

# 20

with **Kevin Beattie**

# QUESTIONS

By Jonathan Vickers

Kevin Beattie (50) is the Vice-President of Beattie Dodge in Brockville since 2011. Kevin is married to his wife Eva and they live in Brockville with their 4 children: Michal, Rebekah, Harrison and Dawson. Kevin's personal heroes are Winston Churchill and President Abraham Lincoln. Kevin loves golf and basketball and spending as much time as he can with his family on his off time.



**LH:** Is Brockville your hometown?

**K:** I was born in Brockville, but we moved away when I was 3 as my father was in corporate financing. We had the privilege of living in many places across our great country. When I was in grade 9 we moved back when my dad and my uncle bought the Chrysler dealership in town.

**LH:** What can you tell us about growing up in Brockville?

**K:** I am going to claim old age as some of the stories need to stay in the past! (Ha-ha) However, I think I can put it this way, that as a teen in Brockville it was everyone's desire to get out of this place, and then it was everyone's desire to move back ASAP when they realized what a great place it is.

**LH:** Where did you go to High School and any particular accomplishments or memories?

**K:** I went to TISS. I was always involved in sports as it was one of my passions. I was always good enough to make all the varsity teams, but that is about where it ended. I was more of a hustle type of player- where I lacked talent (a lot of talent) I made up in hustle. I was also involved in Student council and spent my grade 13 year (no we had grade 13 back then...) as the head of council. Back then we had Head Boy and Girl. I was a very average student back then. I never applied myself so my marks were pretty average.

**LH:** What high school jobs did you have?

**K:** I had two great jobs in high school. First I worked at Dave Jones Sports- that was the cool place to work growing up! The only problem was, I spent all my money there, having all the best sports gear! We had a lot of fun there! Next I ended up working at Reliable Furniture for the Hoogendam. That was a great job as I made 3.50 an hour plus 2% commission. I remember selling some of the first VCR units in Brockville for \$1995!!! What are they now, \$49?

**LH:** Any lessons from that first job you can relate to now (successes or failures)?

**K:** I realized how much I enjoyed sales. There is a great thrill that comes from helping the person find the product they need by serving them. I realized early that asking questions is better than talking!

**LH:** Before you got into the "family business" at Beattie Dodge what was your first career choice?

**K:** I spent 20 years in the ministry. I started working in a church after university, but realized that I was a square peg trying to fit into a round hole! I enjoyed being out with every day people. I spent some time with the Toronto Argonauts doing chaplaincy work. Because I loved sports so much this was a lot of fun for me. I was on the sidelines at games, and spent a lot of time with the athletes. We used to do school assemblies with Athletes in Action. It was here I realized how much I enjoyed working with teens. So when I finished my Masters, I joined an organization called Youth for Christ/

Youth Unlimited. I moved back to / Brockville and spent 10 years developing the chapter. Those were great years. We opened a youth centre downtown and at one point were up to 10 staff in the Eastern Ontario area.

From there I went to work for the National office helping to develop the future direction the National office. It is exciting to me to see one of our previous staff Johanna Freer rebooting the ministry in the area again! She will do a great job!

**LH:** That must have been a challenging profession working with athletes for a professional sports organization. What were some rewarding results as well as some difficulties?

**K:** Pro athletes are a different breed. In the CFL, for the most part, these athletes see their time here as a stepping stone to the NFL. I heard a lot of stories about final cuts, and trying to get back to the big leagues. Because of that there were a lot of discussions with them about their spiritual journey and all their goals in life. Not to sound negative, but a lot of them were very self absorbed. Then you get the rare opportunity to meet a guy like Pinball Clemens. Mike was all about other people. He inspired me in many ways!

**LH:** Why did you leave the ministry?

**K:** Funny story. I was on the road 3-5 days a week when I was working for the YFC National office. I was working out of Vancouver. My wife Eva and I have four kids. I am sure this was a trying time for her being away all this time. It began to wear on us all. I think the final straw was when I called my daughter Rebekah to wish her a happy birthday. She was turning 9. Her first response was you going to be home today dad for my birthday? I said, you know we celebrate birthdays on the weekends. Then there was silence and in a teary voice my little girl said- you going to miss the day of my birthday again? Eva was great, she said don't worry about it. Something cut deep inside of me that day I remember praying as I was eating, again, in my room by myself. "God you blessed me with a wonderful family and I am not there to be their Dad. What should I do?" Within 3 months I resigned and came back to Brockville.



**LH:** Now that you are at Beattie Dodge- car dealership and a successful business, what do you attribute to the continued success of your organization?

**K:** How do you measure success? I am not sure how we add up to other dealerships and how successful we are. However, I can tell you two keys to our business. First we have a great staff. For the most part this was my father who put our team in place. He has shown me how important our team is. We have very little turnover which is common in our industry. I think Beattie Dodge is a pretty good place to work. We all enjoy working together. Common respect is the key. The second part is our customers. We have a tremendous repeat business because we truly do care for our customers. We are honoured that they have entrusted us with their driving needs. Again we take the time to find them the right car. If we do not have it on our lot, we will do all we can to find it for them.

**LH:** We understand you are involved with Leadercast and other community events. Why? And why should people be aware of this?

**K:** First an old saying, "It takes a community to raise a child" This truth is important to me. It is my goal to do all I can to make Brockville a better place in some small way. One of the ways I am involved is hosting an event called Leadercast. In May we will be hosting our 4th one. It is a satellite event that boasts world class speakers

from around the globe. I have paid 1000's of dollars to attend events like this over the years. I know how much it has affected my view of leadership. So Aaron Perry, a local minister friend and I decided to start this event in Brockville. Last year was the best one yet. We had over 400 people attending and the energy was amazing. Not a bad day for \$65! Our goal was to change the story of leadership in our community from being the big shot, being served type of leader, to the servant leader who leads by example and serves his team! Aaron is the brains behind this event, and he lives it out. We have an incredible team who work hard to serve the community by bringing this world class event to our little city!

**LH:** Now for the more personal stuff: How did you meet your wife?

**K:** We were both in Toronto at school. I was doing my Masters Degree. My roommate had a crush on her best friend and asked me to double date with him. When I saw who I was going to go out with I jumped at the chance. By the end of the night I knew her outward beauty was overshadowed by her inward beauty and strong morals! I had to get to know this lady! Now 24 yrs later, she is still putting up with me!

**LH:** Where did you go on your first date?

**K:** We went to an authentic Chinese restaurant in Chinatown downtown Toronto. Then we went for a long walk and just talked. Great night!



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**LH:** What is family life for the Beattie's on off time/weekends etc?

**K:** We are all pretty busy in the community. Three of our kids are gone now. Eva is involved with the Roadrunners club and the Y. Harrison, my youngest son, is into the arts and is involved with plays in Brockville and at his high school. I am involved with a few organizations around town including co chairing a men's group on Monday mornings. This is probably one of the highlights of my week. We have also taken up skiing again.

**LH:** If stranded on a desert island name 3 things you would want with you?

**K:** 1) My family (is that ok to say?)  
2) My golf clubs (hey, we can dig with those!!!)  
3) One of my favorite local restaurants! (I have three!)

**LH:** Favourite Guilty Pleasure?

**K:** chocolate cake and a large glass of milk!

**LH:** Favourite TV Shows?

**K:** Criminal Minds

**LH:** Favourite Sports Team or Sport?

**K:** The Sen's or Syracuse Orange basketball team! March Madness is probably my favorite sporting event of the year

**LH:** What is a characteristic in people you dislike?

**K:** selfish or self-serving people-but I am careful not to show too much disdain for that before I look at myself in the mirror!

**LH:** If I could change one thing about myself, it would be?

**K:** I would have been taller and bigger which would have given me more size to play sports when I was younger (the second thing I would have wanted was skill. (ha-ha)

**Bonus question:**  
Best part about "LIVING HERE!"

**K:** I love living in Brockville so much! Where else can it take you a 1/2 hour to walk down to Tait's for lunch because you have to stop and talk to 10 people! Also the river! What a gem! We love being out in our boat every moment we can!!