

Fear Is a Liar, Hope Is a Muscle, and Gratitude Is a Lever

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Sometimes I say things.

“Speak for 5 minutes,” they said.

“What should I say?”

“Do what you do.”

So, I did this... at STFM's Conference on Medical Student Education last month.

Melissa says, “Five minutes.”

We're getting 5 minutes, so what we're going to do is this: I'm going to download 56 years of wisdom in 5 minutes. Good with that? Okay, so we'll start with “good morning.”

“Good morning.” There you go. “Stand.” Everyone stands up. “Okay, sit down if you've never had imposter syndrome,” I sit down on stage, and everyone laughs. As I get up and stand, I say, “Okay, now everyone else, you can sit down.”

Now, I've been told that the reason I don't have imposter syndrome is that imposter syndrome is generally in the fear of failure, and I was an 8-pound, 12-ounce forceps delivery breach birth. I failed at literally the first thing I was supposed to do. Anyhow, I don't use years, I use levels now. I'm level 56 because that sounds like experience points, and I dig that.

So, at level 56, this is what I've learned: fear is a liar, hope is a muscle, and gratitude is a lever. My leadership style is unconditional love and fear is lying to you. Impostor syndrome is you being complicit in your own oppression, and if you want to be there, fine. If you don't want to be there, come join us in abundance, because abundance is where we need to be right now. Scarcity has caused us to be polarized and make everyone else the other, including ourselves. Are you ready to step into abundance? I'll show you the path.

You follow fear, you go toward discomfort, and you realize that unconditional love is what makes it worthwhile. Hope, hope is a muscle that you can only use if you embrace it yourself.

Unconditional love is my leadership style; it's the way I lead myself, it's the way I'll lead you, and anytime you step into it, you join us because we have the ability to change the world, and it will

not change unless we participate.

So, you don't let that impostor in the room. That impostor is telling you can't change the world. That impostor is telling you have no ability to shape the world. That impostor is telling you that when you make a choice, it will end up badly. I don't care if it ends up badly; make the choice, and then adjust as indicated by the results and step into the next moment. Just do it.

We have no choice but to change. We are living at the most precarious time that you can imagine. We have a choice between utopia and a dystopian nightmare. That is where we are. No one gets to sit on the sidelines, and the best part about it is that you might be the one person who steps this way and allows us all to go forward. But if you don't make that step, you'll never know if you are that person. I believe you're that person, and I know why because I'm that person, and I am no better than you. I'm taller than some of you, I'm shorter than some of you; I'm definitely funnier than Chris!

But this is the thing, we all have something to give, and if we don't give it, if we don't give it all this year, if we don't give it all right now, we will never know what could have been.

Okay, are you ready to step into this next amazing era? Are you ready to make this next amazing era? Then you show up, and you make sure everyone around you shows up.

Do you want to see something really cool? Do you want to see what we can all do together? Do you want to do a cool thing? Ready for this? All right, stand up. Okay, this is what we're going to do.

You got to be ready. When I say “family,” you say “medicine.” You ready for that? When I say “family,” you say “medicine.”

“Family!”

“Medicine!”

“Family!”

“Medicine!”

“Family!”

“Medicine!”

“Now, scream!”

We're done.

That was the speech, 4 minutes, and 14 seconds. You can watch it here: https://youtu.be/5pRmp4so_EQ

What follows is my commentary on the thoughts in that speech.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, FEARLESSNESS, AND THE FUTURE

I'm here to share the wisdom I've accrued over 56 years, or rather, "levels," as I like to think of them. I always joke that my life's journey hasn't been easy or conventional; I was an 8-pound breech birth delivery. My first attempt at just being here was... well, a failure. But that experience set a tone that has followed me: I'm not afraid of failure.

So, here's what I've learned at level 56: fear is a liar, hope is a muscle, and gratitude is your most powerful tool, a lever. My leadership style, in life and all endeavors, is rooted in unconditional love. This sounds lofty, I know, but hear me out. You hate people you have never met, so well, I can love people I've never met. Fair is fair.

Imposter syndrome? That's fear lying to you, convincing you that you're not enough. That you're actively participating in your own oppression. Saying you are not good enough is lying to you about your own abundance. You have enough when you know you are enough.

If you want your abundance, then come join us in believing in abundance. Abundance is not about having or acquiring money or things. Abundance is about the feeling that there is enough to joyfully share. Abundance, not scarcity, is what we should strive for. Scarcity fuels division and hatred, including the hatred we direct toward ourselves. Are you ready for abundance? We can go together, you can even show others the way. Unconditional love.

Unconditional love isn't easy, but it rewards those courageous enough to embrace it. Follow fear toward discomfort, and you will see how that love makes the journey worth it. Hope—the belief that things can change—is a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes.

My leadership style starts with how I lead myself: with unconditional love. I'll lead you that way, too. If you choose to step into that space, know this: we have the potential to change the world. But change only comes when we actively participate.

Don't listen to the voice of the impostor, that voice of doubt that says you can't make a difference, that tells you your choices will always lead to failure. I don't care if the choice has a bad outcome; learn from it, adapt, and move forward. This is hard to do but sometimes, it is as simple as that.

Right now, we're on a precipice. Utopia or dystopia, it's our choice. Nobody gets to opt out. What's beautiful, what's terrifying, is that any one of us could hold the key that moves us all forward. We'll never know unless we try. I believe each of you has that potential, because I do, and I'm no different from you.

The key is to do the best you can with what you have. The changes we make today shape the choices we'll have tomorrow. Will you join me in shaping a better future? I know it's possible,

but we all must show up and encourage those around us to do the same. Are you ready to see what we can achieve together? I believe in you.