



Your 212° Mentality... The Extra Degree Will Change Your Life

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As you read this article, keep the following numbers in mind:

- Below 32 degrees, water is solid.
- Above 32 degrees, water is liquid.
- At 212 degrees, water turns into steam; and
- Steam powers machines that enhance productivity.

Change in your life is dependent upon the level of heat you choose to apply.

In the book *212°, the Extra Degree*, Sam Parker and Mac Anderson convey that your continued application of heat (effort) to whatever activity you undertake will empower you to reap exponential rewards when you apply an extra degree of effort. At 211°, water is simply hot. While at 212°, it boils. In life and work, you are underestimating your true potential without the extra degree. The number 212 serves as a powerful metaphor to guide and shape the way you think, plan, and act.

You grow as a direct result of your habits. And changing habits begins with a pre-determined goal in mind. Often, your effort to change does not reap immediate rewards. It is the consistent application of effort – the extra degree – that takes you out of your comfort zone to achieve extraordinary outcomes. If you remove heat from water, the temperature starts to drop. You have to start over as the momentum is lost. Heat has to be reapplied to get back to the boiling point. The more consistently you apply the heat, the faster you reach 212 degrees.

The Quitter, Camper and Climber

Paul Stoltz, the originator of the Adversity Quotient (AQ) and PEAK Learning (www.peaklearning.com), is one of the foremost experts on human resilience – one's ability to endure setbacks yet progress to the next level of success. An avid mountain climber, he believes that people fit into one of three types: (1) quitters, (2) campers, (3) climbers. Quitters find reasons why something can't work. They are often bitter, resentful, and the loudest whiners. They retired twenty years ago but never told anyone. They tell stories about how great they once were, but something has taken its toll and now they define themselves as victims.

Campers, on the other hand, have worked very hard to find a safe plateau in life. They admit that they have been aiming for a particular spot all of their lives, and now they have reached it and are content to just camp there. Stoltz's research indicated that 80% of today's business professionals are campers, and many managers are simply campground leaders who, likewise, have settled into a safe, shady spot on their career path. At some point on their journey, the toll became so great that they stopped climbing and sacrificed their dreams, goals, and aspirations.

The good news is that inside every camper is a climber. Climbers never stop learning and growing. They are relentless in their pursuit of their goals in life. They inspire us because they see future potential. They have purpose and passion in everything they do. And they have a 212⁰ mentality.

If you are a camper or a climber, the extra degree will offer you life's highest reward – your potential.

Where to Start

To achieve a specific goal, you have to define your 212⁰ outcome. Unlike water, each person has a different boiling point. I encourage you to visualize what 212⁰ looks like in a specific area(s) of your life. And once you determine what you want to achieve, put it down in writing and revisit it every single day. And assign a deadline(s) as to when you want to reach 212⁰.

Highly successful people have mastered the art of 212⁰. They keep adding an extra degree, every day, and consistently apply heat. While they do not have a thermometer to let them know how close they are to 212⁰, their mind, body, and spirit sense that a major breakthrough is one step away and will be missed without the one extra degree of effort.

Is achieving 212⁰ easy? No. If it were, everyone would be doing it. 212⁰ requires commitment, self-reflection, positive attitude, motivation, visualization, perseverance, and goal setting. It begins with making a pact with yourself to achieve what you are capable of. And adding one extra degree today and tomorrow. You also must be able to answer the following questions:

- Question 1 – How is achieving the extra degree going to positively impact my life?
- Question 2 – What will it take to get to 212⁰?
- Question 3 – Am I committed to make the necessary sacrifices to get there?
- Question 4 – When and how do I begin?

Possible Applications for 212⁰

Through my professional career, I have taken great pride in living each day with a 212⁰ mentality. This has included, but not been limited to, how I have approached my dealings with clients, prospects, carriers, co-workers, centers of influence, and the community. Extra degree examples include the extra effort to research a business before the first prospect meeting, birthday cards, carrier appreciation events, going above and beyond when a claim occurs, and a steady flow of thank-you cards.

The 212⁰ mentality is also core to the teachings of Beyond Insurance as well as the success of each agency within the Beyond Insurance Global Network (BIGN).

That being said, I would like to share examples of how 212⁰ may help you advance your skills in a variety of ways.

212⁰ Attitude

Your attitude influences how you act and feel. Attitude is a choice that will have a profound impact on your performance. A positive attitude gives you a competitive edge, while a negative attitude impairs your ability to grow. As Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz said, "Life is 10% what happens to you, and 90% how you react to it."

212⁰ Commitment

Great achievements in life just don't happen. They are the result of dedication, determination and sacrifice. Commitment starts in your heart and soul. You must be prepared for obstacles and opposition. Commitment gives you the inspiration to carry forward even when confronted with tremendous challenge and turbulence.

212⁰ Goal Setting

Success cannot be measured or achieved without setting specific goals. To achieve the extra degree, it is essential that you learn the art of goal setting. Goals set too high or too low impede progress. Goals improve performance. Goals are dreams with deadlines. A powerful acronym for goal setting is SMART:

S – Specific
M – Measurable
A – Achievable
R – Realistic
T – Time bound

212° Mental Toughness

Your ability to handle pressure is essential to the achievement of 212⁰. Pressure can be both a positive and negative force. Pressure affects each person differently. Confronted with pressure, people weigh both the benefits of success and the pains of failure at the same time. When you are mentally tough, you stay focused and, most importantly, deal with adversity.

212° Motivation

Your desire to succeed must be stronger than your fear of failure. Motivation starts with a sense of purpose. It is rooted within your DNA. People find motivation in different ways. For some it is a mission to be accomplished. For others, it is fulfilling a lifelong dream. Often, this dream turns into a burning desire to reach a specific goal.

212° Gratitude

Gratitude is an internally generated capability that enables you to create and discover meaning and value in every situation and relationship in life. Simply put, gratitude shifts your focus from what your life lacks to the abundance that is already present. Behavioral and psychological research gives evidence that the life improvements stem from an attitude of gratitude. Giving thanks makes you more resilient, improves your health, reduces stress, and strengthens relationships.

212° Relationships

Your ability to build deep, long-lasting relationships is a key ingredient to your success. Quality relationships consist of a blend of mutual trust, respect, and shared values. A 212⁰ mentality allows you to create relational capital -- credibility, integrity and authenticity. Credibility is the quality that makes others believe in you, your words and actions. It is the outgrowth of professional competence. Integrity is being trustworthy in actions and character. It is the quality of having honest and truthful motivations. Authenticity is the quality of being genuine. It is about being who you are.

212° Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is an attitude that is characterized by the positive belief that you can take control of your life and your plans. It is a belief in your abilities. Confidence is a state of being certain that a chosen course of action is the most effective given the circumstances. People who are self-confident do not rely on the approval of others to affirm their existence. It is enough that

they know they have the capacity and potential to do something, and the guts to do it, no matter what others say. People who are highly self-confident take advantage of opportunities that come their way. Self-confidence can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, as those without it may fail or will not try because they lack it – while those with it may succeed because they have it. You can enhance your self-confidence in three primary ways:

1. **Knowledge.** Education, research, analysis, investigation, observation, and most importantly, first-hand experience.
2. **Skill.** Your ability to effectively utilize this knowledge.
3. **Attitude.** Your belief that you have the ability to control the outcome.

The extra degree you apply in gaining knowledge and skill will improve your attitude and take you to new levels of success.

212° Creativity & Innovation

Creativity is the act of producing new ideas, approaches, or actions while innovation is the process of putting an idea into action. Creativity is always the starting point for innovation. Creative people do best in an environment that allows them to invent, imagine, problem-solve, and create fresh ideas and concepts. Creative ideas emerge when preconceived assumptions are discarded and attempts at new methods, that seem odd or unthinkable to others, are explored.

212° Empathy

Empathy is best defined by the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of others. Henry Ford once said, *"If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own."* An extra degree of empathy will enable you to become a better decision-maker, co-worker, and leader. Empathy will also give you a competitive edge over your competition.

212° Value Proposition

Your value proposition is your reason for your professional existence. It describes how you create value for others. Your ideal value proposition is concise and appeals to the customers' strongest decision-making drivers. It is an irresistible offer, an invitation that is so compelling and attractive that the customer would be out of his or her mind to refuse your offer. The added heat you apply in creating your value proposition has unparalleled applications in determining your future success.

212° Work/Life Balance

Are the demands of work infringing upon the quality and quantity of time you have with friends, hobbies, and community? Are you feeling persistent stress as evidenced by fatigue, frequent illness, eating disorders, headaches, forgetfulness, sleep deprivation, aggravation and irritability

with colleagues, family, and friends? If so, consider a 212⁰ wellness plan to create equilibrium among all priorities in your life. Your 212⁰ work/life focus may include, but is not limited to, nutrition, exercise, sleep, rearranging priorities, and time management.

212° Servant Leadership

Servant leaders serve the people they lead. Their style reflects a selfless approach to leadership, one that places serving others as priority #1. Servant leaders understand that personal recognition is not the path toward team success. Their ego and individual goals do not get in the way of a larger picture of team goals. Truly great leaders go the extra degree in order to serve other people. They understand that you become a better leader by sharing whatever power and effort you have, not by saving it all for yourself. When you use your power and effort to empower others, your leadership will extend far beyond your grasp.

In every aspect of life, one degree makes a difference. One – just one!

Take a look at your life right now. No matter what you are doing, there is always room for that extra degree. The one that takes you from hot to steaming. Take a look at the results you are getting out of life. Where can you add that extra degree and turn up the heat...to change your life?

About the Author

Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA is the CEO of Beyond Insurance and is recognized as an industry leader having been named a Philadelphia finalist for *Inc. Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" award as well as one of the "25 Most Innovative Agents in America." Beyond Insurance is a consulting firm that offers leadership training, cultural transformation, and talent and tactical development for enlightened professionals who are looking to take their practice to the next level. Since 2007, the proven and repeatable processes of Beyond Insurance have transformed individuals and organizations as measured by enhanced organic growth, productivity, profitability, and value in the marketplace.