

# LEADERSHIP

is **NOT** a

# HOBBY



# JEREMY KINGSLEY

A MASTER STORYTELLER OF PRINCIPLES  
THAT PRODUCE RESULTS

# Leadership Is *Not* A Hobby

By Jeremy Kingsley

## Introduction

I grew up in a very small town in Wisconsin. That town had just 686 residents, and I considered myself a significant member of the local environment. I remember going to visit my grandfather who lived about three hours away in Milwaukee. He had a “bumper pool” table in his basement. My two brothers and I thought it was the coolest thing in the world. We would play for hours. But after a few days, we would go back home and reenter Small Town USA.

Don’t get me wrong: My little town was *home* to me, and the people who surrounded me played a significant role in who and what I am today.

After my seventh-grade year, my family moved to Washington, D.C. Now that was a drastic change! How does a middle-schooler survive that kind of transition—small town to big city? I can smile about it now because I’m finally old enough to appreciate how life’s twists and turns can lead to life-changing circumstances and opportunities. For example, two years later, when I transferred to a new school to begin my sophomore year, I met a special girl named Dawn. I married her seven years later!

When we met, she lived just down the street from the school. Her parents always invited the student athletes to come over after school while they waited for a game or practice. It was a great environment in which to relax, eat, and have fun with friends. One of the best things about Dawn's house was a pool table in the basement.

I remembered watching Minnesota Fats play pool against Willie Masconi on TV when I was little. They were amazing and very entertaining. Now I had the chance to pick up this "game of skill." I was hooked on billiards...and of course, on Dawn.

Now, almost two decades later, Dawn and I have a pool table of our own that sees a good amount of action. We have two sons, and it's great to watch them playing different billiard games with each other, their friends, and of course against Mom and Dad.

I think it's a great hobby. Every so often it's nice to light up that table, grab my favorite pool cue, chalk it up, put a little talc on the hand, and break that rack! Play a game of 8 Ball, 9 Ball, Knock Out, or Straight Pool.

Currently I travel around the country speaking to different companies, corporate gatherings, and other special events on the topic of leadership. I always enjoy meeting and talking with people after I speak. Many of the men and women I've met over the years have told me stories about their hobbies.

A hobby is an activity that is not part of your occupation. It's done in your leisure time, during a season or a free day. For adults, our hobby list usually includes things like hunting, fishing, reading, cooking, golf, yoga, running, or writing a blog.

But leadership is *not* a hobby. It's not reserved for your leisure time or a season. On the contrary, it is something that is constant and consistent.

To be an effective leader, you don't have to be the smartest or the strongest, and certainly not the loudest. Leadership is not a given right. It belongs to those willing to *consistently* invest their energy, on a full-time basis, into helping others become the best they can be. That is the true essence of leadership. It means doing all you can to get the best possible results in every enterprise you are involved in, both as an individual and as part of a team.

Getting the best possible results always involves working directly with other people. And those people need to know, trust, and believe in your values, purpose, and commitment to them.

In the following pages, you will read about five essentials for every leader. You cannot truly lead without *influencing* others and showing them how to do the same. You cannot truly lead without showing others how to *improve* themselves, how to help *build teams*, how to *strategize* to achieve worthwhile goals, and how to consistently *encourage* people, especially when the going gets rough. True leaders do nothing less.

Leadership is not a hobby.



## Influence

*The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.*

KEN BLANCHARD

Five factors dictate where a golf ball goes when struck by a club. They are clubface angle, clubhead path, clubhead speed, angle of attack, and what spot on the clubface actually impacts the ball. These five factors—which stem from stance, grip, swing, and more—together comprise the *influence* put on the ball by the player. They determine how the ball will behave in the air and how it will behave when it hits the ground. Become the master of influence, and your golf score will improve beautifully.

Become the master of influence in business, and your “scores” will dramatically improve, as well. But unlike golf, which you work on now and then and during a season every year, leadership is a year-round endeavor.

Influence affects all areas of business leadership. You want to influence your team toward positive goals. You want to influence your customers toward decisions that will be mutually beneficial. You want to influence your boss to not only keep you around but also promote you. Sometimes you influence others by encouraging them to speak up—to begin using their own influence. You would like to influence your quarterly totals to or beyond your goals. You want to influence your company toward innovation, your business partners toward mutually beneficial synergy, and your team toward high morale and efficiency.

Some forms of influence are more effective than others. Screaming in the face of your employee might actually work for some people. Certainly it's done in the military and in other countries. But that can also backfire, causing the person to produce less of what you're wanting or even to begin sabotaging your efforts. You need to determine what methods of guidance or leadership will be most effective in influencing your employees, and each person is different.

A portion of your influence will come simply by virtue of your position. Someone who is hired as a manager will automatically have influence over the people in her department. That's not influence that's earned. It's more like someone who respects the office (of president, for example) without necessarily respecting the person *in* the office at the time.

Sometimes you don't even realize the influence coming to you because of your position within the company. Often the only way to see that some of it was artificial is to lose that position and find that suddenly the same people don't talk to you much anymore.

You may also not realize the influence you have over those under you in the org tree. Your suggestion that someone look into improving his knowledge on a certain topic might be perceived as an order to take night classes.

When it comes to the influence you consciously exert, you need to decide what sort of influencer you want to be. Do you want to be that screamer? Do you want to withhold praise until you get what you're after? Do you want to provide contests or rewards or games to generate the changes you want to see? Do you want to intimidate or

threaten? Do you want to pit one worker against another? I do not like these tactics, but all of these are used in business and other situations around the world.

I would highly recommend this option, generating influence by being a servant leader. Some people are nervous about “lowering” themselves to see to the needs or comfort of those under them, fearing that stepping down off the throne will be a sign of weakness. But when someone who is in a position of power considers with compassion the situation of those in his/her care, it sends the message that the employee is valuable to the organization and worth the time and attention of those in authority.

Another powerful way to influence those around you is to cast a vision. When you can articulate a desired future for your company or team, it has a magnetic influence. Everyone wants to get to that place you’ve described. The visionary leader has an almost magical influence over those who catch the vision.

Almost everyone can think of people who have had an influence in their lives. It might be a negative influence, like the wrong kind of friends who pushed their buttons and played on their insecurities and led them down a bad road. Or it might be a positive influence, like a parent or a coach or an older friend who believed in them or saw potential in them or epitomized what they wanted to be.

Take a moment to think about the good and bad influences in your life. Analyze what it was that drew out the positive or negative behaviors in you. Take that information and apply it to those you have influence over: employees, coworkers, young people, junior partners, support staff, family, and friends. How can you be intentional about the sort of influence you want to exert?

That may result in some changes in how you've been doing things. A golfer who tends to slice his drives, a change in his grip or the rotation of his hips can influence the ball to his target on the course. A leader in business may have to adjust his own way of doing things to be sure he's generating the right type of influence too.

### **Insights for Inspiration...and Results**

- Become aware of the influence that belongs to you automatically.
- Decide what sort of influencer you want to be.
- Cultivate the qualities of the servant leader and the visionary leader.
- Analyze the sources of influence that have impacted your own life.
- Commit to using the most powerful methods to positively influence those in your circle.

## Self-Improvement

*Listen, Learn, Apply, Grow.*

JEREMY KINGSLEY

To see this young man practicing martial arts today, you'd never guess that he has autism or that he used to be bullied by nearly everyone in his school. This boy was ridiculed mercilessly, and he had no ability to understand why it was happening or what to do with it.

Until he started getting bigger. Then he could do something about the people who picked on him: He could fight back. And fight back he did, until no one would bother him for fear of getting pummeled. This boy started taking martial arts with the goal of learning how to pound kids who were bigger than him.

But if you've ever studied karate, you know that martial arts are not to wreak violence on others but are simply forms of self-defense. Over time, the boy received guidance from his instructors about using martial arts to protect and to defend.

Now this boy wants to become a karate teacher who helps all people, especially those with disabilities, learn how to protect themselves. He wants the cycle of violence to end. As he has risen in his belt ranks, his behavior and demeanor have improved dramatically.

Self-improvement in karate often takes place a few times a week, but self-improvement in business has to be a full-time endeavor.

“To change the world takes time,” said R. S. Lowel, but “to change yourself takes courage.”

Leadership is not for couch potatoes any more than karate is. Leadership is not for people who feel they already know everything and don't need to improve. As C. S. Lewis said, “A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

Self-improvement is a cornerstone of great leadership. Every year, dozens of books by top leadership experts are released. Why not read a few of them? Why not attend a workshop on leadership or management or business practices? Why not enroll on professional development courses offered by your company or a nearby college?

It may be good to learn about something that may be of interest in the future. I'm often amazed at the cross-pollinating that happens when I'm studying one thing in my spare time and then thinking about something else at work. Suddenly an out-of-the-box solution will occur to me that I never would've had if I hadn't been working to improve myself on my own.

I know a man who teaches novelists how to write better fiction. This man has a background in both theater and theology. So often, he'll come up with an adage from theater that illustrates good storytelling in fiction, or he'll produce a bit of wisdom from the pulpit that gives novelists the solution they need.

In your situation at work, challenge yourself to learn and grow, to improve and excel. Many times, when upper management is deciding which employee to promote or to assign a special task to, they'll think of that one worker who is always striving, always learning, always eager to deploy a new technique they've learned.

If you were in their shoes, would you select that employee or the one who is just marking time until 5:00—or until retirement?

Leaders can inspire teams by their personal commitment to self-improvement. The manager who comes into a meeting full of excitement about a new book she's just read or a seminar she's just gotten back from can have a positive infectious effect on her employees. Would you rather work with a person learning and growing or someone who stopped trying to improve twenty years ago?

Now, you probably don't want to ask your department to completely change directions every time you read a business book, but you can inspire your team to go out and improve themselves too, following your example. And that will help everyone.

Write down five ideas for how you might improve yourself this week, quarter, or year. See how many of them you can do—and what results you can achieve.

Most of the top business leaders got where they are today thanks to persistent self-improvement. They studied the best. They emulated the best. They became the best. So can you.

### **Insights for Inspiration...and Results**

- There's no avoiding it: The path to excellence is self-improvement.
- A leader who is working to improve him/herself is a positive influence on the team.
- Learning in multiple disciplines surrounding your business is a great way to cross-pollinate and gain wisdom.

## Team Building

*If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.*

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

If you are old enough that you were paying attention to the Winter Olympics in 1980, then you probably remember the “Miracle on Ice” U.S. men’s hockey team that shocked the world and claimed the gold medal.

Before the Lake Placid games opened and the team began its 12-day march to Olympic glory, the U.S. team had practiced and played together for six months. During that time, they had played more than 60 games together both at home and overseas. By the time they faced the Soviets in one of the most famous games in U.S. sports history, they knew each other incredibly well. They communicated. They trusted one another. They knew what each other was going to do before they did it.

You won’t often find that today. In the winter Olympics, the U.S. team (like almost every other team in the tournament) is comprised of pro athletes with team obligations. The unit that plays together in the Olympics might have played together only one day before the first round begins.

Hockey is a sport and a hobby for most of the people who play it. But even for the likes of a legendary team like the one that took the gold in 1980, it was in the end a



temporary alliance. The team-building they produced was powerful, but it was not permanent.

But in the world of business leadership, team-building is something you do 24/7 and 365 days a year. You don't have the option of thinking about team-building just once or for a span of days and then being done with it.

In business, the positive things you can accomplish as part of a team are almost always greater than what any individual can accomplish alone. I love when pro athletes have a great, even heroic game, but spend their interview time praising their teammates. Sure, part of that is because he's going to have to go face those guys in the locker room, and having just taken sole credit for his success will make life difficult for him. But most of it is because it's simply true. Yes, the running back had 120 rushing yards in the game, but a quick look at the replays will show the linemen hustling to their assignments and creating a hole that even I could get through. His success was completely dependent upon the work of his teammates.

And that old recruiting slogan, "An Army of One," was just a slogan. It played well to individualistic Americans who wanted to feel powerful, but when they got into the army, they realized that they were an army of tens, hundreds, and hundreds of thousands. One person may be strong, but a platoon is stronger. The goal isn't merely to be competent in what one soldier is doing but to make each soldier a force multiplier that can make a difference on the strategic map.

In business, your team increases in strength as the members fly in the same direction (it's leadership's job to cast a compelling vision), as trust rises between members (not only trusting that others will do their job but that workers are safe to

experiment and to express), as mentoring increases, as morale and motivation trend upward, as members feel empowered and significant to the organization, as members and leadership increase commitment to their objectives and teammates, as members contribute heartily, and as communication is encouraged and takes place.

How is the teamwork going in your place of work? What elements on that list are things that are happening around you? What areas could you improve on to make your team members feel supported and your leaders feel encouraged?

No one is good at everything. In your business situation, you probably have coworkers and leaders who are good at one or more of the things you have to do to make your company's endeavor's successful. A few superstars are good at multiple areas that help the business succeed. But truly, no one is very good at all aspects of running a business.

Ask any sole proprietor if she's a 9 or 10 in every part of her job—from making the widgets to generating sales to paying sales tax—and she's confide in you that she's great at some, fair at some, and awful at others.

The idea is to create a team of people who have strengths in areas where others are not so strong, so that between you all, you're good at all aspects required for this sort of business endeavor.

Once you have the pieces in place, it may be your job to make sure they all have what they need to succeed and are all pointing in the same direction and feeling appreciated for what they do.

“Enemies” in the form of setbacks, competitors, and marketplace forces are working to disrupt your team and the camaraderie, trust, and communication you've

built. But when you have a team that feels the benefits of working together, you'll find them joining your efforts to keep the team intact and moving forward.

### **Insights for Inspiration...and Results**

- Members of a team are able to accomplish much more than individuals can on their own.
- The more elements of a strong team you have in place, the more success your business will have.
- Assemble a team of people who can be good at one or two points in the process, so that between everyone, there is strength in all areas.
- Strong teams can endure the hardships that inevitably come in business.

## Strategy

*Victorious warriors win first and then go to war,  
while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.*

SUN TZU

I enjoy the game of Chess, it is a hobby enjoyed by millions worldwide. It's one of those games that can be taught in ten minutes but takes a lifetime to master. And of those who do spend a lifetime on it, 99 percent will never play at the grandmaster level. A good player sees not only what move he wants to make next but several moves beyond that, not only his but his opponent's. World champion Garry Kasparov said he routinely *saw* three to five moves ahead, and in some situations could see twelve to fourteen moves ahead.

I like Wikipedia's definition of strategy in the game of kings:

Chess strategy is the aspect of chess playing concerned with evaluation of chess positions and setting of goals and long-term plans for future play.

While evaluating a position strategically, a player must take into account such factors as the relative value of the pieces on the board, pawn structure, king safety, position of pieces, and control of key squares and groups of squares (e.g. diagonals, open files, individual squares).

A good chess player's strategy can be seen in his very first move. He's maneuvering for position, unfolding his plan, and causing the other player to suspect what his true strategy may or may not be.

Strategy is your overall plan for how you will achieve your objectives. In chess, it's how you move your pieces. In war, strategy is the top-level thrust of all your resources—military and otherwise—marshaled toward a specific end. In tabletop wargaming, your strategy determines what sort of units you're going to use and how you are going to deploy them as the battle begins.

In business, strategy is vital. You must have a plan for what you think will be the best way to reach your objectives. I define strategy as an overall plan for achieving a specific goal.

In chess, it's possible to be a casual gamer. Your strategy can be whatever you want it to be. It's even conceivable to have no strategy at all but just to move the pieces around randomly and see what happens. But in business, strategy is not optional. In business, you can't be a casual strategist. It will determine whether you succeed or fail.

Maybe your business strategy is to lead your industry by providing a better product or service than all your competitors. Maybe your strategy is to provide a comparable product or service but at a better price than the competition. Maybe it's to be the only one offering this product or service in the region—or the most convenient one. Maybe your strategy is to seize a market that is just beginning to emerge, or that you foresee emerging, so that when everyone else wakes up to the opportunity, you're already there set up and selling tickets. Maybe it's to buy out the competition.

Whatever your business strategy is, everything else you do will flow out of it. Your strategy will dictate where you put your research dollars, where you ask your marketing department to concentrate on developing your audience or potential clientele, who and how many (and how quickly) you hire, where you locate your headquarters, and how you position yourself in the industry.

Now, it is possible to have no strategy at all. But realize that that's a strategy too. In that case, you're 100 percent defensive and reactionary. You're not moving toward objectives; you're trying to avoid negative outcomes. You're not seizing opportunities left by others in the market; you're just moving in a straight line, doing what you've always done, with blinders on.

What strategy is your company (or department) currently pursuing? Given your situation, resources, and goals, what would the ideal strategy be? How closely to the ideal are you aligned? What changes can you realistically make to more perfectly follow the ideal?

What *is* your strategy now? What primary and secondary goals are you actively moving toward? What is the plan for achieving those goals?

Now let's look at tactics, which are the practical ways of turning goals into actions.

In chess, success is all about options. The player who controls the most space on the board—especially the center—has many more options for movement and attack than the player with less space. So controlling the center of the board might be your strategy, but your *tactics* are how you're going to achieve that goal. Tactics are specific moves a player can make that limit the opponent's options and may produce a tangible gain in

pieces or space or both. Chess tactics include the pin, the fork, the discovered attack, and the sacrifice. They all work to further the player's strategic goal.

In business, your strategy might be to be the first to market with a revolutionary new product. Many times, first wins. When you know your strategy, your tactics become clear, since they're just the nuts and bolts about how you're going to bring that strategy about. If you're going to be first to market, you need to be sure you're moving the development process along as quickly as possible. You're going to be sure you've got your manufacturing and distribution systems in place. You'll need to develop a prototype early on so that your sales staff can be showing it to potential buyers, who will hopefully be so excited about it that they're placing orders already—so you'd better have your price point set and your accounting systems ready.

You see how it goes: What your strategy is determines what your tactics need to be.

Sun Tzu, the master military strategist, said, "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril." An example of this in business is when, several years ago, Burger King decided to try to gain an advantage over McDonald's, its largest rival, by touting their French fries as being better. McDonald's, in an example of knowing their enemy, found out about this strategy and immediately countered it. All McDonald's restaurant managers were told about the upcoming attack by Burger King and instructed to be sure they were serving only the best fries in the coming weeks. Burger King's campaign came to nothing, thanks to a judicious use of strategy.

A good business strategy is flexible. You never know what you're going to encounter as you pursue it. As the military saying goes, no battle plan survives first contact with the enemy. The road ahead is fraught with dangers and pitfalls, and possibly even landmines and ambushes. You're not the only one with a strategy, after all.

That's why you build flexibility into your plan. If you're playing a wargame and a unit's goal is to take Hill 112 via the north road, but they encounter an enemy convoy on that road, it's not cause to change the strategy. Just implement the strategy a different way—take another route to Hill 112. The strategy remains the same.

Your strategy determines your behavior. As Master Tzu pointed out, having a winning strategy is the main prerequisite to winning the war. Trying to figure out your strategy only after the war has begun is not the way to victory. Whether your battlefield is a chessboard or the marketplace of industry, a solid strategy is the key to winning.

### **Insights for Inspiration...and Results**

- Strategy is your overall plan for achieving a specific goal.
- In business, all your choices and behaviors flow out of and serve your strategy.
- Tactics are the practical methods for implementing your strategy.
- A good strategy has flexibility built into it to deal with the unexpected.



## Encouragement

*Appreciation is a wonderful thing:*

*It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.*

VOLTAIRE

Running is a fitness hobby enjoyed by millions. Some run because their doctor told them they'd better do something or risk a heart attack. Some run because they love combining a workout with being outdoors. Some run because it's arguably the purest form of exercise humans can do. Some run to keep their blood sugar under control. Some run consistently and others are fair weather runners. Some run six minutes a morning on a treadmill, while others run marathons.

I read about a man running in his first marathon. He'd trained very well and was in the best shape of his life. At age 44, he was trained up, geared up, rested up, read up, and fired up. On the morning of the race, he ate and drank what the experts told him to eat and drink and he had his snacks and his strategy and his goal. He strapped on his watch, put his earbuds in and started the music, and waited for the gun.

Things went as planned until the final four miles of the race. The course had been flat for the first half (for the benefit of the half-marathoners in the race) but miles 22 to 25 for the full-marathoners took them over a series of hills. Runners dropped out in droves around him. Some walked. Some stretched. Some collapsed.

His hamstrings, which had been previously injured, and his quadriceps began sending him strident warnings. He was on the verge of exhaustion, despite his training and following the best advice available.

At the edge of defeat, he received a text from his wife, who was waiting at the finish line: “Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in (Winston Churchill).” That quote was followed by more. Celebrities and heroes writing about determination. Quote after quote after quote.

These words shot him through with encouragement. By the end of mile 25, he was so tired and concentrated on forcing out one more step up the hill that he could no longer read the messages that came in, but it didn’t matter. The encouragement had done its work. Mile 26 was flat, and this runner crossed the finish line of his very first marathon.

What if his wife hadn’t sent those encouraging words? What if he’d had no one pulling for him specifically? Sometimes the cheers of those standing by are the very thing we need to power through in the most difficult of tasks.

Encouragement in running is vital, but running a marathon—or running at all—is optional. Not so in business. Fail to encourage your team in the workplace, and you may find yourself without a team at all.

Encouragement has a power that cannot be underestimated. It’s like fertilizer added to the soil of a garden. The result is plants and flowers of tremendous health, beauty, and vigor.

Discouragement is just as powerful, but in the negative. How many children have had their potential poisoned by a discouraging message from a parent or teacher? If

encouragement is fertilizer to the soul, discouragement is poison. The result is a stunted, miserable growth, that more than likely will die.

I know of a woman who spent thousands of dollars going to writers conferences to try to improve as a writer. She was actually quite good, but she never believed it. At one conference, she met a sympathetic teacher who probed a bit more into the issue, and the woman revealed that, when she was in third grade, an elementary school teacher had looked at the girl's composition and said, "You just can't write at all, can you?" And this woman had spent the subsequent 40 years trying to disprove this one teacher's word of discouragement.

Words of encouragement—or discouragement—are incredibly powerful. In business, as in families or hobbies or any other realm, which do you want to sprinkle on those around you? Is it fertilizer or poison you want to give to others.

Good leaders never stop encouraging their people. Leadership expert Ken Blanchard once said, "It's important to catch your people doing something right." That is the true essence of encouragement. Because you simply cannot afford to let those individual moments pass without acknowledging them and encouraging your team members to build on what they've just done.

The easiest form of encouragement is simple gratitude. "Make it a habit to tell people thank you," says professional speaker Ralph Marston. "To express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you'll soon find many others around you. Truly appreciate life, and you'll find that you have more of it."

Marston has hit upon the secret of encouragement: It's reciprocal. You might be doing the encouraging, but encouragement will reflect back and enhance you. Gratefulness begets gratefulness and produces a climate of gratitude that will benefit everyone it touches.

It's a big debate in parenting and childhood education circles about whether all forms of punishment should be removed. The proposed alternative is to lead children to the behaviors you desire them to produce by offering rewards when they do it. Not earning the reward is as close to punishment as some folks want to come.

I'm not sure that's the best or only legitimate method of parenting, but I do know that rewarding the behavior you do want to see—with children or adult employees—is an effective means of leading people to make positive changes.

A little girl got home from school with information about a fundraiser the school was going to do. The student body had been to a presentation about the prizes the kids will get if they sold X number of whatever it was they were selling. This little girl had stars in her eyes over the idea of getting the spy camera prize she could earn by selling so many units. So she pestered her father to take her out door to door for the next several days, where she charmed people with her smile and enthusiasm. In the end, she not only hit her sales goal but became the school's top seller. All to earn a little spy camera.

Such is the power of positive motivation, and encouraging words are a mighty source of positive motivation.

Look around you in the workplace. Are people doing things right? Do you see employees doing something positive that isn't necessarily in their job description but that makes it a better place to work? Is someone going an extra distance with clients or even

just being faithful to help out other staff members? What positive qualities do you see in those around you?

Now think about how you could celebrate those things and those people. Maybe there's an award you can nominate someone for. Maybe you could put in a good word about that person to her boss—or to your boss. Even mentioning some positive quality or action to someone else, aloud and in the hearing of the person who did it, can be a significant way of affirming that worker. The chances are good that you're going to see more of that positive behavior in the future, and not only from the worker who did it first.

There has been growing criticism, especially in America, of our emphasis on making people feel good about themselves. Self-esteem has been exalted to the point where we can turn out lousy students, with scores well behind students from almost every other developed country, who nevertheless feel great about themselves. They can't do anything, the critics say, but at least they like themselves.

I think there's probably something to that, but I also see the benefit of encouraging people around us. I've seen teachers and coaches and business leaders from other countries berating and humiliating and terrorizing those under them. Maybe they do achieve greater results in the short term from their people, but I have to think it's crushing their spirits and causing such resentment that it will certainly spill out onto those over whom these people have authority, like their spouses and kids.

I think encouragement and affirmation and gratitude cause people to flourish and to feel relaxed and safe. And as any athlete will tell you, when you feel like that, you're more likely to perform at your peak. Now, if you encourage an employee and he doesn't

grow but continues being a negative influence, you can always fire him or have him transferred (accountability is important).

When you identify something in an employee that you can praise, why not do so? Do it privately. Do it publically. Do it often.

And don't let it be words only. If you have noticed that someone is very good at, say, organizing things, but you never give her responsibilities that go with it, it's going to start sounding hollow. If she's good at organizing, see if she'd like to be in charge of the team meetings, planning a corporate event, or whatever else.

Whether it's a hobby like running or writing, or a characteristic of good business, when you encourage people, they bloom. You have in your words the power to raise up or to crush. Use words to affirm and appreciate those around you, and the benefits will come to them and to you.

### **Insights for Inspiration...and Results**

- Good leaders never stop encouraging.
- Encouragement is like fertilizer; discouragement is like poison.
- Find things to praise and appreciate about the workers around you.
- The benefit of encouragement comes to the person receiving it and also to the person giving it.

## Conclusion

Bumper pool is a great game. It's a hobby that engenders skill, humor, concentration, sportsmanship, and camaraderie.

Leadership is not a hobby. It's not something to do once a week, or during a specific season, it's *consistently* applying principles that help people.

Remember - use your *influence* to bring along the new hires in your company and lead the veterans to focus their efforts on the goal.

Remember - you are on a long road of *self-improvement*. It's how you rose to where you are in business and it's how you'll rise to your potential.

Remember - in business, you focus on *team building*, lead your people in actions and maneuvers and practices that will engender trust and mutual benefit.

Remember - in business, you look at the team you've assembled and you create a *strategy*, a plan that will lead to victory.

Remember - use your words, your actions, and your gestures, to *encourage* those around you to become the best they can be.

The most effective leaders *consistently* practice these principles.

*Leadership is Not a Hobby.*

# About the author

Jeremy Kingsley is a best-selling author, leadership expert, and one of the most sought after speakers in the country. Since 1996 he has spoken to over 500,000 people at live events and given over 2000 keynote speeches. He has been featured in/on ABC, CBS, CNBC, FOX, FOX BUSINESS, FORBES, WALL STREET BUSINESS and many more media outlets. He has endorsements from Fortune 500 companies like Yum and Whirlpool. His messages have reached millions through radio, TV, and the internet. Jeremy is a master storyteller and connects with audiences through the perfect blend of humor, inspiration, and relevant principles to help each individual. He believes that inspired people produce results and is committed to helping people change, grow, and fulfill their personal and professional dreams.

World-renowned leadership expert Ken Blanchard said this: “Jeremy drives home one of my deepest principles in life and leadership – it’s not about you. Let his words inspire you so that you can inspire others for the greater good.”

Jeremy’s early years were spent in the frigid winters of Wisconsin and his teen years in the politically charged environment of Washington, D.C. In both places, he learned much about character, integrity, and effective leadership.

After playing three years on the high school varsity basketball team, Jeremy was named Conference Most Valuable Player his senior year and recruited to play at the college level. He gave up the opportunity to play college basketball to attend Columbia International University in South Carolina, where he earned an undergraduate and graduate degree. Jeremy has the heart of an athlete and understands the importance of commitment, determination, and purpose.

Jeremy and his wife, Dawn, live in Columbia, South Carolina, with their sons, Jaden and Dylan. Jeremy enjoys running, basketball, and classic cars.



Jeremy Kingsley has given over 2000 keynote speeches to hundreds of thousands of people around the world.

**Would you like to have Jeremy Kingsley, author of “*Leadership is NOT a Hobby*” speak at your company, organization or special event?**

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