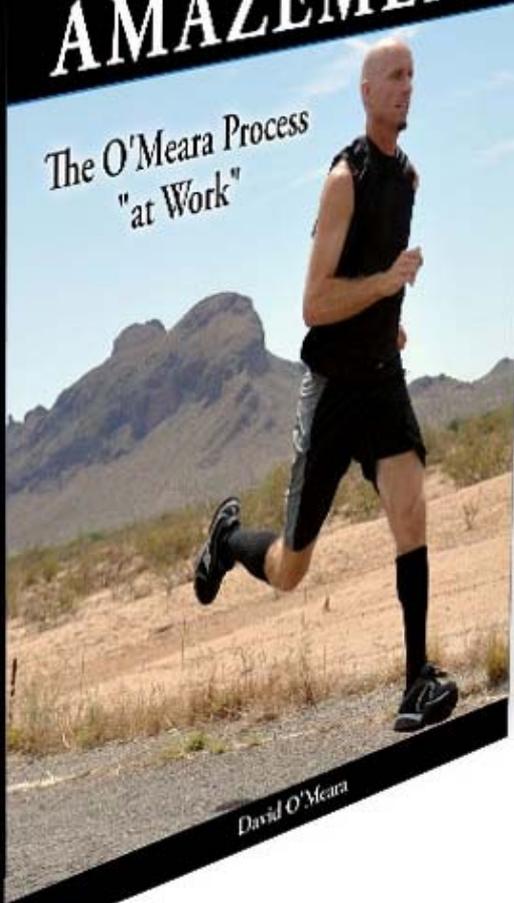


From the author of the inspirational *Play Better, Live Better*

CREATING AMAZEMENT

The O'Meara Process
"at Work"



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About the Author



*“Renowned
Coach,
Speaker,
& Athlete”*

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To my business colleague and brother, Brian,
who continues to amaze me with his integrity,
attention to detail, and tireless efforts
for perfection.

To all my clients who amaze me with their
desire to reach their own potential and in turn
help me reach mine.

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Introduction

Amazement, noun. *A state of extreme surprise or wonder; astonishment.*

This book is about creating amazement. It is about creating the mindset required to do something extraordinary, something that causes you and others to say, "Wow!" The purpose of this book is to explore amazement and create a process for reaching optimal performance, doing something that no one has ever accomplished before, and achieving results that create a state of overwhelming surprise or astonishment – in yourself and in others.

I believe that inherently everyone wants to do something amazing, and to feel like they are living an amazing life. We all would like to be great in our careers, in our relationships, in our hobbies, and in life. We all want to get fired up when we get out of bed, ready to take on the day and use our gifts and talents to do something great.

Unfortunately, many of us don't know how to generate this feeling of extreme surprise and wonder, of astonishment. Also, as a society we seem to be systematically destroying our capacity for amazement. Therefore, the purpose of this book is to understand how we can consciously create amazement in our lives, our organizations, and in society as a whole.

I make my living as a motivational speaker. If I'm going to ask my clients to find themselves, take risks, and achieve extraordinary results in their organizations and lives, then

I need to be an example of that same thing. I need to challenge myself on the same level that I expect from my clients, and demonstrate amazement. In a nutshell, that's why I undertook my particular challenge. Taking on a goal at age 45 like running 20 one-mile races, in 20 weeks, in 20 different North American cities under 5 minutes per mile was a laboratory for me to learn about what it takes to go beyond the expected. It was a way for me to discover what it really takes to do something that has no guarantee of success and that will require going beyond anything that I had done before.

My goal in running these races was to see if I could inspire others and to make a stand for people everywhere to create amazement. I wanted to inspire my corporate clients as well as the athletes I coach. I also wanted to inspire older athletes to say, "Let's not have age be a factor." I wanted to teach people that we can accelerate at any age. I'm not only talking about the physical realm. I wanted people to overcome their physical, mental and spiritual challenges. I wanted people inspired to say, "Hey, I can overcome what I'm facing."

I believe that my experience was a success. I achieved my goal of running 20 races in 20 weeks in 20 cities in under 5 minutes per race. More importantly, some of the emails I received were unbelievably touching. People wrote to me from all over the world telling me that they were inspired to get out and start a fitness program or something else in their life that they had thought they could not do. People

Creating Amazement

Kids constantly have that feeling of amazement. A pile of dirt can capture a kid's imagination for hours. The sun, moon, stars, trees, garbage trucks, rainbows, clouds, snow, crayons, a walk in the woods, a newborn puppy, , and even a dragonfly can amaze kids.

What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about something that amazed you as a child?

I remember watching the homerun derby at the All Star Game in Fenway Park, when players cranked ball after ball over the "Green Monster." It seemed like they were hitting those balls all the way to New Hampshire. I'd say to myself as each player took his turn, "That's unbelievable that he did it again...And now he just did it again!"

There was a time when we had tremendous respect for our elected officials and what our government could achieve. Some readers might still remember being glued to the television when astronauts landed on the moon for the first time. We might recall the great speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. Perhaps we can still hear Ronald Reagan standing at the Berlin Wall and imploring Gorbachev to "Tear down this wall!" Even today – political views aside – the election of Barack Obama as our nation's first black president has amazed millions.

In addition to sports and government, we also have experienced amazement in business. During the dot-com era, businesses sprung up that changed the way we do

felt that sense of amazement and were excited to look inside to achieve their own ambitious aspirations.

I want to share with you my recent journey to create amazement based on my own sense of purpose and inner aspirations, and then challenge you to do the same in a way that is most appropriate for your life and career.

I will start by defining amazement and talking about why I think amazement is rarer and rarer in our world today. Then I'll detail a ten-step process for looking inside and proactively creating the perceptions that generate breakthroughs and amazement. . I'll explain why I chose this particular challenge, and why the mile is important to me. Next, I'll take you through each of my twenty races, and share one key attribute from each race that helped me succeed in my own quest to be an exemplar of amazement.

I believe that my ten-step process, along with the twenty attributes that I explored during my racing, represent a powerful formula for anyone seeking to create amazing results, and for those of us who want to bring amazement back into the forefront of our society. The book concludes with ideas about how we can all work together to make amazement more a part of our work and our personal lives again.

things today. I remember a sense of vitality and creativity as new businesses sprung up that had the potential to change the world. Many failed, but many delivered on their promise.

Today, innovation continues to amaze us. New technologies like the iPod have revolutionized the music business. Google has grown faster than any other company before it and created a whole new way for large and small businesses to reach potential customers. TiVo has changed the game in television viewing. New revolutions in drug development and healthcare diagnostics have brought healthier lives to millions.

At the same time, during these tough economic times, the old stalwarts of business also seem amazing. These are the “boring” companies that consistently earn reliable profit growth year after year, while other companies struggle to survive and former high flyers disappear.

What about your company? Where do you experience amazement? What has one of your employees done for customers or your business that has taken your breath away? What is the most amazing result you have achieved in your own career that is larger than your status, title, and salary?

Imagine for a moment the benefits that you could bring to your company, shareholders, and customers if creating amazement became part of the fabric of everything you did:

- Your culture would make your organization unstoppable, focused on excellence, agility, and continuous improvement in all areas of your operations and finances.
- You would have the pick of the most professional and passionate employees.
- Your customers would rave about you, because you go beyond the competition to astonish them with consistent, reliable products and service.
- It becomes easier to raise funds, because you back up your vision with the ability to achieve remarkable results and investors see you as “bankable.”
- You find greater fulfillment and satisfaction in your work, because you are focused on achieving your most worthy aspirations.
- You would dominate the competition, because your employees are performing at their best and ready to take on any challenge.

At the same time, imagine what a typical executive career could be like when created from amazement. Many business executives get a little flat at some point in their career. They stop challenging themselves. They no longer seek that new puzzle or new and potentially remarkable journey to take. They don't tap into their creativity and growth. They stop pushing the envelope of life, and perhaps just settle in and focus on their compensation to keep going.

However, if you make amazement a key driver in your career:

- Once you hit a goal, you reinvent yourself and find another avenue to amaze. Life is a constant adventure.
- You feel fulfilled because you have found your gift to the world and how that gift contributes. Work becomes less like work and more like a calling.
- People are drawn to your natural enthusiasm and passion, and your commitment to the highest standards of excellence.
- You become the “go-to” professional in your field.
- You develop new leaders committed to amazement, and create a company that continues to thrive.... leaving a legacy of leadership when you leave.

As you think about what amazement can do for your career and organization, note that amazement doesn't have to mean glitz or media attention. In business, a lot of the companies that really make people say, “Wow!” are the ones that consistently grow three or five percent every year. They are reliably profitable. They may not be glitzy, but they are still amazing to people who care about business and know how difficult consistent growth is to achieve. It takes an amazing infrastructure and set of systems to grow consistently. It also takes great relationships with the people in the company, so that

everyone gets together in an organized way to achieve positive results, year after year.

As a culture, we seem to be obsessed with glitz. Young people today are saying “Wow” about people like Paris Hilton, Jessica Simpson, Miley Cyrus, and whoever the star of the day happens to be. We love celebrity. We love *The Enquirer*, even if we only read it clandestinely in the supermarket checkout line. Others are only looking at how much people make, and what they buy with that money or where they go on vacation. None of these things have much to do with authentic amazement.

In our culture, we often make the mistake of looking outside for amazement and fulfillment. We live very much in the material world, and derive many of our feelings of self-worth and satisfaction based on external markers. When executives achieve their profit goals and receive a big bonus, they feel smart and worthy. At the same time, when employees feel unhappy in their jobs, their first instinct is to look for a new job – and then when they find one they become unhappy again after a short time. Looking outside ourselves is not enough to achieve lasting satisfaction, and is not sufficient for creating truly amazing results.

My former English professor Richard Lederer, one of the nation's leading linguists, notes that the word amaze is closely connected to the noun 'maze' -- a labyrinth, a network of paths. This implies that creating amazement is very much like taking a journey while solving a difficult, often confusing puzzle. In fact, the root of the word

amazement comes from the Old English “amasod,” which means bewildered or confused.

This connection to mazes and a state of confusion suggests that the road to amazement begins with a journey within one’s self. In other words, authentic amazement is very much related to the spirit and the soul. One of my favorite words is the Greek word *entheo*, the root of the word enthusiasm. *Entheo* means, “God within.” When people are enthusiastic, they have tapped into the god within themselves. When people say, “Oh, how exciting that was,” something has touched their spirit and their soul. It is much more effective to go inside and not look for the solution outside – by finding that amazement inside you, tapping into *entheo* and your unique gifts, accepting a bit of confusion in order to choose a worthy goal and embark on a challenging journey.

In this context, amazement is about much more than that fleeting experience. Amazement is not a single moment or even a few hours in time. It is a way of experiencing life as a whole, a way of changing our perceptions to strive for excellence and live life to the fullest. Amazement is a way of being that defines who we are and aspire to be, starting from the inside.

Sure, you could say at this point, “My life’s too hectic. I have three kids. I’m just trying to keep my company afloat. I’ve got to do the work at hand. I can’t spend time looking for this *entheo* thing that is supposedly inside me.” Think about how taking just 15 minutes a day to work on striving for amazement and connecting with our inner aspirations

and enthusiasm. How will this affect those around us at work and at home?

However, while enthusiasm is crucial, it is not enough to create amazing things. You also need to have talent, and do the extremely hard work required to navigate the journey and achieve results. Everyone does have at least one gift or skill, but sometimes we are not clear of what that truly is. If you doubt this assertion, you haven’t watched the first few episodes of any season of *American Idol*.

On the one hand, it is good for people to have hope. We don’t want to kill anyone’s hope. But some people base their sense of self on what others say. When someone on *American Idol* thinks they have a gift, usually you’ll hear them say, “Well, my mom says I’m a great singer... My brother says I’m fantastic... My friends told me to audition.” They really haven’t sung in public to find out what objective people think.

In addition to having talent, you also need to do the hard work of converting your aspirations into results. For instance, many of my tennis students tell me they have a goal for their tennis game. Once I know a student’s aspiration, I know the kind of work he or she has to do to achieve it. Then I can put the student to the test and see how serious he or she is about achieving their aspiration.

Similarly, let’s say your aspiration is, “I want to be the CEO of this company.” Let’s say the work you’re doing isn’t good enough yet to match up with your aspiration. Even though you seem to have a gift for leadership, something

has to change for you to achieve your aspiration. Either you have to change the way you work, or you have to change your aspiration.

It doesn't take much yelling or screaming. We just look at the facts and can conclude, "You're not doing enough."

In business, projects and deadlines are great for learning because they show what the company is all about. People can take the feedback they get and learn. "Well, maybe we're not so good at this field after all. Maybe we should be in something else." Or, "Maybe my leadership skills aren't as strong as I thought. I need to build some skills."

Regardless of your aspirations or how you define amazement, ultimately you must do the hard work and execution required to convert inspiration and *enthusiasm* into tangible and amazing achievements. The "maze" exists both within us and outside us. That is why creating amazement is so difficult, and also so worthy.

Because amazement is a long-term process, we create a life of amazement through a series of breakthroughs. Breakthroughs are the actions and results that come from new, more powerful perceptions and create the feeling of amazement in ourselves and in others. A breakthrough can be a single act, or many acts that add up over time. A breakthrough requires us to break from the past, learn new things about ourselves and the world around us, and change our perceptions.