

emerge ONE

Intro - What is emerge all about?

Before I can talk about emerge ONE, I must first discuss emerge. If you've read my book, I presume you already know what emerge is all about. Thus, you may skip this section if you want to. For the rest who haven't read emerge, or who like a good story, allow me to go down memory lane.

My wife and I were college leaders in the 1980's. We were both involved in the leadership of campus groups. After college, we did not feel God was calling us to go on staff. So, we tried to find a place to fit in the local church. Unfortunately, they didn't exactly know what to do with us. Neither did we. We ended up drifting along for roughly fifteen years. Worse yet, as we looked around at our fellow college leaders – those who we could keep in touch with, we found that our plight was typical. Very few actually found or invented a dynamic ministry after college.

Then, we started mentoring a couple of college student leaders. Their hunger for personal attention was evident. Their desire to be poured into was strong. And their ability to pass on what they were learning from us was amazing. We didn't want them to get lost like we had.

So, we started with one student each. This grew fairly quickly, since they recruited their fellow leaders for us. LEAD Team was launched as a ministry to meet this group of leaders in a community of leaders. So, yes, while this thing was moving, we were inventing the teaching that was most impactful, and handing it out right off the assembly line.

After several years, most of that curriculum and process was firming up pretty well. Kristi and I were living in our sweet spot. That is when the vision

actually started to grow. As fun and awesome as it is to be in a front lines ministry like we were, the dream expanded into many LEAD Teams. We started to ask ourselves, "What if LEAD Team was not just a Ken and Kristi thing?" At that time the formula was locked in my head. The teachings were hand written in my journals – in bullet form. And the vision was not easily communicated.

Eventually I felt the calling was clear and the timing was right to author a book. Emerge, Equipping College Leaders to Continue a Life of Vision and Purpose is that book. The first seven chapters are the main teaching subjects of LEAD Team. The last two are the formula that we use to direct our LEAD Team. So, my hope is that anybody could follow our formula and direct their own LEAD Team. If you haven't read emerge yet, and you want to impact student leaders, I'd advise that you get a copy from Amazon and give it a try.

How does Emerge ONE fit in the equation?

Emerge ONE is meant to be a companion to the book emerge. Emerge gives the formula for directing a LEAD Team. However, I suspect that there are lots of people who would like help emerging college leaders transition well, but only have the capacity for one student. The time commitment for directing a LEAD Team is quite high, on typical lay leader terms. And even if someone DID have the capacity to direct an entire LEAD Team like Kristi and I do, they are still likely going to start small – with one student – just like we did.

So, in short, I wish this material were squished in between chapters seven and eight of the book. But, there's lots of material I wish would have fit. Thankfully, I can continue to develop that material and make it available on my web site, KenJibben.com.

Chapter 1 - Are you ready to do this?

Believe it or not, I think the first step for launching a ministry is to take a good long look in the mirror. This section has some hard questions. I hope you don't find this section discouraging. Please pick just one area to begin work on.

How are you doing with personal devotion?

We all have life happen to us at times. We all have bad habits we want to break, and good habits we want to establish. But let me remind you that if you are hearing daily from the Master, that He will give you wisdom that you don't have. Pretzel-like problems are not problems to God. You need that source if you are going to really impact student leaders. Besides that, if your walk is not close with Jesus, you are missing out big time. So, let me encourage you to improve that walk just a little bit today. You can improve it a little bit tomorrow too, but let tomorrow worry about that.

Are you well read?

There are tons of amazing books on leadership development. I'd encourage you to read some if you haven't already. Probably, they can help you to avoid re-inventing the wheel. Also, they should encourage you to grow as a leader and see the leadership potential in others. People love it when you see their potential!

How about your commitments?

Kristi and I could do other ministries in the local church while we were meeting with just one student. However, after LEAD Team was launched, those other things had to be cut back. Kristi was on worship team. I was involved in men's ministries. And Kristi was directing women's ministries. It wasn't easy at first, but he had to step down, and we had to continue to say no to things we really wanted to do.

I'd like to encourage you that this is OK. Most churches have a small minority that do all the volunteer work. By serving too much, you are taking an opportunity from someone else. And no, it really doesn't matter if you can do it better than everybody else.

Do you think of yourself as a leader?

There are many different sorts of leaders. Those who draw their sword and holler – “I’m taking that hill, who’s with me!” are just one type. I didn’t actually think of myself as a leader when LEAD Team was launched. However, I started to think differently after a year or two, It makes sense that I should learn what God has called me to, and that I should cast that vision to others. I encourage you to ask God to show you how He has uniquely gifted you as a leader. You may be surprised. Also, you will find it easier to relate to the student leaders.

What is your vision?

Vision goes hand in hand with leadership. Leadership development is a core value of my vision. I know it takes work to discover your calling. I’ve been there. If you cannot say it in a sentence, perhaps you will be able to as you continue to develop as a leader. Being around other leaders is a great influence. So, if God is placing it on your heart to influence emerging college leaders, I’d encourage you to go for it, even if you know your own vision is a work in progress.

Are you fortified against attack?

There is an enemy out there who wants to steal, kill and destroy your life. There are also a collection of spiritual armor. Don’t be surprised when strange stuff starts to happen – physical problems, old habits return, or dormant relationship issues flair up. I’m sorry to say that you’ll have to work through them. But don’t give up. Raise your shield of faith – remember that Jesus loves you, died for you, has saved you, and that He is in control.

How’s your emotional wellness?

If you start to mentor student leaders, probably some emotional issues will come up. This could be taxing on your own emotional wellness. Although it is true that a “I’ve been there too, and you will make it” sort of story is exceedingly powerful, if you’re not really sure if you have “made it” or not yet, it can be discouraging. This has happened to me dozens of times. I have realized that the advice that I need has just come out my mouth aimed at one of the student leaders who has enough courage to face it. Ouch.

Let me encourage you that when this happens, that this is an amazing gift from God. Somehow, we tend to forget what we have learned. The

temptation to drift is very compelling as the waters of life are rushing past us. These little wake-up calls are there to remind us to let go of that weight – that thing that is holding us back. It's pretty hard to give someone else good, Biblical advice and then ignore it in our own lives. And that's a good thing.

Chapter 2 - Recruiting

When I tell people about LEAD Team, the most common question is, "Where did you get the students?" It is true that a leader must be able to recruit. It is also true that recruiting isn't exactly my strong suit. So, here are some ideas that I have learned over the years.

The campus staff – your best buddy

You must have a good working relationship with the campus staff that are on your campus. If they go to your church, that's good. If you financially support them, that's good too. However, if you have a genuine love for the student leaders, that's the cat's meow. The reason this is so powerful is that the campus staff have that same love. Sharing a passion with someone has an amazing ability to unite people, and I haven't met a campus staff member yet who didn't love their student leaders.

Now, even though this shared love is disarming, I must warn you of a very real pain that many campus staff have encountered. That pain is the pain of investing in someone, having hopes for their impact and continued investment, and then seeing that hope dashed when their leaders are recruited by someone else. This is sort of a parental pain, and I wouldn't blame a campus staff member for feeling this way – even if they know God called one of their student leaders another direction.

That said, you must respect their world. And you must be true to your word. Perhaps you can even help some of the student leaders raise their support for an internship with the campus organization. This would be huge for them.

So, assuming you have at least some degree of trust with the campus staff, you could ask them for student leaders that are graduating, or perhaps have already graduated, that they would recommend. Or perhaps you could request permission to attend their weekly meeting to try and build relationships with some of their leaders. It would be excellent if they would make introductions for you.

What if you're not in a campus town?

I've gotten this question lots of times. Actually, it tends to be more of a statement. I realize that there are lots of cities that do not have a university or college near by. I'd encourage you to take a look in your

local church. Are there any young adults attending? Perhaps there is a singles ministry. Maybe there are other Christian ministries in your town that have young servants. Or, perhaps there are senior high students that have recently graduated, and tend to come home on weekends. Ask God to show you where the harvest is plentiful.

How do you smell?

OK - this is an awkward subject... I can't actually think of a nice way to say it, but I'll try. If you are recruiting people, your persona is a powerful marketing tool - what you wear, how you look, your style, even cleanliness. If you get mad at me now and stomp off... sorry. But those things aren't really you, they are just habits you have grown used to. Maybe you're hip and up with the trends - good for you. But if you want to impact a younger generation, be prepared to let go of a few things that might be getting in the way. One of my friends actually threw away a perfectly good 15 year old pair of glasses. He said that whenever he put them on, the conversation would just stop, and the student leader would get a glazed look. Maybe you should get a haircut that you didn't have when YOU were in college. I actually use jell in my hair... sometimes... BLAH! Young people love to play sports. I did when I was their age too. What would it take to get your body to the point where you can enjoy sports again? It's SO worth it! Let me encourage you that you can do this.

Invest in one - that one will recruit for you

I'll admit that when we launched LEAD Team that most of our recruiting, OK, so ALL of our recruiting was done by the two student leaders that we were meeting with - Matt & Sarah. I truly did wonder what would happen when they moved on. But as it happened, each year there was word of mouth from the graduates as to who should be on LEAD Team for the next year.

You will probably have to be intentional, though. Ask for references for the next year. If the people you are impacting are leaving town, they will probably want that somebody else to benefit as they have. You can ask to be introduced to those that are recommended. I've found that students will seldom turn down a free lunch - but make it a yummy place... not fast food. It doesn't have to be expensive, though.

Chapter 3 - Curriculum

This is a great subject because the answer is so easy. My book, *emerge*, is designed to be a flexible resource. You could use it to do mentoring – go through one chapter every meeting or two. Or, you could use it as the materials of a small group. Or, you could learn the materials and then teach it in a mentoring situation or even small group setting. The materials are that flexible. Furthermore there are additional materials on KenJibben.com that you can add to supplement the teaching in the book.

However, I'm equally excited about the potential of you adapting *emerge* or even inventing your own. I met with a youth leader who noticed that the transition subjects of the book are exactly opposite from high school to college as they are from college to the real world. In high school, student leaders go from very high structure to no structure. That's a huge transition. College grads go from no structure back to the structure of a working world. So, even though the transitions are the opposite direction, they are transitions none the less.

Furthermore, my friend noted that by January of their senior year in high school, his students, even the leaders, are checking out. They are divesting from the youth group experience. This exact same thing happens to many student leaders in campus ministry. So, he started asking the question – "How do I become part of that transition, rather than an observer on the sidelines?"

I love this sort of thing! This is thinking about the problem in a new way. Think differently! He is adapting my materials to a world that they were not created for. That's awesome!

Chapter 4 - Getting your church involved

Perhaps you have witnessed this. Perhaps this even happened to you. But I've seen it enough to conclude that it is fairly common, though tragic. It happens like this.

First God starts to move in the heart of a lay leader in a church. They start to develop a vision – If only this were different! They might even start to strategize on HOW it might be different. "If only we could meet the needs of these people in our community." Or, "We can reach this people group if only we..." Or even, "The church SHOULD care about this problem in society!"

Next, they bring this to church leadership – sometimes officially, but often sort of off the cuff. They might even waylay church meetings by passionately expressing their burden.

Finally, the grim reality sets in. Their local church is not going to get behind them in this vision. The church will not give them the leaders to make it happen. Sometimes they get sullen. Sometimes they leave the church. Sometimes they bide their time and assert their calling again, and get the same result.

I say this is tragic because there is a misplaced expectation on what the local church is supposed to do in these cases. God is moving in someone's heart. However, the new-born leader misunderstands what step two should be. They think that the local church should "do something about it." But probably God is calling that new leader to do something about it.

So, step two should be, find some way to live the vision for a while – like two to five years, or even ten. Discover how to meet those needs with the resources that God has given you. Perhaps you can find others with the same passion, and/or raise up some of your own leaders with the same passion.

Then step three is to notify your local church of the great things God is doing in their body. Produce success stories first. Then offer this to the church as their success too, since you are part of them.

So, I say to you, if you plan to invest in emerging college leaders that you will probably not turn many heads in your local church. Stay low key for a while. Let the leaders you mentor start to bless the local church. Don't toot your own horn. God will make that happen when He wants to.

Conclusion – God’s blessings to you

Let me say that I am not just trying to sell books. I am trying to be part of a movement that will change our world. There are many, many others that long for the same thing! I haven’t met a campus staff member yet who didn’t care about their alumni. I haven’t met a church staff member yet who said that they have all the leaders they need.

If you desire to impact emerging college leaders for the Kingdom, God’s blessings to you!