
*"...at last the ladder,
which had been built slowly,
slowly,
one hope at a time,
reached up to*



the clouds.

And the dreamer began...



*to
climb."*

Becoming Uncommon

*Developing Your Success at
the Speed of Life*

Michael York

Student and CEO



*In celebration of
the power of learning*

*“To Strive To Seek, To Find,
and not to Yield.”*

— Tennyson

When do we stop learning?

Most individuals and organizations often don't understand the huge difference between learning and training.

Most every company talks of the importance of training, even providing some form of it to their workers.

But it's the attention and desire of the individual who truly wants to learn

that is of the utmost importance.

It is this personal desire and effort to keep up, to continue the process, that promotes real improvement.

And that is more than just training...it's learning.

Training has a beginning and an end,

it's for a day, or a weekend or a convention.

And unless those attending

want to learn something the training is for naught. But

learning is a continuing process. Think for a moment about how a six-year-old learns.

Every day it's something new.

We may think "Hey, I'm the Daddy, I already know it all..." or "I've got 15 years' experience..."

The truth is, the marketplace is moving fast beneath our feet, constantly changing.

If we don't keep pace, or at least attempt to continue our learning...

we're history.

And this is *The Future!*

Welcome.

This book is personal.

In it I have shared some of my most private thoughts, feelings and writings about my life, my family and my work.

It is intended only as a means of expressing to you
Encouragement,
Instruction,
Inspiration,
and Confirmation.

That *your life* can be one of the next Great Success Stories.

And that my hope for you is that you will one day share your experiences with another student.

What we choose to do for a living is our profession, but it will make up a large part of, and have an impact on, our personal lives and the lives of those around us. That alone should cause us to look at our work, our contribution, our success, in new ways.

My favorite definition of success?

It's at the end of this book.

And the best part about reading this book is that you can go there now, or open it to any page between here and there and begin reading.

Be as adventurous as you like.

There are no chapters and the text flow is certainly *uncommon*.

I do not ask that you agree with everything written here, only that you consider it as you would anything personal shared with you

by a friend.

Before you read this book...

Many of the references throughout this book are regarding sales, selling and sales people. The reason?

Simple enough.

This book is written from a sales perspective on business, and life.
Whether you realize it or not, you will "sell" your entire life.

You will...

Sell yourself to adults as a child.

Sell yourself to your teachers and friends in school.

Sell your attitude and your character to win your first job.

And one day,

sell your future spouse on spending a lifetime with you. And soon after, your children will begin selling you.

Your education throughout the various stages of "selling" in life is largely up to you. Oh, there are lots of teachers and instruction available.

But rarely will those teachers come and take you captive.

You will learn those lessons primarily because you decide to.

If you have the desire to learn, or if you develop it.

So whether or not you consider yourself a "sales" person matters little.

There are principles and ideas and fundamentals within these pages that apply to your life and how you live it, balancing all the pressures and demands of life's arena today.

There are lots of books and lists and tapes and videos.

So it's not that we need more "how to,"

It's more about you really having the "want to" or the desire, and choosing to find the clues of success. They're out there.

Good hunting. And good selling.

I wish you well in your pursuit of the uncommon lessons
of success in life.

Thank you for being my customer, and for being a student.

Becoming A Student

I'm Michael York, and I am a student.

I know that because it says so on my business card.

Actually I put it there to remind me every time I see it,
or each time someone comments on it, that it is my goal to
ALWAYS continue learning.

With all that I have learned over the past 20 years, I can now
be

called a professional. There's an interesting word,
professional. Stop for a moment and think about what it
means.

Being a professional at anything,

means you're doing it *for a fee*.

For profit. And by definition, striving to be at the top
of
your game, whatever it is you aspire to be "professional" at.

I'll never forget soon after I started my speaking and
consulting business, being introduced as a "professional
speaker." Wow!

Exciting. And challenging. Recalling that
introduction on that day challenges me every day to be
the

best I can be at my chosen profession.

And by doing that the marketplace will reward me with a greater measure of compensation.

What's your profession? Or what do you aspire to do at a professional level?

I'm very excited to share with you some of the things that I've learned in my study and pursuit of **SUCCESS**... and the clues that success leaves behind.

The laws, principles, rules, suggestions, fundamentals and philosophies that have propelled others to amazing successes, incredible achievements and breakthrough accomplishments.

Much of it I found in books and tapes, and just by paying attention. Then I applied it to my life and career.

The instruction and inspiration that has worked for others, and that can impact our lives in much the same way.

Beware of anyone who knows it all and tells you so.

The best teachers remain lifelong students.

The thing we know best is the existence of those things we have not yet learned.

I have found that there is a difference between a manager and a leader.

Between work and a job.

Between just showing up and getting the most out of every day.

A difference between the status quo and the value that comes with life change.

I call it **"becoming uncommon!"**

It's not about taking shortcuts or skipping steps, it's

about
rock-solid foundational principles that can absolutely make
you a better student, better leader, better father, mother,
spouse, worker,
better at whatever it is you do. Or whatever you choose to
do.

This book doesn't have all the
answers.

In fact, it is designed primarily to promote more
questions.

Questions you will ask yourself. What I have to say is really
not all that important. But what I'm asking you to consider is
that

*How you respond, what you think, and how you feel
about what you read here* is extremely important.

Ask yourself,

"What Am I Becoming?" as a result of what you're
learning... or not learning.

What we'll discuss in these pages
and what I hope you'll consider is "*what am I becoming with
what I'm doing in life.*"

I want to challenge you to take a hard look at
what you're doing...or not doing.

Ask yourself, "*Am I excited about what I do?*"

Are you? Do you love what you do? If not,
what would you change? What would you love to do if you
could?

Why can't you? Why don't you?

What could make you more passionate?

Give you a zest, a zeal, a love for your work? Is there a
fire burning in you? Are you excited and enthusiastic? Next
question,

*“What are the things in my life, things about my work, that I love?
What has me turned on?”*

If you find it's a short list, or a list that's tough to get started on, maybe it's time for an evaluation, a
checkup.

Maybe a strategic planning session with someone you
admire,
someone you consider a success.

Maybe it's time to take a hard look at what you're
doing,
or how you're doing it.

Just how “valuable” are you?

And how valuable can you become if it's really important to
you?

Are you letting the days and weeks slip by just putting in
your time?

Or are you loving what you do?

Carpe Diem.

What a great statement.

It's only a couple of words, but in any language it can't help
but add

value to your day and to your life if you adhere to the
challenge.

Seize The Day, grab it, enjoy it.

Maximize it.

Throw your arms around each day and give thanks for big
things,

little things, and all the things we often take for

granted.
Seize The Day with a zest and a zeal and a passion
that resolves to get the most from it.

I've Got Experience

I often speak to workers or managers or businesspeople who love to trumpet their 10 or 15 or 20 years of "experience," and in some cases these are the individuals who sit cross-armed with a little smirk as if to say "What can you tell me that I don't already know?"

I've seen it all in my career, I'm a pro, I've got
25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE!

And experience is a great thing, don't get me wrong.

But it's not the only thing, and it can't be something we refer to as *how good we were yesterday*.

Let's suppose you were going in for surgery tomorrow, and the good

news is your surgeon has 25 years' experience.

It would probably be of some comfort to you that you have an "experienced" surgeon.

But would you want this surgeon operating on you with the same tools, training and techniques he or she used 10, 15, even 20 years ago?

Or would you want the very latest and greatest?

The newest technology, the best tools and training and techniques?

The least amount of pain, the smallest incision, the quickest and safest recovery?

Certainly the price for that surgery has changed in 20 years; wouldn't you hope there's been an increase in other areas?

Of course.

How ridiculous is it for us to think, in sales, or medicine, or any other profession, that we can get by on experience alone.

Sadly though, that is exactly how many people think, which of course, makes it common.

What the marketplace demands is that we are at the top of our game TODAY.

That we are better now on this particular project than we've ever been. That we've been able to take all that we've learned up to this point and invest it in today. Experience alone is not enough.

We must **continue to learn and improve.**

How about this one:

"I can't believe I'm not doing better!"

(making more money)

"I've got 15 years' experience on this job."

That's sounds unfair, doesn't it?

Should we strike? How could a company do that to someone?

But after a closer look, here's what we find:

someone who grew pretty well in the beginning.

They were excited about this new opportunity, threw themselves into it, learned what to do, and what not to do.

In essence, they really went to work on

learning and improving in that first year. And then the learning curve went flat.

And they just repeated what had been
learned, what was easy, FOURTEEN MORE TIMES!

So it becomes not a case of someone with 15 years experience,
but

one year's experience, REPEATED over and over and
over. Stale, stagnant, not growing, not improving.
Sound familiar?

*"Remember not the former things;
Do not dwell on what is past.
Behold I am doing a new thing,
even now it springs up."
— Isaiah 43:18-19*

You 6.0

If there are two or three or six versions of a certain software
or video game, which one do we want? Some might say,
"I'd be happy to have any," but the prevailing answer would
be...

THE LATEST VERSION! Of course.

Sure, we want the 6.0 version, or Play Station 2 or 3 or 4
or whatever the latest, greatest and best is.

We want to live in a place that is on the grow,
new development, new opportunity. We move away from
stagnant or stalled growth to seek a better quality of life.

We read or research the best places to live, that offer us
the best of all that we seek for our life.

We want the latest technology.

We want the best from our towns and cities,
our transportation, ...why not for us?

We would no doubt say, in all the things WE want,

we'd choose the updated or the latest version.

Yet what we choose to bring to our careers or companies

or to the marketplace is the "outdated" version of Us.

The skills or education or learning from times past. We're not continuing to improve whatever it is we do or what we are, and

that means we're old news. Being passed by, or let go, because

the marketplace is choosing a later, greater version of worker over our 2.0 skills or attitude.

Why is that?

Just too hard to update our "software," I guess. Just not enough information available for me to get better in whatever area I choose

I suppose.

And I don't have a computer at home, or books, or encyclopedias, or trade magazines, or...

Hey, forget the common excuses,

find uncommon solutions.

How about scheduling some time at your local library?

"Man, do you how much they're getting for a library card these days?"

Oh, that's right, it's free.

It's free, but you do have to go get it.

I know it may seem difficult, but you can do it!

Be bold, march right into that library and tell them you want your very own LIBRARY CARD!

They might even give you one right there, now, today!
Books, tapes, computers, world wide web,
all right at your fingertips. Imagine, your very own
continuing education center.

Several years ago I heard a statistic that I could hardly believe,
that only about 3% of America has a library card.
Could it be?

Only 3%?

So I called the Library of Congress personally to find out.
Though they didn't keep statistics on that particular issue,

we reasoned that it certainly must be **less than**
5%.

Hard to believe how we take our libraries for granted.
But we must have them, for our children to learn, right?
So someday they can be as smart
and as educated as we are, and far beyond.

In contrast, how many of us would you suppose have a
"video rental card?"

Would you say it would be more than 5%?

Answer; without a doubt.

Don't wait for the Library Channel to come to TV.

Go get the books and tapes and your ticket to greater success
now.

We're so consumed as a society with "occupying" our time,
being entertained rather than "investing" our time into
learning or taking our 2.0 skills to a 3.0 or 4.0 version. Sad, but
common.

Uncommon says, "I will take advantage of every
opportunity to learn, to improve, to BECOME!"

"Sam was good 10 years ago, but you should see him today!"
"Susan started out as our receptionist, and today she's the C.O.O.!"
COOL!

*Continuing improvement is
what we demand from the marketplace,
and is also what the marketplace
demands from us.*

Become uncommon.
Update the version of YOU!

The marketplace will notice the difference and
pay you well for it.

*"When I get a little money
I buy books.
And if any is left over I buy
food and clothes."
– Erasmus*

What's so great about

“Uncommon”

Whether you're a student, an executive, salesperson, mom, dad, whatever you are or you choose to be, be...

Different.

A-Typical.

UN-conventional.

Be Memorable. And that means you'll

be unforgettable.

This is of course, just the opposite of common companies and individuals that are typical, or may even be called “average.” They just sort of blend in.

Nothing wrong with that if that's your goal, but blending in doesn't make you memorable with your customers or supervisors or teachers or co-workers. In fact, it makes you forgettable.

How many companies have that quality in their mission statement?

“We just want to blend in with all the other service providers and hope our customers like us the best.”

Conformity. (yaaaaawwwnnnn...)

Sound silly?

Why then do we think the thoughts and commit the acts that are

commonplace, the same, typical, comfortable, conventional.

Uncommon is different.

Uncommon companies and individuals...

Uncommon companies are the one's you've heard about...

This is just a sampling of the instruction, inspiration and ideas you can use to achieve a greater measure of success.

Becoming Uncommon is over 250 pages on Success.
Mine and yours.

It includes fundamentals and philosophies, success stories and history lessons, quotes of uncommon individuals who did the impossible. It's about leaders and managers, teachers and students, success and failure, executives and workers and parents and children.

It contains many questions you've asked before.
And many answers maybe you haven't found yet.
In it is encouragement and direction.

And I share with you powerful concepts that will absolutely work for you. Like creating value that lasts forever... in just 5 minutes.
And how something as simple as a book can change the course of your life, and of history.

*It is a different kind of personal development book.
And as you can see, written differently as well.*

On how we can all add greater value to our personal and professional lives, and how we can become known for being different, for being uncommon.

– Michael York

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