

scratch the surface

and other life lessons masquerading as marketing magic

“Make it simple.
Make it memorable.
Make it inviting to look at.
Make it fun to read.”

—Leo Burnett

scratch the surface

SURFACE 51

buzz, guerilla, viral...

...everyone's talking about marketing.

You need no more proof than to browse your local bookstore—you won't have to search for the marketing section—the marketing books will be right up front next to the latest releases.

With all of this marketing chatter, has anything really changed?
Does anything still need to change?

yep. But, as they say, the more things change, the more they stay the same. So while there are all kinds of new marketing questions (and answers) emerging each day, we thought we'd start with the basics. And here they are—little life lessons we've learned from people along the way. SURFACE 51 has worked with some of these people and admired some from afar, but from each we've learned plain, simple truths that double as marketing magic.

scratch the

Sit and talk to someone,
ask questions and **really listen.**

surface.

People will always share something. Maybe they put five kids through college working two jobs. Maybe they have a masters in mechanical engineering but write books. You obviously wouldn't know these things just by looking at them— you have to take the time to delve beneath the surface.

People are more than their outer appearance. And so is your business. Scratch the surface. Take the time to ask and really listen. Stay as connected as possible to the who, how and why of your daily operations.

“I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen.”

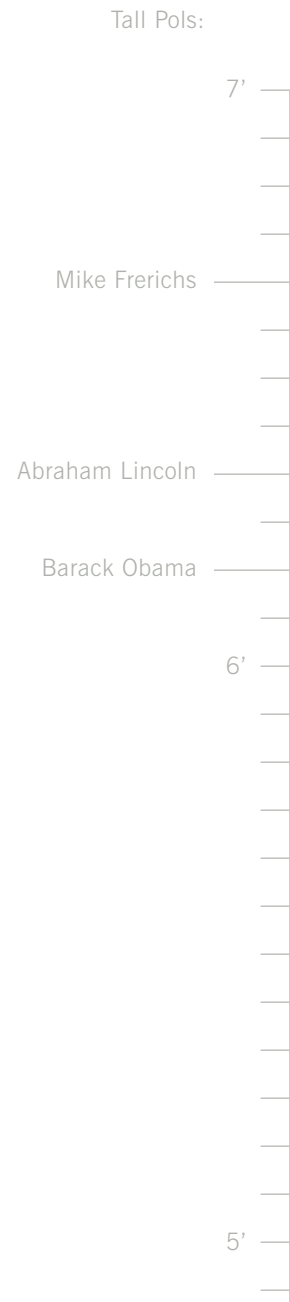
—Ernest Hemingway

stand tall. Inside and Out.

Studies tell us that tall people get more respect, so maybe it's no surprise that, at 6' 8" and age 34, Mike Frerichs has already held three elected positions and is currently the first Democratic State Senator to represent East Central Illinois since 1936. But it also doesn't hurt that when you talk with Mike Frerichs, you find out he's a Yale grad, he's personable and he actually cares about, say, complex ethanol issues facing Illinois farmers.

Be like Mike. Make sure your brand stands above the rest. And, more importantly, make sure that the promise your brand implies is dutifully fulfilled.

Mike Frerichs
Illinois State Senator
www.mikefrerichs.com



trust and be trusted.

It's shocking to note the amount of time people and companies waste focusing on their so-called competitors. After all, how can you focus on your own growth if you're constantly looking over your shoulder?

We were thrilled, then, to meet Lori Patterson, President of OJC Technologies, a firm with whom we've competed for a number of clients. Lori actively sought collaboration and shared information; and we followed her lead. Over time, our companies have worked together on a number of projects that are stronger because of the trust we've mutually built.

The most successful—and innovative—partnerships *always* contain an element of risk, but taking small steps toward trust can net relationships that are as profitable as they are fulfilling.

Lori Patterson

President, OJC Technologies
www.ojctech.com



make a **name** for yourself.

Alex Ruggieri's a veritable one man brand. The patriarch of his family team of commercial real estate professionals, Alex has the best intuitive marketing sense we've come across in a long time. When he's not putting together million dollar deals, he's deftly handling introductions and cheerfully referring clients. Not to mention hosting his own weekly television and radio shows.

Looking to have your message "go viral"? Make sure your energy and enthusiasm are as infectious as Alex's.



Alex Ruggieri

Senior Investment Advisor,
Sperry Van Ness/Ramshaw Real Estate
www.ruggieriteam.com

**leave yourself
a little room.**



You never know when
you might need to back
yourself out of a corner.

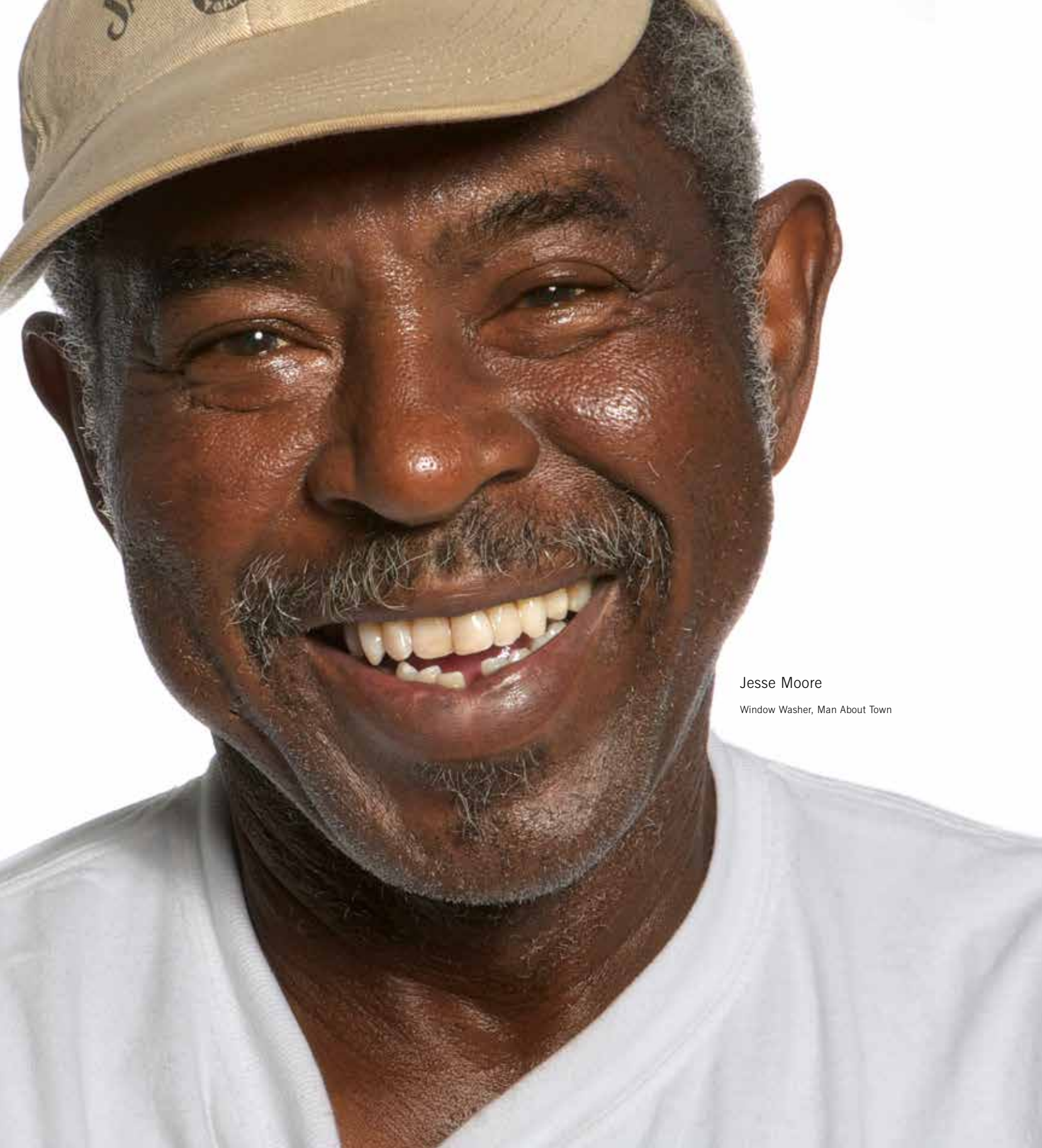
the most important ingredient is the one you leave out.

Tony Mantuano knows food. As Chef at Spiaggia, the only four-star Italian restaurant in Chicago, and author of a couple of outstanding cookbooks, his basic advice is simple: Omit the extraneous and focus on quality.

The same should hold true with any marketing mix. More failed marketing plans suffer from over thinking than from under spending. Use whatever budget you've got to buy the best components possible and don't add things you don't need.



Tony Mantuano
Chef, Spiaggia



Jesse Moore

Window Washer, Man About Town

It takes a true character to turn something as mundane as window washing into an eventful experience. Yet that's just what Jesse Moore does. Acting as his own marketing, customer service and purchasing department, Jesse shows up at our door every few weeks with a beaming grin, a little gossip and a joke (or two). Everything's a little brighter when he leaves.

Turning a rote task into something memorable is one key to building a successful brand image in today's "experience economy."

**fulfill a
basic need.**

(with a great big smile.)

be bold.

not loud!

“Boldness has genius, power
and magic in it.”

—Goethe



T.J. Blakeman
City Planner

plan.

**plan to break your plans,
but always plan.**

T.J. Blakeman, a city planner with limitless ideas for improving his community, sometimes seems to channel Daniel Burnham (“Make no small plans...”). But he also preaches the importance of having a Plan B (and even a Plan C, D and E).

The world often changes at a pace faster than we expect, but solid planning can prevent our plans (marketing and otherwise) from becoming a constant source of disappointment and frustration. So plan ahead and plan for change.



consensus is not the same as a decision.

There's a time for each. Make sure you know the difference.

be you.

Meet Stephanie Sanchez. At the window of our local coffee shop, we wake up to her giant grin a couple mornings a week. If we were to frequent a certain national coffee chain, we might be greeted with an overtly perky “good morning,” served shockingly consistent lattes and sent on our way more quickly than we are at Stephanie’s shop. But Stephanie chats a bit, remembers who takes honey and who takes sugar, and doesn’t miss a beat when we ask her to be part of a little book we’re putting together. She’s real. And we love that.

In an increasingly competitive retail environment, where any little edge can mean keeping a customer instead of losing one, the best brands are authentic.

Stephanie Sanchez
Barista, Cool Person



stay true.

Papa's got a brand new bag...and Barry's Farm has the coolest ones. Owners Katie Martin and Barry Abrams custom make laptop sleeves that look like monsters, robots, business people... even unicorns! And when a highly trafficked blog—boingboing.net—featured one of barrysfarm.com's bags, that love quickly found its way around the world. So quickly, in fact, that with hits climbing above 50,000 per day, Barry's Farm had to immediately upgrade their server.

While they've been approached multiple times to launch their products nationally, they've opted to stay small and true to their customer base. Knowing their niche and, thus, their limitations has been the ongoing secret of their success.



“Be true to your work, your word, and your friend.”

—Henry David Thoreau

**You are never
too old to set
another goal
or to dream
a new dream.**

—C. S. Lewis

“ Dreams are necessary to life.”

—Anais Nin

force humility.



Er, most of us aren't rockstars.

And even if we were, we'd do well to understate our importance a bit.

The same holds true with your brand. Seemingly strong brands tumble overnight, so do your best to make sure today's brand statements can't be turned into tomorrow's punch lines.

get real.



If the reality of your brand doesn't match the packaging, it's like meeting a beautiful idiot—you're more disappointed than enthralled.

over deliver.



Gary Frantz

Sales Representative
www.originalsmithprinting.com

In the printing business, delivery is everything—and no one understands that better than Original Smith Printing. For the past eight decades, they've delivered high quality printing that exceeds expectations. With an understanding that "getting it right" is more important than "being right," they've built a reputation as a business that stands by their clients and who are more interested in a long-term relationship than a one time profit.

Tho' the age old rule has always been to under promise and over deliver, think about promising plenty AND over delivering.

That's rare. And that stands out.

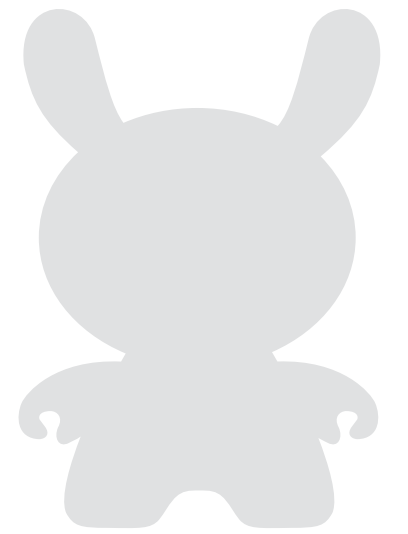
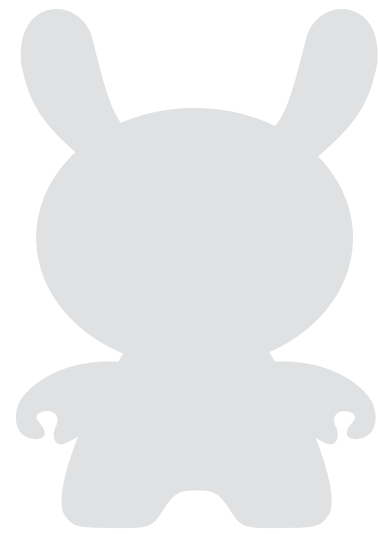
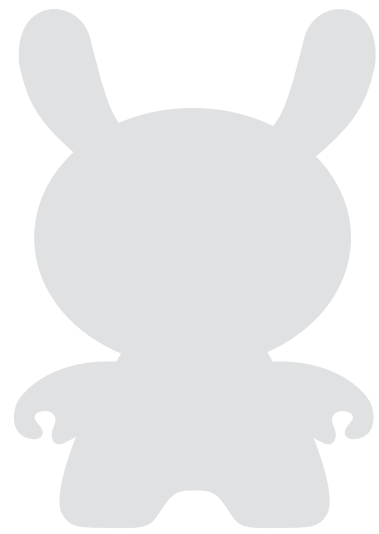
relationships matter.

John Nienhuis gets it. A nationally renowned photographer who we've been fortunate enough to work with for almost 20 years, John knows it's not just about a "day rate," but about a great relationship. That's why his first question is always, "What's the project?," not, "What's the budget?" Every one of his consistently stunning images would impress any art director, yet he always takes the time to personally call to go through his favorite shots.

It pays to focus on the true bottom line:
A fantastic relationship with your clients.

John Nienhuis
Photographer
www.johnnienhuis.com





be consistent.

(but not afraid.)

“Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.”

—Oscar Wilde

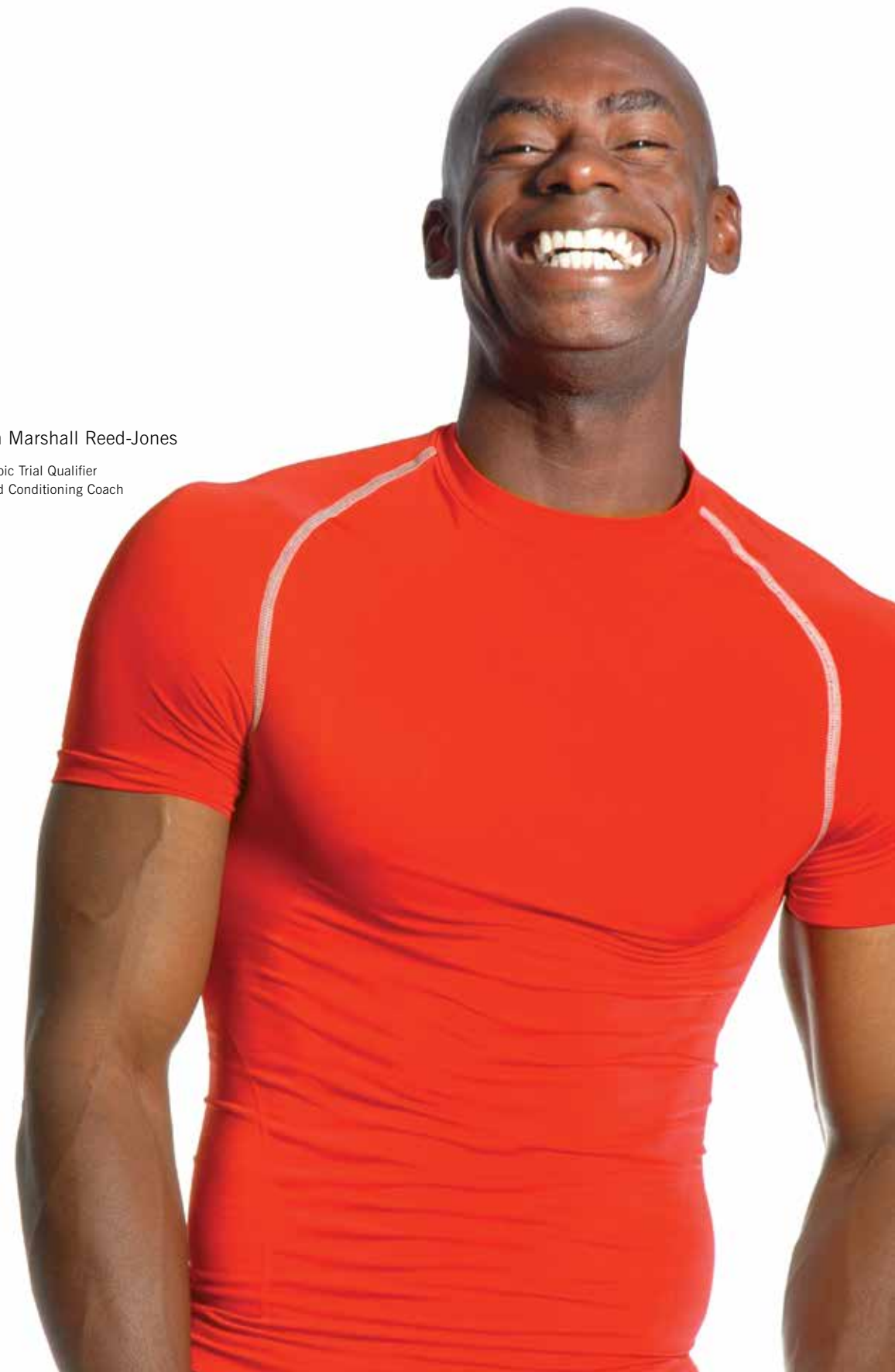
technique trumps talent.

Abe trains himself mentally the same way he trains his athletes, with constant repetition and total focus on improving technique. It's what's taken him from a childhood spent in foster home after foster home to an adulthood filled with possibility.

Talent's great if you've got it, but slow and steady improvement in your technique will net you the greatest returns.

Abraham Marshall Reed-Jones

2008 Olympic Trial Qualifier
Strength and Conditioning Coach



Remember what you
thought possible when
you were 10 years old.

(That's a directive,
not a question).

unlearn your limits.

batting .390
writing a book
becoming president
a walk on the moon
curing cancer
running a four minute mile
opening a restaurant
shooting a hole-in-one
jamming with jack white
surviving, then thriving
becoming a millionaire
winning an oscar
taming a dragon
winning a gold medal
marrying a prince
climbing mt. everest
going to yale
flying a helicopter
living on a coast
winning the triple crown
playing madison square garden



Emmy Fleener, Age 11
Standing with the world at her feet



it's **OK** to play.

“When they start the game, they don’t yell,
‘Work ball,’ They say, ‘Play Ball.’”

— Willie Stargell

“ Don’t bunt. Aim out of the ballpark.
Aim for the company of immortals. ”

— David Ogilvy



when the time comes...

...let go.

“ Finish each day and be done with it.
You have done what you could. Some blunders
and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them
as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day...”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson