



Energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance. The premise of this book is simple: Performance, health, and happiness are grounded in the skillful management of energy.

To be fully engaged, we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest. Full engagement implies a

fundamental shift in the way we live our lives. The challenge of full engagement—which leads to great performance—is to manage your energy more effectively in all dimensions to achieve your goals. Four key energy management principles drive this process:

**Principle 1:** Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

**Principle 2:** Because energy capacity diminishes both with overuse and with underuse, we must balance energy expenditure with energy renewal. Elite athletes use a training method referred to as periodization, where periods of training alternate with times of rest and recovery. Following a period of activity, the body must replenish its energy.

**Principle 3:** To build capacity, we must push beyond our normal limits, training in the same way that elite athletes do. All growth comes by expending energy beyond our ordinary limits and then recovering.

**Principle 4:** Positive energy rituals—highly specific routines for managing energy—are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance.

The problem with most change efforts is that conscious effort can't be sustained over the long haul. Will and discipline are far more limited resources than most of us realize. If you have to think about something each time you do it, the odds are that you won't be able to keep doing it for very long. A positive ritual is a behavior that becomes automatic over time—a habit. The power of rituals is that they insure that we use as little conscious as possible where it is not absolutely necessary, leaving us free to focus the energy available to us in creative, enriching ways. The most effective way to bring change is building positive rituals into our lives.

Making changes that endure is a three-step process that we call **Purpose-Truth-Action**. The first step in our change process is to *Define Purpose*. Ultimately we need to identify our deepest values and define a vision for our lives—which provides motivation to change. In the next stage of the process, *Face the Truth*, we look honestly at how we are spending our energy now. (It's impossible to chart a course of change until you are able to look honestly at who you are today). The third step is to *Take Action* to close the gap between who you are and who you want to be. This involves building a personal development plan grounded in positive rituals.

There are four arenas of energy that we need to manage: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Physically, the size of our energy reservoir depends on the patterns of our breathing, the foods we eat and when we eat them, the quantity and quality of our sleep, the degree to which we get intermittent recovery during the day, and the level of our fitness.

Physical energy is the raw fuel for igniting our emotional skills and talents. In order to perform at our best we must access pleasant and positive emotions: enjoyment, challenge, adventure and opportunity. Any activity that is enjoyable, fulfilling, and affirming tends to prompt positive emotions. The key is making such activities priorities, and treating the time that you invest in them, as sacred.

Just as physical energy is the fundamental fuel for emotional competencies, so it is the fuel for mental skills. Nothing so interferes with performance and engagement as the inability to concentrate on the task at hand. The key to mental recovery is to give the conscious, thinking mind intermittent rest.

The quantity of energy we have to spend at any given moment is a reflection of our physical capacity. Our motivation to spend what we have is largely a spiritual issue. Fundamentally, spiritual energy is a unique force for action in all dimensions of our lives. It is the most powerful source of our motivation, perseverance, and direction. We define “spiritual” simply as the connection to a deeply held set of values and to a purpose beyond our self-interest. The capacity to live by our deepest values depends on regularly renewing our spirit—seeking ways to rest and rejuvenate and to reconnect with the values that we find most inspiring and meaningful.

Two behaviors, we have found, dramatically increase the likelihood of successfully locking in new rituals. First, ***Chart the course***: launch each day’s ritual-acquisition mission by revisiting your vision, clarifying not just what you want to accomplish, but how you want to conduct yourself. Second, ***Chart the progress***: build rituals that lead to sustaining change by holding yourself accountable at the end of each day. Accountability means regularly facing the truth about the gap between your intention and your actual behavior.

Great performers all rely on positive rituals to manage their energy and achieve their goals. There are several key elements in building effective energy-management rituals but none is so important as specificity of timing and the precision of behavior during the 30-60 day acquisition period (it normally takes 30-60 days to clearly establish a habit in your life). The reason for this lies in the fact that our conscious capacity for self-control is limited and easily depleted. By determining when, where, and how a behavior will occur, we no longer have to think much about getting it done.

As you begin to successfully develop rituals, you will find that it gets easier, and the changes seem less difficult. Life will develop a certain rhythm, your energy will increase, and you will be able to fully engage the different aspects of your life.