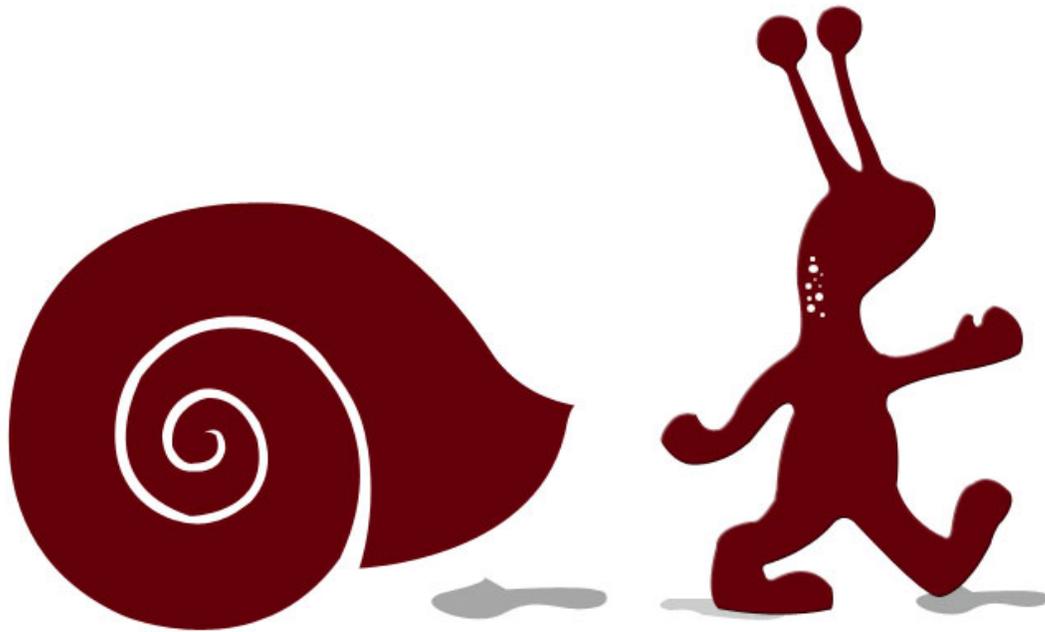


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# Title TBD

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GREAT Tagline Right Here, Oh Ya!



James Carter

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## Chapter One

# One Step Beyond Normal

A reporter, fresh out of college, noticed that his little town had filled up with people overnight. All the hotels were booked, the restaurants were filled and there were cars everywhere. Looking at the calendar, he saw that there was no festival, parade or other event that could account for such an onslaught of visitors. Being a good reporter and new to the town, he began asking folks why they were there.

As he spoke with people, he continued to hear the same story. Everyone was in town to attend a funeral. Who was the funeral for? What had this person done that would bring so many people to town? The reporter assumed that the funeral was for someone famous—a musician, an actor or maybe a politician who grew up there.

No. The funeral was for a man who had worked in that town, in the same place, doing the same thing, day in and day out, for forty-five years. However, it became clear to the reporter that most people had really known the man for only a few short years. It turned out that the man had worked in the middle school and that the visitor were all the students who had passed through the school in those forty-five years, most knowing him for only the time they were in school.

The reporter naturally asked what this person had done at the school. Had he been a principal or a favorite teacher beloved by all? Nope. He had, in fact, been the janitor. Somehow, without any direct authority or power, this man had impacted thousands of young people so much so that they left their busy lives for a few days to attend his funeral and pay their respects.

Almost ten thousand people attended the celebration of the life of this janitor. If ten thousand attended, how many people wanted to but couldn't make the trip? How many people had this man actually impacted?

This story would change my life.

I had been studying legendary people and how they, well, became legendary. What did they know? What did their path to such an achievement look like?

When I read about the janitor, I was moved but not instantly changed. You see, I had been studying *famous* legendary people. This janitor was not famous, so I while I was inspired by his story, I set it aside.

But three days later, in the middle of the night, I burst from sleep and yelled out loud: “Oh my God! He *is* legendary!” My wife, now wide awake, was not pleased.

That 3 a.m. realization reminded me of the time I took my four year old daughter to look at the stars in the desert. We were vying to see who would see the first star. I would like to say that I let her win, but she did actually see the first one.

“Look, Dad, the first star!”

Then another popped into view within seconds. “Look, Dad, another one.” And another and another. The stars kept popping up everywhere. I to watch the dome of the night sky fill with twinkling lights. My daughter was squealing with delight as she tried to point out each and every one.

The janitor was my first “star.” After I “saw” him in that story in 2007, I began seeing other *normal* legendary people. Then more. Then more! Legendary people were popping up everywhere like stars after sunset in the desert.

Until then, I did not realize that I was limiting my search by seeking out only famous legendary people. I subconsciously believed that in order to be legendary, you must be famous.

This man, this janitor, did not feel constrained by thinking, “I’m just a janitor.” He did not need to be famous or anything else to be legendary.

He is proof positive that titles mean nothing. Proof that the amount of money we make or have in our bank accounts does not equate with the amount of impact we can have. Proof that influence is possible in nearly everything we do. Proof that we don’t have to wait for anything before we take action to help others. Proof that we all have the capacity to Be Legendary.

This janitor, whom I will never meet, continued to change lives even after he was gone, and perhaps changed my life more than any. This amazing person, my first star, will forever be the person to challenge my thinking and my beliefs around who has the ability to be legendary.

After realizing how I constrained the definition of “legendary” and opening my blinders to the real world filled with legendary people everywhere, studying legendary people became infinitely easier! It became a cinch to meet and speak with people I saw as legendary. Buying them a cup of coffee was a common bribe. Tea worked, too, as did proffering dessert. Occasionally an alcoholic beverage was necessary, but I did whatever it took to talk to as many people as possible in order to understand what they were doing and why it mattered.

I have been doing this research for fifteen years, and have interviewed hundreds of people who have taken positive action and created an incredible and tangible impact on the world.

These are the questions I wanted answers to:

- What are these people doing?
- How do they achieve such incredible results?
- What do they know that I don't know?
- Is what they have learnable? Teachable?

I wanted to have an impact, too, and maybe I could follow in the footsteps of these giants. When I read about the janitor, my world tilted on its axis and everything looked different. I saw trends that had been in front of me the entire time but had missed. As I looked more closely at the people I was studying, common traits emerged.

The first trait that was blatantly obvious was courage. At the same time, I knew we needed something to help convey courage and legendary. Some kind of rallying symbol that would be instantly recognizable and get people to want to be legendary.

Impulsively, I held an Internet contest to create an icon for the phrase "It takes courage to be legendary." I magnanimously told everyone that I had no preconceived notions about what this icon should look like and that whichever design received the most votes would be our logo.

We received over 100 different from designers all over the world and we invited anyone and everyone to vote. This was a symbol for everyone, not just me and not just my company. There were just over 125,000 votes cast in the 30-day contest with a VERY clear winner..

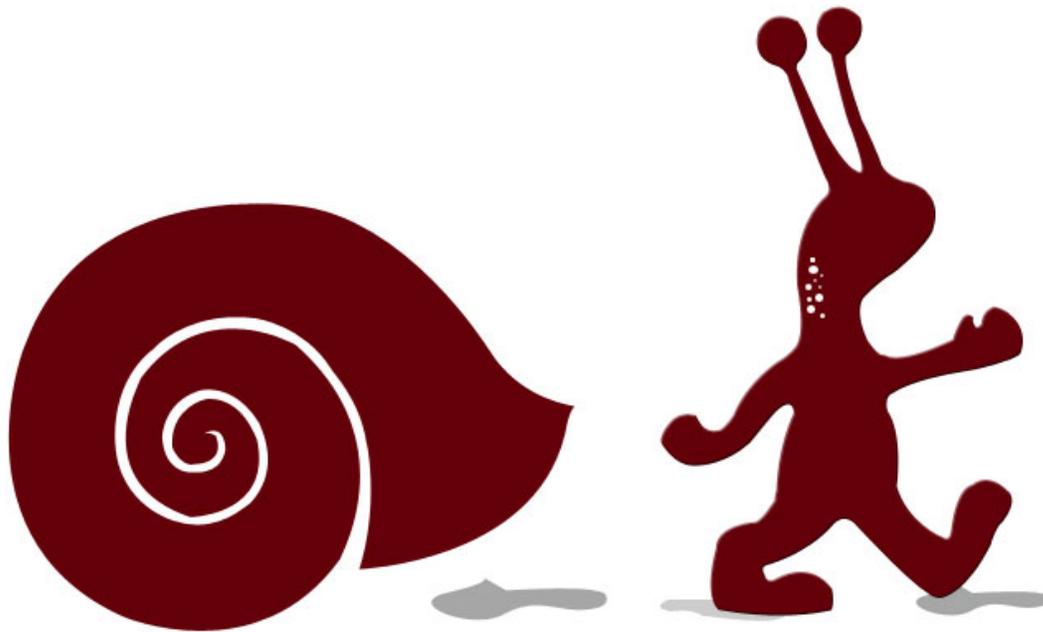
Never did I expect that a slimy snail walking away from its shell would receive almost 85 percent of the votes! I was horribly disappointed and could not believe that this buttery, garlicky appetizer / garden pest would be the symbol of our company and the movement we would create.

While I thought I had no idea about what the logo should be, I was clearly expecting something very masculine, like a man holding up the world. Designs along those lines were indeed submitted, but received almost no votes. I was stuck with this disgusting little beast.

Not willing to give up my masculine leanings, I figured that I would just change the design later when no one was looking. I was, after all, the owner of the company. But the snail designer knew something I didn't and captured the very essence of what it means to be legendary. I just couldn't see it yet because I was still stuck: it soon became clear that my belief in who *could be* legendary narrowed my focus to who *should be* legendary. A snail couldn't be legendary!

By 2009, a single commonality among legendary people became self-evident. Each of them was one step beyond normal.

## One Step Beyond Normal



When we are young, we seek out new experiences and adventures. We want to try new things and see what we are capable of doing. Then most of us get to a certain point in life where we are content with the status quo. We eat at our favorite restaurants, we drive the same route to work, we do everything we can to streamline our lives and create as little friction as possible. We no longer feel the need to test the waters—we just want to get through the day with as little annoyance and misadventure as possible.

Legendary people are different. They are never satisfied with the same old same old. They, too, have routines and don't veer from them all the time, but in certain key aspects of their lives they always push to go further. They do not settle. They do not allow themselves to become complacent. It took me a while to uncover this key, but once I did, I realized that it was the first element I needed to unlock the mystery of what makes legendary people legendary.

Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu—they all had this trait in common: they all continually challenged themselves to be one step beyond normal. Until one day ... they took what was just another step, one like hundreds of others they'd already taken, but this one step took them beyond society's normal. They were not just challenging themselves but a very important social norm. Those in power, and in some cases society as a whole, pushed back to force them to return within the norms. Yet they kept going and stayed one step beyond normal. They did not take a step backward to that safe place where everyone was comfortable.

So when we consider famous legendary people at the end of their lives and what they have accomplished, our view of them is as being hundreds of steps beyond where we are, and we think: I could never do that. I could never be legendary.

But you can.

These people became famous *and* legendary because they challenged something much larger than themselves, and they continued to challenge it because of their one critical habit: They were always one step beyond normal.

Once I realized this, my questions were:

- How did they continue?
- Where does that kind of emotional strength come from?

This was the genesis of my first author contribution, in the book *Discover Your Inner Strength*, with Stephen Covey, Ken Blanchard and Brian Tracy. In the chapter, 'Licking the Sticky Wicket', I explored the question of where does the immense strength come from that allowed them to withstand so much negativity?

The janitor was never famous because he never challenged society's norms. But he certainly challenged the norms of what it means to clean the hallways and bathrooms in a middle school. Knowing what I know now of legendary people, had a school principal told him he was not allowed to speak with students, I doubt that that would have prevented him from impacting those children. Had he been fired, he would still have created an impact, albeit in another way.

Legends are created one step at a time. There are no leaps. Jumping from an airplane is only a single step—a big one for sure, but only a single step. There were, however, many steps leading up to that one.

In 1911, Capt. Albert Berry became the first person to successfully jump from an airplane. That was a big step on that day. Today, tens of thousands of people successfully jump from airplanes. It's normal. If you want to jump, you can be in the air in a few hours with a very good expectation of being alive at the end. Today, parachuting is just a normal adrenaline rush.

We can more easily walk in the footsteps of legends and achieve even more because of the confidence they give us to push beyond our boundaries, our norms. Legends create a new normal for the rest of us. Legendary people are more committed to the experience of life. They have a broader and deeper sense of their impact, in the work they do and in their interactions with people. Legendary people walk through life with a greater sense of purpose and, as a result, take more initiative, are more curious, are lifelong learners.

As I studied everyday legends and how they were one step beyond normal, I began to truly see for the first time that I had a protective shell. I never realized that it was there, restricting

my expression of self, until I saw how easily legendary people walked through life, one step at a time, creating an impact and even massive change. I knew my goal then was to make today's legendary normal. Captain Berry instigated a huge change with one step, but it took the masses to make it normal.

## Make Today's Legendary Normal

Once upon a time, everyone was happy. Or so the story goes. However, many people struggled in silence, trying to live a life of meaning but knowing that something was missing. What was missing?

Hundreds of people began asking that question out loud and society ridiculed them. So they grew silent. Most did not want to be laughed at or to be singled out as weird. Then one day something happened that affected everyone in the world. You were there. You lived it. Do you remember this event?

We peeked out of our shells and looked to the left and right, seeing, many for the first time, a world of humanness all around us. We were awakened to a world full of love, compassion and consistent, simple acts of kindness. We felt connected with those around us in a million small and mundane ways. Everyone reveled in sharing that human connection.

Over time, the event and that sense of connection passed from memory. We crawled back into our shells, content to be safe and avoid risk by not venturing outside them. Buying the latest gadget or fanciest car or biggest house took precedence. Getting to the front of the line—whichever line, as long as it complied with the “me first” mentality that had been central to our society for so long—was all that mattered.

But this wasn't true for all people.

Some awoke permanently to the energy of deep human connection and walked away from their shells. These people are living, to this day, knowing that a different world is possible. They are intentionally recreating the world from the ashes of that event. The event was 9/11.

The unintended consequence of that catastrophic event was that it jolted a large group of people into seeing the possibility of a different world, a better world—normal, everyday people consciously creating a positive difference in the world. En masse, we made legendary normal overnight.

But our new legendary world disappeared because it was a reaction and was without purpose. This time, we are creating it intentionally. This time it will stick and today's legendary will be normal again. Just imagine what that new world will be like and what we will strive to achieve then.

I wrote this book to reveal the mind-set of legendary people that allows them to consistently be just beyond normal. I wish that, like one of those superbuff people you see hawking protein shakes, I could tell you to simply do what I have done and convince you that “you too can Be Legendary!” I can't.

The truth is that I have spent most of my adult life researching peak moments, creating transformational life experiences and studying people who have achieved the kinds of results I admire. I can share only what I have learned.

The ABCs of a legend's mind-set:

**Awareness:** What am I focusing on that is shaping my world?

**Beliefs:** How do I develop a powerful structure that supports what I want to achieve most?

**Courage:** Where is my source of courage and how do I harness it when I most need it?

The mind-set of a legend is 100 percent learnable, and when the ABCs are integrated a positive spiral of amazing shit will start to happen. Each of us has the capacity to create this mind-set. In fact, it already exists inside us. We just have to rediscover it.

One person can create enormous change, but it requires the masses to create transformation. The world needs you. I need you to facilitate the transformation we have already experienced and make it permanent.

Be Legendary's mission is to guide people who will challenge the status quo, take one step beyond normal and change this world for the better.

Are you one of them?

It's time to crawl out of your shell.