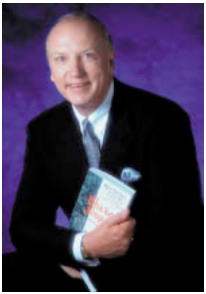


## Interview with Mark Victor Hansen: co-creator of the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” book series



*Mark Victor Hansen, co-creator of the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” book series, is a top-rated speaker and was recently placed on the Top 10 Greatest Motivational Speakers Ever list. A keynote speaker and master motivator for the past 25 years, Mark has spoken to over 2 million people throughout the world.*

**HI:** Your books have sold over 60,000,000 copies and you are one of the most popular speakers in America. From your perspective, what's going on in our culture?

**Mark:** We've got the most prosperous culture in human history and we've also got the biggest spiritual hole in human history. People are saying, 'I can't fill the hole with money. I can't fill it with alcohol, or drugs, or sex, so what do I need to fill it with?' To fill that hole you need something like the Hoffman Process, where you clean up your act and go deep inside to find out that your core essence really is important, that you do matter, and you can make a difference.

**HI:** So you are saying that inner development and outer contribution - making a difference for other people - are closely linked?

**Mark:** You plant a little seed and in time the fruit comes out. An apple is way bigger than the seed and it contains more seeds, plus you get to eat it for nourishment. Inner development always multiplies. I teach that you have to set goals. I personally have the most goals, I think, set in the world, which is 6,000. Then I've got 10 macro goals. I say you ought to write out 10 outrageous goals that are bigger than you because your life isn't meaningful or important unless you're on purpose about something way bigger than you are.

Last Saturday my whole family helped build a Habitat for Humanity house. By the way, when I told my staff that my family was going to go build this Habitat House, 50 of them came to help us. I've since inspired 100 other people I know of to go out and buy a Habitat House, gather 50 people together and build it in a day, then give the keys away. That's intrinsically spiritual because you're helping people who are below poverty level and literally can't help themselves in this way.

One of my goals is to inspire people to be all that they can be and, hopefully, be a good example and teach some useful, interesting principles. Perhaps I can be the key that turns on the engine in their life, and then they can take their car where they want. One of the places I'm encouraging absolutely everyone to go is The Hoffman Process. I think they ought to take their little car to the Hoffman car wash, so to speak.

**HI:** Your metaphors make me smile, and I recognize that a powerful truth is embedded in them.

**Mark:** I'm told I'm the world's best-selling author, with one in seven books being sold at Christmastime having my co-author name on it. I say that, not to brag, but because when we started 33 publishers kicked us out without looking at the book jacket. But finally one little publisher took us and said, 'We'll print it if you pay \$6 for each book'. Now we've sold all those books. People say 'You can't do more than one book every two years. We did one book, then two books, then four books, and now up to eight books a year. And they're all selling. Before Christmas we were number one in the New York Times with Chicken Soup for the Sports Fan Soul. All of us have infinite potential but most of us are self-sabotaging. You need the Hoffman Process to get out of a lot of your self-sabotaging behaviour.

**HI:** Chicken Soup for the Soul seems to represent unconditional love for an aching soul. Is that the resonant chord you're striking in society?

**Mark:** That and a subset of love called hope. My parents were immigrant Danes. My daddy once said to me, 'What does America really have written on it?' And I said, 'Dad, if I had to put one word on why you came

here I'd put hope, because you hoped for a better life for yourself, hoped for a better life for your spouse and kids.'

My parents had a third and sixth grade education respectively and were language illiterate on a lot of levels. What they wanted for the four of us was to make it through college. We did, and all of us have what is called the good life. But there's still a lot more than the good life. There's an inner you, the invisible you, that has to be sculpted, that can be made into a masterpiece.

The Hoffman Institute is one of the places that I think we've got to have millions of people go to. And not because it's the only Process, but because it's a fine process. It's been refined. It's been tested. The results are in. Some of the most visionary leaders of our time have been through the Process and all of them say, 'Boy, this thing is really good. Bob Hoffman was inspired.' He created something that is designed well, executed magnificently, attracts tremendous, great and inspiring teachers, and delivers a uniform result where people get what they want. It doesn't tell you who you are or what you're going to be. It helps you see your inner magnificence and the wonder called you.

**HI:** Most motivational speakers want people to change themselves, you also want people to change the world.

**Mark:** I think the great givers, the people who are fully self-actualizing and alive, are the great givers. I can pick hundreds of role models, but I'll pick three - Nelson Mandela has just given to a whole country. Mahatma Gandhi (and Mahatma of course means Great Spirit) was riddled through to the end with lots of pain, and he strove to unify and free a subcontinent; and Martin Luther King, Jr. had the guts to make civil rights a reality in America. The bottom line is that everybody wants to use their whole potential.

**HI:** There is a unique mission each person can discover by going inward that, in turn, can only be accomplished by going outward into the world. Most of us find that our inner mission, our passion, has to do with something in the world. We all need healing, but then we also need to make a difference in life. Please speak about that and about the

distinction between spiritually-directed missions and materially-directed missions.

**Mark:** I think we're intrinsically spiritual. We're spiritual beings in a physical universe and we are here to make a spiritual contribution. Unless you are fulfilling your spiritual mission (and this is my opinion totally), you anaesthetise yourself or you wound yourself. As a result, we've got a lot of wounded and numb souls on the planet. That's why I said you've got to have a purpose and a passion, a mission that's bigger than you are. Then you've got to call out the team because the team that works together achieves more. If you know somebody who you trust, admire, respect, and want to work with, who has core competencies different than yours, it will fulfil you to work with that person. When people are playing flat out, enthusiastically giving 100 percent, they are not fighting for platform space. Once you start to find out what you can and can't do, you discover that people who have core competencies different than yours will help you realize your outrageous dreams.

And you need other people to reflect back to you. As our mutual friend Dr Ken Blanchard, author of the One Minute Manager series, said 'Feedback is the breakfast of champions.' Everyone needs feedback and most of us don't like it. Because if I give you feedback and you don't have the depth of being to really understand it to your greater benefit, you'll take it as criticism and you'll shut down rather than turn on. What I want to do is turn you on. To be fruitful you have to figure out what you are going to plant to grow in your mind, your being, your soul, and your spirit. Next, you multiply because an acorn becomes an oak tree and that becomes an oak forest. So you multiply and then you replenish. You have to replenish yourself individually, and we have to do it collectively, and then we have to replenish the planet.

One of my 10 goals is to reforest the planet with 18 billion trees and inspire everyone to plant trees. My older brother said, 'Hey Mark, what are you on?' And I said, 'I'm on a mission from God. I just got these assignments that I'm capable of doing.'

**HI:** Your work is inspiring people about the difference an individual can make that no corporation or government can ever make.

**Mark:** Last year I was blessed to win the Horatio Alger award, which to me is like winning a Tony, an Emmy, and an Oscar. It means you came from rags to riches and you've been philanthropic with your life so far. There are 500 winners. These award winners raised \$100 million last year and they want to make sure that every below-zero kid gets to go through college. Many of these kids have been abused. Money has a couple of uses, but one of them is the great good to extend your ability to serve people that no one else can serve.

We've brought the best minds together, and they're all philanthropically oriented to help everyone else. They don't want to give a hand out; they want to give a hand up. That's what I think Hoffman does.

**HI:** So tell me, Mark, is the Hoffman Quadrinity Process Chicken Soup for the Soul?

**Mark:** The Hoffman Quadrinity Process is a Banquet for the Soul!

*When you're serious about change*

**Hoffman Institute UK**  
Call us on: +44 (0)1903 88 99 90

This website contains intellectual property including graphics and text protected by international copyright. All Rights Reserved. ©1998 Hoffman Institute International Inc.  
URL: <http://www.hoffmaninstitute.co.uk>