

The Four Steps to Achieving Greatness

Jay Abraham, marketing master and author of *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got*, knows that there is greatness inside of everyone. In this interview with *InsuranceNewsNet* publisher Paul Feldman, Abraham describes the four steps of greatness and why they are worth attaining.



SS

W

e all want to achieve a level of “greatness” in our lives and in our business. But the question is *what is greatness and what does it even look like?*

That has been a lifetime pursuit of Jay Abraham, a marketing master and author of influential books such as *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got*. Jay has spent the past 25 years solving problems and significantly increasing the bottom lines by more than \$9.4 billion for more than 10,000 clients in more than 465 industries worldwide.

Jay has seen and dealt with every type of business you can imagine. He's studied and solved every kind of business question, problem, challenge and opportunity. But in his dozens of years of helping other people become successful, he was constantly seeing people fall to inertia, to choose mediocrity. Everybody grew up thinking they'd be a superhero and many ended up a bit part in someone else's heroic story. Jay saw that people had greatness inside, yearning to run free.

He researched the path to greatness and concluded that it has four steps. In this discussion with *InsuranceNewsNet* Publisher Paul Feldman, Jay describes how to achieve greatness.

FELDMAN: How do you define “Greatness” and why should everyone strive for it?

ABRAHAM: We started looking at greatness a couple of years ago and it was tormenting to me because I see all kinds of people around the world who perform at levels of mediocrity. And yet there is never any man or woman in any role in life and certainly in your industry that ever wants to be average or mediocre. So the question is why would they do it?

I did a lot of thinking and had a lot of stimulating discussion with a lot of

experts and specialists much brighter than I and we have come to the conclusion that every human being is inherently programmed in their DNA for greatness. Now that's the good news. But there are four reasons that few if any perform even remotely close to greatness.

Four Steps to Greatness

The difference between mediocrity and greatness is not linear. When you realize how to operate in that rarefied strata of greatness, the impact, the performance, the results, the connection, the relevancy that emanate from it is asymmetric. It's geometric.

FELDMAN: So, why do so few people operate in the realm of greatness?

ABRAHAM: The first, biggest and most fascinating reason and the reason that's pretty easy to solve is they do not have a clue. They don't know what greatness looks like relative to the performance of their job, their career, their role or their life. Not only what it looks like, but also how it feels, how it is supposed to

be executed and what it looks like from the recipient's side.

I had a client in Mexico who sold entry-level homes for people who were just getting married. Their entryway on their model house had graffiti on it. The bathrooms were not clean and the environment was dirty. Yet when people went there, they were being asked to choose this as the place they wanted to raise their family and spend the rest of their lives. And it was not doing well. The managers of the facility were working their hearts out but no one had made that connection.

So the first move toward greatness is recognizing that it's inherent. We all have it. We sense in our hearts that we are not necessarily performing to the nth degree of our capability. And a lot of times we try to correlate it to money but it's much more complex than that. We want more fulfillment, we want more connection, we want more contribution but no one ever paints a clear picture.

It applies everywhere in your life. It's greatness in your role as a spouse, parent, friend or contributor in a community. The more clarity you get, the more liberating, exciting, fulfilling and impactful you become.

So the first problem with greatness is most people don't even realize it's there and it's just dormant, waiting to be released like a tightly coiled industrial spring, ready to explode productively and constructively in your life. But somebody has got to help you paint a clear picture – internal, external of what it looks like, how it looks when you execute it, when you perform on it. And, if you don't know what the picture looks like, you'll never get there or transcend it.

FELDMAN: How does someone get the momentum to start step one?

ABRAHAM: You've got to decide what's important to you. A lot of people really don't know. A lot of people want to make a lot of money but don't know why. Is it to give themselves freedom? Do they want



What normally happens is we default and go right back to status quo. It's a vicious circle that brings us right back to mediocrity and average.

to make a lot of money to acknowledge their proficiency? Do they want to make a lot of money because they think they are protecting and enriching their clients? You have to be clear on your purpose – that's the first thing.

Then you have to see people within your industry who are doing what you think it is you're trying to do and you've got to see why and how they are doing it. Contact them to find out. It's not a big deal if it's outside your field and it's really not even a problem within because no one has ever approached it like this.

You can ask: What's your vision of what you do and how do you do it? What's your strategy on it? What do you look at your job as being? How do you see your responsibilities or your obligations or your opportunities? How do you see your interaction with the other side? When you wake up in the morning, what are you thinking about? When you are interacting on the phone, what's going on in your mind? What are you thinking about yourself and your client, if it's a selling situation? If it's a managing situation, what are you doing there? Do you see

yourself growing and developing the success of that other person?

You must ask a myriad of questions and you listen to the answers and you ask the same question of a number of different people who seem to represent where you are trying to get to.

The second thing is: You look within your life, both in the business context and in the personal context. Who do you deal with in your life who was either preeminent or great? Somebody that you can't wait to have interaction with. Maybe it's a place you go to buy things. Somebody who is your advisor. Somebody who makes you feel like \$1 trillion. Somebody who guides you, somebody who helps you, somebody who makes you feel better off every time you are in their life. But what is it about them?

Then ask: What does it look like when it's applied in my business or life situation? Who else inside this industry is doing what looks like a better use of time, opportunity, effort, but also emotions? It's about a higher use of your ability to communicate.

The first problem with greatness is **most people don't even realize it's there** and it's just dormant, waiting to be released like a tightly coiled industrial spring, ready to explode productively and constructively in your life.

Higher use of your ability to move people to greater action because they respect and trust you. And it can't happen with just intention. Intention is a great concept but it is useless if you don't have a frame of reference to compare against like a template and to keep course correcting.

FELDMAN: Once you have seen and understood what your vision is for greatness, how do you get there?

ABRAHAM: That's step No. 2. Someone might know what it looks like, but most people really do not know the best, safest, most effective path to get there. You've got to really be very candid and ask "where am I right now?"

So if I am at mediocrity, average or what we call suboptimal, how do you go from there to greatness? What are the steps? What are the processes?

Unfortunately, human nature has a tendency to want to be an Olympic pole-vaulter and do it in one fell swoop, which is almost impossible. So you need someone to paint a path that's going to be the highest and best route, the safest and least divergent, the most progressive so that at each stage, you are seeing successes to reinforce and even further fuel your progression to get there.

On to step No. 3. The few people who get that far have the confidence, certainty, courage and self-belief to shift their action, and aspiration to get themselves on this new path.

This is the concept of preeminence. That is being seen as the most trusted advisor in whatever role you are in. Preeminence is having the well-being of everybody you interact with as your driving force. Preeminence is being totally focused on adding value for the other side and understanding what value looks like.

FELDMAN: Which leads us to the fourth step, which is probably the most important, isn't it?

ABRAHAM: Yes, it's the final element, which is pretty simple and it's easy to understand.

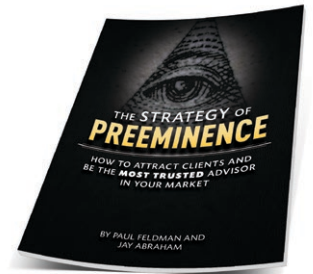
So, to recap, with No. 1, you are fortunate enough to get a picture inside

→ GET THIS

Visit www.insurancenewsnet.com/preeminence to download a **free report** written by Paul Feldman and Jay Abraham.

As a special 5-year anniversary gift to InsuranceNewsNet readers, we have created an **exclusive 36-page report** that could transform and transcend your business to new heights.

For more details see page 61.



and out. No. 2, you are blessed enough to get a clear-cut path that's going to get you there without taking you through the quagmire or detours, dangers and roadblocks. No. 3, you get that far and you believe in yourself enough to want to really shift. The last element is when you fall off the wagon in step 3 – which you are almost always going to do – you need to have someone who is your champion or your advocate who is going to hold you to a higher standard and not allow you to accept less than the effort, the time, the life, the job, the opportunity.

And it's a privilege. We have a privilege, an opportunity, a responsibility and a moral obligation in whatever we do to do it full out not even for the money but because we can make a difference. Most of us don't realize it but whatever we do, whether it's end-user to the client or it's supporting the process of the business that ends up adding the value to the client, we have a chance to impact lives in a very big way.

It's like anything we have ever done different in our life. If you have ever tried a new sport or to learn a new language, you will see that unless you are exceptionally rare, the first time you try it, your execution sucks and it's bad.

And most people, the moment they have that unsatisfying outcome, they've got to be a very rare person to get back on the horse and redouble their commitment. What normally happens is we default and go right back to status quo. It's a vicious circle that brings us right back

to mediocrity and average. And that's sort of the reality.

FELDMAN: Besides working with a mentor or coach, how can people keep themselves on the path?

ABRAHAM: It's a universal malady but it's a malady that is no one's fault. The key to everything is verbalizing what you feel. Most people carry gnawing frustration and uncertainty, dying aspirations in their heart that they are not even aware of because they've never even put it into words. The moment you put it into words and you break those words down to the actions that need to flow from them to fulfill the objectives, it's liberating because it demystifies it.

If you say, OK, I know that I'm destined for greatness. I know that I am not performing at greatness. I know there's a big chasm, a gap between where I am and what greatness is supposed to look like. I've got to first figure out what greatness needs to look like for me and my role. I've got to know what it's got to feel like for the recipient. I've got to find a way that I can verify it. I've got to find role models inside and outside that can help me calibrate and then I've got to start experimenting. But then I've got to figure out how to get to that because I've never done it before. And I've got to get the best stage. And then I've got to believe in myself that it's a waste to operate the rest of my life at a fraction of the level that I can perform at.

This is the concept of preeminence. That is being seen as the most trusted advisor in whatever role you are in...

Preeminence is being totally focused on adding value for the other side and understanding what value looks like.



FELDMAN: Is that when they reach the level of what you refer to as preeminence?

ABRAHAM: Yes, preeminence is a life philosophy of being seen as the most trusted advisor and adding enormous value. It starts with an attitude and most people don't really have that attitude.

But if you had that attitude, the concept of referrals – which is business that emanates from your trusted clients – is an obligation. It's not just the hope and expectation that somebody has, it's a responsibility that you have to your client to help people that are important to them and give them the best advice and referral generation becomes an ongoing integral part of the whole interactive process that you conduct throughout your professional life.

FELDMAN: That's interesting that you have taken referrals not just as a way to perpetuate business, but also as an indicator that you are preeminent.

ABRAHAM: Most people get referrals

occasionally and it's usually the lifeblood of their business. They might run ads and do cold calling to get business, but those who have any value to their clients, they get referrals.

FELDMAN: You have spoken quite a bit about having the right mindset and attitude to be successful. I can imagine a lot of people reading this and thinking that sounds new-age-y and that selling is about activity and carrying through on your promises. Wouldn't they be right that simply doing that would be a path to success?

ABRAHAM: There are a few good reasons why attitude and mindset are important. One is that we are rewarded for the quantity, quality, complexity and consistency of how we solve problems for ourselves and others and the number of opportunities we make possible. Why would you not want to solve as many problems as possible?

Also, if you look at the concept of competition, competition is really determined more on value creation because

price is a detour from value. Value creation is the whole key of life, but value has to be understood.

Why would you want to be in any situation in life – whether you're a salesperson or own an agency – and get up on Monday morning and say to your loved one, "Honey, guess what? I'm going to work this week and I'm going to accept about 30 percent of the impact I can make. And I am not going to really add a lot of value, just sell a couple things so we can pay the rent. At the end of the day, I'm not going to really feel like I have made a difference in people's lives. I'm not going to really feel like I've transacted myself above and beyond the maddening crowd. I'm just going to feel like I made some money so I could come home and feel sort of purposeless."

I can't imagine why you would want to do this because at the end of your life, you will look back and ask what was it all about? We were either takers or givers. Our life is denominated by the contribution we make. You've got a chance to make a difference. 