

Sarah Cirone:

Hi everyone and welcome to today's webinar, Planning Overcomes Panic: How to Prepare for Remote Work, hosted by HRDQ-U DQU and presented by Kevin Eikenberry. My name is Sarah and I will moderate today's webinar. We'll have an extended webinar session today lasting around an hour and a half to answer your pressing questions. Please type your questions into the question area on your GoToWebinar control panel and we'll answer as many as we can during today's session. And for any that we're unable to get to, we'll answer those after the session by email. Today's webinar is sponsored by HRDQ-U Consulting. Are you looking for live, interactive training classes delivered right to your learners, wherever they are? HRDQ-U's virtual instructor led training classes allow your learners to keep the training, teamwork, and communication going from a distance. Real time interaction between instructors and classmates provides a powerful learning experience. The performance improvement and cultural shift you need. Learn more at www.hrdqu.com/consulting. I'm excited to introduce our presenter today, Kevin Eikenberry. Kevin is a recognized world expert on leadership development and is the chief potential officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group. He has spent more than 25 years helping organizations and leaders from around the world on leadership, teamwork, communication and more. He has twice been named by inc.com as one of the top 100 leadership speakers and top 100 leadership management experts in the world.

Sarah Cirone:

He is the author, coauthor, or contributing author to nearly 20 books, including the best selling remarkable leadership, From Bud to Boss with Guy Harris and The Long Distance Leader: Rules for Remarkable Remote Leadership with Wayne Turmel. It's an honor to have you speaking with us today, Kevin.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Sarah, it's my honor. I'm glad to be here. And so after all that long introduction, it may seem strange what my first slide is going to be everybody, but I want to make sure you understand why me specifically, because all that nice stuff that my mother wrote for Sarah to read, it talks awful lot about leadership, but I want to talk very specifically about why me for this session, because I have been doing this work for a long time and I am the co-founder of the Remote Leadership Institute. I've worked with and helped thousands of remote leaders as well as leaders working together. I lead a remote team every single day and I'm here to help. It was just eight days ago, I'll say more about that in a second that Sarah and I, that we decided we were going to do this webinar and so we are super glad that you're here. And we know that your job title might be anything from manager, senior manager, director, team leader, frontline leader, VPC level, we don't know.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Maybe your title is something else, but what we do know for sure is that you're here, you raise your hand to be here, because you got some stuff going on around work today, which of course is no big surprise given the world that we live in at this moment. But we're super glad that you're here and I'm ready to spend time sharing some ideas with you, giving you some tips and strategies and skills. And then as Sarah said, answering your questions. I will stop, excuse me a couple of times along the way, and Sarah will share some questions, but we will at the end, sort of free for all, take whatever questions that

you've got and I look forward to doing that as well. Where are we headed? Where we're headed today is, well, first of all, what you were promised, which was that we're going to help you building a work from home plan, giving you some ... What are the remote work tools that employees need so they can be successful working remotely? How do we help our teams work together successfully when they're no longer actually together? And ways to prevent your team from panicking about all that's going on, and we're going to answer your questions. We're actually going to do a little bit more than that before we're done, right?

Kevin Eikenberry:

We're going to give you what I call a lagniappe, and if you know anything about Cajun, that means a little something extra before we're done. All that was promised and a little bit more before we're done. I want to start with the first rule from our book, *The Long Distance Leader*. I think it's an important place for us to start today, and the first rule in that book is this, of the 17 or 18 or 19 rules in the book. The first rule is, "Think about leadership first and location second." What I want you to do first is to remember that you're already leading, you know something about it, and not everything has changed. Though much has changed, not everything has changed. And you know a lot of things already that will work about leading. We're going to talk about the nuances, the big, important differences that take place now, but I want you to start with a place of some sense of confidence in the current chaos. And as I said a minute ago, a lot in the world has changed in the last eight days since I reached out to Sarah and we had a conversation and we talked about doing this webinar. Think about it, eight days ago, I thought right now on this day, on a Friday, as we're doing this live, that I might be watching college basketball. And I haven't thought about college basketball in several days.

Kevin Eikenberry:

The world has changed a lot and so this webinar has been changing in terms of exactly what I'm going to deliver to you, because I want to deliver it to you what's relevant at this moment, on March the 20th at 2:00 in the afternoon, Eastern time, because this isn't just about a plan to move to remote work. It's not. It's about more than that, and it isn't even just about the team. I want to talk about the elephant in the room. The elephant in the room is all of this stuff that you're thinking about, about everybody else, absolutely 100% applies to you, right? Here's what I know, I don't know where you're from, I don't know the nature of your business, I don't know a lot of things, but I know that right now, and you're here, that you're uncertain, you're stressed, you may be fearful, you're worried, you're frustrated, you're probably exhausted, and I don't know what else you'd add to the list, but some or all of this is true, right? It's important for us to recognize that, because we're asking of ourselves and it's being asked of us as leaders to move this team forward, to make massive shifts in the world that's shifting all around us.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And while all of this is true for us, it's also true for our teams. All that stuff that you're feeling, everyone on your team is feeling. And of course not everyone's feeling the same thing. Everyone has their own story about what's going on in their lives right now and everyone's in a slightly different place and some people aren't as worried about this as others, and yet everyone's got emotions and issues and frustrations, and if the only ones they have are about now I have to work at home, if that's the only one, it's still significant. It's important for us to start here with the idea that leadership isn't all about you. In some of our work, we talk about this idea that what we call the three O model, that leadership is about outcomes. As a leader, we are responsible for moving the team towards a desired place to something valuable in the direction of something we don't currently have.

Kevin Eikenberry:

We are responsible for outcomes. We are also responsible for and need to help others reach those outcomes. Leadership is about outcomes and others. The third O is us. Ourselves. Who we are plays a role in how successful we are with the other two. And so while that's always true, it's never been more true than right now. We have to think about the center O, about ourselves. And so you must take care of yourself right now. And maybe that's the most important thing that you need to hear during this call, is that you need to have permission and recognize that you need to take care of yourself, because if you can't be at your best or even close, you can't possibly help your team be at their best or even close. Let me just say a couple of more things about this in terms of starting with ourselves, if I could, and the first thing I would say is you got to do all the stuff your mom taught you, right? Keep eating well, right? Exercise, get a good night's sleep, wash your hands.

Kevin Eikenberry:

We know that we ought to do that stuff, and maybe you're not doing one or more of those things. Do all the stuff mom taught you and you need to take a breath and you need to take a break and you need to find someone that you can vent to, and that's not your team. You probably need someone to just say, "Get it out and share it and move on." And I have lots of clients that have been emailing me and wanting to call and talk to me to do exactly that. You need that, because you need that so that you can be at your best and so you can refocus so you can help everybody else. I would just say that when I first ... When Sarah and I first started talking about doing this webinar, everything I've just said I wasn't planning, didn't know I'd have to talk about. And yet if we close this webinar down right now, which Sarah doesn't want me to do, but if we close this down right now, it would be worth what you've chosen to invest. You need to do that. I hope that you will. And I hope that everything else we talk about as we go, you will see how it connects back to where we've just started.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Having done that, take a breath and as we move into maybe sort of where we originally planned to start. And so I want to ask a question. We actually have a poll for you. I want to know where your organization is, because we've got a lot of people. And by the way Sarah, I win, just for the record. We got a lot of people on this webinar right now and we don't know where you all are in terms of your work in your movement towards remote. Sarah, can you put up that poll right now. You can see there are five choices. I can't see them right now. Can you read them Sarah?

Sarah Cirone:

Yes. We have some responses that are coming in. We'll give people a couple moments here, Kevin, to cast their vote and then I'll share the results.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Perfect. Yeah, we just want to know where your organization is, because that'll help me in the time that we have left and it'll, I think, be interesting to everybody else who's on the call.

Sarah Cirone:

Okay, great. There we go. I have now shared the results. Kevin, can you see those?

Kevin Eikenberry:

Only if I open it. Now I can see it. Now I can see it if I put on my glasses. Everyone else can see it too, yes? Where are we? Well, we've got some in and some out until now. We've been remote for a while, 11%. Lots of us have moved in the last couple of weeks. Some of us are moving soon and some of us are still thinking about it. And so I really didn't know where this would come down and so it was hard for me to decide how to do these first couple slides, because again, when we put this together, the whole idea was planning for the panic. Most of you are past that, so we're going to shift a little. We're going to do everything you promised. We're going to shift a little bit. Thanks for that. And I'm going to go back to the slides. Where are we? It depends a little bit on where you are in that planning and communication process, right? And clearly most of us have moved or are moving, and a few of you are still thinking about it.

Kevin Eikenberry:

What I want to do right now is specifically around planning and communication. The initial part of this change, for those of you that have a specific question about that, again, we're going to get to all kinds of questions later, but if you have a specific question about that, about where you're at in that, please type that in. I'm going to take a sip of my tea and then Sarah give me any of those questions that we have, okay?

Sarah Cirone:

Sounds great. Kevin, we have a question coming in here from Charles and he would like to know how often should we be communicating with our teams?

Kevin Eikenberry:

A lot, and we're going to talk about it. That's a great question, Charles. We're going to definitely talk about that a little bit later, so I'll just say, "Hang on, we're going to get there," but I will say this much for right now, probably more than you're used to. I'll start there, but we'll say more about before we're done. Any others?

Sarah Cirone:

Kathleen would like to know, should communication come from a central area at a certain time?

Kevin Eikenberry:

I think that depends a lot on your organization. How big your organization is, what the existing culture of your organization is, about where people are used to getting communication. If you're in a large organization and maybe there are some sort of corporate communications, those probably need to continue to happen, but if that's where you're at, the reality is there's probably more communication or reinforcement or more specifics that need to come from supervisors, frontline leaders, or division leaders or whatever that would be in your organization, right? Leaders of leaders. There may be some high level stuff that needs to happen and that ought to probably be happening and continuing to happen, but you probably need to be looping in your leaders that are lower and encouraging them to continue the communication. But remember, communication isn't just sending, it's also conversation. Especially the closer we get to folks that are making the move, the more that this needs to be something other than a PowerPoint and more about a conversation, as well. And I'll say more about that in a little bit as well. Any others? Maybe one more.

Sarah Cirone:

We had a question from Lynn and she asked how much actual work can be expected with students at home with parents, other parents at home trying to work, et cetera. Will they consider lowering their expectations?

Kevin Eikenberry:

Again, I must be cosmic. I've got that question answered. We're going to talk more about that later too and I'll just share, I wish I had it up. I would share part of it. One of my clients sent me an email yesterday that said, in part, "The deadlines haven't changed. Everything's the same. I don't know how we're going to make this all happen. I'm home. I've got five kids. One of them is a two year old. She doesn't recognize mommy's working. My husband's working in the same room. We're trying to figure this all out. My house is a disaster. My kids are about ready to lose their cool." I'm getting it close to what she said to me and I know that that's where many people are, and so as leaders, we need to recognize that that's where people may well be. Even on my team where I think I already said that, I already have a remote team. I only have a couple of folks that are now working from home that used to come to this office, where I am now, and three of my team members are dealing with that, where their young children are now at home with them and it's changed. Even for them, that's certainly changed. Even though they were already used to working remotely, it still makes it harder.

Kevin Eikenberry:

We're going to talk more about that later, but I would say this as leaders, especially if you're more like my age, then your kids might be older and you might not be thinking about that. That's real. And again, we'll talk more about it before we're done. I guess one more. Sarah, any other ones [crosstalk 00:16:31]?

Sarah Cirone:

Mary asks, how many communication channels should you use?

Kevin Eikenberry:

Hey, a lot. We're going to get to that too. I'm going to go ahead and go on, because I hate to just keep putting people off, so we just won't ask them right now Sarah. But listen everybody, please keep putting in your questions as we go, because we'll keep Sarah busy giving them to me later, okay? Let's actually talk about tools. It's one of the things we promised we would talk about. Let's start by talking about text tools, if we can, and there are text-based tools that we already know that this first part of the slide, you're going to say, "Kevin, I already know this." There's email, there's instant messages, In our organization we use Slack. You might use Microsoft Teams, you might use any number of things, and you're probably sending text messages. And listen, you know that there are limitations to these, right? Let me tell you, you're already using these in the workplace.

Kevin Eikenberry:

They're going to get used more now and we already know that there are limitations to them, big limitations to them, because for one thing, none of them are really good at conversation. Right now, instant messages and texts are a little different, because they have the feeling of being a little more synchronous if both people are available. But there are limitations to them, because while we mostly have are the words we don't have ... Let's just back up. Communication. What is communication? Message sent, message received, message understood. And the way our messages are understood come in three basic categories, the words we say, how we say them, and how we look. And while there are

things that we guess or surmise in an email to get tone, how we say it, or to get the visual, how they look, we don't really have those things. And so by definition, a text-based tool is limited. And so we use it all the time, and we've got to be careful. I don't know if you know this, but for the first time in human history, for the first time in human history now, today, not just today, but in this time in which we live, it's the first time ever that 70% of communication happens via text or via words as opposed to being spoken.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And it's a challenge. It's limited. There are limitations. Should we use all of these channels? Of course we should, and we need to set some agreements on how and when we use which one. And so we're going to talk more about expectations as we go, but we need, as leaders, to work with our teams to say, when are we going to do which one and how are we going to use them? And I want to start by giving you some very specific tips on email now. Now, these were things that always would apply, but especially if you're just now moving to remote, these are more valuable than ever. The first thing is, how many times have you ever sent it ... Well, let's just do it this way. You've sent an email ... Backup. Someone's sent you an email and you didn't respond right away, and then they send you another email saying, "Did you get my email?" Or they text you and say, "Did you get my email?" Or they call you and said, "Did you get my email?" You've had that happen, right? Maybe you've been on the other side of that and you've done it. Why does that all happen? It happens because people may have different expectations about how quickly people will respond to emails, so we need to have clear expectations about that. To the question about I got three kids around me and I'm not used to that.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Maybe I can't respond to emails quite the same frequency or quite the same way. I might even suggest that we should manage our email a little differently now in this case, but if we don't talk about that and I don't understand why Sarah's not replying to me or why Charles isn't replying to me, then I'm going to get frustrated and all the sorts of bad things are going to happen, right? Here's the other thing, once people are working at home, they never leave work. The work is always there for them and for you and so you got to be really careful about what you do and your example here. In part, if you're sending emails at odd hours and you don't expect people to respond at those same odd hours, you need to talk about that, especially as the boss. You don't talk about that, people are suddenly going to say, "Well Kevin sent a email at eight o'clock at night.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Kevin's sending email at three in the morning," which I did this morning to people on my team, if they don't know that that's not expected to reply immediately, I've had that conversation with my team. Every once in a while, I will ... I try hard not to, but every once in a while, for some reason I'm sending email at very strange times, but I'm not expecting them to reply immediately, to drop what they're doing, et cetera. We need to set clear expectations with each other about how we're going to respond, when we're going to respond, and we got to be careful about our own example on this. And while this is also always true, it's more true than ever when people are now working from home, because before what would happen is we might send an email, then when we're in the coffee room, we're saying, "Hey, I don't know if you knew this, but I thought I'd fill you in on this. I didn't put you on the email, but ..." But now, people feel like you got to put everybody on every email. Maybe not. I would just encourage you to encourage your teams and yourself to take more care about who you're copying on individual messages because it will just help everybody manage it more.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Chances are, if you're taking people remote for the first time right now, which like a third of you are doing or just have done, the email volume is going to go up and that's not necessarily what we want in some cases. I also want to encourage you to use what I call the three message rule. All of you have been on an email like this. The third or fourth email happens and it just gets worse, right? It goes downhill. Conflict begins. Miscommunication grows, frustration grows. You've been there, right? Here's the three message rule, when we get to the third message in an email, if it's not resolved, someone needs to pick up the phone or someone needs to fire up their webcam. That needs to happen, because email ...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:23:04]

Kevin Eikenberry:

... to fire up their webcam. That needs to happen because email friends is not good for conversation and yet we try to use it and people are going to try to use it more so that way now if they've just gone remote. I strongly encourage you to consider what I call the three message rule. My team knows it and if it's happening, it happens in our instant message too. I'm like, someone needs to pick up the phone or I'm calling or let's get on the webcam or whatever because we'll get done faster with less conflict, with less frustration, better communication, faster. We think it's faster to do email. We know it isn't always. So just we could... This session is not about email, right. But I felt like there was a few things we ought to just talk about that we know changes when that time, when this change is going on.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Here's... There's other tools obviously as the question was what tools should we be using? Of course, here's one our phone. You should be using your phone probably more than you were using it before. Again, we can have closer to real conversations on the phone. We'll talk more about that before we're done, but make sure that you use the phone more and by all means use this webcam more if you can. Again, a lot more about that in just a sec.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And you all now have, if you didn't before, have some sort of web platform like go to webinar, like WebEx, like Adobe Connect, like Zoom. I could keep going. You've got one. You may have more than one. If you have multiples in your organization what you need to do is settle on which one you're going to use most and we need to make sure that everybody knows just like in a meeting situation, what meeting room are we meeting in. Physically, what virtual room are we meeting in if we're doing it here.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Your web platform like this can do pretty much everything we can do in a regular meeting. There's a white board, people can raise their hands. You can do nearly everything. Excuse me, that you can do in a face to face meeting virtually. So you've got them. Use them. Learn how to use them better and encourage the rest of your team to use them by your example. And I'll say more about that before we're done as well.

Kevin Eikenberry:

But I want to talk about webcams for just a second, because not everyone has a lot of excitement about the webcam. And the first thing I will say, and I've heard this this week, some people say, "Well, we're not wanting people to use our webcams because we're worried about bandwidth." Okay, real, if that's

real for you in your organization, you're bringing people in to a VPN, and they're really all going to still be on the bandwidth that you were on before in the office I understand that.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So you got to be careful when the bandwidth allows. But let me just say this, and again, there's policies in your organization about all this. So I'm not trying to override what you're actually doing, but there are ways around that too, right? Because you got two people working from home on their own internet and they can have a Zoom call without going into the corporate internet if they need to want to. And again, I'm not telling you what to do or saying I'm not giving you permission. If your organization says otherwise and there are options that you might consider that you haven't thought about in the past. If you've got bandwidth challenges, I understand, I get that. And if we use our webcams, we get better communication. Let's just think about this for a second. First of all, you're as old as me. [inaudible 00:26:31] probably are.

Kevin Eikenberry:

You might remember some commercials that AT&T used to run for long distance phone service where they said it's the next best thing to being there. Well, guess what? The best richest communication is face to face, one-on-one across the table or desk. The next best thing to being there is this webcam. And so just think about this particular session that we're in right now. Now it's one way, one to many, many, many of you. I'm not seeing you, but you can all see me and is... Just ask yourself this question. Is this more effective because you can see me? Now, you may not be looking at me all the time and that's fine and you might say, "Well wish she looked better." That's also fine, but is my countenance, is my body language helping the message get across and I don't think there's any question that it's changing the communication hopefully for the better.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Our webcams will help us improve communication. Every organization I've ever worked in, said, "We need better communication around here." That doesn't get better automatically when we're remote. One of the things that we can do is use our webcams more when we can. Next thing when we use our webcams, they help build or maintain relationships and trust, both of which are going to take a hit when you go remote. Both of those things can be managed and they will be challenged if we don't take actions. We'll say a little bit more about that again, as we go. Everything we're talking about today is hooked together for sure. Okay. So I'm encouraging you use your webcams now and some of you are sitting there with the big old button in your head like Kevin, you just don't understand. We've got people that are resisting this.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Maybe you're saying, "I don't want to use my webcam." You're saying, "Kevin, Kevin, I don't like to look at myself in the webcam. You listen, I'm working from home. I got the ACDC tee shirt on. I'm not... Or the Taylor Swift tee shirt. I don't know. I'm not interested. I don't want to be seen. I'm working from home now. I'm in my PJ's. I didn't take a shower this morning." And I can say, "Let go of all that. First of all take a shower, right?" But beyond that, there are issues here that are mostly ego there in our own head. We need to let go of them. No one else is worrying about it near as much as you are. Let it go. Encourage your team members to let it go. Second is that people have issues about the background. "I don't want people to see my workspace. Man it's a mess here. I got the kids all around here. It's like a zoo around here." All of that stuff.

Kevin Eikenberry:

There are ways to deal with the background stuff. I'm going to tell you that later on I'm going to give you a place, appoint you to a free resource that goes a lot deeper and this whole webcam thing and helps people make the webcam, their friend and I'll point you to that before we're done, I promise. Okay, but here's the thing. If you are buying into what I'm saying and you want your team members to do this, guess what? You got to go first. Go first. Be the one that says, "Hey, let's do this on a webcam." And by the way, when you're having your one on ones with folks that we're going to continue to talk about as we go through this our time together, I'm going to definitely encourage you to use these webcams for those whenever possible. Be the one to go first if you're not doing it, they're not going to... Yes, Sarah?

Sarah Cirone:

Just to interrupt you really quick so you could maybe clarify to the group. We did have a question come in that asks, when you use the term webcam, does that equate with platforms like Zoom and WebEx, et cetera?

Kevin Eikenberry:

Yeah, I'm just saying because you can be on Zoom and not be using your video and you can be on WebEx and not be using your video. So I'm saying when I'm saying using the webcam, I'm saying turn it on so we have access to video. That's what I'm saying. Thank you. That's a great clarification, right.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And I happen to have a webcam here that's exterior to my laptop, but most people probably have one that's attached to their laptops if you're using laptops and so use them and yeah. So that's taking place in one of those tools right? Inside of Slack, which takes you to Zoom, in Zoom, in WebEx, in GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar, GoToTraining, all that. Yes, absolutely 100%. does that answer the question, Sarah?

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, thank you Kevin.

Kevin Eikenberry:

You're welcome. All right. So what are some of the challenges I promised we'd talk about challenges that you're facing if you're new at this and some of you the 11% of you that have been doing this a long time are probably going to nod your head and you may still be dealing with some of these challenges even now.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So first of all, when you people move remote or when they are remote, they feel disconnected from each other and disconnected from the big picture. They don't feel like they know what's really going on, right? Because what's happening is now we're isolated from each other and so we feel like someone might probably know stuff that we don't know. We're out of the loop. We're disconnected from each other. When we came to the office, we said, hello, we talked about the ball game. We laughed over the coffee and now we're not doing any of that anymore. At least not until we're done here you will be able to. So people feel disconnected from each other. They feel disconnected from the big picture. They lack

information or think they do. They're not getting the feedback that they want or need probably. They might not have before but it's probably going to be even less now.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And again, they lack their personal connection. And that's so important. Even if you, and even if members of your team are introverted and say, "Man, I don't need to come out of my... I can be sheltered in place for the next month and I'll be happy." We all still need some interaction. We see need some personal connection. We need to feel connected to others and the amount of that need and the type of that need might be different for different folks. It's important. And as leaders... And guess what, people may not talk about it, may not know how to talk about it, might not be able to describe it or put their finger on it. It doesn't mean it's not true. More challenges because there were more than that. As I said earlier, trust is going to take a hit.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Relationships may take a hit and communication is going to be different and harder. We've already talked about that a little bit. So all of these are challenges that you are likely going to face if you're not facing them now. And so you.. They're all things you need to start taking into account and accounting for. And I'm going to be... As I continue to go, I'm going to be addressing many of these, but if you have specific questions about one of these that I don't address, of course that's why we have the extended Q and A. Okay. So keep.. You and I's job is to make Sarah's job heart by giving her lots of questions. Okay. All right. So this morning I write a daily email to a lot of leaders and folks around the world starting next week, five days a week. It's been four days a week.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And this morning I wrote about this idea here and I thought I'd share it with you. And the idea was that we've been talking a lot over the last few weeks about this thing called social distancing, which I'd never heard of until recently. It's all we talk about now is social distancing. And I think it's a mistake. Not because we shouldn't try to contain the virus and keep people from getting sick. I'm not saying that, but we shouldn't be thinking about social distancing. We should be thinking about physical distancing. About trying to create social closeness.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Your people are now physically distant or soon will be, that's true. They're working at a distance, that's true. Part of what we need to try to do is to create social closeness because social closeness can happen regardless of distance, right? That's where we need to try to get... I mean, all I need to do to tell you that is someone that you've gotten reconnected with because of social media that you haven't seen in a long time, but you now feel closer to than ever because of that social media.

Kevin Eikenberry:

We can create social closeness even in a time when we need to have physical distance and we're working at a distance and I challenge you and encourage you and urge you to think about that. So I want you to also remember this, that as the leader of the team, you are also a member of the team, right? You wearing two hats, you've got your leader hat and you got your team member hat. And so all of those challenges that we just talked about, you were thinking about them in terms of the challenges your team members are having. But chances are you're facing them too, not just as the boss but as a

member of the team. So we need to realize and be okay with recognizing that. And so then the challenge becomes how do we help the team as the leader given all of that.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So now I want to get into some very specific tactics that you can apply to help. And I think I've got five on this list of things to do now. And let me just lay them all out quickly and then we're going to dive into each of them a little bit more. So the first one is thoughts and feelings before tasks. The second one is be a model. The third one is set clear expectations. The fourth is check in regularly and the last one is grant everyone some grace. Oh, what's he saying about all those things? Well, I'm going to dive in each one. Let's do each of them one at a time. First one, thoughts and feelings first.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Remember I was telling you earlier about the email that I got from a client, all those issues that she's dealing with, the reality that she's living in. She didn't send that email to me expecting that I would have an answer for her. She sent that email to me hoping that I would listen, hoping that I would acknowledge her, hoping to feel heard. One of the things that happens as leaders is oftentimes we're afraid to bring up topics that we don't have answers to, so we'd rather let them just sit there and hopefully they'd take care of themselves rather than bringing them up because we don't know how to answer them. And we think as leaders, we're supposed to have the answers. Listen, you're not going to have all the answers right now. What your team needs is for you to hear them. They don't want answers.

Kevin Eikenberry:

They want your ear and they want your attention. So I strongly encourage you to think about how you can show up and ask, listen and acknowledge people. They don't need answers, they need acknowledgement. And that's not just about the work, although the work is certainly part of it. We need to create what some people call psychological safety. And there are many of you on this line and many more that are going to watch this on a replay. And here's what I know. Not every organization has the same level of psychological safety. Some of you have organizations where it's not safe to share issues, to be both vulnerable, to ask questions. And if that's true for your organization, this is going to be even harder and even more important. But what we want to try to do now is make it safe and okay for people to say, "Man, I'm stuck. Man this is hard. I'm trying to balance all this stuff with my kids and the news is on and my spouse's in the same room and they're driving me crazy and they need someone to talk to about that."

Kevin Eikenberry:

And so what we as leaders need to do is let that stuff come out, give them a voice to that. Let them be heard and allow for venting but not allow for complaining. What's the difference? Well, part of the difference is length of time, right? If venting is people say, "Man, this is hard. This is a struggle. I didn't think was going to be this hard." That's venting. Complaining is when they say it five times. Well they keep talking about it or they don't let go of it at all and want to keep talking about it. That's complaining. I'm not suggesting we should take our whole day to let people complain.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I am suggesting we need to give people the chance to vent, to share, to say, to get it off their chest. That's important. It's necessary. And as leaders we can do that and we can allow for venting and we can

allow people to vent and then we can say, "Okay, now what are we going to do with that? Or how can I help? Is there something I can do to help?" And sometimes they're going to say, "No, but you helped by letting me say it." "Fine, we can move on." So when you do these things this... I am doing my very best to do this with my team in every conversation in these current days, even though our team was already largely remote because of all this other stuff that's going on in the world, right? Trying to do this first might just be a minute or two.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I'm doing that check in. Then we're talking about the work, then we're talking about the tasks. Then we're talking about the to do list. Then we're thinking about the project. I'm not saying we take all day to do the first three, but I'm saying if we go directly to the transactional stuff, it's going to cause us problems down the road. It's like shaking up the soda can with no way for the pressure to come off. So here's what we know about remote work already without all of the new issues we got. What we know is this, is that conversations and interactions become far more transactional, right? You've done this, you've called someone on the phone and say, "Hey." Or you sent them an email or something and say, "Hey, I don't want to bother. You don't want to take too much of your time. I know you're busy, but I need this." And so it's transaction question, answer question, answer transaction. What we need is more than just transaction. We need interaction and not just transaction.

Kevin Eikenberry:

We need to create interactional communication and not just transactional communication and the things that I've just shared are some of the ways that we can do that. Notice I'm still saying we got to get to the work. We're going to say more about that before we're done. We've got to get to the work. I get that. I'm saying we got to think about how we go about this and maybe to the earlier question Sarah shared, maybe we can be flexible. Depending on the work we'll get to that in a bit. Before we go onto the next piece of advice, Sarah, I'm going to take a drink of my tea and see if you've got any like pressing questions that you think I really need to take at this moment.

Sarah Cirone:

Okay, that sounds great. Shannon asks how do you create psychological safety, particularly in a company that doesn't have a lot of it?

Kevin Eikenberry:

Shannon that's a great question. So first of all, you've got to decide as a leader that you want to create it and you have to recognize too that while there's always an organizational culture, there's also a culture that you have with your folks and because all the culture is, is the way we do things around here, and so there's actually an advantage... Opportunity. It's not an advantage. There's an opportunity that you have right now because everything else is changing. And so you can go to your team. Assuming this is true, I'm going to just state something as if it were true. And since you asked the question, Shannon, I'm guessing it would be true for you. Hey team, this is all hard. This is all uncharted water. None of us had been here before. I want you to know that if you need to talk, we can talk.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I want you to know it's not going to go anywhere. I want you to know that it's safe for us to talk about the things that are being hard for us right now or the mistakes that are getting made. Like it's okay. And I know that that may seem foreign to you and you may not believe me, but test me on that. I want to

make it as safe a place as possible for us right now. So the point that I'm making is while that would necessarily generally be easier face to face than in other ways, you have the chance to open that door right now and you have to be patient. So, first of all, you've got to be ready with your behavior, which means when you're on your webcam with someone, you're on a Zoom call with someone, right? And they share that stuff and you kind of roll your eyes like, well you just lost your psychological safety because they're not going to share it again.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So as long as you're open to work on getting better at it yourself and you offer that and are patient with it, it'll start to change. If you do what we said on the earlier slide, by asking those questions, trying to do those things first, you will slowly start to build it and that will become one of the hallmarks of your new organization.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Whether you ever move back to the office or not. So thanks for that question Shannon. I appreciate that. Keep logging those questions Sarah. We'll get back to them. Next. So you're all wondering like do I know Sarah? No, Sarah and I have worked together two or three times. This is the second webinar we've done together this week. So we're actually an example of working remotely, aren't we, Sarah?

Sarah Cirone:

We are.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And so we've actually had a little fun this week together and I'm not going to ask her to share because that wouldn't be fair and I might not like her answer, but I would like to hope that she would say that I've been doing some of this stuff with her that I'm saying that we ought to do with our teams even though-

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, I enjoy working with you Kevin. [crosstalk 00:44:37]this week.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Thank you. So that was not meant to do that, although I'll take it any chance I get, right? So, okay. So here's the next thing. We've got to be a model. I was thinking earlier today about the Gandhi quote that says, "We must be the change that we want to see in the world." If we want things... If we want there to be more psychological safety, we got to go first. We've got to be the change. We've got to do the things that we want to see our teams doing. Guess what? Your teams is watching everything that you do.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I mean, you knew that was true before, right? When you saw them in the office. They're paying attention to what you do, what you don't do. When you do things, when you don't do things, how you say it, when you send an email, consciously or not, people are paying attention and you are their model and they're following your lead more than you realize. It's scary, but true. It's still true when we're all remote, 100%. and so we've got to make sure we're modeling.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I always tell leaders this, you're already a role model. The only question is, are you modeling what you want them to repeat or not? Be the change you want to see in the world. If you want to have people have a different attitude, then you need to be making sure that the attitude that you're sharing is the one that you want reflected. I have often asked people...

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Kevin Eikenberry:

I have often asked people this question, is enthusiasm contagious? I've asked it in groups large and small and everyone will nod their heads say, "Yeah, enthusiasm is contagious." Guess what? So is the opposite. And I've often shared next, and maybe it isn't appropriate now, and say, "Well which virus do you want to spread?" And I apologize for using that metaphor, but it's an apt one, actually. That whatever attitude we have, the way we're viewing the world, the approach that we're taking, is making a difference for our team.

Kevin Eikenberry:

If you look at the attitude of your team, it's often a mirror reflection of yours. It's not the one you want? You need to be modeling it differently. Never has that been more true than it is right now. Never is that more true than when you first send your team remote, because you're going through all the same stuff as them. How are you managing it? More specifically, what about using the tools? Are you using them? Are you changing the way you use email? Are you including less people? Are you picking up the phone? Are you using the tools the way you want them to use them? Or are you just telling them to do it?

Kevin Eikenberry:

Because they're going to follow your lead and then we just need to be making sure that we're encouraging people and that if we're hearing what some people on the team are doing to make things to go better. We ought to be sharing those best practices. We ought to be recognizing what people are figuring out and sharing that with others and be encouraging others and be a model of doing best practices for everyone. We've got to be a model.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I don't know if you've noticed, but everything I've said so far, you say, well that would all be true for us except for very specific things like webcams. Well that would all be true before and it's just more true now. And the answer would be yes. Remember the rule number one, think leadership first, location second.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Next big key here is clear expectations. Again, we absolutely need clear expectations when we're leading our teams, and yet too often that isn't as clear. People don't really know what is expected of them. And you're saying if you're in that third or so of the group that is saying, well, we're just now going here. It's actually almost half of you that either have just moved, or are about to move, to this. And you're saying, well, how can I set clear expectations of what I want from them because we've not done it yet?

Kevin Eikenberry:

So set them as you go. It can be a work in progress. That's okay. Just tell people it's a work in progress. Hey, I want us to have clear expectations about how we're going to work together. Neither of us quite have it figured out. Let's figure it out together as we go and let's clarify those expectations and how we're going to do it, as we go. People will love your transparency about that in and of itself.

Kevin Eikenberry:

In order to set any clear expectations, you have to be clear yourself first and then you have to help transmit that to them so it becomes clear to them. And so the first thing is your team members are not paid to read your mind. They can't read your mind. So you've got to get clear about what you want, get it written down and talk to them about it. You can't get clear expectations without doing that.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Some of this though, maybe right now we'll figure it out as we go. But here's what's always true when we go remote,~ and that is that even if your team members were doing well and were very clear on their expectations when they were in the office, they knew the what of the expectations. But once we move remote, we now have to think about the how expectations. How are we going to do it?

Kevin Eikenberry:

The hows likely change once we go remote. And so while people may know what, which is the quality of this report and the timeliness of this report and I got to get this report done and all those things, the hows probably change. So we're going to talk about that. So when you think about setting clear expectations once your team is remote, it's not just what, it's how.

Kevin Eikenberry:

All right, next. A big part of that is communication. And so think about your medium. Which mediums are we going to use? If you have expectations about that, talk about it. Hey, we're going to use these tools for these things and these tools for these things, and please don't use your text messages unless X, Y, Z.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Whatever they are, once you've figured them out for your working situation, make them clear to everybody. And then certainly of course, the frequency with which we're going to communicate. And again, more on that to come, but clear expectations about what that looks like is key.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Next, set clear expectations. I keep coming back to these tools because we're being asked to use tools we didn't use before. Remember that middle? We've got this whole idea we got to mediate everything through technology now. And so we've got this in between link that we've got to make sure we're taking into account.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So what are the expectations about tools? What are your expectations about webcam use, et cetera? What are your expectations about when we're sending emails, when we're not sending emails, et cetera, et cetera? And by the way, we need to be setting expectations with individuals. Sarah and I can

have conversations about expectations, both directions. Both if I'm the leader and she works for me, but what does she expect of me in return? That would be important.

Kevin Eikenberry:

But we also need to be thinking about this for the entire team. So we need to be thinking about this, not just expectations one-on-one, but expectations across the team as well. And that's one of the things I'd encourage you to be doing, is having a conversation about some of those things with the group. If you haven't got them all figured out, it's okay, you'll get there. But only if you start thinking about it and you start talking about it. You start working on it.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Here's one of the single most important things you need to remember when you're now leading remotely, and that is that intention becomes far more important. Because think about it this way, even though I'm about to tell you on the next slide, check in regularly. I'll just change there, so you know it's coming. Even though I'm about to say we need to check in regularly, if everyone was in the office and now they're not, you are not going to have as many communications with them as you did before. You're just not. Which means what? Every one has greater weight. Every communication is more important because there's fewer of them. So we need to be more intentional, more conscious, and more aware with everything that we do.

Kevin Eikenberry:

That's one of the biggest challenges and biggest changes for us as a leader of a remote team. It's a heavier lift. It's a different lift. But it's a lift that you can make.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So let's talk about checking in regularly. Number one, more than you think and more than you're probably doing now. So the question was asked earlier, how frequently should we be communicating? Well, I don't know exactly what all you have to communicate, but more here's what I will tell you, again, with a team that is largely remote already, I would call us a hybrid team, most everybody remote, a couple people come here to what we call remarkable house. We have a whole team meeting once a week, excuse me, once a month. This week we've had two. Next week we'll have at least one. None of them were the originally scheduled meeting and we already are doing remote. We're doing it because of all the other changes that are going on in the world and how do we stay connected? How do we create social closeness? How do we stay keeping our priorities set? And all those things.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I'm communicating with every one of my team members more too. So I will tell you this, that for many years I have a number of connections with team members that is my goal every day. And how many that is doesn't really matter. I have 12 remote team members. They don't all report to me. Many of them do. But I consider them all on my team. And I have a number in my head of how many people I'm trying to make an actual connection with and have an interaction with every single day.

Kevin Eikenberry:

In the last two weeks, my new norm is everybody, every day, and I haven't made it, but I've come way closer to it than I normally did before, even though I am personally busier than I can ever remember being. And I'm guessing you may be in exactly the same spot.

Kevin Eikenberry:

One of my clients sent 300 people from a office to home in one day. You think they weren't busy? Yeah, I know where you're at and yet this is so critical and maybe you can't do it every day and maybe that's not what the goal should be for you, but it's more than you think and more than you're doing now. And make sure that you please start with non-work. And I would always say this, not just now, we've already talked about all of this stuff, think about thoughts and feelings first. But even before, you want to be making an interaction, not a transaction, so a little bit more than just work and weather and start there, or you won't ever get there.

Kevin Eikenberry:

If you dive into the work first, you won't remember to come back to the rest. I almost guarantee that. Right now, when you're checking in, you want to be checking in and thinking about engaging people's change acceptance. How are they doing? Are they accepting it? Are they in? Are they stuck? What do they need? How much resistance is there? Figure that out so you know what to do with that next.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Fundamentally, we're checking in for these two reasons, to be a resource and offer help. Where are people stuck? What help did they need? How can we help them? Hopefully this is what you were already doing in one-on-ones. You're just doing it more often with a broader set of topics than you did before. If you weren't having one-on-ones before, you need to do all this as soon as you can. If you already were, it's time to tweak the way you were doing it before.

Kevin Eikenberry:

All right, and we can use this time when we're checking in with folks to adjust expectations. Is everything still working the way we want it to work? How can we work together better? What do you need differently than what you're getting now? Let me make another important point right here about this checking in regularly and expectations. If we set an expectation around, hey, I'm going to try to talk with you, Sarah, every other day. First of all, I'm more accountable to doing it than I was before, but now Sarah knows I'm going to talk to her every couple of days. Because what happens right now is, people go remote, leaders are worried that people are actually doing work or not. Is anything happening? And so when they reach out to see what's going on, people feel like they're being checked up on.

Kevin Eikenberry:

What we want to do is check in without people feeling like we're checking up, and one of the biggest ways to change that from feeling like people are feeling checked up on versus checked in with, is to know upfront that it's going to happen. Now, Sarah may not love that we're going to talk every couple of days. Chances are she's going to find that's okay as we do it a while, but if she knows I'm going to do it, she's less likely going to feel like I'm checking up, because she knows this is the way we're going to work. So it changes the dynamic.

Kevin Eikenberry:

When we do our checking in, one-on-ones, whatever you want to call them, we need to make... That's our chance to coach. It's our chance to coach and give people feedback and help them. And again, the same thing here, we need to be doing this checking in individually as I've been giving examples, but also with the team, more frequently probably.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And remember, conversation, not PowerPoint. Conversation, not, let me tell you all this stuff. And if you want conversation, you have to let them talk first. As the leader, if you say, here's all this stuff I want us to talk about, any questions? How many questions do you get? Zero. Very, very few. But if you start out by saying, what's on the plate, what are the issues, what do you guys need, what do we need to talk about? And you do all that first, some of the things on your list will now be taken care of and there'll be more open to the things that are left, and guess whose ideas the other stuff was? Theirs. If the boss, where there's a power differential, does all the talking first, there's nothing left. And even if they have it, they're not going to ask it.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So if you want real conversation, you've got to get them engaged first or very early, because the longer you talk, the less they're going to, in almost every case. Even more true remotely.

Kevin Eikenberry:

You've got to be supportive. The next item on our list. I guess number four out of five, we've got to be empathetic and understanding. We've talked a lot about that already. We need to offer help to people. Help them. We've got to listen to people. One of the most valuable things that we can do to build relationships and trust and show our support, is to listen, not be multitasking, listen, stop doing other... You can't multitask anyway. It's a figment of your imagination that you can actually do it. Which research I could prove to you with it, and you don't even need that because you really know it.

Kevin Eikenberry:

The reality is, you know what it feels like when someone's really listening, so we should be doing it more than we are and it's more true remotely than ever. We need to create, and we've said this several times, interaction and not transaction, and we need to be providing people with encouragement and positive feedback. If you're not doing that now, you need to do it for sure. If you're already doing it, then probably need to do it more than you were before.

Kevin Eikenberry:

The fifth of the items on the list that I gave you earlier was I said we need to grant people grace. Well, I'm a Christian, so the word grace to me means something that it might not mean to you. And in fact you might look at that word and say, I don't really know what that means, or I think of grace as being something a ballet dancer has.

Kevin Eikenberry:

But so if that word doesn't connect for you, let me give you some different words that say what I mean. And that means we need to be giving people more forgiveness, and providing more patience, and being more understanding, and being kinder. Why? Because everything's changing. People are working from home, they've never done it before, or they did it one day a week before, or once a month, or when they had some specific reason.

Kevin Eikenberry:

We are all learning. We need to grant people some grace and give them a chance to figure it out, and not be so uptight about every last thing. And by the way, Shannon, that will be one of the ways we will create a little bit more psychological safety too.

Kevin Eikenberry:

This is all hard. Even if we didn't have the backdrop of COVID-19, coronavirus, whatever you want to call it, if we didn't have the backdrop of shelter in place, total lockdown, and all the other fear, even if we didn't have any of that stuff, it's still a huge change.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Now you're doing it with all of that stuff too. You got to grant people a little bit of grace. And by the way, we got to do that now more than ever. And it's not just with our team, it's with our spouse, it's with our children, it's with everybody around us. The more that we can do that, the better we'll be and the better we'll make it for others.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So what does this look like in actuality? Well, it looks like, here's one, you're going to get on a webcam, you're going to get on a Zoom call and someone's cat's going to come flying in. It's okay. Someone's kid's going peek their head over and they're going to... There's all sorts of memes on the internet now, I understand, about people having issues when they get on webcams for work on virtual meetings and the kids showing up and there's issues, and so the person doing it feels awful and if the boss rolls their eyes, then they feel even worse. It's okay. Now if the dog's barking and it's been barking for 10 minutes, we ask them to mute so that we can actually continue to have our meeting, that's okay too.

Kevin Eikenberry:

But let's not immediately hammer down on people because they're trying to figure out something that they've never had to figure out before. So we need to allow people time to adjust. We need to remember that everyone is learning. We need to be a little more flexible. And I think that if we will do all this stuff we've been talking about for the last hour plus, you'll be doing pretty well in relationship to all this.

Kevin Eikenberry:

But I know what some of you are thinking. It was probably what I'd be thinking if I was on the other side of this conversation. Kevin, wait a minute, we still got work to do. All that sounds really good, Kevin, and we've got work to do. The work remains. Yeah, the work does remain. I don't want you to take anything that I've said to say that we're just going to give everybody a pass. I'm trying to put the work in context.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Maybe the priorities shift in the short term, maybe. But if there are deadlines, if there are things that have to happen, then we got to keep the deadlines. I can't speak to your specific situations, but I am clear as I am for me as a leader that there's work we got to accomplish and I believe the more of this other softer stuff, some of the softer stuff we've talked about that we do, the easier it will be for people to actually get past that stuff so they can work.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I believe that we need to help people actually focus, because when people can focus... Right now, there's so much changing in people's lives that what they can control is their work and if we can let them know what we really need to get done by this time and they can get their minds around that and then get on it, that could be the healthiest thing that could happen for them.

Kevin Eikenberry:

There's a sense of certainty to that. There's a sense of surety to that. We need to help people focus so that the work can get done, but when we do that, they win too. And I can tell you this, while I do not know the work that you and your team do, I know that for most of us, the work that we do makes a positive impact on the world, and for many of us, it may make a positive impact on the specific situations that we're in right now. Make sure your team remembers how important the work is and how what they do matters.

Kevin Eikenberry:

When people remember that and they have that to hold onto, that will help them be more productive and get the work done in spite of the other stuff. We need to find a healthy balance here of course. But the work's not going away. I understand that. So we've got to help people understand that. We've got to help them.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And I want you to remember this, and that is that motion defeats moping. You all know this is true if you stop and think about it. There've been times when you've been a couch potato and I don't feel like doing anything. But once you get up and do something, suddenly you got more energy, and suddenly you start getting something accomplished.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Action can change our thoughts. So if we give people concrete, actionable things to work on, it can change their thoughts. I actually hope that what I've done with you for the last hour plus is doing that for you. Giving you ideas where you say, I can go do that. And it hopefully changes your thoughts, putting you in a more positive place. You can say, I can go do that. Motion beats moping. And so I hope that you will keep that in mind. And at this point, I'm going to stop and I'm going to let Sarah tell me what we're going to talk about next.

Sarah Cirone:

Great, so [crosstalk 01:06:49].

Kevin Eikenberry:

Sarah, I know we've told them 90 minutes and I know that I'm just reminding you because we've got probably about five minutes worth of stuff, all this extra stuff, I've promised them they'd get to, they don't know what it is, that's still to come. So just help make sure we don't go past that, okay?

Sarah Cirone:

Yeah, we'll make sure to keep track of the time. If anybody has questions, if you just want to type them into the question box on your GoToWebinar control panel, and we can answer some of those for you. As people are typing in their questions, I just wanted to make it clear to the audience, I've seen a lot of

questions. People ask me if they'd receive the recording after the session. Yes, everyone will receive a copy of the recording after today's session. It will be sent in an email to you.

Kevin Eikenberry:

So let me just, while you're getting your thoughts together, Sarah. So everybody, that's a tremendous service that HRDQ is providing here. And if you've been watching this thinking, man, I've got some colleagues, I wish they could've heard it. Now you can share it with them and it might be best thing you could do for them. So please feel free to share it. Go ahead, Sarah.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes. So our first question that we have that came in a little while ago was from Julia and she says that currently her company uses Teams and Office 365 but her niece uses Google Classroom with her students and she understands that both functionalities are good for communicating with students, but do you have a preference?

Kevin Eikenberry:

Because of the work that we do, we're pretty platform agnostic. I own subscriptions to multiple platforms because we work with different clients and help in different ways. I think the biggest thing is that at the highest level, pretty much, there are certain tools that can do things that others can't. But for the most part, what most of us need are available in whatever tools you've got. So I wouldn't be spending a lot of time trying to go, oh man, I wish we had that tool instead of this tool. I'd be focused on learning the tool you got. You might be surprised at how much it can do that you weren't aware of. I'd focus more there.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I don't have a strong... Within the ones that we have, I have a personal preference. The one I like better. But that's just personal preference, it has nothing to do with the functionality or its ability for us to get work done.

Sarah Cirone:

Mary has a good question.

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Kevin Eikenberry:

-For its ability for us to get work done.

Sarah Cirone:

Mary has a good question. She's asking, do you have tips for onboarding new employees in a remote environment?

Kevin Eikenberry:

I have a lot, but I'll give you one very specific one because I do that. I onboard people remotely. Obviously, there are lots of things that we could think about but one is if they're going to be remote after they're on, we need to make sure that whatever onboarding we're doing includes the things that

will help them succeed being remote; learning the tools and all those sorts of things. Let me give you something that I have found to be incredibly powerful for us.

Kevin Eikenberry:

When someone joins our team, I tell them that in the first ... Now remember, we got about 12 people on the team currently. I tell people that within the first two weeks once you are here, one of your jobs is to have a virtual, face-to-face webcam, Zoom call, whatever, with every other person on the team, at least 30 minutes, not about work. In other words, I mandate that they try to get to know each other. Not trying to mandate that they're going to like each other. While I would prefer that they like each other, I don't really care. What I really ... I mean I care, but that's not my goal. My goal is that they know each other so that they start to build some connection between each other so that communication can be improved, there's some working relationship and trust can start to build because otherwise, they're just a name on an email.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And none of that will happen ... Some of that doesn't happen automatically in the office, but it's more likely to happen in the office. It won't happen at all virtually unless you have a really extroverted person or a really self-aware person unless you encourage people, urge people to do it. And it is literally one of the most important things if someone joins our team within two weeks. I manage it. Everybody else on the team knows what that's about, so they know what those conversations are like and if Charles and Shannon need to talk about the work stuff, then you talk about the work stuff. Charles needs to know what Shannon does and how that all impacts what he's going to do and that's great. Do that and 30 more minutes or on another call.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Everybody on the team knows that that's what's supposed to happen, so they help the new person be okay with ... It's not wasting time, it's investing time. So, there's one thought for you that I personally find to be exceedingly valuable and has been for us for a long time.

Sarah Cirone:

Sandra's asking ... She says she has a great team and they've truly stepped up to the challenge. What are some ideas about appreciating, recognizing and rewarding remotely?

Kevin Eikenberry:

We have a ... The instant messaging tool that we use is Slack. It doesn't matter which one you use. I believe that everyone, that I'm aware of, has this capability to have a channel or a group of whatever. We have a channel that we call water cooler. And water cooler is the channel where you don't talk about work; where you talk about the stuff that you would talk about at the water cooler or at the coffee pot in the break room. And it's no work allowed. It's just the chance for us to chat.

Kevin Eikenberry:

What ends up happening there is people thank each other, so that becomes a place for us to build relationships and maintain those relationships. But as it relates to the specific question that Sandra has, it becomes a place, once people get to know each other, that they're more likely to recognize and do that. Should we be doing it as leaders? Sure. But we should be encouraging everyone to do it. That's not just on us to be rewarding people for that. We want everyone thanking each other and encouraging

each other and giving each other feedback. Really work to build that culture more than just, "What do I need to do?"

Kevin Eikenberry:

Certainly, there are a lot of things that you already know that you can do. You can send emails, you can send ... You can't probably send written notes now because there's no place to mail them to. But figure out ... You know some ways to do this. Just remember to keep doing it, K?

Sarah Cirone:

Charles asks if you could suggest any resources for people who are working from home for the first time? Some tips or trick on productivity.

Kevin Eikenberry:

First of all, one of the extra bonuses we're going to give you in a little bit is going to help you with that, Charles, and your team with that. Here's the first thing I would do, is I would tell your team, "Hey, next Tuesday at two o'clock we're going to have a 15-minute meeting and we're just going to talk about what are you doing that's working for productivity?" Or I'd set up a channel in my instant messaging tool or whatever way that you can do that to say, "Share your best productivity tip so far." I could give you a 100 of them. You know a bunch of them, but the challenge is to get the group to share them with each other because that gives us additional benefits as well.

Kevin Eikenberry:

We talked a little bit about some of the things around email and we can certainly ... That certainly would apply. I will say this, though, about productivity now that I said I wouldn't get specific. I'll give you one. If you've got people who are working remote for the first time, here's the world that used to be. They got up, they had some routines that they did before they left for the office. There was a natural thing that had to happen before they "went to work". And then at the end of the day, they left the office so there was a natural break. They had start of day and end of day routines. They need start of day and end of day routines now, too. And there's a big risk that people bleed the work into their life, and so we've got to help people create some clear boundaries for themselves for the value of them, for the value of the people in their lives that might be there waiting for them to stop working, for example.

Kevin Eikenberry:

I would say one tip would be help people build better start of day and end of day routines. And I've got some tools for that in the stuff that I'm going to promise you is coming in a couple minutes, too. How about that?

Sarah Cirone:

That's great. Charice would like some tips and tricks with teleconferencing. And more specifically how do you work-

Kevin Eikenberry:

I'd love to know a little bit more ... That's a big thing.

Sarah Cirone:

Yeah. She-

Kevin Eikenberry:

I'll give you couple. Go ahead. Go, though.

Sarah Cirone:

How to create order when teleconferencing.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Here's the first thing. Depends on how big your teleconference is. If it's really large, you can't have people ... People have got to be on mute like we are here. There's way too many of you for you to be off mute. But if you have a small team ... The rule on my team, 12 people ... The rule on my team is unless there's some background noise going on, you're at the airport or whatever, no mute. Lines are open. Why? Because I want you all to be focused. I want you all to be paying attention. I want you to all be engaged in what we're doing. And it's just too easy to get diverted if the ... There's no webcam and there's no sound, you're going to be on email. You're going to be doing something else.

Kevin Eikenberry:

The first thing is you want to keep people ... Try to keep them as focused as they would be if they were all in the same room. That's the first thing. Minimize mute if you can. You can't always, but if you can, do that. Next thing is if I'm in a meeting with people face-to-face and I ask the group a question, I don't typically start by directing it to a person. But once people are on a teleconference, and especially teleconference where there is no video, everyone's waiting.

Kevin Eikenberry:

If we're all in a room together, we might be waiting because I don't know if I got anything to say yet. We have all sorts of reasons why we might wait. But once we add the teleconference scenario, we get even more reasons why we wait. I don't want to step on top of somebody else, I have no visual clues to see whose about ready to say something, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. My suggestion is, on the teleconference is, you got to be more directive. Hey, I want to hear from the people in the Atlanta region. Hey, can someone on the sales team tell me what you guys are thinking? Hey, Janice, what do you think? Whatever that looks like. Because that gives them opening and opportunity ... I want to ask questions that they have answers to. What do you think? What have you tried? What are your concerns? I don't want to say what's the right answer kinds of questions like we had in school sometimes; questions as a weapon. I don't want that. But I'm going to be more directive in asking.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Another thing that I say a lot that I don't have to say anymore, at least not for right now, is what we would call the hybrid meeting; some people are together, some people aren't. And if that's ever the case again, or when that's the case again, you want to ask the people that are out first and then come back to the people in the room. Otherwise, it would naturally become the people in the room having the conversation and everyone else just listening in and becoming disengaged. There's a couple of thoughts.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. Maria's asking that you share some tips about respecting each other's time. Everything is moving so quickly now. We receive and respond instantly, but how do we ensure that we protect our time, too.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Yeah, that's back to that thing about setting clear expectations about timing on emails and stuff. And of course, it always depends on the nature of your work. If the work that you're all doing remotely now is call center work, the replies need to be close to realtime as possible. But if we're doing other kinds of work, we need to set clear expectations with each other about that. And I would say that we have so many more distractions, perhaps, when we're at home than we did before like our children and like 100 other things that might be going on that I would lean toward trying to batch email in a time. 10 minutes an hour, 20 minutes an hour, whatever that is. And then let other people know that's what you're doing.

Kevin Eikenberry:

What we do in our team is that people don't expect a response to an email immediately. If they want an immediate response, we use instant messaging. You can think about how you use which tool for which purposes to help you manage that, but it mostly comes down to having clear expectations. And I would encourage you all to think about giving people more time to do real work and then do email or whatever because otherwise, they never get to their work because they're always replying to emails. You all have experienced that, I know. Hopefully that's a little helpful.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. Nancy is asking ... She says, "Is there a better practice to manage team communications when there's daily changes? Is it better to give daily guidance that will change from day to day that may cause confusion versus weekly or every three days? Frustration and confusion seems to increase when things change every day."

Kevin Eikenberry:

And if they don't know, they're worried. Here's what I know. Gossip is like a mushroom. It grows in the dark. When we don't know, we make it up. When we don't know, we get anxious and we worry. When we don't know, it's not good. The best thing to do is ... And of course, I don't know the specific situation ... But more frequent communication better and say, "Hey, it's a moving target. This may change tomorrow. I apologize in advance if it does, but I want you to know exactly what we all know right now." I think that's way better, everything else being equal. I would say more rather than less and just ask for a little grace and explain that it's a moving target and that's the direction I would go. This is what I try to do and that's what I would encourage you to do, as well.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. Tavner says, "How do you continue to communicate effectively and with empathy with your supervisor when you're still the one that has to work in the office?"

Kevin Eikenberry:

I have some clients that had that situation. A couple people are still in the office, everyone else has gone home. There are all sorts of things that could be going on there and I kind of got lost in the pronouns. I don't know which person is who in that scenario as you asked me, Sarah, but let me just say this. The emotions and the feelings of the people that are in versus out are going to be very different, especially

now. If we're the supervisor, we want to be very aware and attuned to that and just really understand where people are at and what their concerns are about that.

Kevin Eikenberry:

If we're the supervisor, we need to open those lines of communication. And if we're not the supervisor, we need to say, "Hey, can we talk about this? Because here are my concerns," or, "Here's where I'm struggling," or, "Here are where the issues are," or, "I'm not getting the communication I need from the people that are remote now because I'm here by myself." Whatever those things would be. If this was a managing up question, I urge you to say, "Hey, I need a little time to talk about some of these things because everything's different now. And can you help me navigate this a little bit more?"

Sarah Cirone:

Great. It looks like we might have time for one or two more questions here, Kevin. Tom asks, "How do you handle possibly adding new reporting requirements, i.e. time-tracking documents, et cetera?"

Kevin Eikenberry:

With as much clarity as you can. Again, this is a one to several hundred conversation so my first question would be why are we adding time-tracking? If we didn't need it before, why do we need it now? It seems like, potentially ... I'm not making a judgment, but it raises a possibility of a red flag that says, "Somehow the leaders feel like we got to have people track their time now. If we didn't before, why do we now?" That would be my first question. But if there's a good reason to do that, then I would say it's like any other change that we're implementing. We've got to have clear communication plan, a clear understanding, letting people know what the rationale is, helping them understand not only how to do it but why we're doing it, and that'd be where I'd start.

Sarah Cirone:

K, great. We have another question here that says, "What are some ways to coach virtually? My first thought is to ask more questions and let the employee lead the conversation with their plus/deltas. What are some other thoughts?"

Kevin Eikenberry:

Turn on your webcam. Absolutely. I am a big believer that coaching ought to be about questions to start with, anyway. And I completely agree that when we're doing it virtually that's even more true. And coaching is going to be easier if we can see each other. If at all possible, use a webcam. At a minimum, obviously, the phone. That will depend a little bit on the relationship between the two of you; the level of trust between the two people. In this medium where it's one to so many, that's an awfully good place to start. But the person who asked the question, you are heading in the right direction for sure. 100%.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. I think that will wrap up our Q&A for today, Kevin. I'll throw the ball back to you.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Hey, I got a few more slides. How about that everybody? The question would be what else? I just want to say this. That we ... And when I say we I mean HRDQU and we, the Kevin Eikenberry Group, are here to help. And I promised you several things. We're going to talk about them now. Here they go.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Here they are. Three things. We have a Covid-19 resource page that supports remote leaders in remote teams. I'm going to show you that in a second. The second thing is HRDQ is doing some amazing new stuff. Sarah's going to talk about that. And I want to tell you about a tool that you might find useful called 12 Weeks to Being a Remote Teammate. Let's talk about each of those three things.

Kevin Eikenberry:

The first one is our brand new website. The idea for this came on a Monday, on Monday the 16th. Wednesday afternoon the site went live. We're continuing to update it all the time. It is truly meant to be a source of support for you and your team. A couple things I mentioned today are in here. More on your webcam, more on those starting and ending the day routine stuff is all in here. What we've got is best practices, we've got tips, we've got articles, we've got audio, we've got lots of video, we've got other webinars that we're doing right now that will be in there complete, we've got all sorts of stuff that's there.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And we've got a dose of fun because we know that everyone right now has got to be figuring out how to live in this new world and so we're continuing to provide things to help us get a mental break, maybe the things we're going to do with our families. This just came out this morning; the dose of fun thing. There it is. KevinEikenberry.com/Covid-19. There's even a place there you can get a free consult with my colleague Wayne Turmel. You can get 30 minutes to talk about the specific issues in your organization that you're dealing with. You can get that. All that's there. There's even a place that we're starting a brand new way to give you updates from this page moving forward. You can sign up for that with a link there. It's all there. We did it with one purpose in mind and that's to provide people the resources and the support, both as leaders and as team members, to be more successful moving forward. That's the first thing.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Second thing, Sarah, tell them what you guys are doing.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes. Today's webinar was sponsored by HRDQ Consulting. Let us help you train virtually. You can learn more at the link you see below, which is www.HRDQ.com/consulting. And you can always reach out to our customer service team. They're really lovely over there. And make sure to continue to come back and check out more webinars that we have upcoming that will help you get through these trying times.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Awesome. The third thing that we want to share with you is something that we have created that ... We being Kevin Eikenberry Group ... That we call 12 Weeks to Being a Great Remote Teammate. I want to tell you what it is. It's a blended learning approach to helping people who are working remotely, including leaders because you're working remotely, too, be more successful. And you can see it's 12 weeks long. You can see the 12 weeks of what's in the content each week. It's a soup to nuts approach to helping us being more successful as an engaged, connected, remote teammate. Not an isolated individual, but a true remote teammate. There's a link down there that you can go to. But let me tell you a little bit more about it; how it actually works.

Kevin Eikenberry:

The way it actually works is that each week there's several pieces of video, there are tools and assessments that you get and each week, if you so choose, you can get a daily, what we call habit set, piece, which is a daily text message to remind you of what you're learning and applying that week. We take a mindset, skillset, habit set approach to all of this. But you may be saying, "Kevin, I don't want to wait. I want it all right away," and you want to binge-watch, so you can get it all on demand and get it immediately. And you can learn all about doing that. KevinEikenberry.com/HRDQ. And if you want to think about that more broadly for your organization, you can send us an email. We'd be happy to talk to you about all that. But this is a partnership between us and HRDQ to provide this opportunity to you. And if you find it of value, we'd love to have you join us.

Kevin Eikenberry:

The content was created by me and Wayne Turmel, who works with me, co-author of the book. And it's some of the stuff that's in the book that we're finishing right now that's coming out next January called *The Long-Distance Teammate*.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Why have Sarah and I been doing all of this with you? Well, because the world's new. Everything about us, around us, seems to be changed, probably isn't going to change back. The genie's out of the bottle. None of us know exactly what's going to happen long-term, but we're going to be where we're at for a while and maybe for a longer while. And even if the world goes back to normal, some of this isn't going to go away. And yet, the work still has to get done, doesn't it? It's got to get done. We got to get the work done.

Kevin Eikenberry:

And you've got enough stress and frustration already. That's why we came alongside you to help and we believe that you can do this. And so, let HRDQ and let us help you. There are the things that we said before. I've had several people today said that they're putting that resource page on some internal site in their organization. I would be honored if you would do that. I'm so proud of the work that my team has done this week to create that site and we're going to be continuing to update it pretty close to daily moving forward. And of course, all the great stuff that HRDQ is doing in terms of virtual learning, both webinars and more. And then, of course, if you're interested in that 12 weeks product, we are super proud of it and we'd love to talk to you about it. Take a look. Take a click, take a look. Rock and roll, right?

Kevin Eikenberry:

One last thing before we go. I can actually still move my slides. I've mentioned this book a couple of time ... So you can actually see ... I can see if you can see it. I've mentioned this book a couple of times. Here's the thing. If you go to LinkedIn and connect with me on LinkedIn, I'm going to put you in a drawing to win a copy and given as many people that are here, I'll probably give away three or four copies. And we'll put them in the actual mail to you. I will sign them, the people that win. If that's something that would be useful to you, connect with me on LinkedIn and you'll have the chance to win a copy. I'd be happy to share with you.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Sarah, we said we're going to go 90 minutes. We've gone 91 minutes and 25 seconds. I'm done.

Sarah Cirone:

Great.

Kevin Eikenberry:

It's all yours.

Sarah Cirone:

Thank you so much, Kevin. This was really a truly great session that we had today. And I want to thank you all for joining us and happy training.

Kevin Eikenberry:

Thanks, everybody.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:31:50]