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### **Mark Moses News - Living Your Bucket List**

I am sharing the following story because it truly made a difference in my life and the lives of my father and son. I learned the importance of not only having a bucket list, but also getting it done despite some adversity that got in the way. The memories from this trip will last a lifetime and I am grateful for the quality time we had together.

A lot of people have bucket lists. For most, they are simply a collection of things that they would like to do "some day". My bucket list is a contract with myself...and my family. For years, I have been living my bucket list with my wife Ivette, daughter Darien and son Mason. Our family sits down every December to plan our individual and family goals for the coming year. My kids and I take regular one-on-one Father/Daughter and Father/Son trips. This year, I thought it would be great to take my dad, Milton on a father-son trip, something we didn't have a chance to do when I was a kid. I asked my dad to name the #1 item on his own bucket list and my dad said, "I've always dreamed of going to China."

My personal bucket list includes completing a Marathon and an Ironman on every continent so I did a bit of research and decided that a trip to Asia that included The Great Wall Marathon would be a terrific opportunity to create lifelong memories. The Great Wall Marathon is revered as one of the most challenging in the world as runners pass through beautiful farmlands and tiny picturesque villages while clambering over 5,164 menacing, stone steps with steep ascents and descents. The course record for this race is 3 hours, 9 minutes...more than an hour slower than the current marathon world record.

Mason, my 12-year-old son, is a budding endurance athlete having completed three half-marathons in addition to a handful of triathlons and duathlons. Not many kids Mason's age would have the focus to take on such challenges but what's even more remarkable is his ability to do it after overcoming significant adversity early in his life. Just before his 4th birthday, our family learned that Mason had a brain tumor which would require multiple surgeries. The road to recovery was wrought with obstacles

but it motivated him to take on new challenges and achieve goals that few people his age would even think about.

When planning the trip, it occurred to me that it would be an exceptional opportunity to include Mason for our first ever multi-generation boys' trip. I discussed it with Mason and told him that The Great Wall event included a 7.5K run on the wall. There were some family discussions about missing school and what he would need to do to get caught up. While this was an obstacle to overcome, we knew that class work could be completed at a later date but a trip like this would be an amazing experience that would create lifelong memories. It was an opportunity that should not be missed.

The trip was finalized in January to include visits to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. Shortly thereafter, the next obstacle got in the way. Mason and I were in Canada on a YPO Father-Son weekend when our snowmobile flipped and came down on my leg. The damage to my left calf was significant, requiring me to be on crutches for two months with several months of physical therapy to follow. I knew instantly that this marathon goal would have to wait.

Upon learning of the injury, my Dad suggested that his own bucket list item could wait and that we should take our trip the following year. I considered the pros and cons of postponing the father-son-grandson trip and decided that it wasn't worth the risk of new obstacles getting in the way next year. My father is now 82, my son is moving on to middle school; if we didn't take the trip this year, there was no guarantee that it would ever get done. My dad's bucket list was more important than mine and our plans would remain the same.

May arrived and we set out on our adventure. We enjoyed ourselves while taking in the sights in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tiananmen Square and The Forbidden City, but the thought of The Great Wall kept bugging me. I'd decided to walk/run the 7.5K to have the experience of the event but it bugged me that I came all that way and wouldn't complete the marathon. Due to my injury, I was not able to train but the day before the race, I inquired about the possibility of moving from the 7.5K race to the full marathon. The race coordinators were a bit surprised as they are accustomed to having runners ask to move from the marathon to the shorter race but rarely does anyone ask to move up. Two signatures later, it was done.

The next day, I crossed the finish line of The Great Wall Marathon and Mason completed the 7.5K. It wasn't my best time, but what an awesome life experience! It was an amazing feeling to have been there, run the race with my son and have my dad in the wings cheering us on. Some things got in the way of this happening but the three of us achieved our goals and created memories that will last forever.

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