

Being Better Than Your Best

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Introduction

Do you ever wonder if you're using yourself to your full potential? Do you sometimes come away from a work-day thinking, "I could have done a little better, or worked a little harder?" Did you ever wonder what could happen if you really gave everything your very best shot?

We did too, and it made us wonder, "What is our best and how do we know when we're at our best?" Your best is always changing, but you can constantly strive to be better than you were the last time...better than the time you thought you were at your best. This is called "raising the bar."

Normally associated with high jumpers, raising the bar refers to lifting the high bar so that athletes can challenge themselves to jump a little higher—just a little—to endeavor to beat their last attempt. It encourages them to do better than before...not a monumental amount, mind you...just an inch or so. Every time athletes attempt to go a little higher, they literally have to recreate themselves. They have to rethink who they are. They then base their new goals, not on past attempts, but on new perceptions formed by thinking differently about themselves. Thinking this way keeps things interesting. It keeps athletes motivated. The end result is a sense of accomplishment knowing that they gave it their best shot. What if you could do that for yourself?

Think about what could happen if you raised the bar in your Thoughts, Words, and Actions. How much more productive could you be at your job or business? How much more could you contribute to your team or organization? How much further could you

advance? Could you produce a higher quality product? Could you give better service? Could your sales and marketing presentations be more powerful?

This book is for anyone desiring to raise his or her own bar, whether it's at the office, at home running a business, or in relationships with colleagues, coworkers, bosses, employees, associates, clients, customers, students, or family and friends.

Keep in mind, as John Wooden once said, "*Success is peace of mind in knowing you did your best.*"

Chapter One
What Is Your Best?

*“Always do your best.
What you plant now,
you will harvest later.”*
Og Mandino

There are many books that tell us how to manage better, be more productive, “think outside the box,” make more money, and get more clients or associates—even how to “crush” the competition. The very title *Being Better Than Your Best* suggests competition with yourself; in this case, in order for you to win, no one has to lose.

When you have something great to offer people, there’s always room for you in the marketplace so, competing with *yourself* is truly the key to being your very best.

If you’re not happy or not finding joy in your work, then everything you accomplish will simply leave you feeling empty. That’s why some people who basically have all the things they want—cars, money, stock options, retirement plans, pensions, vacations, and so forth—one day look in the mirror and say, “There’s something missing.”

It’s true that aspiring for the things that money can buy can be a driving force in our productive efforts. After all, money certainly makes things easier. It’s great to not have to worry about paying the bills or buying something for your family or yourself. But a feeling of challenge and stimulation while earning that money is a key ingredient to a happy, fulfilled life. It’s wonderful to have a sense of purpose, so that at the end of the day you can say, “That was the greatest version of myself today.” When you can say that, it’ll be easier asking the boss for a raise, going to the next level in your business or profession, asking the client for the

order, taking on that next associate, being bold enough to speak up at a meeting to offer your ideas and vision, or courageously pursuing new prospects—clients or associates. What a feeling of empowerment!

“Being better than your best” immediately leads to the question “What *is* your best?” You may have thought that your best was graduating from college after a high school teacher told you that you weren’t college material. Or perhaps your best was surviving a layoff and starting and building your own successful business...or becoming a skilled speaker after overcoming childhood stuttering. Your current best may be attaining a high position in a firm that didn’t hire minorities 20 years ago! The gauge on “your best” changes at different times of your life as you continue to grow and develop.

So how can you be better than your best when you may not even know what your best is yet? By raising your own bar you create a new model for yourself; a higher standard, one in which *you* are your own role model. You can do this with any of your goals or dreams...whether you’re looking to increase the success of your own business, seeking to rise to a higher position within your company, or simply desiring to be more appreciated, respected, and motivated in your current business or professional role.

To raise your own bar you must step outside yourself, face your fears, and challenge yourself to not only *think* outside the box, but to *live* outside the box. You need to apply all the principles that you have learned in all the motivational, team-building, and you-can-do-it-too conventions, seminars, and training sessions you’ve attended. Now you need to not only intellectualize these ideas but *actualize* them—do what they suggest doing! That’s living outside the box. That’s making it real. That’s being the best you can be! Remember, as Albert Einstein once said, “*You cannot change your current conditions with the same thinking that created those conditions.*”