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THE PAUSE PRINCIPLE:
Step Back to Lead Forward

By Kevin Cashman

The pace of work, the pressure to perform and the speed of our interconnected world have never been greater. The constantly wired, instantly reactive, multi-tasking, everything-coming-at-us-at-once world has stretched everyone to our limits, and we have begrudgingly accepted this as “the new normal.” But could it be that going faster and driving harder to keep up are not the answers? Is our dedication to speed and action actually counterproductive?

Bestselling author Kevin Cashman, who has 25 years of experience coaching CEOs and top executives, argues that a leader’s most powerful weapon against these crushing forces is the one thing they resist the most: pause. In his new book THE PAUSE PRINCIPLE: Step Back to Lead Forward (Berrett-Koehler; September 24, 2012), Cashman offers an antidote to our addiction to speed and transaction, replacing it with a conscious, intentional process of stepping back to consider and deliberate, and then lead forward with greater clarity, momentum, and impact. Rather than merely doing more, we must learn to pause—to reflect—and do things differently in order to grow, achieve and innovate. In the book, Cashman provides the reader with real tools and practices to make pause a pragmatic practice of deep, reflective inquiry for focused problem-solving, or a break to make space for new insights to emerge. All of these practices lead to purposeful change, and contribution, an essential part of a leader’s everyday life.

“In our fast-paced, achieve-more-now culture, the loss of pause potential is epidemic,” writes Cashman. “If leaders today do not step back, to stop momentum, to gain perspective, to transcend the immediacies of life, and to accelerate their leadership, we will continue to crash economically, personally and collectively.”

The author of the breakout bestseller Leadership From the Inside Out, Cashman has helped thousands of leaders around the globe to learn to pause in order to gain clarity, reconnect with purpose and drive performance. As founder and CEO of LeaderSource, ranked one of the top three firms in leadership development globally, he founded the Executive to Leader Institute, a “laboratory for pause.” In 2006, LeaderSource was acquired by the world-renowned Korn/Ferry International, where Cashman now serves as Senior Partner, CEO & Executive Development, advising CEOs and senior teams. He has founded the Chief Executive Institute—a comprehensive, integrated, globally delivered leadership development and coaching program for CEOs and CEO successors—and he has been ranked as a top 10 thought leader by Leadership Excellence magazine for several years.
Cashman’s work centers around one simple truth: that fast thinking is the domain of management transaction, while slow thinking is the leadership domain of strategic, innovative transformation. He believes every leader is on a journey from being a transaction-focused manager to an authentic leader that inspires real change. At the core of this transformation is the ability to pause. But for most, slowing down to drive performance is counter to instinct, especially when they have thus far been rewarded for speed and action. But stepping forward to act, particularly in complex situations, without first stepping back for information, clarity, and connection to what is most important can be disastrous.

In **THE PAUSE PRINCIPLE**, Cashman argues that pausing to gain fresh perspective and transcend immediacies is the key to leadership excellence in today’s complex world that won’t slow down. He draws on real-life business case studies, a variety of current research sources, CEO and executive interviews, and personal stories to illustrate the profound impact of pausing – with examples from Novartis, Interface, and General Mills to firefighters, the city of São Paulo, Steve Jobs and Albert Einstein. These examples illustrate how pause powers purposeful performance and growth in the three critical areas of leadership:

- **Grow Oneself**: Pause to grow to the next level of personal leadership through self-awareness, character, and purpose. This is an inside-out process of growing the whole person to grow the authentic leader.

- **Grow Others**: The real measure of leadership is the character and quality of the people the leader and the organization produces. By pausing to develop others, a leader will derive great energy and fulfillment from seeing the next generation, and the organization, succeed.

- **Grow Cultures of Innovation**: Growth in the first two areas provides the foundation for a culture of continuous growth, creativity and innovation. Most organizations have no lack of hyperactivity, but they are often sorely lacking in transformative thinking. By establishing a culture that values the power of pause, organizations will be better positioned to capitalize on the forces and ideas that point toward new ways forward.

This growth is an inside-out and outside-in process of transformation beginning with the self, moving to others, and then to cultures of innovation. Cashman applies this “pause and grow” approach to each critical area, and uses Seven Pause Practices as a framework for guiding a leader’s mindset and behavior in each area (see attached). These principles and framework will afford leaders more examination, higher-order logic, rational analysis, more profound questioning, deeper listening, higher-quality presence, broader perspective, greater openness to diverse thinking and input, and ultimately more impactful, influential and innovative action.

By learning when, why, and how to step back, leaders will gain their innate power to go to the higher levels. Pause powers purposeful performance. With **THE PAUSE PRINCIPLE**, management speed and transaction can become leadership significance and transformation.
About Kevin Cashman

Over the past 25 years, Kevin Cashman has been involved in coaching and developing thousands of senior executives and senior teams in more than 60 countries. He is recognized as a pioneer in leadership development and executive coaching, focusing on optimizing executive, team, and organizational performance. He was recently named one of the top ten thought leaders by Leadership Excellence magazine.

Mr. Cashman joined Korn/Ferry in 2006 via its acquisition of LeaderSource, a firm he founded and was ranked as one of the top three in leadership development globally. Between 2006 and 2008, Korn/Ferry, LeaderSource, Lominger International, and Lore International joined forces to create a premier global leadership and talent consulting practice.

Mr. Cashman is also the founder of the Executive to Leader Institute®, an interdisciplinary approach to leadership development and executive coaching, and Chief Executive Institute®, a comprehensive, integrated, globally delivered leadership development and coaching program for CEOs and CEO successors.

Mr. Cashman is the author of five books on leadership and career development. His breakout bestseller, Leadership from the Inside Out, was named the #1 best-selling business book of 2000 by 800-CEO-READ and was also named one of the top twenty best-selling business books of the decade. He has written numerous articles and papers on leadership and career management, and has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, Chief Executive, Human Resource Executive, Fast Company, Strategy & Leadership, Oprah, CNN, National Public Radio, and other national media. Mr. Cashman was formerly the host of CareerTalk radio, and is currently a leadership columnist for Forbes.com.

A frequent keynote speaker at conferences and corporate events, Mr. Cashman is a senior fellow of the Caux Roundtable, a global consortium of CEOs dedicated to enhancing principle-based leadership internationally. He is also a board member for the Center for Ethical Business Cultures fostering ethical leadership in corporations. Mr. Cashman earned a degree in psychology from St. John’s University.
Advance Praise for THE PAUSE PRINCIPLE

“To thrive and to innovate in today’s complex, globally connected world, leaders need sophisticated ways to step back to understand what they are facing within and outside themselves. The Pause Principle provides pragmatic resources for making the critical move from management efficiency to leadership excellence.”

—Daniel Vasella, MD, Chairman, Novartis

“Effective leaders would do well to pause and absorb the wisdom that Cashman imparts in this profound book. The Pause Principle demonstrates why creative pauses are an absolutely essential ingredient for clearer, more innovative leadership in today’s increasingly dynamic, warp-speed world.”

—Paul A. Laudicina, Chairman and Managing Partner, AT Kearney, and author of Beating the Global Odds

“Kevin Cashman’s latest must-read book focuses on the essence of leadership: being consciously reflective before we act. Incorporating Cashman’s ideas into your daily practices will transform you as a leader.”

—Bill George, author of True North; Professor, Harvard Business School; and former Chairman and CEO, Medtronic

“Leaders, like so many others, are suffering from hurry sickness—always going somewhere, never being anywhere. The Pause Principle is just the right prescription for slowing down, listening, and getting the clarity needed to lead in deep connection with vision and purpose.”

—Richard Leider, founder and Chairman, The Inventure Group, and bestselling author of Repacking Your Bags and The Power of Purpose

“Here a veteran coach shares his long experience to help busy executives deal with the question, In my rush for success, how do I help my soul to breathe and my mind to renew? His answer echoes an ancient tradition: withdraw and return; reflect and act. I recommend this book wholeheartedly to everyone who is trying to lead a better life.”

—Dick Bolles, author of the bestselling career management book of all time, What Color Is Your Parachute?

“Of the thousands writing leadership books, Kevin Cashman hits the mark. In their quest for speed and efficiency, many leaders fail to pause and ponder, losing perspective, performance capability, and the ability to sustain operations as a consequence. Cashman coaches leaders from madness to sanity, then to wisdom, wealth, and self-worth—the new triple bottom line.”

—Ken Shelton, CEO and Editor, Leadership Excellence
“Leadership is a continual process of stepping back to get new perspectives in order to step forward with greater innovation and impact. Cashman captures the essence of leading in our dynamic, global marketplace.”

—Paul Walsh, CEO, Diageo plc, and former Chairman and CEO, The Pillsbury Company

“Cashman has cut through the leadership clutter and found the essence of elevating leadership excellence: pause to perform, pause to be on purpose, pause to innovate. It has freed me to make better decisions, push boundaries further, and be more present to myself and with my team.”

—Dr. Deborah Dunsire, CEO, Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company

“Leave it to Kevin Cashman to challenge us to stop…to dig deeper for purpose and relational connection, to journey beyond the limits of the known to the unknown, to bring more of our leadership potential forward. If you think pause is for the fainthearted, think again. Pause is for the brave-hearted, fearless, most innovative leaders.”

—Karen Kimsey-House, cofounder and CEO, The Coaches Training Institute, and coauthor of Co-Active Coaching

“As we’ve come to expect, Kevin Cashman has once again given us a fresh new way of looking at leadership. In this particular case, he’s produced a primer on the principle of ‘pause.’ And more than just telling us why it matters, Cashman clearly shows us how we can apply this powerful and effective tool to help move our organizations forward.”

—David Shadovitz, Editor and Publisher, Human Resource Executive

“Leadership is tough, but with Cashman’s The Pause Principle, you can make it a lot easier and more impactful. Get this book to sort through the leadership smog with clarity, purpose, and innovation!”

—Michael Paxton, Chairman, Transport America, and former CEO, Chamilia and Häagen Dazs

“Grab this book, pull up a chair, and spend some quality time you deserve with one of the best executive coaches out there today. Kevin Cashman’s The Pause Principle delivers the wisdom we all need in this crazy, fast-paced world. You’ll find your time with Cashman reaffirming, energizing, and rewarding.”

—Kevin D. Wilde, Chief Learning Officer, General Mills, and author of Dancing with the Talent Stars
The Seven Pause Practices

Based on extensive interviews and an analysis of a multitude of research and case studies, Kevin Cashman isolated Seven Pause Practices that support the Pause Principle: Step Back to Lead Forward.

1. Be On-Purpose
   Purpose gives context, drive, and meaning to personal growth, talent growth, and growth of innovation. Purpose shakes the dust off of the everyday fabric of management, revealing the interwoven patterns of leadership, meaning and service. Purpose may be the most important, most far-reaching, transformative pause of all.

2. Question and Listen
   Questions are the probing language of pause, forcing us to step back, reframe, re-vision, and reconsider. Listening is the receptive language of pause. In balance, questioning and listening create an incubator for growing clarity out of complexity; it is during the silent pause that the soul of transformative learning takes place.

3. Risk Experimentation
   Leaders create the future through intelligent experimentation. As innovative leaders, we must have the confidence and self-trust to repeatedly risk failure, the courage and openness to absorb hard-earned learning, and the endurance to eventually break through.

4. Reflect and Synthesize
   As leaders, we tend to over-analyze, under-reflect and under-synthesize. Great leaders take adequate time for analysis, reflection, and synthesizing to discover more forward-thinking solutions. The greater the complexity, the deeper the reflective pause required to convert the complex and ambiguous to the clear and meaningful. Pause helps us to move from the transactive to the transformative.

5. Consider Inside-Out and Outside-In Dynamics
   Pause is a holistic, integrated process of considering dynamic forces within us and outside of us. The more we pause to consider both internal and external forces and information, the more potential personal insight, talent insight and strategic insight available.

6. Foster Generativity
   A generative leader pauses to prepare the next generation, more than he or she pauses for personal success – fostering a rich atmosphere for human potential to flourish. The true measure of your leadership will not turn out to be your great achievements, but the number of great leaders you turn out.

7. Be Authentic
   Managers build dependability through accuracy; leaders build credibility through authenticity. Pausing to be more authentic with ourselves, with our people and with what we aspire to create is critical to enduring value.

Adapted from THE PAUSE PRINCIPLE by Kevin Cashman, Berrett-Koehler, 2012.
An interview with Kevin Cashman, author of THE PAUSE PRINCIPLE

Q: What inspired you to write this book?
A: Our world today suffers from an epidemic of “hurry sickness.” Increasingly, we are going everywhere but being nowhere. We are moving faster and faster, but for often without a clear purpose. We trade speed for significance and performance for purpose, but at what costs? Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “Busy? The ants are busy.” The question we need to ask is, “Busy for what purpose?” The inspiration for writing The Pause Principle was to bring more authenticity and purpose to our leadership and our lives in order to balance our hyperactive, non-sustainable, busy-ness culture.

Q: You have worked in the leadership space for decades, becoming a widely recognized thought leader in the process. What led you to focus on pause as a critical characteristic of leadership?
A: Paradoxically, pause powers purposeful performance. From observing, assessing, and coaching thousands of senior leaders around the globe for the last 30 years, one critical differentiating characteristic became apparent. Those leaders who stepped back, who practiced intentional reflection, had better self-awareness, better listening and coaching skills, and tended to make better personal, interpersonal, and business breakthroughs. In my work with senior leaders, I noticed that nearly all breakthroughs were preceded by some type of pause-through. An assessment, some feedback, a new strategy, or a boundary-breaking innovation was all born after some type of pause. Pause is the human mechanism for going deep to synthesize and emerging with insight and clarity.

Q: What are the core differences between effective managers and exceptional leaders?
A: Effective managers focus on speed and transaction, while exceptional leaders focus on significance and transformation. Effective managers seek control and process, while exceptional leaders seek contribution and meaningful purpose. At its core management is about content, and leaders is about deeper, broader context. Pause is the conscious, intentional process to move from control, content, and speed to the higher order principles of contribution, context, and significance. The mechanism, the way to elevate our leadership, is paradoxically to step back from the hyperactive fray to see the bigger picture within us, in relationship with others, and within our marketplace. The leaders who pause to breakthrough thrive in today’s volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous world.

Q: Can you explain the connection between pause and innovation?
A: Innovation, by definition, requires stepping back from and stepping out of the status quo. Great innovators deeply question the way things are in order to probe new perspectives, new realities. The process of pausing to question, pausing to listen, pausing to synthesize new realities is the essence of innovative breakthrough. However, innovation is not just an external process. The fire of innovation is lit with self-innovation, burns with the innovation of others, and is sustained in truly innovative cultures. In our book, we show how a great scientist like Einstein was a pause expert, sometimes germinating breakthroughs for as long as 10 years, and how contemporary innovators, like Steve Jobs, leveraged breakthroughs and their impact as innovations by pausing for deep purpose. We also explore how to create more innovative cultures by emphasizing the compelling nature of curiosity, questioning, collaborating, risk-taking, and connecting to purpose to propel us beyond the assumptions
and limits of the status quo. In today’s world, there may be no more important skill than stepping back to innovate forward; innovation is the new leadership.

**Q: Will you tell us about the Pause Sanctuary in your home?**

**A:** After an exceptionally demanding time in our lives, personally and professionally, Soraya, my spouse, and I built a sanctuary—a place to retreat, meditate, write, read, and reflect in our house. It is a very beautiful space with carved wooden doors from India and other relics that remind us of great sages of pause from the past. Our houses had living room, bedrooms, family rooms, dining rooms, but none ever had a pause room. So, now we have a place to reflect, to go deep, and to intentionally connect. In many ways, this dedication to pause and perspective saved our lives, reminded us what was important, and we re-established more balance and resilience in our lives.

**Q: In your work internationally, have you found the practice of pause or its relevance different in other countries or cultures?**

**A:** I wish I could say that after being in over 60 countries certain cultures have mastered the practice of pause. But, in today’s globally connected, fast-paced, hyperactive world, most cultures suffer from the same “hurry sickness epidemic.” Even in cultures many would consider more pause-practiced, like Asia…Japan in particular, in general, the people in these countries are also more caught up by speed than reflection. As the world quickly moves to embrace new, faster technologies, it would be advisable to adopt The Pause Principle to sustain our pause with purpose and contribution.

**Q: What is your advice to people in organizations with demanding speed and action as part of the culture?**

**A:** Meet the demands of speed and action with about 80% of your time and energy. Then consciously step back and embrace the most important, the most complex part of your job with about 20% of pauseful, deep reflective time and energy. During this time, engage other colleagues collaboratively to break through with probing questions: What do we see? What might be possible if we did x, y, or z? What if we did this or that? What if we saw this through the customers’ eyes? What if we considered the environmental and community impact? Why are we doing this? What might be possible if we saw our product and our organization with new eyes? Demanding cultures do want results, and paradoxically, pause powers performance. Pause powers results. Use it to show how to transform the status quo and maybe, just maybe, your hyperactive, demanding culture will come to appreciate some new approaches to performance and innovation. The Pause Principle is not about slowing down speed or demands; it is about consciously stepping back to find better ways to grow ourselves, others, and cultures of innovation. Like and archer, the more forcefully we pull back the bow, the more dynamic and powerful the shot. The purpose of pause is to step forward with greater impact, sustainability, resilience, creativity, and authenticity.