

The **EXTRA MILE**

A Guide to Walking the Winner's Road



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The Extra Mile

A Guide to Walking the Winner's Road

James Skinner, Mark Victor Hansen, and Roice Krueger

“The Extra Mile” will show you where to find your greatest excellence and your greatest rewards.

Give this book to everyone you know who desires to excel!

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The Extra Mile

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The Extra Mile

The Road to Legendary Living

The Road to legendary living is found not in the first mile, but in the extra mile—in going beyond what others do, beyond what is demanded of you, beyond what can be reasonably expected.

Let's start with a really good story that will help you understand exactly what going the extra mile means.

Most of you know that Itzak Perlman is one of the greatest violinists in the world, and one of the greatest who ever lived.

On one particular occasion he was performing at Lincoln Center in New York. Itzak Perlman suffered from polio as a child, so he came out on stage using crutches, which made his progress haltingly slow. It was actually quite a painful thing for the audience to watch, but they continued to applaud his entrance.

When Perlman finally reached his seat, he put his crutches aside and started to play.

The Extra Mile

Then, all of the sudden: “SNAP!” One of the violin’s strings had broken.

As the sound reverberated throughout the great hall, everyone in the audience had the same thought: “Oh, my God! He’ll have to pick up his crutches again and walk across the stage to get a new string.”

But that’s not what Itzak Perlman did, because he knew how to go the extra mile. He said, “Ladies and gentlemen, please give me a moment. We’ll soon be ready to start again.”

Then Perlman removed the broken string, and he began to play. It might seem impossible to play a piece composed for a four-string violin with only three strings, but that exactly what Itzak Perlman did. He did it perfectly, and flawlessly—and with only three strings.

At the close of the performance, there was a standing ovation that lasted half an hour. And it wasn’t just for the music that Perlman had played, great as that

The Extra Mile

was. It was because Itzak Perlman had gone the extra mile.

He had come to perform, so he did perform. He could have stopped, but he didn't. He did it with three strings instead of four. He did it with less than most people would need, and he did more than most people could do.

As my spiritual mentor puts it, "Any one can go the first mile. It is those of us that go the second mile that get the reward."

Minimal Effort

Many people try to go through life with the least possible effort.

But I propose that you should try to live life with maximum effort all the time.

Once, when Arnold Schwarzenegger was at the peak of his bodybuilding career, a magazine writer asked him, "When you do ten repetitions of weights, which one of

The Extra Mile

those gives you the most gain?” Arnold replied, “Number twelve.” That’s why Arnold is a star and will always be a star: he goes the extra mile. He was a star as a body builder. He was a star as a film actor, and now he is a star as a governor.

Let’s start using the principle of maximum effort in our personal lives.

Are you pushing yourself beyond what you think that you can do?

“Going the Extra Mile,” means pushing harder and going further than ever before. Pushing yourself beyond your self-created limits literally creates a new you.

Throughout my study of human nature, I’ve learned that we have a phenomenal propensity to achieve what we set out to achieve.

When I was 19 years old, I moved to Japan where I lived for 22 years. Naturally, I spoke with many other foreigners who had come to Japan. I made it a habit to

The Extra Mile

ask them what their goal was in learning the Japanese language. Usually they would say that they wanted to be able to have normal, casual conversations—but rarely anything more than that.

Well, I had a different goal. I wanted to be able to speak Japanese on the telephone so well that people would not know that I was a foreigner.

When I thought I had achieved my goal, I told myself that I had gone the extra mile. But then I translated a book into Japanese. The Japanese editors told me that my Japanese was “completely inadequate for a published book.” The truth was, I had not even begun to be able to speak and write Japanese well enough to satisfy my real goals.

That’s when I redefined what my “extra mile” really was.

I finally studied Japanese to the point where I was able to write best-selling books, and widely distributed newspaper columns.

The Extra Mile

All the rewards go to those who will step up to walk the “extra mile.”

Sometimes it is easy to go the extra mile. When it came to eating, I certainly found it easy. I overate so much that I gained 50 extra pounds. Then I decided to do something about it. I began by reading a book called, *How to be Younger Next Year*. After reading the book, I got a watch that could monitor my heart rate. I then found my target heart rate and started exercising to reach that rate. Soon I was pushing the limit. I ran on elliptical machines and attended spin classes, forcing myself to go harder and faster. The weight just melted off. I lost 37 pounds because I went the extra mile.

Michael Jordan is another great example of going the extra mile. When Michael first started playing basketball, he couldn't even make his high school team. When he did make the team, he spent his first year on the bench. Finally, he became a good basketball player and then a great basketball player, which got him into the NBA.

The Extra Mile

As soon as he started in the NBA it was apparent that he was a great shooter. Michael read the newspaper articles about his high scoring, and he got very angry about it. He wondered, “Why aren’t they writing about my defense?”

The next year he became the number one defensive player in the NBA. At that point the papers were writing about how he was a “double threat,” and again, Michael Jordan became angry: “How come they aren’t writing about my teamwork?”

A year later he was number one in assists. To really succeed and become a Michael Jordan, you have to go the extra mile.

The Power of Focus

Michael Jordan learned to score from anywhere on the court. If he was guarded on the right, he could go to the left. If he was guarded on the left, he went to the right. If he seemed stopped at mid-court, he could literally “fly” to the basket and make an underhand lay-up. He

The Extra Mile

became so focused on going the extra mile that he practiced eight to fifteen hours a day instead of the usual three or four hours. If you get one percent better each day for a year, then you will have gotten 365% better. This is exactly what Michael Jordan did.

The United States Olympic Nordic Ski team once approached my organization about helping to build teamwork. Usually Olympic athletes focus on their individual performance, but here they needed teamwork to be successful. I had only two or three hours to work with them. So we went outdoors and did trust falls and other team-building drills.

From this experience I learned something about the mind of Olympic athletes. With every activity I gave them, they did it five or six times better than I'd ever seen. When I asked them to hold each other by the arms, blindfold each other, and have one person guide them through some rough terrain, they weren't satisfied with just shuffling along. They *ran!* They pushed themselves. I asked them to do some trust falls and they got themselves up on seven, eight, nine foot ladders and

The Extra Mile

would drop themselves off into the arms of the team, while others would do it from two or three feet. They pushed themselves well beyond what normal people would think possible—which is the mindset of going the extra mile.

I'd like everyone to have the Olympic athlete's mindset, in business, in family, and everywhere else as well.

I was recently in the dressing room of an Olympic gold medalist for synchronized swimming from France. She had a back injury, which was incredibly painful, but she was about to go on for a two-hour performance in front of fifty thousand people in Tokyo. Her warm up was harder than the hardest workout that I have ever been through in my life (and I'm preparing for the Ironman race this year). This was her warm up while she was injured, and for an event that was not even a competition. This is a perfect example of going the extra mile.

The Extra Mile

There are several elements to consider in going the extra mile. We'll look at them in the pages that follow. But first and foremost, you must raise your standards to achieve an Olympic mindset.

Your thoughts create your reality—so when you are an Olympic thinker your reality expresses those thoughts and you become an Olympic achiever.

In his great book *As a Man Thinketh*, James Allen wrote, “Mind is the master power that molds and makes. Man is mind and evermore he takes the tools of thought, shaping what he wills bring forth the thousand joys a thousand deals. He thinks in secret it comes to pass, environment is but his looking glass.”

Very simply, it's all about the quality of our thoughts.

Quality of Your Thoughts

One hundred percent of your results come from the quality of what you think. One hundred percent! It's not

The Extra Mile

someone else; it's you. Your thinking causes your behavior, and behavior creates those results.

If you think poorly or you think you are weak, you will get poor, weak results.

So, if you want to have excellent results, if you want the billion versus the million, you have got to think billion.

You have got to de-weed the garden of your mind.

It concerns me that so many people I work with read low-quality books, listen to low-quality music, watch low-quality movies, look at low-quality magazines, have low-quality conversations with other people, and then they want a high quality life.

You simply can't do it!

When I started to prepare for the Ironman race, I studied the people that have actually won the world championship in the Ironman competition. When one

The Extra Mile

of the champions was asked what he thought was the ideal weekly training schedule, he said, “As much as my body can absorb.” So, basically, his life was organized around exercise, sleep, exercise, sleep, eat, exercise, and sleep. He became a legend!

Going the extra mile really starts when you de-weed the brain.

You have to fill your brain with the most uplifting, inspiring thoughts possible. You need to read *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, you need to read *Ideas That Can Change Your Life* . . . You need to read whatever wisdom, literature, scriptures, or biographies that are in your culture that are going to lift you and inspire you.

Your brain needs to be completely filled all the time with the highest quality Olympic thoughts.

Everyone forgets that the world “Olympic” comes from Mount Olympus. Your thoughts need to be on the peak of that mountain all the time.

The Extra Mile

Raise Your Standards

You need to have better goals and dreams than you have ever had before. You can never have too many of them. Most people in the world have too few, and there is only one other person beside myself that I know of that has six thousand of them!

You need to have goals in all dimensions of your life—health goals, family goals, financial goals, emotional goals, mental goals, spiritual goals, and physical goals.

It's actually very easy to do.

You just need to realize that you can have anything that you want in your life.

Take out a piece of paper and write down everything that you would like to achieve, receive, have, do, get, see, or experience in your life or in the world in which you live.

You just write them all down.

The Extra Mile

I tell people, “Imagine that all you need to do to achieve this goal is to write it down. If all that was needed was for you to write it down, would you do it?” You need to remove the limitations from your mind about what is possible if you are going to go that extra mile!

By focusing on the various dimensions and different areas of your life, you can create a powerful synergy. As you build your health, you will build your mind. By being proactive in your thinking, you can rebuild your whole self.

Add a Zero

Here’s another challenge I want to put to you: add one more zero.

My mother used to work for one of the most influential men in the state of Oregon. He managed a power company that provided electricity for everywhere from the state of Washington to the state of Utah. When she first went to work for him, she was having a

The Extra Mile

little bit of trouble comprehending her role there and feeling comfortable, because here boss and the people around him were so wealthy and powerful.

One day she woke up and said, “It’s just a matter of zeros. And anybody can add an extra zero.”

So if you want to become a millionaire, just think about becoming a deca-millionaire, which means you would have ten million dollars.

If you want to sell a hundred thousand copies of your book, start thinking about selling a million copies.

If you want to sell a million books, start thinking about selling ten million books.

If you want to sell ten million books, start thinking about selling one hundred million books.

I once called up a friend of mine in Tokyo and said, “How would you like to have a hundred million dollars?” He was driving to work at the time and almost

The Extra Mile

had a traffic accident. He said, “I would love to have a hundred million dollars! I’m not stupid!”

I said, “Okay, that’s great. How many projects have you got going on right now that even have a remote possibility of giving you a hundred million dollars?” He didn’t even have one.

He stopped his car and couldn’t move for ten minutes.

He set an extra zero on his goals, gave away the company that he had at the time, and set up a new company that now moves billions of dollars.

As soon as your goals expand, your capacity expands to achieve your goals.

If you think hundred dollar thoughts, you get hundred dollar results. If you think thousand dollar thoughts, then you get thousand dollar results. So think million, billion, trillion!

The Extra Mile

Optimize Your Health

If you want to go the extra mile, you need a body that can take you there. If we don't take care of our health, we sub-optimize everything else.

You need to have Olympic levels of energy in every area of your life and that means taking care of your body at an Olympic level.

Notice the connection we made between health and energy, because health is all about creating energy.

If you have weak energy, you have poor health.

To optimize your health, you have to exercise.

That means both aerobic exercise, for breathing and heart rate, and anaerobic exercise for strength and muscle mass. You should also include some form of flexibility training, such as yoga. I personally do yoga three times a week.

The Extra Mile

Nutrition is another necessity for optimal health. It's not only what you take in, but what you absorb. You need to take in nine fresh fruits and vegetables a day, at a minimum. It's easy, if you just take a close look at what you eat. The green in your food is the energy in your life. Life on the planet comes from the green of the planet. What could be simpler?

Basically, you need to go to your supermarket and you need to shop primarily in one section of the supermarket, the section with fruits and vegetables. You need to be looking for the highest quality, most organic, most richly colored fruits and vegetables.

What about protein? The truth is human beings have no need to ingest protein whatsoever. Protein is not actually absorbed through the intestinal walls. So, whenever you take a protein into your body, it needs to be broken down in the stomach into its component amino acids. What we really need are the essential amino acids that are used to create all the proteins in the body.

The Extra Mile

All the amino acids that we need can be acquired from fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes—and you might also want to add a little fish to your diet.

Most people are worried about not getting enough protein. They really need to worry about getting too much. You can't absorb more than 32 grams of protein a day anyway unless you are pregnant. And a small hamburger at the most popular fast food chain has over 40!

So you need get into fruits and vegetables and cut everything else down to a minimum.

Maximize Your Career

How can you go the extra mile in work?

Most of us are trying to get by with whatever the customer has asked or whatever the boss has demanded.

I teach people that service is not doing what the customer has asked for. Service is doing what the customer didn't have the courage to ask for, or know how to ask for.

The Extra Mile

I checked into the Ritz-Carlton this morning. Sitting there on the table is something that I love very much. They know this; they discovered this. Very few people know that I love strawberries dipped in chocolate. They are a divine gift to me. It was very special. They had four of them sitting there waiting for me. They exceeded my expectations. The hotel went the extra mile for me by exceeding my expectations.

I always want to go the extra mile. I always want to do everything that is required—and then that little extra.

This is what made the *Chicken Soup* series go so well. We tested every *Chicken Soup* title. When we did our third book, *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*, we sent it out to twelve thousand teenagers and said, “What do you like, what do you not like?” Unequivocally, they all wanted a story about how to handle abuse and where to go. So, Jack Canfield and I found the right 800 numbers to call. We helped eliminate hundreds of thousands of child abusers. Little things like that make such a big difference.

The Extra Mile

Little hinges move big doors.

I remember my first job with the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Do you think an embassy is a glamorous place? Do you think you have opportunities to meet with the prime ministers and such? My boss would come into the room and say, “I need someone to help count the inventory in the warehouse. But nobody that works in the Foreign Service wants to help count the inventory in the warehouse, and nobody that works in the state department sees that as their job.” So, I would raise my hand and say, “Hey I’ll help.” The next day, the boss would come in and say, “I need somebody to do this job, anybody interested?” I would say, “I’ll do that.” Then the next day I have another dirty job. My overtime pay every month I worked at the Embassy exceeded my normal pay, but the big benefit came when the Emperor of Japan came to visit. My boss had to decide who could be trusted to take him around. That job and others like it came to me.

The Extra Mile

In any organization you will see people that go the extra mile. They are the ones who do their work and then help someone else do theirs. We had a great person that we used to work with that always went the extra mile, Dr. Dee Groberg. When we first brought Dr. Groberg over to Japan to give a seminar, he'd flown all day and all night. When he arrived in Tokyo, we figured he was going to want to go to the hotel and get some sleep. No, not Dr. Groberg. He said, "Let's go to the seminar room, I want to check the room out."

So, he went to the seminar room and made sure the chairs were set up just right. He checked the projector. He checked that the markers wrote and would be visible from the back of the room. He checked every single detail. He asked what we were going to be serving for lunch. He checked to make sure the water was going to be available for all the participants. Then, after all of that, he finally said, "Let's have dinner, because I want to talk to you about your organization and see how it's going for you."

The Extra Mile

So we went out to have dinner and he made sure it would be a successful event for us. And finally he went up to his room.

The next day, when Dr. Groberg came out on stage, he had already gone the extra mile. Then he did it again by giving the best seminar anyone in the audience had ever seen!

Another man that goes the extra mile and is a lovely guy in Australia named Bryce Courtenay. He wrote a hugely successful book called *The Power of One*. It is a movie as well. His book signings attract so many people that the line wraps around the store, but he won't start signing until he has shaken every person's hand. It could be 800 or 900 people, but he does it anyway. When he sees old ladies, he takes them aside and asks for a chair to be brought out. It's a little thing but nobody forgets it.

At the Osaka International Exposition, there were long lines in front of the most popular pavilions, but none longer than the pavilion sponsored by Matsushita

The Extra Mile

Electric (Panasonic). People would wait two or three hours just to get in.

One day someone on the staff of the pavilion was looking at the video monitor showing the guests lined up outside and said, “I think that’s Mr. Matsushita right there!” But how could that be? He owned the whole company (the largest electronics conglomerate in Japan); he could come in through the back anytime he wanted to.

But it was indeed Konosuke Matsushita.

The staff all ran outside and invited him to come in. He quietly explained, “I’m just out here experiencing what it is like for the customer.”

When you own a multi-billion-dollar enterprise and you’re standing in line finding out what it is to be a customer, that’s going the extra mile!

The Extra Mile Comes From Love

The Extra Mile

I have another good friend in Japan named Teiichiro Hori, who created and built Tokyo Disneyland. He shared this story with me.

A young married couple had their first child, but the child died shortly after birth. The woman had been told she could never have another child. Their dream had been to take their child to Disneyland and now they were never going to have an opportunity to do so.

A year after the child had died, the couple decided to go to Disneyland while remembering their child. It was a kind of memorial ceremony for them.

When it was lunchtime, they went into a restaurant and ordered a children's meal for their child that was not able to be there with them.

There was only one problem: you had to be under a certain age to order a children's meal.

The woman at the counter explained that it was company policy only to sell children's meals to children.

The Extra Mile

But when they explained their situation to the young girl at the counter she said, “I understand. We will provide the meal.” She came out from behind the counter with the three meals (two adult meals and one children’s meal) and said, “May I escort the three of you to your table?”

That is going the extra mile!

The Best People

This brings us to our last point.

You need to have an Olympic standard for your peer group and the people that you spend time with. This includes people that you work with, people that you play with, and your family.

You should spend time with people you enjoy being around because they nurture you and you nurture them.

I was once with best selling author Robert Kiyosaki in Yokohama giving a presentation. We were back stage

The Extra Mile

and he said to me, “Look at the seven people that you spend the most time with. That’s your future.”

I encourage you to make a list of the seven people whom you spend the most time with, get a clear picture in your mind of who they are. Look at that image and decide whether or not that is what you want your future to look like.

Thomas Edison used to work ten weeks, and then he took ten days off. Once he went down to Florida with Henry Ford, who used to work for him. They argued about whether in the future there would be gas-powered or electric powered cars.

When Edison and Ford went fishing, they came back without have caught anything.

Edison’s wife said, “That’s impossible. Everybody catches fish around here.”

Edison replied, “We don’t have any hooks and we don’t have any bait.”

The Extra Mile

“Then what are you doing out there?”

Edison answered, “We’re fishing for ideas.”

Whether it’s the people you work with or the people you play with make sure you push each other to go the extra mile. Hold each other to a higher standard.

It is your choice. You can go half a mile, part of a mile, a full mile, or you can go the extra mile. In that extra mile you will find your greatest excellence and your greatest rewards.

With best wishes,

James Skinner, Mark Victor Hansen, Roice Krueger

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