

Figure It Out! Team Champion Message:

Summer is already coming to an end and I can tell in more ways than one. Over the last number of weeks I have been introduced to team members of new practices who are working with us to bring their visions to life. As most of you know, I spend time speaking with each team member after filling out questionnaires we request be completed. The results of late have been interesting.

Overwhelmingly, the most common frustration has been with certain team members who are not pulling their weight in the practice. People are only doing the minimum “required,” have little interest in putting in effort to create a more effective experience for patients and are just flat out being lazy with poor attitudes. There must be something in the late summer air causing this common issue at this very moment all across America. I don’t understand it, nor am I willing to accept it.

When I hear these stories it brings me back to think about how much I appreciate the linchpins I have come to know and develop relationships with at practices who are working our program creating worthy results. I applaud those of you who show up everyday and knock the cover off the ball leaving it all on the playing field. Without you it would be impossible to create positive and profitable change within each of your practices. I tip my cap to you and raise a toast...I do like my baseball and wine!

One of the challenges that comes with being a linchpin is you become the go-to individual for all sorts of requests and questions. I spend a good portion of my time helping our team champions create boundaries so they don’t get burned out and overwhelmed by all that can get dropped on their plate. I know exactly what each of these individuals deal with on a daily basis. It is my mission to help you motivate your team and get them onboard with being more self-sufficient and effective at their roles in the practice. I have faith we can get everyone on our team when it comes to effort and commitment. Maybe this wishful thinking and is why so many people think I am out of my mind that I can have so much hope. I am willing to give everyone a chance until you prove you are no longer worth my time and effort. I am happy to move onto someone else who has the burning desire to be a super star. No regrets on my part. I know someone wants the time and attention.

This message is for all of you who are dealing with more than you should have to

while committing to being the glue that holds your team together. I encourage you to make copies of this message and give it to everyone on your team. Feel free to highlight certain parts of the message and give it to particular people who really could use the words you believe to be relevant. Bold, I know. I believe it is worth every ounce of risk of ruffling someone's feathers. There comes a point where enough is enough. I believe in having high expectations for everyone.

I want to share two insightful messages Seth Godin wrote in one of my favorite books I give to each person who attends our core training event in Nashville. This is all in support of my super stars...you know who you are...thank you!

The first excerpt from "Linchpin" recounts the story of how Ford turned around the company during a very difficult time in the recent history of the automobile industry.

"A few year before Detroit's meltdown, Bill Ford knew his company was in jeopardy, so he went outside (the automobile industry) to hire a new CEO. His biggest concern? 'Ford is a place where they wait for the leader to tell them what to do.'

Perhaps the biggest shift Alan Mulally made when he arrived from Boeing was changing that. Instead of hiring someone with deep domain knowledge who knew exactly what to do, Bill Ford hired someone who knew how to train people to live without a map.

Rick Wagoner lost his job at GM because he told everyone what to do (and he was wrong). Far better to build a team that figures out what to do instead."

The key part of this message is how Mulally focused on training his team to become more independent encouraging them to find their own answers and figure out how to solve problems on their own, rather than sitting and waiting for the answer to be spoon fed or to be led around like a herd of sheep. This message is significant if you want to create something special in your practice.

The story of FORD sparks me to recall back in 2011 when I was training my most recent successful personal assistant. He was a young guy full of energy and the desire to be great. I was fortunate to find him. Actually, he found me. Chris was part of a team of people who supported me in my mortgage company, before I sold it off. He came to me and asked how I produced so much business for just one person. I was in the Top 1% of producers in the country consistently. I give him a lot of

credit for being so inquisitive. I was producing more business than most of the local banks in town that had teams of people trying to create business no different than myself. I built an efficient and effective machine that brought me much notoriety. Chris knew there was wisdom to be had simply by asking to hear my story.

Long story, short, I ended up hiring Chris as my personal assistant and went on teaching him to be a super star developing a very valuable skill set of being an independent thinker who could figure out how to get things done. He learned very quickly how powerful it was to be resourceful. I am proud to say Chris is advancing very rapidly up the ladder at a company that is benefiting from his skill set. The “kid” is now 27 running a division of a compliance and legal department having no college education and no previous experience in this particular field. He learned what it meant to be indispensable. I was proud to see him move on to do such great things. I had no doubt. I know for a fact we will come together again at some point in the future to work on some worthy project.

This is the kind of story I want to hear from all of you. Let’s focus on getting your team more committed to being great. Identify people who have promise. Together we can show them the way. Let’s prepare these people to pass on the enthusiasm to others until we convert everyone. It is a worthy goal and one I would hope we all want to bring to life.

Here is how simple it is. Spend time with your people. This goes for the doctor as well. It is important to carve out time in your schedule to work one on one with people who have “it.” Schedule the time before work, after work or during lunch. To create something great you will do what others are not willing. You CAN find the time.

Once you identify those with potential it is time to teach and mentor. I do not believe everyone should get equal treatment. Focus your time and energy on those who truly deserve it.

You may be asking, “How do I begin?” Well, I will share with you the two tactics I used to train Chris to become an absolute super star who has become nearly impossible to replace.

First, when Chris would come to me with a question I would require him to have his own answer prepared that he would share with me before I would ever give him my response. I would then tell him what he had right and what he had wrong. Together we came up with the right answer to his question or challenge. I didn’t dictate, but

would ask him questions to help him figure out the answer on his own as I led him down the right path. I would share resources of where to find the answers, no different than how I had to learn. I would also encourage him to share with me any new things he learned throughout the day simply through everyday conversations with clients. It didn't take too long before Chris was answering his own questions 90%+ of the time simply looking for confirmation from me.

Second, I would work through the "art of a well-crafted message" (sound familiar?...refer back to my July 2016 message) with him whenever he had to make a phone call or send an email. I would require him to write the message (yes, even a phone call he needed help with...powerful exercise to develop effective language skills) and share with me the reason he used certain words/sentences. I would then work with him to refine his message paying close attention to single words that changed the tone and meaning of what he was about to deliver. I was helping Chris become a craftsman in the art of creating effective messages through the art of language that influences people to want to take a particular action. Again, very rapidly, he became great at communicating with people so effectively he couldn't believe how easy it became to results from people with minimal communication and little resistance. We still communicate today and laugh about how putting in so much effort in the beginning of our relationship proved to be valuable beyond what he could comprehend at the time.

This is no different than us developing scripts and responses to common objections so you have a basis to work with when it comes to crafting effective influential language skills. If you aren't using them, you might want to begin. There is a treasure awaiting you and you have full access.

There is a key element to point out from what I wrote above. I made the CHOICE to put in the time. I FOUND the time. Spending time with Chris was a PRIORITY. I knew how great an impact my mentoring him would bring to the client experience I developed and bottom line of my business. It was magical. He was rewarded for his effort and skill. I am super proud of him. I know he will pass on this wisdom to others who take the time to ask exactly like he did back in 2011. This effort I describe is called "emotional labor."

I share this story with you to encourage you to do this exact same thing in your practice. Be the person who creates the super stars. Let's not wait for the doctor to do it as this time may never come. You will be rewarded for your effort by developing the talents of others who can help you with the responsibility of being another go-to person freeing you up to do higher-level tasks. Please do not be afraid

to teach someone how to “replace” you. Your ability to train “replacements” is a skill very few have and is desired in the marketplace. Your doctor will not want to lose you!

As I wrap up this all-important message I want to share with you another excerpt from “Linchpin” where Godin goes on to define emotional labor.

“Emotional labor is the hard work of making art, producing generosity, and exposing creativity. Working without a map involves both vision and the willingness to do something about what you see.

Emotional labor is what you get paid to do, and one of the most difficult types of emotional labor is staring into the abyss of choice and picking a path.”

Quickly, two gold nuggets of wisdom are in that message. One, you have a choice, as does everyone else. It is up to you and anyone else to make the choice to be great. Two, pick a path...take action...and go for it. You can work it out during the process of creating something extraordinary. Let’s not wait to believe we have it all figured out. We figure it out while in the middle of it all. It starts by taking the first step and advancing swiftly and intently down the path you chose. Don’t worry, we at Dental Success Today are here to support you and help you should you find yourself in a mess. Be prepared for us to first ask you how you would solve the problem though. There is tremendous value in having an answer to your own question!

Congratulations in advance to those of you who will choose to develop your team members into super stars just like you!

Today, choose to be extraordinary!

- Kevin