



The Habits of Going the Extra Mile

Napoleon Hill spent most of his life studying the most successful entrepreneurs in American history. He analysed men like Ford, Edison and Carnegie at length. He concluded that success followed predictable and distinct patterns of behaviour. He suggested that all men and women have similar options open to them. He argued that great success and achievement were available to any and all who would choose to follow certain requirements which he spelled out in his many books, Mr. Hill was the architect of the philosophy of success. He was a pioneer and an original thinker. Many books and articles have copied his ideas, but he remains the master. Of all the great human accomplishments in the 20th century, the judgement of history will inevitably rank the commentaries of Napoleon Hill among them. I hope you will in some small way benefit from this article, however, as you read, it will become obvious it was written well before the time of equality of the sexes. Please be understanding of this incongruity, it is worth it for the message.

An important principle of success in all walks of life and in all occupations is a willingness to "Go The Extra Mile"; which means the rendering of more and better service than that for which one is paid, and giving it in a positive mental attitude. Search wherever you will for a single sound argument against this principle and you will not find it, nor will you find a single instance of enduring success, which was not attained in part by its application.

The principle is not the creation of man. It is a part of Nature's handiwork, for it is obvious that every living creature below the intelligence of man is forced to apply the principle in order to survive. Man may disregard the principle if he chooses, but he cannot do so and at the same time enjoy the fruits of enduring success.

The advantages of the habit of going the extra mile are definite and understandable. Let me examine some of them and be convinced. The habit brings the individual to the favourable attention of those who can and will provide opportunities for self-advancement.

It tends to make one indispensable, in many different human relationships and it therefore enables him to command more than average compensation for personal services. It leads to mental growth and to physical skill and perfection in many forms of endeavour; thereby adding to one's earning capacity. It protects one against the loss of employment when employment is scarce and places him in a position to command the choicest jobs.

It enables one to profit by the law of contrast since the majority of people do not practice the habit. It leads to the development of a positive, pleasing mental attitude, which is essential for

enduring success. It tends to develop a keen, alert imagination because it is a habit, which inspires one continuously to seek new and better ways of rendering service. It develops the important quality of personal initiative. It develops self-reliance and courage.

It serves to build the confidence of others in one's integrity. It aids the mastery of the destructive habit of procrastination. It develops definiteness of purpose, insuring one against the common habit of aimlessness.

There is still another and a greater reason for following the habit of going the extra mile. It gives one the only logical reason for asking for increased compensation. If a man performs no more service than that for which he is being paid, then obviously he is receiving all the pay to which he is entitled.

He must render as much service as that for which he is being paid, in order to hold his job, or to maintain his source of income, regardless of how he earns it. But he has the privilege always of rendering an "overplus" of service as a means of accumulating a reserve credit of goodwill, and to provide a just reason for demanding more pay, a better position, or both.

Every position based upon a salary or wages provides one with an opportunity to advance himself by the application of this principle, and it is important to note that the American system of free enterprise is operated on a basis of providing every worker in industry with a proper incentive to apply the principle.

Any practice of philosophy which deprives a man of the privilege of going the extra mile is unsound and doomed to failure, for it is obvious that this principle is the stepping-stone of major importance by which an individual may receive compensation for extraordinary skill, experience and education; and it is the one principle which provides the way of self-determination, regardless what occupation, profession or calling the individual may be engaged in.

In America, anyone may earn a living without the habit of going the extra mile. And many do just that, but the economic security and luxuries available under the great American way of life are available only to the individual who makes this principle a part of his philosophy of life and lives by it as a matter of daily habit.

Every known rule of logic and common sense forces one to accept this as true. And even a cursory analysis of men in the higher brackets of success will prove that it is true. It is a well-known fact that Andrew Carnegie developed more successful leaders of industry than has any other great American industrialist.

Most of them came up from the ranks of ordinary day labourers and many of them accumulated personal fortunes of vast amounts, more than they could acquire without the guidance of Mr. Carnegie. The first test that Mr. Carnegie applied to any worker whom he desired to promote was that of determining to what extent the worker was willing to go the extra mile. It was this test that led to the discovery of Charles M Schwab.

Mr. Schwab first came to Mr. Carnegie's attention when he was working as a labourer in one of the steel master's plants. Close observation revealed that Mr. Schwab always performed more and better service than that for which he was paid. Moreover, he performed it with

a pleasing mental attitude, which made him popular among his fellow workers. He was promoted from one job to another until at long last in 1901 he was made president of the great United States Steel Corporation at a salary of \$75,000 a year.

Not through all the ingenuity of man, or all the schemes that men resort to in order to get something for nothing, could Charles M Schwab, the day labourer, have earned as much as \$75,000 during his entire lifetime if he had not willingly adopted and followed the habit of going the extra mile.

On some occasions Mr.Carnegie not only paid Mr.Schwab's salary, which was generous enough, but he gave him as much as \$1,000,000 as a bonus in addition to his regular salary. When Mr. Carnegie was asked why he gave Mr.Schwab a bonus so much greater than his salary, he replied in words that every worker, regardless of his job or wages, might well ponder. "I gave him his salary for the work he actually performed", said Mr. Carnegie, "and the bonus for his willingness to go the extra mile", thus setting a fine example to his fellow workers".

Think of that! A salary of \$75,000 a year, paid to a man who started as a day labourer, and a bonus of more than ten times that amount for a good disposition expressed by a willingness to do more than he was paid for.

Verily it pays to go the extra mile, for every time an individual does so he places someone else under obligation to him. No one is compelled to follow the habit of going the extra mile, and seldom is anyone ever requested to render more service than that for which he is paid. Therefore, if the habit is followed it must be adopted on one's own initiative.

But, the Constitution of the United States guarantees every man this privilege, and the American system provides rewards and bonuses for those who follow this habit, and makes it impossible for a man to adopt the habit without receiving appropriate compensation. The compensation may come in many different forms. Increased pay is a certainty. Voluntary promotions are inevitable. Favorable working conditions and pleasant human relationships are assured.

And these lead to economic security, which a man may attain on his own merits.

There is still another benefit to be gained by the man who follows the habit of going the extra mile: It keeps him on good terms with his own conscience and serves as a stimulant to his own soul! Therefore, it is a builder of sound character, which has no equal in any other human habit.

You who have young boys and girls growing into adulthood might well remember this for their sake! Teach a child the benefits of rendering more service and better service than that which is customary and you will have made contributions of character to that child which will serve him or her all through life.

The philosophy of Andrew Carnegie is essentially a philosophy of economics. But it is more than that! It is also a philosophy of ethics and sympathy for the weak and the unfortunate. It teaches one how to become his brother's keeper and at the same time rewards him for so doing.

Let us now observe that the admonition to render more service and better service than that for which one is paid, it is paradoxical because it is impossible for anyone to render such service without receiving appropriate compensation. The compensation may come in many forms and from many different sources, some of them strange and unexpected sources, but come it will.

The worker who renders this type of service may not always receive appropriate compensation from the person to whom he renders the service, but this habit will attract to him many opportunities for self-advancement among them new and more favourable sources of employment. Thus his pay will come to him directly.

Ralph Waldo Emerson had this truth in mind when he said (in his essay on Compensation), "If you serve an ungrateful master serve him the more. Put God in your debt. Every stroke shall be repaid. The longer the payment is withheld, the better for you, for compound interest on compound interest is the rate and usage of this exchequer".

Speaking once more in terms that seem paradoxical, be reminded that the most profitable time a man devotes to labour is that for which he receives no direct or immediate financial compensation. For it must be remembered that there are two forms of compensation available to the man who works for wages. One is the wages he receives in money.

The other is the skill he attains from his experiences; a form of compensation which often exceeds monetary remuneration, for skill and experience are the worker's most important stock in trade through which he may promote himself to higher pay and great responsibilities.

The attitude of the man who follows the habit of going the extra mile is this. He recognises the truth that he is receiving pay for schooling himself for a better position and greater pay!

This is an asset of which no worker can be cheated, no matter how selfish or greedy his immediate employer may be. It is the "compound interest on compound interest" which Emerson mentioned.

It was this very asset which enabled Charles M Schwab to climb, step by step, from the lowly beginning as a day labourer to the highest position his employer had to offer and it was this asset as well which brought Mr.Schwab a bonus of more than ten times the amount of his salary.

The million dollar bonus which Mr.Schwab received was his payoff for having put his best efforts into every job he performed - a circumstance that could not have happened if he had not followed the habit of going the extra mile.

Mr. Carnegie had but little, if anything, to do with the circumstance. It was entirely out of his hands. Let us be generous by assuming that Mr. Carnegie paid off because he knew Mr.Schwab had earned the additional pay, which had not been promised him. But the actual fact may be that he paid off rather than lose so valuable a man. And here let us note that the man who follows the habit of going the extra mile thereby places the purchaser of his services under a double obligation to pay a just compensation. On being an obligation based upon his sense of fairness, the other based on his sense of fear of losing a valuable man.

Thus we see that no matter how we view the principle of going the extra mile, we come always to the same answer, that it pays "compound interest" to all that follow the habit. No one ever does anything voluntarily without a motive. Let us see if we can reveal a sound motive that will justify the habit of going the extra mile by observing a few who have been inspired by it.

Many years ago an elderly lady was strolling through a Pittsburgh department store, obviously killing time. She passed counter after counter without anyone paying any attention to her. All of the clerks had spotted her as an idle "looker" who had no intention of buying. They made it a point of looking in another direction when she stopped at their counters.

What costly business this neglect turned out to be! Finally the lady came to a counter that was attended by a young clerk who bowed politely and asked if he might serve her.

"No" she replied, "I am just killing time, waiting for the rain to stop so I can go home". "Very well Madam" the young man smiled, "may I bring out a chair for you", and he brought it without waiting for her answer. After the rain stopped, the young man took the lady by the arm, escorted her to the street and bade her good-bye. As she left she asked him for his card.

Several months later the owner of the store received a letter, asking that this young man be sent to Scotland to take an order for the furnishings of a home. The owner of the store wrote back that he was sorry, but the young man did not work the home furnishings department, however, he explained that he would be glad to send an "experienced man" to do his job.

Back came a reply that no one would do except this particular young man. The letter was signed by Andrew Carnegie and the house he wanted furnished was Skibo Castle in Scotland. The elderly lady was Mr. Carnegie's mother. The young man was sent to Scotland and he received an order for several hundred thousand dollars worth of household furnishings. He later became the owner of half interest in the store.

Verily it pays to go the extra mile.

Over forty years ago a young salesman in a hardware store observed that the store had a lot of odds and ends, which were out of date and not selling. Having time on his hands, he rigged up a special table in the middle of the store. He loaded it with some of this unsaleable merchandise, marking it the bargain price of a dime an article. To his surprise and that of the owner of the store, the gadgets sold like hot cakes.

Out of the experience grew the great F W Woolworth Five and Ten-Cent chain store system. The young man who stumbled upon the idea by going the extra mile was Frank W Woolworth. That idea yielded him a fortune estimated at more than \$550,000,000. Moreover, the same idea made several other persons rich, and applications of the idea are at the heart of many of the more profitable merchandising systems in America.

No one told young Woolworth to exercise his right to personal initiative. No one paid him for doing so, yet his action led to ever-increasing returns for his efforts. Once he put the idea into practice, increasing returns nearly ran him down.

There is something about this habit of doing more than one is paid for which works in one's behalf even while he sleeps. Once it begins to work, it piles up riches so fast that it seems like queer magic which, like Aladdin's Lamp, draws to one's aid an army of genies, which come laden with bags of gold.

Some thirty years ago Charles M Schwab's private railroad car was switched onto the siding at his steel plant in Pennsylvania. It was a cold, frosty morning. As he alighted from his car he was met by a young man with a stenographer's notebook in his hands who hurriedly explained that he was a stenographer in the general office of the steel company, and that he had come to meet the car to see if Mr. Schwab needed any letters written, or any telegrams sent.

"Who asked you to meet me?" Mr. Schwab queried. "No one", the young man replied. "I saw the telegram coming through announcing your arrival, so I came down to meet you, hoping I might be of some service".

Think of that! He came down hoping he might be able to find something to do for which he was not paid. And he came on his own initiative without being told. Mr. Schwab thanked him politely for his thoughtfulness, but said he had no need for a stenographer at the moment.

After carefully noting the young man's name, he sent the lad back to his work. That night, when the private car was hitched to the night train for its return to New York City, it carried the young stenographer. He had been assigned, at Mr.Schwab's request, for service in New York as one of the steel magnate's assistants. The lad's name was Williams. He remained in Mr. Schwab's service for several years, during which opportunity after opportunity for promotion came to him unsolicited.

It is peculiar how opportunities have a way of trailing the people who make it their business to go the extra mile, but they do very definitely. Finally an opportunity came to young Williams which he could not ignore. He was made president and a large stockholder in one of the largest drug concerns in the United States - a job that yielded him a fortune far greater than his needs.

This incident is clear evidence of what can happen, and what has been happening all down through the years under the American way of life.

Here is the appropriate place to remind you of an important thing about the habit of doing more than one is paid for. It is the strange influence, which it has on the man who does it.

The greatest benefit from this habit does not come to those to whom the service is rendered. It comes to the one who renders the service, in the form of a changed "mental attitude", which gives him more influence with other people, more self-reliance, greater initiative, more enthusiasm, more vision and definiteness of purpose. All of these are qualities of successful achievement.

"Do the right thing and you shall have the power", said Emerson. Ah, yes the power! What can a man do in our world without power? But it must be the type of power, which attracts other people instead of repelling them. No one has ever been known to achieve permanent success without doing more than he was paid for.

The practice has its counter-part in the laws of nature. It has back of it an impressive array of evidence as to its soundness. It is based on common sense and justice. It must be a form of power, which gains momentum from the law of increasing returns, through the operation of which one's acts and deeds come back to him greatly multiplied.

You who work for wages should learn more about this sowing and reaping business. Then you would understand why no man can go on forever sowing the seed of inadequate service and reaping a harvest of full-grown pay. You would know that there must come a halt to the habit of demanding a full day's pay for a poor day's work.

And you who do not work for wages, but who wish to get more of the better things of life! Let us have a word with you. Why do you not become wise and start getting what you wish the easy and sure way? Yes, there is an easy and a sure way to promote one's self into whatever you want from life, and its secret becomes known to every person who makes it his business to go the extra mile. The secret can be uncovered in no other manner, for it is wrapped up in that extra mile.

The pot of gold at the "end of the rainbow" is not a mere fairy tale! The end of that extra mile is the spot where the rainbow ends, and that is where the pot of gold is hidden.

Few people ever catch up with the "end of the rainbow". When one gets to where he thought the rainbow ended he finds it is still far in the distance. The trouble with most of us is that we do not know how to follow rainbows.

Those who know the secret, know that the end of the rainbow can be reached only by going the extra mile. Late one afternoon, some forty- five years ago, William C Durant, the founder of General Motors, walked into his bank after banking hours, and asked for some favour which in the ordinary course of business should have been requested during banking hours.

The man who granted the favour was Carol Downes, an under official of the bank. He not only served Mr. Durant with efficiency, but he went the extra mile and added courtesy to the service. He made Mr. Durant feel that it was a real pleasure to serve him. The incident seems trivial, and of itself it was of little importance. Unknown to Mr. Downes, this courtesy was destined to have repercussions of a far-reaching nature.

The next day Mr. Durant asked Downes to come to his office. That visit led to the offer of a position, which Downes accepted. He was given a desk in a general office where nearly a hundred other people worked, and he was notified that the office hours were from 8.30am to 5.30pm. His salary to begin with was modest.

At the end of the first day, when the gong rang announcing the close of the day's work, Downes noticed that everyone grabbed his hat and coat and made a rush for the door. He sat still, waiting for the others to leave the office. After they had gone he remained at his desk,

pondering in his own mind the cause of the great haste everyone had shown to get away on the very second of quitting time.

Fifteen minutes later Mr. Durant opened the door of his private office, saw Downes still at his desk, and asked Downes whether he understood that he was privileged to stop work at 5.30. "Oh yes", Downes replied, "but I did not wish to be run over in the rush". Then he asked if he could be of any service to Mr. Durant. He was told he might find a pencil for the motor magnate. He got the pencil, ran it through the pencil-sharpener and took it to Mr. Durant. Mr. Durant thanked him and said "good night".

The next day at quitting time Downes remained at his desk again after the "rush" was over. This time he waited with purpose aforethought. In a little while Mr. Durant came out of his private office and asked again if Downes did not understand that 5.30 was the time for closing.

"Yes" Downes smiled. "I understand it is quitting time for the others, but I haven't heard anyone say that I have to leave the office when the day is officially closed, so I choose to remain here with the hope that I might be of one slight service to you "What an unusual hope" Durant exclaimed.

"Where did you get the idea?" "I got it from a scene I witness here at closing time every day", Downes replied. Durant grunted some reply, which Downes did not hear distinctly and returned to his office.

From then on Downes always remained at his desk after closing time until he saw Mr. Durant leave for the day. He was not paid to remain overtime. No one told him to do it. No one promised him anything for remaining and as far as the casual observer might know, he was wasting his time.

Several months later Downes was called into Mr. Durant's office and informed that he had been chosen to go out to a new plant that had been purchased recently to supervise the installation of the plant machinery. Imagine that! A former bank official becoming a machinery expert in a few months.

Without quibble, Downes accepted the assignment and went on his way. He did not say, "Why Mr. Durant, I know nothing about the installation of machinery". He did not say, "That's not my job", or "I'm not paid to install machinery". No, he went to work and did what was requested of him.

Moreover, he went at the job with a pleasant "mental attitude". Three months later the job was completed. It was done so well that Mr. Durant called Downes into his office and asked him where he learned about machinery. "Oh", Downes explained, "I never learned, Mr. Durant. I merely looked around, found men who knew how to get the job done, put them to work, and they did it.

"Splendid!" Mr. Durant exclaimed. "There are two types of men who are valuable. One is the fellow who can do something and do it well, without complaining that he is being overworked. The other is the fellow who can get other people to do things well, without complaining. You are both types wrapped into one package".

Downes thanked him for the compliment and turned to go. "Wait a moment", Durant requested. "I forgot to tell you that you are the new manager of a plant you have installed, and your salary to start with is \$50,000.00 a year.

The following ten years of association with Mr. Durant was worth between ten and twelve million dollars to Carol Downes. He became an intimate advisor of the motor king and made himself rich as a result. There is nothing very dramatic about the story of Carol Downes. The main trouble with so many of us is that we see men who have "arrived" and we weigh them in the hour of their triumph without taking the trouble to find out how or why they arrived.

The incidents mentioned occurred during the day's business, without even a passing notice by the average person who worked along with Downes. And we doubt not that many of these fellow workers envied him because they believed he had been favoured by Mr. Durant, through some sort of pull or luck, or whatever it is that men who do not succeed use as an excuse to explain their own lack of progress.

Well, to be candid, Downes did have an inside "pull" with Mr. Durant! He created that "pull" on his own initiative. He created it by going the extra mile in a matter as trivial as that of placing a neat point on a pencil when nothing was requested except a plain pencil. He created it by remaining at his desk "with the hope" that he might be of service to his employer after the "rush" was over at 5.30 each evening. He created it by using his right of personal initiative by finding men who understood how to install machinery instead of asking Durant where or how to find such men.

Trace down these incidents step by step and you will find that Downes' success was due solely to his own initiative. Moreover, the story consists of a series of little tasks well performed, in the right "mental attitude".

Perhaps there were a hundred other men working for Mr. Durant who could have done as well as Downes, but the trouble with them was that they were searching for the "end of the rainbow" by running away from it in the 5.30 rush each afternoon.

Long years afterward a friend asked Carol Downes how he got his opportunity with Mr. Durant. "Oh", he modestly replied, "I just made it my business to get in his way, so he could see me. When he looked around, wanting some little service, he called on me because I was the only one in sight. In time he got into the habit of calling on me. There you have it! Mr. Durant "got into the habit" of calling on Downes. Moreover, he found that Downes could and would assume responsibilities by going the extra mile.

What a pity that all of the American people do not catch something of this spirit of assuming greater responsibilities. What a pity that more of us do not begin speaking more of our "privileges" under the American way of life, and less of the lack of opportunities in America.

If there is a man living in America today who would seriously claim that Carol Downes would have been better off if he had been forced, by law, to join the mad rush and quit his work at 5.30 in the afternoon? If he had done so, he would have received the standard wages for the sort of work he performed, but nothing more. Why should he have received more?

His destiny was in his own hands. It was wrapped up in this one lone privilege of every American citizen: the right of personal initiative through and exercising the habit of always going the extra mile.

That tells the whole story. There is no other secret to Downes' success. He admits it, and everyone familiar with the circumstances of his promotion from poverty to riches knows it.

There is one thing no one seems to know: Why are there so few men who, like Carol Downes, discover the power implicit in doing more than one is paid for? The whole world is clamoring for such men. They are needed and wanted in every walk of life. American industry has always had princely berths for men who can and will assume responsibilities and who get the job done in the right "mental attitude" by going the extra mile.

Andrew Carnegie lifted no fewer than forty such men from the lowly station of day labourers to millionaires. He understood the value of men who were willing to go the extra mile.

Whenever he found such a man, he brought "his find" into the inner circle of his business and gave him an opportunity to earn "all he was worth".

People do things or refrain from doing them because of a motive. The soundest of motives for the habit of going the extra mile is the fact that it yields enduring dividends in ways too numerous to mention, to all who follow the habit.

The best of all methods of testing the soundness of this principle is that of putting it to work as a part of one's daily habits. Some truths we can learn only through our own experience. Americans want greater individual shares of the vast resources of this country. That is a healthy desire. The wealth is here in abundance, but let us get our wealth by giving something of value in return for it.

We know the rules by which success is attained. Let us appropriate these rules and use them intelligently thereby acquiring the personal riches we demand, and adding to the wealth of the nation as well.