



Intention

Axel, my 9-year-old, eighty-pound son was recently play wrestling with Anastasia, my 4-year-old, forty-pound daughter. She ended up in the emergency room. As he quickly pointed out, “he didn’t *mean* to do it.”

Hate is a strong word. I HATE this statement.

It implies that because it wasn’t what he intended to happen, it is ok. “He didn’t *mean* to do it,” fosters a mindset that our choices are unrelated to the outcomes they produce and therefore, we are not responsible for them. Instead, we are simply victims of forces we don’t control.

Unfortunately, this mindset is not only instilled in young children by parents, but throughout their lives by others in positions of authority. As an example, our leaders in government take credit for the lives they saved during the pandemic for choosing to impose widespread economic shutdowns. Those same leaders then blame Covid for the economic hardship, and meteoric rise in physical, mental and drug abuse that were a by-product of their choices. I use this example to



neither agree nor disagree with Covid policy, but rather to further highlight that our society will not teach our children to take responsibility for their choices.

Darren Hardy, publisher of Success magazine and author of The Compound Effect, uses a metaphorical \$3 million dollars to explain that although we may all want immediate success, ultimate success is based on an aggregate of the choices we make every day, in all aspects of our lives. Mr. Hardy starts with a penny to represent those choices.

Although we may all want to be given the \$3 million dollars (i.e. attain immediate success and gratification), in actuality, we are given a penny that compounds for a 31-day month (the 31-day month is used metaphorically to represent a really long time). If we make good choices on Day 1, we have 1 penny. If we make good choices again on Day 2, that penny *compounds* and we have 2 pennies. On Day 3, it *compounds* again, and we have 4 pennies, then 8, then 16, then 32 etc.

Many people make good choices for short durations, and sometimes even a bit longer than that, but great choices for 10 days (i.e. a short to medium duration) is worth only \$5.12... and many people stop making those good choices. Positive change occurs the day we start making good choices, but it often takes a long time for us to see or feel a material difference. Therefore, after making New Year Resolutions, many people go to the gym in January and February but stop doing so by March. However, if we have been instilled with the belief that our choices are the genesis of *who* we ultimately become and *what* we ultimately achieve, we increase the chances that we will be disciplined enough to continue to make good choices for a long time even if we don't attain immediate success. Back to the penny, if we do make good choices for a long time (31 days), that penny compounds to \$10 million dollars (\$10,737,418.24 to be exact).

I know Axel "is *just* a child," but the lesson about the penny is one that every child should learn. The society in which they will grow up will not teach it. Instead, parents must do so. Teachers, coaches, and business executives must do so. Leaders must do so. Today, my son is nine years old, but as any parent will tell you, tomorrow (or what will *feel* like tomorrow), he will be nineteen and attending the Naval Academy (or enlisting in the Marine Corps if my indoctrination is successful). Regardless of the path he chooses, as I highlighted to him during our very direct and one way conversation after his sister and Mom left for the emergency room, I appreciate that he didn't *mean* for his sister to end up there, but she still did.

Today, we found out that she had Nursemaid's Elbow. Tomorrow though, when he is nineteen, he might not *mean* to kill himself or someone else if, as an example, he gets behind the wheel of a vehicle after drinking. The former would destroy our family. The latter would destroy someone



else's. In either scenario, no one would care if he *meant* for it to happen. Our choices lead to outcomes. Therefore, it is mission critical for his success in life that he take responsibility for his choices because everything that happens or fails to happen throughout his life will be a by-product of them.

There are benefits for making good choices; none greater than becoming the best version of ourselves, and there are consequences for poor ones; none worse than not becoming that ultimate version. Today, the consequence for his poor choices is the loss of an iPad. Tomorrow, at nineteen or thirty- nine, the consequences will be much more severe. As I explained to him, I love him too much for me not to do everything I can today to ensure he never has to experience those severe consequences tomorrow.

I will always love my son unconditionally, and because I do, I will raise my son to be a man. A man who takes responsibility for his choices and the outcomes that they produce for himself and for all the teams he will be privileged to be a part.

I challenge you to do the same. And let's do so with our daughters too!

Be a great teammate and a great team leader on all the teams that we are privileged to be a part.

Eric Kapitulik
Founder and CEO

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