility.

The legendary Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi put it well:

*"The difference between a successful person and others is not lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will."*

You have to want it.

Your relentless pursuit of greatness will be evident. The right team members will follow. The rest will quietly show themselves the door.

*"Actions speak louder than words"* is especially true here.

As my extraordinary husband, Kevin, always says to his clients, *"Let's choose to act!"*

2) Display a compelling modesty; are self-effacing and understated.

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People are drawn to those who possess confidence and self-awareness, without flaunting it.

Believing in your ability is essential to lead others.

Check your ego at the door.

Ask questions to reach solutions. Engage others. Avoid making demands. No one likes to be bossed around.

3) Attribute success to factors other than themselves.

Encouraging others to take ownership of the mission and reach their potential is a key to success.

A servant leader understands the importance of empowering every team member. They know the spotlight doesn't need to shine solely on them, it should rotate to everyone.

Success is never a solo act. It takes a unified front to win. Everyone should be celebrated for the roles they play. Share the credit when credit is due!

4) Display workmanlike diligence (more plow horse than show horse).

Set the tone through quiet determination. Keep your head down and do the work.

Teach as you go. Listen. Develop others.

Mold your team into their best selves—not by pressing or dragging them—but by example.

Those who don't buy in will naturally step away, making room for those who want to be part of a winning team.

5) Set up their successors for even greater success.

One definition of "leadership" in the Merriam-Webster dictionary is *"capacity to lead."*

All of you reading this have that quality.

You've been called to influence others, to show them the path to greatness and to be a kind soul in stressful moments.

You are the essence of your team.

Don't be afraid to empower others. They will help you achieve victory.

When people feel involved and valued, the chance for success multiplies.

I'd like to sum this up by borrowing the title from Jim Collins' book.

Taking yourself and those around you from *"Good to Great"* falls on the shoulders of its leaders...that means you.

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Choose to lead, no matter your position or title.

Take ownership of this responsibility.

Embrace the challenges.

Know there are people here to support you: mentors, coaches, and more.

Your efforts will be rewarded.

You may not know exactly how that reward will appear...but it will.

**Doing the Work,  
Julie Kowalke**

*Today...Choose to Be Extraordinary!*

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## Make Room for Good Things to Begin

The hustle and bustle of the holidays, along with the yearly calendar coming to a close, can bring unwanted stress and circumstances. The good news is that we get to control some of what we experience by choosing the “who, what, where, and when” of our time spent.

I’m reminded of a quote from the book, *“Fight On,”* by M.H. Clark. This quote is powerful and timely for the season we’re in, so I wanted to share it with all of you:

*“Do not give your time to the things that drain you, the thoughts that bring you down, or the people who break your heart.*

*Make room for good things to begin.”*

The people you allow into your life...the messaging you allow yourself to consume...the outside circumstances you allow to distract and control your life...

These things can take you away from experiencing JOY!

Let this quote remind us all of the importance of being self-aware about how people and “things” are impacting our behavior and attitude.

**YOU control YOU.**

**YOU control what you allow into your mind and space.**

**YOU control how you respond to situations and circumstances.**

**So I say: set yourself up for success!**

**Truly reflect on how you spend your time, and with whom.**

**There’s always someone or something in our environment trying to bring us down or pull us back from the great work we are doing in our lives.**

**That’s why it is so important to follow the advice of the book title:**

**Fight On!!!**

**I encourage you to reflect on what is consuming your time and mind, what is holding you back from experiencing joy and happiness each and every day.**

**Once identified, take the necessary steps to compose your counterattack and stand your ground so you don’t allow circumstances beyond your control to shape your daily outcomes.**

**This message would serve well as a team-building activity to engage everyone in your practice.**

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It's always helpful to understand what our teammates are going through, personally and professionally, so we can offer empathy, encouragement, and support.

Most importantly, this message can serve as a guide for YOU to make time for self-reflection in an environment that allows you to focus solely on YOU.

For me, it's early in the morning before the unrelenting pace of the world begins.

My hope is that this message reaches those of you who are struggling with being surrounded by (and filled up with) negative people and "stuff." I pray this helps you get back to center.

Your teammates deserve your best.

Your patients deserve your best.

People in your personal life deserve your best.

**YOU deserve to have the best for YOU!**

*Today...Choose to Be Extraordinary!*