

# Pushing The Limits



**F**amed racecar driver Mario Andretti once said, “If everything seems under control, you’re just not going fast enough.”

Obviously, he wasn’t advocating going so fast that you spin out and crash; he was talking about pushing the limits, going beyond what is “safe” and taking a calculated risk.

In life and in business, the only way to test your limits is by opening the throttle and going forward, past the point you think you can achieve.

Many of the actions we take are difficult, but not particularly scary. Other actions are not particularly difficult, but may be incredibly frightening. Of course, frightening is a relative term. If you’re an outgoing person who loves to get up and entertain, making a business presentation may be just another part of the job.

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*“If everything seems under control, you’re just not going fast enough.”*

—Mario Andretti

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But if you’re shy and don’t like speaking in public, that same presentation may send shivers up your spine. To you, taking that action may appear

to be a great risk. (What if you forget what you’re supposed to say? What if your boss doesn’t like it?)

But if you don’t take the risk, you can’t reap the reward. When you take an action that includes some degree of fear, you automatically increase your confidence level for the next time. You know that you have gone beyond your fear, that you have made the effort. And if you do it once, you can do it again—you can also move to the next level of action. Each level of action we achieve serves as the foundation for the one to follow.

## See the Invisible

Sometimes pushing the limits means seeing the invisible—going after opportunities other people don’t see. Entrepreneur of the Year Jim McCann, founder of 1-800-FLOWERS, is constantly looking for those opportunities. “Every so often, I ask myself: when I look back five years from now, where will the really big opportunities have come from? What are the things I’m going to look at and wish I had done? That forces you to take your best guess, with the evidence that is in front of you, as to how the business world is going to change—and make sure that you’re positioning your company to be at the edge of that change.”

## Top Yourself

You don’t have to be extraordinary to accomplish extraordinary things, but you do have to be willing to do whatever it takes to achieve your vision—even if it’s extreme. When I interviewed Tony Hawk, world champion skateboarder in the X-Games, he told me he pushes the limits in both sports and business. He said, “No matter how far you go with skating, you’ve got to keep challenging yourself. Even if you’re considered to be on top of your field—in business too—there are ways you can improve yourself and keep coming up with new challenges. The goal is not to be better than everyone else. The goal is to be better than yourself.”

When you’re older and looking back on your life, you won’t be telling stories about the times when everything came easily. You’ll look back and talk about the things that were most challenging, and therefore most exciting.

Robert Louis Stevenson once said, “To be what we are, to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life.” Do you know right now what you are capable of becoming? How can you ever know, unless you are willing to put yourself to the test? The only way to become everything you are capable of becoming is by pushing the limits, every single day. ▲

Barry Farber has taught thousands of individuals and corporations how to break through barriers to achieve their sales, management and personal goals. He is the author of 11 books, a black belt weapons expert, an entrepreneur and marketer of innovative products, and a television host and producer. To learn more, visit [www.barryfarber.com](http://www.barryfarber.com).