



The following information contains Tom's personal notes and opinions/ key takeaways that he gained whilst reading 'Your Oxygen Mask First', and also valued statements and examples that Kevin N Lawrence has used in his writing.

YOUR OXYGEN MASK FIRST – KEVIN LAWRENCE

Find your sweet spot

- The things that energise you
- What you like(love) to do and do well at

Then how to you like to do it (environment)

Move toward spending 80% of your time in your sweet spot.

List 3 things you need to do more often

List 3 things you need to stop doing (or do less often)

Lick your toads

Toads – those tasks that are irritating and you procrastinate over because there is more important things to focus on.

Get your toads done early in the day so your energy is freed up for bigger and better things on your to do list.

To improve your team

1. Find the truth tellers – some people are wired to give you the awkward truth that you don't want to hear;
2. Handle honesty well
 - a. List 3 things I can do to continue to grow and improve
 - b. What should I start doing, or more often? Why?
 - c. What should I stop doing, or do less often? Why?
 - d. What should I do better, or differently? Why?



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Make yourself useless

Invest time in hiring, teaching, coaching, challenging and providing feedback. When you help people grow, they gain the confidence and skills to manage day to day business without you.

For you -this spells freedom. You will be able to spend your time on your company's big picture strategy and long term growth.

This seems obvious – but it is remarkable how often a leader get trapped handholding mediocre players. Sometimes because they hate hiring, so they'd rather live with the devils they know. Others let personal loyalty cloud better judgement.

No matter the reasoning, you'll be forever limited unless you do what it takes to surround yourself with A players who are *truly exceptional* in their fields, and a culture fit with your company.

People think A players are four leaf clovers, but that's not my experience. You just need elbow grease, and a proven hiring methodology to find the best of the best. Then it's your job to keep challenging them, and investing in their growth.

Believe you can have a full team of A players, then accept nothing less

To have any chance at Greatness a leader must have high performing, low maintenance teams.

Four steps to mastery

1. Pick your date (**my Useless date- my team will be so strong that I will be useless by:**) – set a date that is relatively soon – no more than 5 years from now. A longer term date won't inspire you to take meaningful action.
2. Honestly evaluate the performance of each team member



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		Performance	Performance
		LOW	HIGH
Culture Fit	HIGH	B	A
Culture Fit	LOW	C	TOXIC A

3. Live by the motto – ‘you have to be an A to stay’
 - a. This neither impossible of ruthless – it’s just common sense
 - b. A graders are your greatest assets – they produce more results than two or three B players, so invest what it takes to find and keep them
 - c. Don’t neglect them because they are so self-sufficient – A graders have two dangerous tendencies
 - i. Boredom – if you don’t hand them increasingly difficult challenges
 - ii. Overwhelm – won’t whine when they have exceeded their limit
Make them challenged but make sure it’s sustainable
4. Help your B Players become A players
 - a. Need confidence
 - b. Help them find their sweet spot
5. Quit making excuses for toxic A’s and stop hoping they will quit
6. Manage out the C’s
 - a. People get messed up putting too much energy into C players – diligently trying to help them improve – this is throwing good money after Bad- Don’t be soft.
 - b. Set them free so they can be an A player somewhere else
7. Fire compassionately.
 - a. Treat people fairly
 - b. Help people move on with dignity
 - c. Let them lead the story
 - d. Treat long term employees generously
 - e. Move quickly for their sake and yours
8. Be ruthless about hiring



People need to meet the standards

You cannot win if you accept mediocrity. So you need to be a bold, clear voice articulating what excellence looks like. This should be done kindly and respectfully.

Get your expectations out on the table early with everyone.

Tell people what you really expect and hold them to it without apology.



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