How To Form A Mastermind Group

Terry Gibbs

Interviews

Kevin Moriarty

Terry: Hi, this is Terry Gibbs. Today, I'm here with Kevin Moriarty. We're going to discuss forming a mastermind group.

Joining a mastermind group is a great way to improve the results of any business. Optimally, a mastermind group is a place to share ideas, get encouragement, feedback, and learn from others.

Before we get started, I'm going to have Kevin introduce himself. How are you doing today, Kevin?

Kevin: Doing very well. Thank you, Terry. I've been in business online for about 7 years before I started my internet businesses. I have 22 websites, selling a variety of products.

Before that, I was a manager at Revlon, making the makeup. So, if you need to know how to make mascara or anything like that, I can fill you in on the secrets, and lipstick.

After that, I became a computer contractor.

And after that, I became an instructor for computers, and I've taught, in person, thousands of people how to use their computer, how to do Excel, Word, Visual Basic, and a bunch of other stuff. And I enjoyed that a lot, and I decided to go ahead and start my own internet business around 2000, and I've been doing that since then, making mostly online video tutorials for products.

I've also made e-books and audio books and a variety of other things. But I've found that masterminds have been instrumental in my success. It's faster, it's easier. When you have your own business, it's really hard to talk to other people who don't. It functions as a good support network, to get you over your fears or self-imposed constraints that you might have.

Terry: That's one of the biggest things in my business and the success of my business, is I found myself, when I first started my business, being surrounded by people who were – to keep it polite – wage slaves. They didn't understand what I was doing. They didn't understand the vision that I was working under or the goals that I was moving towards. And I got a lot of pressure from them, that you should go get a job.

I have a degree in economics, so I should be working at a bank or something.

By going out and meeting other like-minded people, people who are running their own businesses, people who are doing things like I did, I was able to overcome

pressure from my family and also learn the skills and the tools that I need to success in my business.

Kevin: I've found that's true. It's a different way of thinking. When I first started my business, I had the same experience. Initially, I didn't understand. I would be explaining what I'm working on, and people couldn't understand it because they weren't business owners. They didn't understand that your motivation, your perspective, the actions that you take will determine the success of your business. And those will are all tied together.

So, the people that you're around and interacting with, asking opinions of, have to be similar to you and focused on business success. And when you do that, you get a lot of positive energy and things happen. And when you try to do it with people, you try to talk about business, it's like you're speaking a foreign language to them. They just don't get it. So, they fall back on what they were raised in and what their habits are.

In the olden days, I guess it was go to work, work for 30 years, and then retire. Now, it's go to work, maybe you're going to get fired.

I think that model is dead, to a large extent. You have to look out for yourself. And a good way to do that is to have different avenue of income.

Terry: Before we get started, let's define a mastermind group. What is the mastermind, the whole genesis of it? What's it about?

Kevin: You can have a variety of mastermind groups, so I'll cover it from one perspective, initially.

A mastermind group is essentially, a small group of people. It can be one person. It can be 5 to 7 people. It could be bigger. But generally, 5 to 7 people that are all dedicated to a specific goal. Each person can have a different goal in the group.

And remember, there's a lot of different types, but I'll just give you one example of one.

Let's say you have an internet marketing mastermind group, and everybody there is just starting out their business and they want to specialize in a certain area. Let's say eBay and Ad Words and organic search engine rankings. So, you want to be able to get your website popular. They meet on a regular basis to help share resources, insight and support.

For a mastermind group to work, there's really only 2 main things that have to happen. One, there has to be chemistry between all of the people involved there, between each of the people. That's number one.

You have to be able to respect the person. If you don't have that chemistry, then they won't work together well. You have to have that energy.

The other thing is that each person has to be able to make a significant, positive contribution to each of the other persons' success.

There's a lot of other details in there, but those are the 2 main things. If you've got that chemistry, you've got that energy when you interact with it, and you know there's certain people that bring out the best in you, that's one of the things that happens.

The other thing is that they have insights or expertise or something, so that when they bring out the best in you with the chemistry, they're able to offer specific suggestions for your problems. You can come in there, "I have this problem. Anybody have any ideas?" Boom, they've had an experience with it or they have ideas that will help you get over that problem.

Part of that's emotional, like "I'm afraid of this" or "I'm not sure what to do about that." Part of it is specific, technical knowledge.

Terry: So, this is really about people joining together in order to improve themselves, as a group.

Kevin: Yes. Even though you form a business mastermind group, let's say, with a specific focus, internet-based business mastermind group, it's not just about that. Because you have to respect all of the people involved and have that chemistry, you end up growing as an individual and you bring other problems to it. Maybe 80% is on internet business, but you've got 20% of "My daughter is having these problems. What do I do about it?"

And these people share their experiences and insights that have worked for them, and you learn and grow from that.

Part of the greatest limiting factor in success in any business is you. It's your limitations that you either are raised with or your expectations that are wrong. And these people say, "No, no, you're looking at it in the wrong way. "

Terry: Once there's a comfort level in the group itself, it becomes a circle or group of trusted advisors that you're close to. And because you're getting together on a regular basis, whether that's weekly or monthly or however often the group meets, there's a deeper background, a deeper knowledge, so that the members can say, "Hey, this is how I run my business," and the members get more acquainted with each other and are able to provide much more important, much more valid feedback.

Kevin: Yeah. That's exactly true. When the groups first start out, there are ways to do it.

The easiest way I've found to do it is just start with one person that gets it. You're trying to get something done. You've probably talked with a lot of people.

This is when you're first starting out. You've found some people that are receptive. Start with them, if it has a positive effect. That's all you have to measure. Does this person, when I interact with them, increase my energy and I get more stuff done? And then, add one person at a time, as you go on, to see if they fit.

The first meetings, there's going to be perhaps not as much openness and sharing and trust. But after meeting 5 or 6 times, there's going to be a lot of comfort.

And having the meetings correctly. In ancient Roman times, they used to have something called sub-rosa, under the rose.

Basically, what it meant is that when you meet, anything that you say in the room is confidential. You don't share it outside of the room. So, you have that comfort level. And once it's there, then you're able to face your fears as well as your problems, and share your secrets or things that you consider instrumental in success in your business and solve them, and accelerate your success.

Terry: That builds the trust. You talked about some of the elements of a successful mastermind group. You shared some of that. Earlier, you shared some of the elements of a successful mastermind group with me.

Kevin: There's a variety. One thing that differentiates what a mastermind group is and isn't, for example a networking club is not a mastermind. People meet, they share leads, but they don't really have each other's trust and respect, and some of the other elements, which include positive criticality. That's basically people who are correcting you for your own best interests.

I've found some masterminds that do exist are like Toastmasters. I've found it to be an excellent mastermind group. They have the same goal. Everybody wants to help each other become good speakers, they have positive criticality, they correct other people when you say um's and uh's, or have suggestions for how to improve your presentation, in the spirit of – I hesitate to say loving spirit – a kind, generous, open, "I want to help you because we're helping each other here" type spirit.

If the group doesn't have that, I wouldn't call it so much a mastermind.

If you can enjoy another person's success in the group, that's one of the indications that you're in a mastermind.

Terry: You said that a mastermind is not a networking group. Now, I've been to some networking meetings. Those are all about meeting people that you can do business with, not so much meeting people you can exchange business ideas with. Would that be the difference?

Kevin: Yeah, that would be a big differentiator. They wouldn't be as likely to share resources. You wouldn't really tell people about your fears or "I'm designing this new web page layout. What do you think?" You couldn't really ask people at a networking club those types of questions and get good answers.

Terry: I used to belong to a club here in Phoenix, and it got taken over by printers. When it first started, it was mostly marketers talking about what they were doing. And then because all of the marketers were using print services, printers started joining. After a while, it got to the point where almost 60% of the people that attended the meetings were printers there, trying to sell their services.

As a marketer wanting to discuss marketing, I wasn't getting what I wanted from those meetings.

I guess we're going to talk a little bit more about the people that come to these and how to screen them out and which ones to attract.

But let's talk right now about the different types of groups. I know of a phone group, these are people that get together on a conference call and talk regularly. One of my doctor friends does this with other doctors around the country. They talk about the treatments, things like that, that they're working on. That works for them. I think they do that every Wednesday.

I also have another friend that runs a weekly online deal in a HotConference Room. HotConference is a web software conference room. They do that every Friday night. They get together and they talk about their marketing and what they're doing.

So, those would be one type of group where the people aren't specifically meeting.

Another type of group, and I was in one of these for about 5 years, meets regularly, either weekly or monthly. In the case of the one that I belong to, we met weekly, every Thursday night. We just kept meeting for years, and it became, after 4 or 5 years of the same 4, 5, 6 of us, it was a very tight, very supportive environment.

Kevin: That's like an ideal mastermind. It has all of the elements. I say 5 you thrive, 7 you're in heaven. So, it has 5 to 7 people. It meets on a weekly basis. You can meet monthly. You can meet once a year. You can have a mastermind that meets one time. I've got one problem. Let me call up people that I know or ask people who know about my problem. Let's say I need to send out an email advertisement to my email list, and I want to get people's opinions.

So, I call up people that I distantly know, all at the same time, and see what their input is. That's a one-time mastermind. You can do that.

But the ideal mastermind is a weekly mastermind that meets for 2 or 3 hours, with 5 to 7 people. It has developed that kind of really deep trust and it generates more breakthrough ideas. Because when people talk and interact, they know what they need and it takes time to learn what people need and where they're coming from, and things like that, for that to happen. And you've got to get rid of all of the people who are going to be energy-sappers, too, once you have those.

Terry: Thinking back on it, actually, I feel a sense of sadness because that group ended about 15 years ago. While the few people that I still see today are close friends that belonged to that group, there's a sense of loss in my life. I guess that shows you how powerful that was to me.

We did get very close to each other, in terms of understanding exactly what people meant by things. A big problem that I think all of us have is communication. We say one thing and the person hears something else.

After a few years of belonging to that group, people understood exactly what it was that I would say, when I said something. And I understood what they were saying. I was hearing the same thing that these people were saying. Very powerful.

Kevin: It has a lot of potential beneficial effects. That's a difficult one to accomplish and achieve. An easier one to achieve is simply people who are focused on the same goal. If you want to start an online business related to something that you're interested in, for example raising pot-bellied pigs – I'm just making that up – and you get other people who want to start online businesses, you get together, you meet on a regular basis, you share information and resources, you're focused, you'll derive a lot of benefit just from that. And that counts as a mastermind.

You might not develop the level of trust and all of the benefits that you were talking about. But provided you have that framework, you'll still get a lot of

benefit and be much more successful, much faster than if you were trying to go it alone.

Terry: While I'm holding that group up as the pinnacle, that's something to shoot for but not expect.

I can't even tell you how that happened. It was just something that evolved and it was magical. But it was about us doing it and showing up, and the dedication.

Another type of mastermind group is a sub-group or a special interest group. And I know in the train clubs that I belong to, they have special interest groups.

For example, twice a year, the people who collect Marx trains get together on the Thursday during York Week, which that's like a whole week of train activities in Pennsylvania. So, it's a special interest group. They also have online interactions with discussion boards and chat groups. And I'm sure that people talk amongst each other.

But once a year – or twice a year, rather – they get together in Pennsylvania and actually sit in a room and talk to each other, so they can put a face on it.

Kevin: Are those special interest groups always generally related to something they do for fun or have interest in, that are not necessarily business related?

Terry: That example, the Marx isn't. But there's a special interest group in the trains for electronics, and that's mostly either manufacturers who make these new electronics to run the trains or the people that are into how can I run my train with the computer. So, they're attending. So, there is a financial benefit to it.

But I think that the special interest groups, they don't have to be about financial stuff. I know that my stepfather, for a number of years, he got together with a small group of people, and they were building a hydrogen-powered car in a guy's garage. They never got it to run, but they got together every week and worked on the car.

He also did something with solar energy, where they got together and they studied solar energy. And they actually had people who had worked on the Manhattan Project that were working and showing up.

So, that was something. It was their hobby. But the potential for a breakthrough, when they had gotten together, was enormous.

Kevin: That sounds like, to me, a couple of different things. One is a project-based mastermind, where they're getting together. They have the same interest and they're working on something, like the car, the hydrogen car.

And the special interest group, would that be something that you'd define as focused, like you're all focused in a specific area? It was hyper-focused, what you were talking about. But could you also say a special interest group is something like everyone who's interested in finding out about Ad Words? Or would that be something else?

Terry: I think to go something as specific as Ad Words is too limiting. That might work as a topic of discussion among internet marketers. But as an actual basis for a group, after a month you'd pretty much have discussed everything.

Kevin: That's true. I've noticed that you can cover all of the material. That's why it seems like it sounds like the group that you mentioned was based on self-growth.

Terry: That's what Willingness To Change was, was a spiritual self-growth organization or group that we got together.

Kevin: And that, you can get people from a wide diversity of areas and everybody can contribute because everybody's alive. Right? So, they've had experiences and they can share their insights.

Terry: Yeah. And we also had common backgrounds, which that was a big part of it. We all had similarities in our upbringing, similarities in the problems in our lives, and things like that. And that definitely played a role in joining us together.

We'll talk more about the people in a minute.

There are also groups that meet irregularly, and these are groups maybe they meet quarterly or maybe they meet as part of something else.

For example, I know that a lot of the internet marketing or marketing seminars and boot camps that go on, there are mastermind groups going on.

For example, I went to a JPDK seminar about 10 years ago. That's the "Make Money In Your Underwear At Your Kitchen Table" guy, Jeff Paul. About halfway through the first day, Paul Hartunian, who teaches people how to do free publicity, he went up, he started talking, and a whole group of us got up and left. And Paul spoke from like 10:30 until noon, and then they broke for 2 hours for lunch.

We went downstairs in the hotel, in a little private room, and there was about 10 of us that were all using the JPDK system in our businesses, and we got together down there and shared, and it was a little mastermind group.

I've also been at one of the Dan Kennedy seminars, the last one I went to was 3 years ago, his Mega-Mini thing, that seminar was Tuesday, Wednesday,

Thursday, and there were groups that got together on Monday. People flew in early. There were groups that got together on Friday. I attended one on Saturday.

So, that's where a bunch of people know they're going to be together, and they say, "Okay, let's all come in a day early or stay an extra day, and spend the whole day talking."

Kevin: Excellent. I have not done that. But I will do that, because you mentioned that. I've met people at seminars and formed mastermind groups with them, but that makes a lot of sense, for an event that's going to occur, and just add this on as a way to get the people together. That's a great idea.

Terry: And it's private. You go to a seminar and you meet people. The next time you're going to the seminar, you call the people you met and say, "Hey, let's get together the day before," or "let's get together the day after," or somebody that's in that area might do it and set it up.

One of them that I went to, one person got a hotel room that was a suite, and there was a conference table in it, and we met in his room.

So, that kind of stuff is really easy to set up and I find those kind of meetings exciting. They're not as deep. You don't have the level of commitment and you also don't have the level of trust and interaction that you'd get in a weekly meeting. But the fact that people are flying in to attend shows a level of dedication. And also, because it's invitation only, you're only getting the best people. You're not having to deal with the naysayers and the people who don't have anything to contribute, because you haven't invited them.

Kevin: Right. Highly-motivated. There's definitely energy to events like that.

Terry: So, where should people meet and how often should they meet?

Kevin: You can meet, as far as location, almost anywhere. It depends what the group is.

Initially, for example, when you're starting out your group, there's definitely better and worse ways to do it. You could meet in person at a coffee shop for the first few meetings, to kind of evaluate the person.

Generally, for long-term, a coffee shop wouldn't be good because it's noisy, unless they have a private room or something. There will be interruptions and things like that.

You've had a lot of experience at meeting in different locations. Where do you like to be?

Terry: In the willingness to change group, we actually rented a room from a church. It was expensive. We gave them $1 every week. But we also cleaned up, and they had other people come in that would make messes, and we'd clean up after them.

So, we were doing a service for the church. And that was because it was spiritual-based, even though none of us went to that church. This was a church that was centrally located for us all.

Coffee shops, restaurants. A lot of restaurants, you can get a separate room.

Kevin: Yeah, I've met in restaurants a lot of times, in a private room. Those are great. They're private. And if you meet for like lunch, everybody shows up on time.

Terry: We do – and I don't know if I'm going to continue this – my Dad started, in 1983, we started the Friday night dinner group. So every year in June, at the toy train conventions, we would get together a small group of people and go to dinner, and actually rent a room. And we would go to the most expensive restaurant in town.

That's been going on, this is 2007, we didn't do it this year because my Dad died, so last year would have been the 23rd year that we've been doing that. People aren't the same, but it was a lot of fun. We always did that. We would have the hotel tell us, "Hey, what's the best restaurant?" Last year, we went to The Palms in San Antonio.

That's not exactly a mastermind group, but it's a group of friends who, over the years, have gotten to really know each other.

Kevin: That's interesting. Benjamin Franklin used to meet every week at a restaurant, Friday night. He consciously formed his mastermind. First he had a couple employees, and then they invited specific business owners in his area that he thought would fit in. But they met every week at a restaurant, too. You can meet online, too, in a conference call. Like Hot Conference, you mentioned. HotConference.com, I think it is. Skype has a Skype Cast, where you can have an online conference call for free with groups.

It's easier to get more people when you're doing a telephone conference call, because you can go all around the world. But I don't like it as much because the energy. So, you have to trade those 2 off. If you're trying to find the right people for what you're working on, it might be easier to do it over the phone. But if you really like the energy of in-person meetings, which I like, you've got to drive to the location and you're going to be limited to the local people.

Terry: That's one of the things about dedication. I know one of my friends does a quarterly mastermind group and brings in some really well-known people that are at the top of their game. And they actually fly in and stay at the hotel, and then everybody gets up and you go in and have breakfast at the hotel, and they all talk to each other. About 8:30 in the morning, they go into the little conference room, 15 or 20 of them, and sit down and go all day. They have meals served and the whole day is spent just talking about the businesses and what they're working on.

Kevin: My experience with those have been they do it because they have measurable financial benefits after they do it. They go there and they say, "Here's the problems I have, here's the ideas I'm working on," and they share maybe the experiments they've done and the insights they've gained. And they go back and they implement some of them. Usually, you implement like 5%.

But within a few weeks or a few months, you're making more money. You can measure how much. "I'm making an extra $5,000 net per month, because I'm doing the thing that Jim said at the meeting, or Susan said I should systemize my process with this service. Great!" It pays for it.

Depending on what level of success you are and what you're doing, those type of things are required. Once you get benefit from it, you've got to do it.

Terry: I went to one of those, and as a result of that, what you see today on my Website News.IWantCollectibles.com, that came out of it. The whole structure of it and everything is in there.

Kevin: I have wondered about that, because you are top-ranked in a lot of different keyword search terms. And I said, "Wow, it's simple. Look at the structure. All the information, all the links, everything's hooked together. It makes sense."

Terry: Yeah, and that was just like 20 minutes of what we covered during the day.

So, we've covered the different types of groups, when to meet.

Oh, one thing that I don't like about meeting online, and this might just be because of the poor selection of the people, the online groups tend to be disruptive.

For example, I dropped into one last Friday night, to check it out, because I knew we'd be doing this, and some guy in Scotland is talking about his new Ad Words campaign. And then there's text chat going on and they were talking about it's just gibberish and cross-talk.

One of the things that I don't like about the online groups is that they don't filter out, which means that it's basically people who are there for entertainment, people are there to share ideas, there's a lot of cross-talk, they're not as structured.

So, for example, one person might talk about his AdSense test; and then the next person that talks, talks about creating a PDF. So, there's such a wide level of things under discussion, that there's no real depth in any one direction.

Kevin: I think there's a greater tendency for those groups online. However, provided you do have structure, like you have a timekeeper. You have homework assignments.

If you're meeting online, I'll meet on a weekly basis because it's not hard to do a conference call, and everybody is either assigned a homework assignment in the sense of, "Hey, let's all work on this and get this done for next week," or people choose their own homework, "Hey, I'm going to achieve this," and the mastermind group can function as an accountability group, too.

If they don't do it, they're out, if they consistently don't perform. Or if they do, they're disruptive, they're out.

You go through them, boom, boom, boom, until you get enough people. It takes time to do it. But yeah, that's the inclination. You're going to have to go through a bunch of people to get that.

Terry: I think the biggest problem with the online ones is, at least the ones I've looked at, they're open. I can give you an example. Right now, I'm working on setting up a private, members-only discussion forum. The reason I'm doing that is, one, when you go out online and ask a question to a discussion group, you get people who post answers, but their answer is, "Go buy my e-book." It's not an in-depth answer.

Then you also get people attacking.

I'm finding that a lot of my clients, my students, are not comfortable participating in discussion boards because they've been attacked in the past. So, I'm thinking that if I create a private discussion board and then moderate it, because I'm only allowing access to specific individuals, and then throw out anyone who's causing a problem, then I can prevent that and I can create a community where my students can grow.

I think that same model done on the online mastermind group would be beneficial.

Kevin: Definitely. People have to feel comfortable that they're not going to get slammed. That's a big thing, initially. I got slammed many times when I started out. I asked innocently, and some people I guess are angry and they want to be mean. People are a lot meaner online, especially when typing, than they would ever be in person.

So, you want to have that environment so they're free and comfortable.

The first thing you have to deal with is the emotional aspect. You've got to be comfortable, so you can reach the next level, which is gaining those breakthrough insights and all the good stuff.

But until you deal with the emotional, the great stuff's not going to happen. I guess that would be a necessary critical element to have in any online mastermind group.

Terry: We've mentioned quite a bit about people. I think that different members will change the way the group interacts. So, if it's an open group, like we just mentioned with the online ones, then it's more disruptive.

Whereas if it's a private or invitation-only or secretive group, the ones that I've attended that were wrapped around either the day before or the day after a marketing seminar, those were some of the most powerful discussions I've ever attended, because they're very selective and, in the most cases, they're people who have known each other. They might only get together 2 or 3 times a year, but they're people who they all have a common bond or a common goal.

Let's talk a little bit about the people. What specific types of people should be invited or should you look for in a mastermind group?

Kevin: Definitely, the quality of the people that you choose is going to dramatically effect whether it's going to work or not.

The bottom line is, if it's a business mastermind, it will affect your bottom line.

Another thing about open groups, the personal experience I had, I was the Phoenix metro area manager/organizer for something called the Brain Exchange, which is a national mastermind-type group. You come to the meeting, you have a problem, there's a certain structure associated with it, and people offer suggestions to solve the problem.

It's good. The structure's good. The problem is you're always getting different people in. So, you might have one meeting that's great because there's a few really good people there, and they've got great ideas and their approach is positive, etc. And another time, if they don't show up, it might not be that good.

So, having something that's more moderated, and an inner circle of people that's going to meet on a regular basis, will definitely be something you want to do to be successful.

The type of people you want will have similar characteristics. They'll be positive. It's too easy to be critical.

You want people that are going to be supportive, so you can explore the best way to work. The first idea that comes out is never the one you do. So, it's got to be people who are going to say, "That's good. Have you thought about this? Or maybe this might be an improvement."

You want people that are pleasant to work with. They're enjoyable. There's that chemistry.

You want givers. You can't have people who come to meetings and don't offer suggestions for other people. They don't enjoy other people's success, because it won't work. It won't be a contribution. And that's relatively rare. You have to go around and go through a few people, and it takes a bit of time. That's why they work so great though, because they have those elements.

Terry: You want positive, quick-thinking, pleasant people, who are givers and are going to share their information and promote a dialogue in exchange of ideas.

One of the things that I think many people think about when they start exploring the idea of a mastermind group is the idea of similar levels of accomplishment. Do you want people who all have achieved massive success? Or are you better off with people who are new, all the way up to people who have achieved massive success?

Kevin: It depends really on the goal of the mastermind. That will determine that.

If the goal is a business mastermind, generally what you'd want on an individual basis is you want the worst house in the best neighborhood. You'd want to be the least-successful person in the mastermind group, because they're going to make you successful.

Now, saying that, everyone in the group, one of the requirements is that everyone has to be able to give significant benefit to everyone else in the group.

So, how do you get into a mastermind, let's say of deca-millionaires of something, and you aren't a deca-millionaire? Well, you do it by being the organizer and facilitator, and doing all of the grunt work and putting it together, calling people, all of that stuff. That's a benefit that makes it happen.

Because you do that, you can be around these people and learn. You won't be able to contribute in the way they do, because you haven't had the experiences and insights and think the way they do, but you can rapidly accelerate your success because you've facilitated that, and you've made a contribution to make it happen.

In general, though, I would say, from my experience, you want people who are at about the same level. Not only that, of experience, you want people who are similar. You want people who have the same level of experience but different experiences. So, their insights are different. And you want them to be similar, so that they can communicate well.

Terry: By similar, when I think about my friend Joe's mastermind sessions, you walk in there and it's like the GQ weightlifter's club. They all look the same.

That's not what you mean, though. I'm actually being facetious, because there are people who dress like you and I do, who show up at those.

Kevin: We're casual-dressed right now.

Terry: Yes. They're similar people in outlook and experience and goals.

Kevin: The way they approach things. I've found, and some people agree with this, some people don't, I've found the Myers-Briggs, it's a personality profile test. Properly used, I find it useful in about 60% of the time.

What it does for me, and I use it with my wife and children and everything, as far as understanding different people's perspective, where they're coming from.

For example, you are an abstract thinker, to a large extent. And I am an abstract thinker. So when we communicate, we can talk in the same terms. And because of that, we're able to communicate on many levels.

When you get people who are very different, not in anything like experiences or their approach, in a sense, but are very different in how they communicate and how they understand things in the world, there's going to be a miscommunication.

Now, if your mastermind is just about sharing information, that's fine. You can get totally different people, as long as they've had success in something that's beneficial to share with other people, and you're okay.

But if you want to reach a level of discovery communication, what I call it, where you share some info, another person shares some info, and you realize that those 2 bits of info can work together synergistically to create a new insight, like a breakthrough idea where you can double or triple your business, in order for

that to happen you have to have that level of "they're the same as me, they were just raised in a different environment type of similarity. They don't have to be exactly the same, but they have to approach it in the same way.

Terry: And this is one of the contrasts that I see, you're saying that we're abstract thinkers. We contrast that to an engineer, who has a linear mindset, and I have a very hard time having discussions with engineers. I don't have the patience for them to plod through everything. They can't understand me as I'm jumping all over everywhere.

So, that's the similar mindset.

Kevin: That's exactly it. Once you're aware of that, you can marginally compensate for it and realize that this person's not trying to irritate me, they're just different from me. But you can factor that into your group.

I had the same thing with different relatives. Once I learned that, that they basically saw the world in a different way and I'm trying to communicate them in my style, then I stopped doing that. And I go, "Oh, that was so easy!"

But the same concept in a mastermind group is necessary. It helps you filter people out very quickly, and know whether or not they're going to be able to make a significant contribution to the group.

Terry: If we had a group, you and I, and we had someone with the engineer or linear mentality, that person would be, at best, unable to follow. And, at worst, disruptive and slow down the whole process of exploration.

Kevin: That's exactly it. That's one of the criteria of the mastermind that's run properly, is that it moves. It goes along.

There are certain things you want to do. Let's say everybody gets 20 minutes to explain their problem and get feedback. But anything that slows down that process is something you want to either eliminate or replace with something positive. It's identifying and recognizing the people and/or activities that really inhibit the success of the mastermind group, that will allow you to make it more successful. People are a big factor in that.

Terry: Let's talk about some of the people, and you have a list of them, the ones that you wouldn't want to invite and the ones that, once you did invite them, you don't want to invite back. Because I really believe that as these groups grow and move forward through time, they're self-selecting.

If I look back at the Willingness To Change group, that basically fell together. It was a question of we were like-minded people. We were a splinter group from another organization. And as other people came into that organization, we were

able to attract the ones into our group that were like-minded, in order to maintain that level of, and I believe that we stayed in the 5 to 8 range. There were always between 5 to 8 people. And we were able to do that and replace the people that had moved away or went on to other areas, by attracting new people.

That was a lesson we learned. We had to do this based on attraction. This is who we are, this is what we do. And if you're comfortable, come on down. And if you fit in, keep coming down. If you're not comfortable with that, go off and do your own thing. Don't come in here and try to change us.

We had people that did that. One man said, "I don't like the way you guys do it." And it's like, "We've been doing it this way for 3 years, and we're going to be doing it this way and we're not going to change it just because you want something different. Why don't you go off and do your own thing?"

And you say that in a polite and loving way, of course.

Kevin: You're not going to benefit from that. I've seen that. The people try to impose themselves on the group.

It's a concept of resonance, to me. It is self-selecting, because it resonates with the people who are going to fit and be able to produce, and it doesn't resonate with the other people.

That concept can be used in a bunch of different things. I use it in my business when I'm making a product and marketing it. Who am I going to resonate with? Who's it going to fit?

People who it's not going to resonate with, I don't want because they're not going to derive the benefit and really take action on it. And it's the same thing in a mastermind group.

I've found there's positive and negative types of people. Some positive people are a person who's an encourager, maybe. I call them cheerleaders. I actually had super-hero and super-villain names for them. Not in a really super-strong way, but an upbeat person. They're not critical. A persuader might be an interpersonal expert person. I've found that that's very effective, whatever you're doing. People are probably around you and they're involved in what you're doing and your success.

So, somebody who really knows and can communicate how to effectively interact with people, whether it's writing good ad copy or having problems in family life and stuff like that, they can give you some pretty good insight.

Creative problem-solving people, helping you get over your self-imposed constraints. Decision-makers, who are good at looking at the pros and cons and different ways of deciding things.

Those are some of the positive types of people.

Terry: I think one type of positive person you haven't mentioned would be the translator. And that would be the person who can understand what others are saying, in order to make points clearer and keep the discussion going.

Looking back, I played that role and one of my friends played that role.

Kevin: That's excellent. That, actually, I think, should be part of every group. I differentiate it from a role of a type of person. That is what I call the facilitator. It's a natural kind of talent.

Some people in mastermind groups will say, "Why don't you change the," they call it like the organizer or the leader, but I don't think that really captures it. Translator is great, because that really is what it is. You have somebody who's trying to say something and the other person doesn't get it, and you're listening and you're able to really facilitate their interaction in a way that wouldn't be otherwise, if you weren't there.

What do you do?

Terry: How do I do that?

Kevin: Yeah.

Terry: I just understand. And I think it comes down to knowing both people.

The last time, and actually this is why I came up with the word translator, my stepmother said something to my niece and my niece said something back. And then I said, "Oh, this is what you both said," and they said, "Yeah," and they walked off. And neither one of them had said what I said, but I had understood where they were going and what they were talking about, while neither one of them was really on the same page. And by doing that, I was able to forestall a 5-minute discussion while they narrowed down exactly what they were talking about.

I think that's a role that people do alternately. Whoever sees that happening jumps right in and does that as it needs being done. It's not actually something that's assigned. It's something that happens once you get the familiarity within the group.

Kevin: That's neat. In my groups, I actually assign somebody because, for myself, I can be a translator – or I call it a facilitator. But if I don't assign myself that position, I don't do it. I'm excited about what we're talking about and I want to give my input.

One of the things I think that's necessary for that to happen is you kind of have to be objective and outside of the discussion. So, not interested so much in saying your opinion and giving your insight and all of those other things, but in helping other people share their insights and bring it out from them.

And there are certain things that help that, like having time limits and maybe a timekeeper. Like you were saying, a certain amount of time per person, recognizing that if you're bringing a problem, it's not going to be solved completely, perhaps, but you're going to have a lot of different avenues to investigate. And you're going to save a tremendous amount of time because of other people's experience.

Terry: So, those are positive people. What are some bad?

Kevin: Here's the super-villains, and they have super-powers. There's captain negative. His super-power is he can sap energy with catch phrases like, "It's been done before. It won't work. If that would work, somebody else would have done it already." You don't want a person like that in your group.

And don't try to change people in your group. Once you present the rules and the structure of the idea, positive interaction, giver, that's it. That's your chance, bud or gal. And if they can't do that, then they're not going to work out. You can't change a person.

The vacuous mouth. His super-powers are the ability to form words without thought, often parrots other people's thoughts. Not really able to change mind. That's another negative type of person that won't really work. They talk a lot, but they don't really say anything that's their own opinion. They don't add to the group.

Terry: It's quantity, rather than quality?

Kevin: Yeah. And it's nothing original.

Dr. Sloth. He's able to meld with couches, watch endless TV, and ineffectively use time. Everybody has a little Dr. Sloth in them. But this is a person, basically, if you have those homework assignments or if you say, "I want to get this done this week," let's say if you're meeting weekly, you come back and they don't do it. They don't take action.

I know a lot of nice people that are interesting, but if they don't take action, then they're aren't going to derive the benefit. It's not going to work.

Terry: We said earlier that one of the things that is an absolute requirement for people in the group is that all of them have to be doers. They have to actually be going out and doing things.

So, this Dr. Sloth, as you're saying, it would be the person who is static or doing nothing.

Kevin: They might go because they enjoy it.

Terry: They're there for entertainment, rather than improvement.

Kevin: Yeah, that's exactly it. One of the neat things about a mastermind group, though, is if you have a tendency to procrastinate, this makes it a lot easier to get stuff done because you're meeting with somebody and they're going to ask you about it, and it gives you an energy. If you've got fears about it, it helps alleviate those. It really helps you accomplish more and be much more likely to be successful.

So, if you have many Dr. Sloth, you can help eliminate it or reduce it.

The Nicenator is a person who is able to dilute effectiveness by focusing on possible harm to others. They're always politically correct. Instead of looking for ways to make the idea succeed, and what you need to check out beforehand, "Let's make everybody happy," like that resonance thing. You can't make everybody happy. And if you try to, you will fail.

You have to have a focus. The focus is your success. What are you focusing on? Let's say if you're solving a problem, how much are people willing to pay for it? And people who don't have a problem, you don't want them involved.

Terry: What did you call this person?

Kevin: The Nicenator.

Terry: You must be going to an entirely different set of groups than I go to. I've never even seen anyone pay lip service to being politically correct or being nice at one of these meetings.

Kevin: I've seen this mostly in corporate meeting groups, and stuff like that, where people bring up this "who's this going to offend," stuff like that.

Terry: I know people that do that, but I've never actually been in a mastermind meeting with them.

Kevin: As you say that, when I think about more mastermind, especially business focused, that's not as much of a problem, because your brain changes.

They do have the problem, though, which is kind of related, of lack of focus and worrying about how people are going to perceive it.

So, when that's a problem, then it's a difficult one to solve.

Terry: Are there more?

Kevin: Senior Perfection is an analysis paralysis, causes total cessation of action by waiting for the perfect plan. For the super-heroes, I had names like Action Man, Senior Perfection is Action Man's arch nemesis.

The idea is that if something's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly. Go out and get it done, and see what the effect is. Ready, fire, aim. That works. That's one of the fundamental success business principles and even life principles. You wouldn't do it in surgery.

Terry: It's fire, ready, aim.

Kevin: Okay, thank you. What did I say?

Terry: Ready, fire, aim.

Kevin: Okay, fire, ready, aim.

Terry: That's the saying.

Kevin: Okay, that's it. Fire, ready, aim.

Terry: The story with that is if you ever watch the movies with artillery.

They have the artillery, there's a guy that's crawled up there with a radio and binoculars, and they fire a shell. The guy looks out there with his binoculars and says, "You want to go 2 degrees to the left and back 40 yards." He radios that back, they change the dials on their cannon or whatever they do to aim it, then fire again. This is where they're getting ready. The forward observer, he says, "You're on target, fire for effect."

They've fired a couple of shells so they could narrow it in. And while they're doing that with one cannon, and there's never just one cannon, they've got all of the other cannons out there lining up. Now they know where to aim and then bam.

So, it's not ready, fire, aim. It's fire, ready, aim.

Kevin: I will use that from now on. Thank you very much.

The Tangentor is somebody who puts in red herrings and brings up discussions that aren't relevant.

The Emotionator is someone who is very emotional in their responses, to such an extent that it brings in negative energy and it affects people.

Terry: You mentioned earlier that you needed a level of objectivity. This would be the opposite of being objective or rational. That's why I don't discuss politics or religion with people. Rather, I don't discuss politics or religion with people who don't agree with me, because they're unable or incapable of being rational and objective.

Kevin: Yep. Everybody has their trigger words and subject areas.

One thing I've noticed among all successful internet entrepreneurs, which is my focus, is that they let reality determine their reality. They go out, they have an idea, and they try something. Then they see what the response is and they change their minds and their perspectives based on the results they get.

Terry: Now that we know what kind of people to attract to our groups, different types of groups and when to meet, things like that, let's talk a little bit about formats. We've mentioned some of the stuff here and there, but we haven't really narrowed it down to the exact specifics of what kind of forums.

I mentioned the group Willingness To Change, that I was in. With that, we didn't have a topic, because we weren't really business-related. We were life-related. And what we did was we got together on Thursday nights, and we sat and we talked about what had gone on the week since, talked about our lives, and one person would share, the rest of the people would listen. And then once the person would share, other people would comment, if they had comments. There's no requirement for them to comment. And then, the next person would share. And we basically went around the room.

And remember, this is 5 to 8 people. So, if each person talks for about 5 minutes, maybe 10, if it's been a busy week, you're in and out in an hour, hour and a half. It's not that long.

That worked. Now, that also works in a business format. In a business meeting, the person would come in and say, "This week, I'm working on AdSense. This is what I've tried," and get some feedback from others on things that they've done, some suggestions, things like that.

And then, the next person would share and say, "This week, I'm trying to increase the conversion rates in my newsletter. This is what I've tried, these are the tracking results."

That's an interesting point. Usually, people have an idea or metrics. They're actually watching things. They're not talking about what might work, they're testing and tracking and analyzing things in order to find out what does work. And then you'd go around the group, with each person sharing about what he's working on, until everyone had gotten a chance. And that would be a great format for a weekly get-together. It wouldn't probably work very well if it was a quarterly or infrequent group.

Kevin: That sounds excellent.

Terry: Another type of meeting, and these are the great ones for the quarterly deals, or the things that happen on Monday before a seminar that's Tuesday and Wednesday, is a specific topic.

So, that would be like I went to the one, where IWantCollectibles news category came from, where we talked about search engines, RSS feeds, all of that stuff. What's an authority site? What's a hub site? How do we create an authority site, which was my goal with IWantCollectibles.

Kevin: To me, form follows function. So, the structure of the meeting, what you do and how you do it, is based on what you want to get out of it.

Here's an example. You're not going to get it right at first. It's the whole idea of mastermind groups or anything, go out, fire, ready, aim. Did I do it in the right order?

Terry: Yeah.

Kevin: And take action, and then improve it as you go on. So, you have to change your agenda as you go on. This is an example of an initial mastermind meeting agenda, where the people are relatively new, getting to know each other. And that's like the first 6 meetings or so, depending on the people involved and a few other things.

But you might have personal introductions, which take about 2 minutes each. If this is a business one, you might have the business name, the type of business, years in business, let's say this is the third time they've met, share a success they've had from last week. This helps build a positive environment and also can reveal some useful information, and share one problem that you want help with, that you're focused on for the meeting. It's a creative problem-solving part of the meeting.

Then, you might have a presentation where people take turns in the group presenting on one subject that they know a lot about, for like 10 minutes.

Terry: So, this would be one person presents each week?

Kevin: Yes. That's exactly it. So, in the meeting, there's basically 2 things. There's the presentation and then there's the creative problem-solving part of it, and everything that facilitates that.

Then, you discuss the presentation; how you're going to implement it, is it valid, did it make sense, stuff like that.

And then, you do the creative problem-solving for each participant. So, everybody had their one problem and they had like a couple minutes. This is a very compressed meeting. It's not the 20-minutes per. It's like an hour.

People, boom, they give suggestions. They've got to be short. You can't tell a long story. It's directly related to the problem, in this type of agenda. This is just one type of agenda.

And then after everybody's had their suggestions for their problem, they review the last week's goals that they set to achieve by this meeting, and they set the goals for next week. And then they determine next week's presenter and backup presenter.

So, that's an example of a very specific agenda that you can have in a mastermind group. These would be highly-motivated people, a very specific type of mastermind group. For this case, it was all business owners, and for a very specific benefit.

This kind of model, that one is after Ben Franklin, where his was 2 things. It's for business owners and self-growth.

Terry: So, to me, that sounds like it would be a really powerful agenda there if it was the right people, and completely terrible if it was not the right people.

Kevin: That's exactly it.

Terry: I think all of these would be there. One last type of format is just the common area of interest. And I've been to quite a few of these, where it's just marketers, a bunch of marketers get together and talk about what they're doing and share ideas. And that's actually very powerful. I really enjoy those, because while I might be selling e-books, I meet somebody else and he sells vitamins, they don't seem like they're the same. But the truth is we're both selling things, we're both generating leads, and converting prospects into buyers. So, there is that common ground.

Kevin: I agree, 100%. They all involve people. People haven't changed in the last several thousand years. To get my wife, before I started dating her, I read a book called _Ovid: The Art Of Love_, which is 2,000 years old. And it's basically how to pick up women. And it tells you the techniques. You make friends with

their friends, you find out what they like, be really persistent, and you will succeed.

So, people have not changed. You're right. If you have related similar interests, especially with marketing where it's related to people, that will be the same. Or if it's a similar type of focus on something else, there's going to be a lot of beneficial cross-fertilization of ideas. You're going to get a lot of suggestions and different perspectives that you'll be able to apply, because it's that similar interest that ties it together.

Terry: When I first started learning how to sell on eBay, and this is almost 10 years ago, we didn't actually have a group, although it was a group. There were 4 of us: 2 of us here in Arizona, a guy and his brother, which I'm only counting as one, that lived in California, they're twins, and a guy in Pennsylvania. And we used to talk to each other on the phone, never more than 3 on at a time.

But we would share information about what we were doing and what we'd tried. Because, remember, back then there was nothing. There weren't even tutorials on eBay about how to sell on eBay. It was just you want to sell something, write what you're selling in here and hit enter, and you're done. That was it. It was one box that you filed out. You select the category, you hit enter, and you're done.

We didn't know how to do it, but we learned. It was a common interest. I've been to groups where there are a bunch of people who want to start selling on eBay, and they get together, and they'll sell some stuff on eBay, they'll come back and talk about the problems they had, and they slowly build.

Now, those are groups with a common interest, and they also tend to die because once the people get from knowing nothing to becoming somewhat accomplished, they're done. There's no benefit to continuing going.

And there's nothing that says that these meetings have go forever.

Kevin: Right. That's true. It depends on what the goals are. And you can reform, once you've accomplished. It can be a one-time meeting, once you've accomplished it. You're right, there's a natural tendency.

To me, there's always like you mentioned the concept of a wage slave or somebody. My idea is you've got to have enough money so it's not a consideration. That's my goal.

And then I'll go on to the next thing.

So, that's one of the things I want to accomplish in my mastermind groups, is achieve that success.

Terry: And then one last format, and this one I do not recommend anyone try to do one of these unless you might want to try this as a sub-group for an existing group, is no format, nothing. Just totally unstructured. We get together once a week at such-and-such time, such-and-such place, show up.

Those meetings, and I was involved in one of those, while it was very difficult to get people to come back twice, those who did were absolutely wonderful because they fit in. We had a blast. We actually got together at Coco's Restaurant every Wednesday night. I guess that went about 18 months.

It was nothing. There wasn't even a common basis or anything. It was just a bunch of fast-talking, fast-thinking people getting together and drinking coffee.

Kevin: You can do that with the highest-quality people. You're right. I don't think as a place to start.

And even if you have the structure in the other formats, with high-quality people, you'll still get a lot of benefit. And they'll actually appreciate it initially, I think, when you're filtering through the people, because it will get rid of them really fast.

Terry: With that group, the fast-talking, fast-thinking people, we had people that would come in, and couldn't understand. Engineer mentality, they can't understand. They're like an anchor trying to pull you back as you're moving along. Those people never came back. Some of them even left pissed-off.

Kevin: It's just not a match.

Terry: Yeah, you feel bad about it, but they don't belong there.

Oh, I want to talk one last thing, the circle of support.

I have evolved something that I use in my life, I call the circle of support. This isn't a group, it's me with lines – consider them like the legs of a spider – reaching out to different individuals. Each of those people is someone who is doing something, but they're different. Maybe this guy runs an auto body shop, this guy sells car parts, this guy's a journalist, this guy has a marketing business, this guy's a copywriter.

I have folders for each of those people in my file drawer. As I see stuff that they would be interested in, I put it in there. And then I talk to them and I send them the stuff, if they're not locally, or I share it over the phone with them.

It has evolved to the point where, every week, I spend 2 to 4 hours with somebody who's in that circle, having a one-on-one conversation. And most of those people don't know each other.

This provides me with the ability to bounce ideas off people. It's not really set up as I call the person on the phone and say, "Hey, I'm working on this, I need help." It's I call the person on the phone and say, "Hey, what are you up to today? What are you working on?" Get them talking about it, and then talk about what I'm doing.

When it works correctly, where one person shares what's going on and I share what's going on with me and what I'm working on, it is very powerful.

It's very motivating, because when I share about what I'm working on with somebody that I talk to regularly, it might once a week, might be every couple of days, might be twice a month, when I share things, then I know that I'm going to be talking to them again.

So for me, this isn't a mastermind group, it's my circle of support where I've actually gone out and met these people and said, "Hey, this person fits in."

Kevin, sitting here next to me, he kind of fits in well with that. So, he'll definitely make it into my rolodex.

Kevin: I haven't achieved that level of sophistication, but I've heard about that. I haven't heard it called the same thing.

I've heard they say very successful people, instead of thinking of how can I solve this problem, they think of who's the right person for this problem or who do I know that can solve this problem? So they think more about the people and the subject area, rather than trying to solve it themselves.

That's something that I've thought about and begun to incorporate, but I'll do it more because you said it.

Terry: Exactly. It's like you have this microphone sitting here on the stand and whatever that is, amplifier, plugged into the computer. And it's like this is kind of interesting. I'm looking at this and I'm like, "Yeah, I could just go buy everything you've got." And then I'm thinking, "No, I know Josh has spent years figuring all this stuff out. I'll just call him and tell him to send me a list of what he's got, and just go buy it."

Kevin: That was a revelation for me. I used to think, "Books, that's the answer. Books." I would read a lot. I don't read that much now. And books aren't the answer. People are the answer, when you have a question.

You can go to the internet and look a lot of stuff up. That's great. But still, if you want to know an answer like that, real problem, if you go to the right person you've got a great answer and the whys and where to get it, and you have all the

other things that are solved. It's still better than the internet, if you've got the right network to access.

Terry: It's much better. It's faster. And you never know what will happen. I mentioned the private membership thing that I'm putting together, and that's actually because somebody else was doing one, and then he told me what he was doing.

I told him how to do the coding simpler, and then I was thinking, "Will that work?" So, I went and checked. And then I thought, "I should do that!" He has all of these reasons, because he was going to sell memberships, of why he's going to sell the memberships. There's private, no flame-in, no ads, and all that other stuff. And I'm thinking, "I bet my people would like that."

Because I just told him how to set it up, it's not all that difficult for me to set one up myself.

Kevin: You generated an opportunity because of that process.

Terry: Alright, we spent some time covering this topic, and I think we've done a good job. We've given the listeners the ability to go out and form their own mastermind group, or join one.

Is there a way that people can find mastermind groups? A directory or something?

Kevin: There are different resources that you can access. Probably the easiest, fastest way to do that is to just go to my website, and I'll have a list of resources there. I'll have sample agendas, some of the information that we talked about, and different techniques for getting people into your mastermind, where to find them, where to go to find them.

It's NerdMaker.com. I always liked the idea of making people into nerds.

Terry: Alright, this is Terry Gibbs, and I want to thank you, Kevin, for participating in this session. And for those of you listening, go on out there and get started. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll see improvement.

We're done.

Kevin: Okay, cool.