



Move the Average

In psychology, education, and organizational development, we spend an enormous amount of time studying those who fall below the average. Researchers identify deficits, diagnose gaps, and develop interventions to help people move toward the median. This work has tremendous value—it changes lives.

But as Everyday Leaders, perhaps we're asking only half of the question.

What if, instead of focusing primarily on helping people move *to* average, we focused on discovering those who consistently perform *above* average and moved the *average* toward *them*? That simple shift changes how we lead.

Statistics provide an interesting perspective. In a normal distribution—the legendary bell curve—approximately **68% fall within one standard deviation of the mean**, clustering around the average. Roughly **16% perform significantly above the mean**, while another **16% perform significantly below it**. The mean simply marks the center of the distribution, where performance tends to cluster.



But Everyday Leaders are not striving to become average. We are striving to become better every day. We understand that leadership is a making a journey of continual growth, not striving to achieve adequacy. Yesterday's best should become today's baseline.

For decades, psychology concentrated primarily on dysfunction— anxiety, depression, trauma, and other psychological aberrations. Then came the rise of **Positive Psychology**, pioneered by Martin Seligman and others, which asked a different question:

"What makes people flourish?"

Instead of focusing exclusively on what is wrong, researchers began studying what exceptional people do right. Research has consistently shown that people who intentionally build on their strengths experience greater engagement, resilience, well-being, and performance. The strongest organizations don't merely correct weaknesses—they intentionally multiply strengths.

That is exactly how Everyday Leaders should think.

Certainly, we should coach those who struggle. We should invest in helping everyone succeed. But we should spend just as much time studying the people who consistently elevate everyone around them.

- Who creates psychological safety?
- Who builds trust the most quickly?
- Who consistently helps others in their development?
- Who inspires people to become better?

Don't simply admire them—*Study* them. Learn their habits. Understand how they think. Observe how they communicate. Then challenge yourself tomorrow to become just a little more like them than you were today.

Because that's what Everyday Leaders do. We don't compare ourselves to others to determine our worth; we learn from others to accelerate our growth. Every interaction becomes an opportunity to improve. Every exceptional leader becomes a teacher. Every day becomes another chance to set the bar a little higher.

The greatest cultures are not built because everyone improves equally. They are built because excellence becomes contagious. As leaders, our responsibility isn't merely to pull people up from below average. Our responsibility is to continually redefine what "average" looks like. When we identify exceptional behaviors, practice them ourselves, and encourage others to do the same, the entire bell curve begins to shift. Yesterday's *extraordinary* becomes tomorrow's *expected*. Today's *excellence* becomes tomorrow's *average*.

That is the work of an Everyday Leader. Every day we strive to become just a little better than yesterday, and in doing so, we inspire others to do the same.

Don't let the average become your standard. Find the people who represent the very best of your culture, study them relentlessly, learn from them humbly, and commit to becoming just a little better every single day.

Because leadership isn't about managing the middle. It's about raising it—one person, one interaction, and one day at a time.

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kent Myers". Below the signature, the word "AUTHOR" is printed in a small, uppercase, sans-serif font.

Discussion and Challenge

1. What people in your life or organization consistently inspire you to become better?
What specific behaviors or mindsets could you intentionally adopt from them?
2. If someone were studying your leadership as an example of excellence, what habits would you hope they would emulate? What habit still needs the most growth?

Challenge

This week, make a conscious decision to stop measuring yourself against what is average and begin measuring yourself against what is possible.

Identify one person in your organization, your community, or your life who consistently demonstrates a leadership quality you admire. It may be the way they build trust, create psychological safety, communicate with compassion, hold others accountable, or inspire those around them. Instead of simply admiring them from a distance, become an apprentice of their leadership. Observe their actions. Ask questions. Learn what habits, attitudes, or disciplines have made them exceptional.

Then choose **one** behavior to intentionally practice every day this week. At the end of each day, ask yourself these two questions:

- **Was I better today than I was yesterday?**
- **What is one thing I will do even better tomorrow?**

Remember, Everyday Leadership is not about becoming perfect. It is about making the intentional choice to improve every single day. As you get better, you raise the expectations for those around you. Over time, what was once exceptional becomes the new standard.

Don't strive to fit within the bell curve. Strive to move it.

If you like this message, please visit the Everyday Leadership Library at
www.everydayleadershiplibrary.com

