



NAPOLEON HILL

Principle 5: Go the Extra Mile

The Extra Mile Formula

Render more and better service than you are paid for, and sooner or later you will receive compound interest from your investment. It is inevitable that every seed of useful service you sow will sprout and reward you with an abundant harvest.

Going the extra mile is not the sort of principle that can be put into practice in a few easy steps. Instead it is a state of mind that you must develop, so that it is a part of everything you do. There is a subtle, but powerful, mental attitude connected with it. The stories that follow will demonstrate that attitude and show you the concrete benefits it brings. Remember, your best recommendation is the one you give yourself by rendering superior service in the right mental attitude.

Thomas Edison's Only Partner

Edward C. Barnes was a man of much determination but few resources. He was determined to ally himself with the greatest mind of his day, Thomas Edison. When he arrived in Edison's office unannounced, his poor appearance made the clerks laugh, especially when he revealed that he had come to be Mr. Edison's partner. Edison had never had a partner. But his persistence got him an interview with Edison, and that interview got him a job as a handyman.

Edison was impressed with Barnes's determination, but that alone was insufficient to convince him to take the extraordinary step of making him a partner. Instead Barnes spent years cleaning and repairing equipment, until one day he heard Edison's sales force laughing over the latest invention, the dictaphone.

They said it would never sell. Why replace a secretary with a machine? But Barnes, the handyman, jumped up and cried, "I can sell it!" He got the job. For a month Barnes pounded the New York City pavement on a handyman's salary. At the end of that month he had sold seven machines. When he returned to Edison, full of ideas for selling more machines all across the country, Edison made him his partner in the dictaphone business, the only partner Edison ever had.

What made Barnes so important to Edison? The inventor had thousands of people working for him, but only Barnes was willing to display his faith in Edison's work and to put that faith into action. He didn't demand a fancy expense account and a big salary to do it either. Barnes focused favorable attention on himself by rendering service far beyond a handyman's responsibility. As the only one of Edison's employees to render this service, he was the only one who uncovered such tremendous benefits for himself.

The Nordstrom Phenomenon

Starting out in a simple shoe store in the 1920s in Seattle, the Nordstrom family has built a chain of department stores famous around the country for service and willingness to bend over backward to please their customers. A garment may be returned anytime it fails to satisfy, even years after the original purchase. Sales associates will call branches all across the country to find an item in the size and color a customer wants. One woman even sent a Mother's Day card on behalf of a customer who mentioned that she had forgotten to do so.

Store executives acknowledge that a policy of such dedication to the customer leaves them open to abuse. People buy clothes to wear once and then return them. Items are special-ordered and never picked up. A few folk seem to regard Nordstrom sales associates as their personal gofers. It doesn't matter. By delivering service that is so far and above that of any department store in the country, Nordstrom has developed tremendous customer loyalty. In an economic climate that saw giants like Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Marshall Field, Sears, and J. C. Penney closing stores or laying off employees, Nordstrom continued a slow and steady expansion coast to coast, never opening a new store until it was sure it had assembled a crew of employees dedicated to its own brand of going-the-extra-mile service.

My Own Journey

I accepted Andrew Carnegie's commission to organize and publish the principles of success when I was a law student at Georgetown University. Other than reimbursement for some traveling expenses, I got no compensation from Carnegie for my efforts. My dedication to my task placed strains on my life. I had a family to support, and many of my relatives ridiculed me for my goal. In spite of this opposition, I worked for twenty years, interviewing presidents, inventors, founders of great companies, and famous philanthropists. Because these people were often unaware of the principles they employed--they just *did* it--it took a great deal of time for me to observe them and determine whether the forces I supposed were operating actually were. Instead of making money for myself, I had a job to do for others.

Believe me, there were times when, between the needling of my relatives and the hardships I endured, it was not easy to maintain a positive mental attitude and persevere. Sometimes, in barren hotel rooms, I almost believed my family was right. The thing that kept me going was my conviction that one day I would not only successfully complete my work but also be proud of myself when it was finished.

Sometimes, when the flames of hope dwindled to a flicker, I had to fan them with everything I possessed to keep them from going out. It was my faith in Infinite Intelligence that tided me over these rough spots and saw me through.

Did it pay to go the extra mile for twenty years and endure all those hardships? The answer is obvious.

The Benefits of Doing More than You Are Paid For

Since going the extra mile can involve hardship, it will help you to be conscious of all the different benefits it will bring.

The Law of Increasing Returns

The quantity and quality of the extra service you render will come back to you greatly multiplied. Consider the farmer who plants a crop of wheat. If he harvested only one grain of wheat for each grain he planted, he'd be wasting his time. Instead every successful grain produces a stalk and a sheaf containing many more grains. Of course, a few don't sprout, but whatever problems a farmer may face, getting back many times more wheat grains than he or she planted isn't one of them.

And so it is with everything you do in the service you render. If you render service worth a hundred dollars, chances are you will get back not only those one hundred dollars but perhaps ten times that--provided you have done so with the right mental attitude. If you render extra service unwillingly or resentfully, you will probably get nothing back. It's as if the farmer had sown his wheat on the interstate road instead of the fertile field. And if you render your service only with a sharp eye out for your own benefit, you will get nothing except perhaps a poke in that eye.

One rainy afternoon an elderly lady walked into a Philadelphia department store. Most of the clerks ignored her, but one solicitous young man asked if he could help her. When she replied that she was just waiting for the rain to end, he didn't try to sell her something she didn't want, and he didn't turn his back. Instead he brought her a chair. When the rain let up, the lady thanked the young man and asked for his card. A few

months passed, and the owner of the store received a letter asking that this young man be sent to Scotland to take orders for furnishing an entire castle! The letter writer was the elderly lady for whom the clerk had provided a chair. She also happened to be Andrew Carnegie's mother. By the time the young clerk had his bags packed for Scotland, he was a partner in that department store. This was the result of the Law of Increasing Returns, all because he had shown a little concern and courtesy when no one else would.

The Law of Compensation

The Law of Compensation ensures that everything you do will bring you some sort of result of the same kind. To benefit from this, you must always render the most service you are capable of, with the best attitude, and you must do so regardless of your immediate compensation, even if it appears you will receive no immediate compensation.

The issue from here is not some unlooked-for benefit, such as might come from offering a chair to a senior citizen. It is a matter of honesty and earnest effort. Dishonest, lazy people look to get something for less than is required- or even nothing. If you decide to boost your profits by raising your rates and providing less service, it's going to catch up with you.

AT&T learned this lesson the hard way. Its rates continued to climb, and it did nothing to offer its customers any new advantages. Along came deregulation, MCI, and Sprint, and bang! Customers began switching their long-distance service by the hundreds of thousands. AT&T saw its error quickly, though, cut its rates, and began offering innovative packages. It still faces heavy competition, but it now knows quite a bit about the Law of Compensation.

In contrast, consider mobile home builder Jim Clayton. His company, Clayton Homes, was already growing rapidly when Hurricane Andrew decimated South Florida. The need for new mobile homes was enormous and fast. Clayton could have followed the examples of many Florida business owners and jacked his prices skyward. Instead Clayton Homes kept its prices level and jacked its production skyward. The Law of Compensation meant that the company still made a reasonable profit on its services; it also means that thousands of home buyers in South Florida have reason to remember Clayton Homes very fondly when it comes to their next purchase.

Your day-to-day life may not offer such dramatic examples, but the most concrete one is your paycheck. If you are dissatisfied with its size, remember: Until you begin to render more service than you are already being paid for, you are not entitled to any more pay.

If you are convinced that you are already doing more work than you are being paid for, ask yourself why the Law of Compensation doesn't seem to be working. The sad fact is that most people have no definite purpose greater than getting that paycheck. No matter how hard they work, the wheel of fortune turns right past them because they neither expect nor demand more. What are you doing that shows you expect and demand more than what you currently get?

Gaining Favorable Attention

People who need your work have things to offer you. You probably are not the only person capable of providing what they need. What will distinguish you from the crowd? The attention you generate by doing more than you are being paid to do. Early one morning Charles Schwab arrived at one of the steel mills he managed.

There, in the dawn's faint light, was a clerk from the company's stenography pool. When Schwab wondered what he was doing there, the man explained that he had come in case there were any letters or telegrams Schwab wanted sent right away. It would be hours before the rest of the staff arrived.

Schwab thanked the fellow and told him he might need him later that day. And he did. That night, as Schwab headed back to the main office, he took along his new personal assistant, the fellow who had gotten his attention so early in the morning. It wasn't the fact that this young man was an extraordinary stenography that got him attention. It was his habit of showing his personal initiative in going the extra mile.

Becoming Indispensable

Whether you are an employee or the head of your own company, going the extra mile makes you indispensable to others. You do for them what no one else does. There may be others with more knowledge, skill, or prestige, but you are the only one who provides something absolutely necessary. There may be seven other companies providing public relations expertise, but if you are the one who can be called upon at two in the morning with a can-do attitude when a disaster strikes, people will remember and value that.

One young man, working for a movie talent agency, was the only person willing to listen to a cantankerous star complain about her problems hour after hour, day after day. No one else took the time. When she threw a tantrum on the set one day, he, not the director, the producer, the heads of the studio, or her agent, was the only one to persuade her to go back to work. The movie went back on schedule, and millions of dollars were saved. He had made himself indispensable by befriending that important client.

You will never command more than average compensation until you become indispensable to somebody or some group. Make yourself so useful that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to replace you. People who have pulled themselves out of the crowd and have included the priceless ingredients of going the extra mile and personal initiative in their service virtually write their own paychecks.

Self-Improvement

Going the extra mile means that you strengthen your ability to do your job and to do it well. Carrying out your tasks in a state of mind focused on providing the best service possible in the best possible attitude reinforces your skills. By imposing systematic self-discipline, you understand the process better every time, and you impress upon your subconscious the need for quality work. Remember the adage: "Strength and struggle go hand in hand."

You should never make a presentation, design a software program, or do anything at all connected with your definite major purpose without the deliberate intention of doing it better than you have ever done it before. True, you may sometimes fail or not meet your previous standards, but the very intention of surpassing your previous best is a healthy habit that will ultimately cause you to excel. Doing a job just to get it done, complaining about the tasks before you, and grumbling about your pay are not ways to make yourself excel. Always stay focused on doing your best possible work.

Opportunity

When you have made yourself indispensable, you will gain not only security in the job you have but the ability to select the work that you do. Perhaps this will mean a promotion, a job at another company, or your choice of clients. Going the extra mile is a way of writing yourself an insurance policy against the fear of poverty, against the fear of want, and against competition from those who only go halfway.

Consider William Novak. After years of rewarding but not particularly lucrative work as a writer, he was hired to be the coauthor of Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca's autobiography. Working with the fascinating details of Iacocca's life, Novak wrote an utterly compelling book that was a national bestseller for well over a year. Iacocca's life story probably would have made a successful book without much effort, but Novak delivered something so readable and inspiring that the book became a phenomenon.

Now Novak's name as co-writer on any project opens every door in the publishing world and commands advances much higher than those written by other people. He can choose his subjects, and he can pick from among the best. By going the extra mile, he made certain that he would always have the work he wanted.

Favorable Contrast

Going the extra mile turns a spotlight on you and gives you the important benefit of favorable contrast with others. An inspired window designer at Marshall Field's once filled a display with handsome ties. In the center was a full-length mirror. Businessmen who stopped to look at the display admired the ties and then saw themselves in the mirror. By contrast, their ties looked dull and shabby. Many were tempted to go in and pick up a snappy new tie which looked so much better than their own. That's the power of contrast.

People are always making comparisons, and we notice the things that are different. If you render more and better service than others, you will naturally stand out in bold contrast. Wise employers are very alert to the power of contrast, and they reward the employees it highlights. Some do decide to ignore that contrast and reap the benefits of extra service from their workers without compensating their workers. But the spotlight of contrast is bright enough that their competitors will sooner or later see the person standing in it. There are so few people who step into this spotlight that if it shines on you, others will notice soon.

Pleasing Attitude

When you do more than you are immediately paid to do in a willing and cheerful manner, you develop a positive, pleasing attitude, the cornerstone of an attractive personality. When you have an attractive personality, you can get almost anyone to behave toward you exactly as you wish. That's something worthwhile, isn't it? Treat other people precisely as you wish them to treat you; apply the Golden Rule. If they don't respond at once, keep at it, again and again and again. If it never works, then you need to decide whether you want to keep working with these people. It may be time to fire your employer.

Personal Initiative

Personal initiative means doing what needs to be done without being told. It is the most outstanding trait of the American personality, yet sadly it is a quality missing in many people. Going the extra mile develops personal initiative because you don't wait for things to happen but make them happen. When your mind is always focused on doing the best job possible, you are forced to look at every situation thoroughly. No doubt something will have to be done that is out of the ordinary. Part of your service is getting this accomplished, and that means putting personal initiative to work. There are people who go through life rendering extra service yet wind up in the poorhouse. They are honest and dependable, adjectives for traits that give others the chance to cheat and exploit them, and they never do a thing about it because they lack personal initiative.

It's one thing to cast your bread upon the waters; it's another to pretend not to notice when it just comes back wet and soggy. You must use personal initiative to see that your efforts are expended in the right areas. Investigate to make sure that the people you work for are honest and trustworthy, that they aren't about to go belly-up and be unable to pay you. And if you find yourself deceived, find yourself someone else to work for. Personal initiative is not simply for the benefit of others.

Self-Confidence

Going the extra mile builds your conviction that you are doing what is good and right. It puts you on better terms with your conscience, and it gives you faith in yourself. Sometimes the hardest person to get along with is the one who uses your toothbrush, the same one you see in the mirror every morning. Talk to that person; explain your plans and purpose; seek cooperation. Outline your strategy for rendering extra service, and listen to the answer you get. If it's doubtful, you need to spend a little more time selling yourself.

A man who was ragged and downcast came to see me once. I recognized his name as that of a once-prominent restaurant owner who had recently lost everything when his partner went bankrupt. He wanted my help. I asked him to stand in front of a pair of drapes, and I told him that in just a moment I was going to introduce him to the only person in the world who could help him regain his self-confidence and overcome defeat. Then I yanked the drapes open to reveal a full-length mirror.

He stared at the mirror for a few minutes, speechless, and then left my office with thanks. Months passed before he strode into my office completely renewed. His thanks now were effusive. He had reminded himself of his skill in business, found new backers similarly convinced of his abilities, and was currently running one of the most popular spots in Chicago.

When you build your self-confidence through the knowledge that you are giving the best possible service, you develop the reserves of determination to see you through dramatic setbacks without the kinds of theatrics I had to employ with this fellow. Trust yourself, and you will always have someone to rely on.

Overcoming Procrastination

When you are doing your work eagerly and cheerfully, you avoid the temptation to do it this afternoon instead, or maybe tomorrow. In fact, you probably won't be able to wait to get started. Have you ever wondered at the stories about famous people who get up at some seemingly ungodly hour to begin their work? They do it because they're eager to do what they are doing, and they have gained their fame because of that eagerness.

When you act as soon as you must, the habit of procrastination dies from not being fed, and no one laments its passing.

The Extra Mile Formula

To help you keep your mind fixed on going the extra mile, I have developed the following formula, the only one in this book. It's very simple: $Q1 + Q2 + MA = C$.

Q1 is the *quality* of service rendered.

Q2 is the *quantity* of service rendered.

MA is the *mental* attitude in which it is rendered.

C is your *compensation*.

"Compensation" here means all the things that come into your life: money, joy, harmony with others, spiritual enlightenment, faith, an open mind, a sense of tolerance, or anything else worthwhile that you seek. Always be aware of the diverse nature of compensation. Money is nice, but it certainly will not be the only thing that makes you successful--or allows you to enjoy success. Do not cut off relationships which are poor in financial rewards but rich in other qualities, for no matter how much service you render, other qualities, for no matter how much service you render, others will recognize your one-sided approach. The spotlight of contrast will shine on you unfavorably then and will seek out those who remain true to the spirit of going the extra mile.

Al Howison's Bit of a Vision

Al Howison was angry. A 30-year veteran of Fibreboard Corporation, one of the West Coast's leading manufacturers of paperboard packaging products, he was now out of a job.

In the summer of 1981, Fibreboard had sold its Stockton, California folding- carton plant, where Howison was operations manager. The new owners promptly closed the plant, leaving Howison and his 200 co-workers unemployed in the heart of a staggering recession.

As Howison saw it, the plant never should have closed. It had good physical resources, several excellent customers, and a group of employees who wanted to work. Now these employees had been let down.

But if Howison was down, he was far from out. He had an idea, "a bit of a vision," as he likes to say--that with the right financial backing, he and several partners could reopen the Stockton plant.

His motivation for doing so, however, went far beyond a simple desire to resume the plant's operations. Instead, Howison sought to create a new company that combined the best resources from the old organization with a new and markedly different management style.

"I saw a chance to create a company that was not typical--to aim for the best," Howison recalls. "It seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to put my money where my mouth was."

Howison seized the opportunity. The result is San Joaquin Packaging corporation, an independent manufacturer of folding cartons. Howison is president, general manager, and part owner of the company.

Opening in December 1981, San Joaquin Packaging was housed in the old Fibreboard Corporation facility. It was staffed with a skeleton crew of 40 employees, most of them Fibreboard veterans, and its earliest customers had also been Fibreboard clients.

Since then, however, San Joaquin Packaging has established its own strong identity. It now employs approximately 100 people and is undergoing extensive renovations of its physical plant. In its first six months of existence, the company increased its customer count by 320 percent; it continues to add new accounts at a steady rate today.

But the biggest changes have been in the company's philosophy. San Joaquin Packaging is, as Howison predicted, something other than a typical company. It is an operation that has eliminated many of the barriers that tend to keep employees, customers, and management at arm's length from each other.

Howison himself, for example, is a constant presence in the plant, touring the facility at least twice a day to stay in touch with his workers. He has been known to temporarily halt the entire factory's operations to hold all-personnel meetings, and he produces numerous companywide memos informing employees of new accounts, compliments from customers, and noteworthy achievements by fellow workers. Many of the memos end with rousing words like "You are the best. Keep it up." And "We are an all-star team."

Howison puts his team to good use by getting nearly every employee involved in customer relations. "When I'm taking potential customers on a tour through the plant," he says, "I try to introduce them to some of our line workers to give them a chance to see how we run. Then, if the customer contracts with us, I send out a letter of welcome, cosigned by me and an hourly worker who becomes a sort of sponsor for the new account.

"Customers really respond to this personal attention. They see how much we appreciate their business, and they in turn appreciate our interest. "Howison adds that the employees react very favorably to the increased responsibility created by such customer contact. "It's a win-win situation," he says.

One major winner at San Joaquin Packaging has been quality control. "When we started out here," Howison recalls, "I gave a little speech stating that if we couldn't do things better than they'd been done elsewhere, we wouldn't do them at all. We decided that our operations would not have different quality levels for different customer needs, as is sometimes the case with manufacturers. We do the best we can for every customer on every job."

The fledgling company's high standards have also resulted in a companywide camaraderie that manifests itself in a variety of ways. One San Joaquin Packaging employee, for example, recently made a contribution to a local charity in the company's name, even though the money came from his own pocket. Another worker, having just remodeled his home, donated some of his leftover building materials to the factory.

Still another employee put his pride into words: "I feel like I am part of something good here," he said. "I feel I'm on a winning team."

For his part, Al Howison is determined to keep this cohesiveness and winning spirit alive. He has even vowed that if San Joaquin Packaging expands to more than 150 employees, he will open a second plant rather than allow the present one to become overcrowded and impersonal.

Thus, from a "bit of a vision" that came when the chips were down, Al Howison has created the kind of quality operation that many managers only dream about.

Filling Up the Glasses

An industrial salesman, a retail giant and a medical clinic show how applying "Going the Extra Mile" can put you head and shoulders above the competition.

"Every seed of useful service you sow will multiply itself and come back to you in overwhelming abundance." - Napoleon Hill

If you give people something of value and treat them with care, they'll come back again and again.

This guideline for success is illustrated by Don Sheehan in the story of the barmaid who was less than generous in filling beer mugs. One day a customer told her she could easily sell twice as much beer.

"How?" she demanded.

"Easy," said the customer. "Fill up the glasses."

His advice is sound and applies to everyone, from the one-person business to the corporate giant. "Filling up the glasses" is the straightest road to pleasing people. When glasses are filled, customer confidence and loyalty grow. They become your best promoters.

Sheehan describes a highly successful seller, commonly known as the "Fishing Salesman," who sold rolling-mill machinery: an item needed only by large foundries and steel processors.

His method? He worked on shop foremen-the guys that higher-ups in the company would consult when replacing machinery.

His way of filling their glasses was taking them fishing. His fishing bill was enormous, close to \$25,000 a summer. But he did this week after week, year after year. He knew he was filling his own glass when he filled theirs.

Sheehan also relates how two large organizations filled his own glass.

One is Sears. They did it by standing behind their products. Ten years ago, Sheehan bought a Sears calculator. It worked fine for a year. Then he left it turned on over a weekend and found it with an odor of burned wire. When he added two and two he got zero.

Sheehan brought the calculator back to Sears, explained what happened and asked them to repair it if that wouldn't be too costly, or throw it away. In a week he stopped by again and received a new calculator at no charge. Sears filled his glass. Now he always shops there.

His other experience is with the Mayo Clinic, also about 10 years ago. When he checked out, he owed \$1,300. The accounting department asked him if paying \$50 per month was too much. Sheehan was relieved and grateful.

Long after the bill was paid, the clinic called him regularly to check on his condition. Mayo filled his glass in ways he'll always remember and appreciate.

Points to Ponder

1. Strength and struggle go hand in hand.
2. Render more and better service than you are paid for, and sooner or later you will receive compound interest from your investment.
3. $Q+Q+MA=C$ The Quality of the service rendered, plus the Quantity of service rendered, plus the Mental Attitude in which it is rendered, equals your Compensation.
4. Trust yourself, and you will always have someone to rely on.
5. When you do more than you are paid to do in willing and cheerful manner, you develop a positive, pleasing attitude, the cornerstone of an attractive personality.
6. Make going the extra mile a habit!
7. The end of the rainbow is at the end of the second mile.
8. The more you give, the more you get.