



The Conspiracy to Call "Pretty Good" – Great

Written collaboratively by Michele Clay & Mark Kamin

There is a conspiracy that you are unwittingly a part of...

That conspiracy is an unspoken agreement to be ordinary; to have ordinary performance and an ordinary life. This unspoken agreement is reinforced through having interactions with others be about “being nice” or “not being pushy” or some other version of that, rather than having interactions be about being effective. Being effective requires, among other things, **extraordinary** communication.

The conspiracy has us tolerate our submission to be ordinary by taking pleasure in things being “pretty good” – we even set it up where people congratulate us and acknowledge us for being “pretty good”. *(He’s so nice, she’s so nice, they are so nice ...they are working so hard, they have done everything and their business is still not working.)*

Doing all of this puts comfort ahead of performance, which is exactly the nature of ordinary. The reality of ordinary is mediocrity. Said another way, ordinary is “not very good” at all.

There is a clear and unmistakable difference between the way an Olympic athlete goes about his or her business (work ethic, perseverance, commitment to excellence) and how we live, for the most part, day to day. If one shines a light of extraordinary performance on our day to day lives, it becomes very clear that the extraordinary performance of a champion is quite distinct from our ordinary day to day lives.

It takes mental discipline and constant creation in the way we relate to and with ourselves and others to maintain a context and an environment (culture) that allows for ongoing high performance.

An Olympic athlete strives for real excellence because they see the possibility of “being great” and sees “being great” as its own reward.

If you don’t create the context of “being great” as something larger than one’s own self-interest, you will not put forth the rigor and energy required ***to be great***.

With our clients, we work to create a context and a culture for the organization that powerfully pull leadership, managers and employees toward *being extraordinary*.