

# Key-Note Speech: Kyle Thaller

Prince William County Global Leadership Conference

May 18, 2019

[Wait a few seconds to ensure pix is on screen before speaking]



Good morning!

(strong inflection

energy in this

greeting). Thank you

for giving me a few

minutes to share

some thoughts on Global Leadership. I live with Type-1

diabetes . . .or what is typically called "T1D",



and was diagnosed  
on April 27, 2015. All  
of us T1D's know the  
exact day we were  
diagnosed because

we would have otherwise died without the help of medicine.



**(pause)** I am alive and  
healthy because I inject  
insulin into my thigh or  
abs. That's about 4,000  
injections per year . . .  
every year . . . for the rest  
of my life **(pause)**.

**This experience gave me a growth mindset, and commitment to seeing my challenges as a journey. The more I am focused on moving forward in this journey, the more I started asking questions (pause); Like, “What can I do for my family? What can I do for my country? And, what can I do for**



**the world?”**

**Much of our society today is based on “What can I get?” and “What do I want?”. Instead, I think that we should be committing ourselves to a civic responsibility and**

**asking: “what can I give” and “how can I help?”.**

**(Strong emphasis on following)** I have been given a second chance in life . . . , and I'm resolved not to waste a

single minute. My Dad

has often told me:

“Live life as if there is

no tomorrow . . . and

always to be extremely



proud of everything you do . . . or don't even bother doing it.”

This is why I formed Kyle's Campaigns for Change . . . Or

KCC. **(brief pause)**



Kyle's Campaigns for Change

[KCC-T1D.com](http://KCC-T1D.com)

**Since forming KCC I have helped T1D clinics in Gulu and**

**Lira, Uganda**



**Now, I'm helping  
save T1D's in Sudan  
and South Sudan.**



So.... you may ask: (pause) “Why these areas?”



Well, . . . because most T1D children in these countries are rarely diagnosed. And so, . . . as a result of being undiagnosed, . . . they just die . . . (dramatic pause) as children.



For example, in South Sudan there are practically zero individuals with T1D, when there should be 15,000 to 30,000 T1D people.

What happened to all of the T1D's? Most died as children, never knowing that they had



T1D, . . . and so never grew up to be adults.

How am I doing all of these things? (inflection upward in voice as asking question) How can somebody in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade make a difference? (inflection upward in voice as asking

**question)** The answer is: I am a Global Citizen as well as a Globally Conscious Leader.

This sounds hard, but it's actually pretty simple when you have intention. Nelson Mandela is one of my biggest heroes,



and he showed the world that there are just a few key things to remember. As a

Global Leader I develop an open mind; I am mindful of my thinking to reduce implicit biases that . . . if left unchecked. . . can lead me to unintentionally stereotyping or prejudging people or situations.

I am also committed to creating a culture of learning for understanding global issues better and for promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

It sounds intimidating, doesn't it? (upward inflection in voice as asking question). Well, . . . it can be pretty simple.

You must:

- One . . .Keep an open mind (pause)
- Two . . . Don't pre-judge people or things (pause), and
- Three . . .Always work together rather than by yourself.

That's it!



Stories help me understand things better, so I'm going to share a few

stories with you. I was in Uganda in 2017 with my Dad to help T1D kids. We had a car driver take us to a week-long diabetes meeting in Gulu, which is a very rugged and dangerous part of Uganda.



The driver's name

was a man named Mr. Isaac. At first, I didn't think much of him because I had grown up in privilege compared to his impoverished (careful with enunciation) background.

I'm a pretty good student. (pause) I plan to go to college. (Pause) while Mr. Isaac never even graduated from high school . . . and was driving a car for his earnings. At first, I was afraid to even talk to him. However, I got to know him pretty well and learned that his work often takes him away from his

family for long periods of time. His job was also very dangerous since he often worked in the same region as the

infamous terrorist

and leader of the

Lord's Resistance

Army.... Joseph Kony,

Mr. Isaac was



risking his life with his job and placed his priorities on his children rather than on himself. He was so humble, yet so inspiring. So . . . I learned, first-hand the importance of not solely drawing a conclusion based solely upon my perceptions and physical appearances. Instead . . . I am committed to seeking an understanding of a person's action and character.

Next . . . another story. To lead, we must sincerely care about each other. For example, another one of my KCC

supporters, a man named Mr. Mustafa, is a powerful



businessman in

Khartoum, the capital of

Sudan. A few weeks ago,

Mr. Mustafa told me a

fantastic story. One day about ten years ago he went to a

pharmacy in Khartoum to pick up his own medicine when

suddenly, a man ran out of the store without paying the

pharmacist. The pharmacist said, “This happens all the time.”

The following day the man returned and said, “I’m sorry.

Please forgive me for stealing the medicine. I’m not a thief.

My son was sick and dying of Type-1 diabetes. He needed the

medicine immediately.”

Afterwards, Mr. Mustafa decided to leave a bag of money with the pharmacist to serve as a bank for people who

**can't afford the medicine. Mr. Mustafa now helps support a thousand or more T1D people in and around Khartoum.**



**When I told him of KCC and my efforts to help T1D's in South Sudan he immediately agreed**

**to help. Now . . . keep in mind that Mr. Mustafa is from Sudan and had never even been to South Sudan where he agreed to support KCC. Mr. Mustafa showed me that no matter how rich or poor we are, we are all human and we should all try to help each other.**

**Finally (pause) . . . to lead, we must also have courage and be fearless. For example, my mentor, friend and one of**



the earliest  
supporters of KCC  
is a woman named  
Ms. Rowa. She is  
from both Sudan

and South Sudan and previously managed a diabetes program  
in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Ms. Rowa now lives in



Washington, D.C. and  
has relentlessly  
promoted her  
opposition to

President Omar Bashir, Sudan's cruel dictator for the past 30  
years. As many of you may know, President Bashir was kicked  
out of office just last month. Ms. Rowa and her family have  
also been tirelessly (careful with enunciation) working to help

**the people of the Nuba Mountains. This Sudan region is**



**known for  
extreme violence  
and poverty.**

**Ms. Rowa's courageous humility is inspiring to me and so many others. Perhaps she will be President of Sudan someday. If I could, I would definitely vote for her. Why? **(Pause)**. Because what are we if we don't have honor? A leader must have the courage to do what's right, even if many disagree.**

**In closing, I would like to share with you a portion of a letter that I wrote to Congressman Robert Wittman in 2017, which is also very relevant to today's conference since I just**

met with Congressman Wittman yesterday (pause) . . . one-on-one, (pause) . . . at his office in the Capital.



Two years ago, I wrote:

*What does it mean to be a leader? Does it mean to lead*



*thousands of troops*

*into battle . . . like*

*Napoleon . . . or*

*Julius Caesar? I don't*

*know. What I do*

*know is that to be a leader and to do great things you have to*

*be like a coxswain in an 8-man rowing shell. The coxswain*

*steers the boat in the right direction. He also makes sure the*

*men are doing what they are supposed to do.*

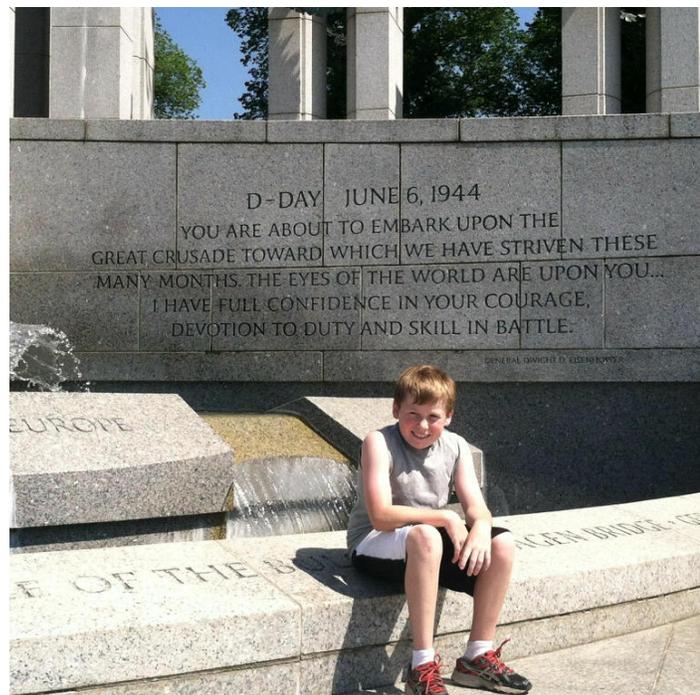
***But, . . . most importantly . . . the coxswain motivates***



***and inspires his team. So, Representative Wittman, I would like***

***to become a better leader so that I can inspire other Type-1 diabetics to never give up on their dreams.***

**And so today I am continuing my quest to be a global advocate and to connect the thread of humanity as a global thinker and leader:**



- **Just like Mr. Isaac, the courageous father, guide, and driver from Uganda;**
- **Just like Mr. Mustafa, the executive from Sudan with a heart of gold;**
- **Just like Ms. Rowa, my friend, mentor and opposition leader from Sudan and South Sudan;**
- **Just like the coxswain of an 8-man rowing crew, inspiring and leading his team;**
- **Just like so many other people from around the world that I know, respect and cherish.**



These people are part of my journey . . . **(pause)** . . . part



of the spark within me,

**(pause)** . . . igniting the

flame to help others find

their spark too.

**(Long Pause)** . . . Thank you very much.