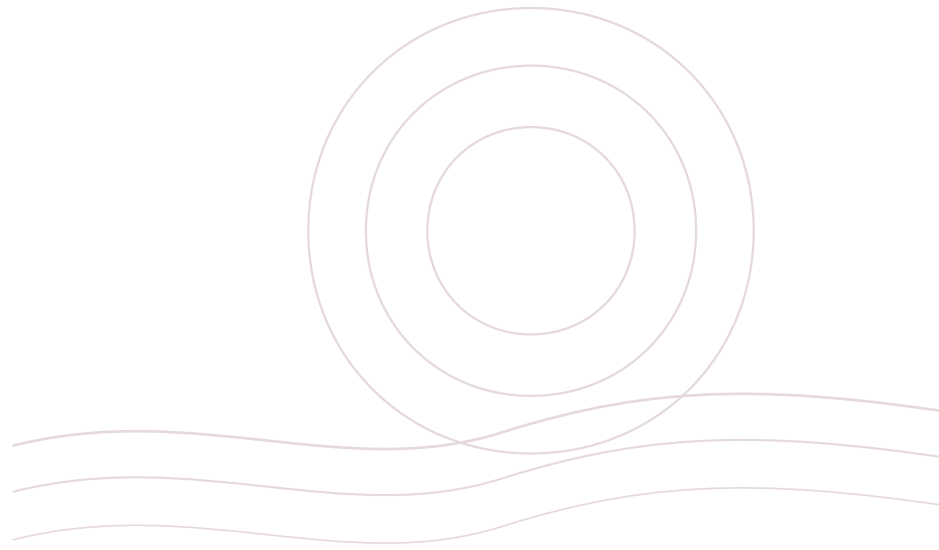


NEXT TO KIN



Useful Enough to Be Unusual

A Manifesto for Next to Kin

THE BEGINNING

I did not set out to build a company in the way companies are usually imagined.

I was not looking for a market to disrupt. I was not trying to invent a more complicated system for a simple human fear. I was not trying to turn vulnerability into a subscription, or anxiety into a growth strategy.

I noticed something.

There are people in our communities who may, for all kinds of reasons, find themselves unable to tell a stranger who they are, where they belong, or who needs to be called.

And there are strangers who would help, immediately and without reward, if only the moment made clear what they could do.

| Next to Kin exists in the space between those two people.

A small tag.

A phone tap.

A person willing to notice.

A way back to someone who cares.

THAT IS THE COMPANY.

We have become very good at imagining technology as a replacement for human responsibility.

Sometimes its most valuable role is simply to make human responsibility easier to act on.

We do not always need to track people more precisely.

Sometimes we need to make it easier to help them.



THE COMPASS

The Two Reminders

There are two people whose work gives me language for the kind of company I want to build.

Not because I want to imitate either of them. Not because Next to Kin is meant to borrow their identity. But because each, in a very different way, reminds me of something I do not want to forget.

Gord Downie is a reminder that a person does not need to become less peculiar, less local, less emotionally honest or less themselves in order to matter widely.

Rory Sutherland is a reminder that the sensible answer is often only the sensible answer because we have agreed not to look at the problem differently.

One reminds me not to edit the life out of the work.

The other reminds me not to mistake convention for intelligence.

| Be useful enough to earn the freedom to be unusual.

Not a licence to be strange for attention. Not permission to ignore evidence, competence or responsibility. The unusual idea must work.

01 / IDENTITY

I Do Not Want to Become Legible by Becoming Ordinary

There will always be pressure to make Next to Kin easier to explain by making it more like something people already understand.

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY COMPANY
DEMENTIA PRODUCT
CHILD-SAFETY DEVICE
MEDICAL ALERT ALTERNATIVE

AGETECH STARTUP
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
CHARITY-ADJACENT PRODUCT
RECURRING REVENUE MODEL

Some of those descriptions may be useful. Some may open doors. Some may help the right people find the work.

But none of them is the whole idea.

Next to Kin is about the distance between seeing someone in trouble and understanding that you can help.

The tag is simply how we shorten that distance.

There are problems best solved by more infrastructure. There are also problems best solved by one small object making one ordinary person more likely to do one decent thing.

THAT IS NOT LESS AMBITIOUS.

02 / IMAGINATION

The Unusual Idea Must Serve the Human Truth

I have a tendency to see ideas sideways.

A small NFC tag does not only look like a product to me. It looks like the beginning of a public behaviour: **tap here when someone needs help.**

Giving tags away does not only look like lost revenue. It looks like distribution, trust, awareness and proof that the mission is not merely a sales claim.

A dropped set of keys with a KinTag does not only look like a stunt. It looks like a question worth asking in public: **will people still help when given the chance?**

A 3D printer in a house in Regina does not only look like modest manufacturing. It looks like a possibility that simple, useful things could be made locally and shared widely without waiting for a factory, a procurement cycle or permission from someone with a bigger office.

Does it make the human truth easier to notice, easier to remember or easier to act upon?

Sometimes another good answer has simply not been taken seriously because it did not arrive wearing the right clothes.

03 / JUDGMENT

The Spreadsheet Is Not the Enemy. It Is Just Not the Whole Story.

I am not against business. I am not against money. I am not against scale, measurement, partnerships, investors or growth.

A company that cannot function cannot serve anyone for very long. Costs matter. Distribution matters. Manufacturing matters. Revenue matters. Reliability matters.

A spreadsheet can estimate the cost of producing a tag.

It cannot fully predict what happens when a stranger realizes they have permission to help.

A forecast can model revenue. It cannot easily measure the value of a child being reunited with a parent, an older adult returning safely to a caregiver, or a family feeling slightly less alone in the world.

A marketing dashboard can count impressions. It cannot completely describe the moment a symbol becomes familiar enough that someone recognizes it in a crisis.

There must be room for the kind of intelligence that asks what might become possible if it works.

04 / RESPONSIBILITY

I Am Not Interested in Selling Fear Back to Families

There is an easy commercial story available in safety: make the world seem more dangerous, make families feel more anxious, convince them that enough technology can eliminate uncertainty, and charge continuously for the feeling of control.

Caregiver worry is real. The possibility of someone you love becoming lost or unable to communicate is real.

But I do not want Next to Kin to make that fear heavier in order to make the product easier to sell.

No battery.

No app.

No tracking.

No surveillance dressed up as peace of mind.

| This person has people.
| You can help reconnect them.

I believe that is enough to build around.

05 / GROWTH

Success Must Not Domesticate the Idea

Growth should not force us to become more fearful in our messaging. Scale should not force us to treat people as units instead of families. Funding should not turn simplicity into a flaw that must be engineered away.

The business should become more capable as it grows.

It should not become less human.

Gord Downie matters to me not as a persona to borrow, but as a reminder: the world may eventually reward the very qualities it first found difficult to sort.



06 / PLACE

A Saskatchewan Idea Does Not Need to Apologize for Being From Here

Next to Kin is being built in Saskatchewan, in a house, by someone whose working life has largely been spent observing families and communities through a camera.

That is not an embarrassing prelude to the real company beginning somewhere else.

That is where the company comes from.

It comes from small towns where people still recognize each other. From families who carry more responsibility than strangers can see. From a province where distance makes community matter. From a Métis understanding that belonging, kinship and responsibility are not abstract branding words. From the belief that something made locally can still contain an idea large enough to travel.

| A small Prairie idea can be nationally meaningful.
| A small object can carry a very large belief.

07 / HUMANITY

The Company Is Serious. It Does Not Have to Be Sombre.

Usefulness earns the freedom to be unusual. Not careless. Not frivolous. Not disrespectful. Alive.

08 / PARTICIPATION

I Want to Build Something People Feel Proud to Participate In

The usual commercial relationship is simple: a company sells something, and a customer buys it.

Next to Kin should be larger than that transaction.

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- 01 A family placing a KinTag on someone they love should feel supported, not sold to.

 - 02 A stranger tapping a tag should feel capable, not alarmed.

 - 03 A community distributing tags should feel that it is participating in something decent.

 - 04 A person carrying a tag should never feel reduced to a risk being managed.

They are someone's person.

The tag does not announce weakness. It makes connection possible when words may fail.

STEP 01

See.

Notice a moment where someone may need help.

STEP 02

Pause.

Recognize the signal and what it makes possible.

STEP 03

Tap.

Help reconnect a person with their people.

09 / BEHAVIOUR

The Work Is to Make the Extraordinary Feel Obvious

Rory Sutherland's influence on me is not that everything should be clever.

It is that many meaningful changes do not begin with more force, more expense or more technology. They begin with a better understanding of what people notice, what they avoid, what reassures them and what makes action feel natural.

The ambition of Next to Kin is not to persuade people into some unfamiliar moral behaviour.

Most people already want to help.

The work is to remove the confusion around helping: to create a visible prompt, establish a recognizable symbol, make the right action easy, and make kindness less dependent on confidence or guesswork.

A person sees the tag.
They tap it.
They call the family.
Someone gets home.

10 / THE STANDARD

Does This Make Next to Kin More True, or Merely More Acceptable?

I will listen to advice. I will be willing to change course. I will test assumptions, count costs, improve the product and admit when an idea does not work.

Being unconventional is not the same as being stubborn. Being poetic is not the same as being right. Believing in people does not remove the obligation to build responsibly.

More true may still mean clearer.

More true may still mean better funded.

More true may still mean more disciplined, more widely distributed and more successful.

But if an opportunity asks the company to become less trusting, less simple, less local, less human or less willing to believe in ordinary people, then it is asking for something more valuable than it is offering.

| People will always need other people.

EVERYTHING ELSE SHOULD HELP THAT IDEA TRAVEL.

11 / DECLARATION

What I Am Building

I am building a company that makes small, practical tools for human reconnection.

I am building locally because local is not small when the problem is everywhere.

I am choosing simplicity because complexity is not the same as care.

I am building a symbol that may one day tell a stranger: this is a moment where you can help.

I am giving the product away where I can because access is part of the usefulness.

I am willing to be unusual because obvious solutions have left an important space open.

Next to Kin should work so well that it earns the right to be different.

Practical enough to trust.

Memorable enough to spread.

Steady enough to endure.

Human enough to matter.

Strange enough to be alive.

THE PROMISE

Be useful enough to earn the freedom to be unusual.

Make something that works. Make it for people, not categories. Let it be simple when simple is better. Let it be strange when strange reveals the truth.

Do not sell fear when you can create trust. Do not confuse sophistication with humanity. Do not let success erase the reason the work began.

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Build the tag. Teach the tap.

Trust the stranger. Help someone home.

