

101 ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO HAVE MORE ENERGY!!

A Values Coach Special Report

Copyright © 2013

Joe Tye, CEO and Head Coach, Values Coach Inc.



Values Coach Inc.

Transforming People through the Power of Values

Transforming Organizations through the Power of People™

www.ValuesCoachInc.com

319-624-3889

Jordan Creek Plaza, Suite 400, Solon, Iowa, 52333-0490

101 Actions You Can Take To Have More Energy!!

A Values Coach Special Report

By Joe Tye

Energy is Life. People with a lot of energy have a lot of life, and people without a lot of energy have boring lives. If you're unhappy, chances are all that stands between you and happiness is an expenditure of energy – emotional and physical.

Introduction

This special report includes 101 great ideas and strategies for having the energy you need to pursue your greatest dreams and to become the person that you are meant to be. Your energy is perhaps your most precious physical resource, and how you choose to use that energy is perhaps the most important choice you make on a daily basis.

Suggested Use: Read the entire report once. Then go back through and pick one of the 101 great ideas each day, and work on that action.

So read this report, then get off the couch, turn off the television, and do something that moves you in the direction of your dreams. As Thoreau promised, you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours!

To download this and other Values Coach webinars, and the special reports and eBooks that go with them, go to this web page:

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e73wvc0z47744f79&llr=p8vf59n6>

Get clear about your values

One of the most powerful sources of energy you can have comes from knowing that you are living your values. And while most people intuitively have good solid values, few of us have put much thought into what those values are, much less how they are reflected in our daily attitudes and actions. The most comprehensive and systematic course on personal values anywhere in the world is the Values Coach course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*. These are universal values that transcend specific political opinion or religious belief (or non-belief). From Authenticity (Core Action Value #1) through Leadership (Core Action Value #12) these are *your* values, and living them will give energy to your life. Each of the twelve values is reinforced by four cornerstones that put action into the value. The course outline is included in the graphic below. And as a special benefit to readers of this report, you can download the eBook edition of the 400-page workbook on *The Twelve Core Action Values* – which is not available for retail sale – at this web link: <http://www.valuescoachinc.com/the-twelve-core-action-values-free-ebook>.

The Twelve Core Action Values And the Cornerstones that Put Action into those Values			
I. Laying a Solid Foundation <small>The first six Core Action Values and associated cornerstones develop inner strength of character.</small>		II. Taking Effective Action <small>The second six Core Action Values and associated cornerstones catalyze action and contribution.</small>	
1. Authenticity	4. Courage	7. Purpose	10. Enthusiasm
Self Awareness	Confrontation	Aspiration	Attitude
Self Mastery	Transformation	Intentionality	Energy
Self Belief	Action	Selflessness	Curiosity
Self Truth	Connection	Balance	Humor
2. Integrity	5. Perseverance	8. Vision	11. Service
Honesty	Preparation	Attention	Helpfulness
Reliability	Perspective	Imagination	Charity
Humility	Toughness	Articulation	Compassion
Stewardship	Learning	Belief	Renewal
3. Awareness	6. Faith	9. Focus	12. Leadership
Mindfulness	Gratitude	Clarity	Expectations
Objectivity	Forgiveness	Concentration	Example
Empathy	Love	Speed	Encouragement
Reflection	Spirituality	Momentum	Celebration

“One of the most important keys to self-motivation is to clearly identify your core values in life. You must decide what matters most. Many people think, ‘I know what’s important, I don’t need a list to remind me.’ What they don’t fully understand, however, is that core values often serve as critical guides for making important decisions. When you’re in doubt, your core values will cut through the fog like a beacon.”

Mac Anderson: *Charging the Human Battery: 50 Ways to Motivate Yourself*

Acknowledge that energy is a decision

The first principle of optimizing energy is to accept that to a much greater extent than many of us care to admit, energy is *a decision*. To a greater extent than many of us care to admit to ourselves, whether or not we have the energy to do the things we want to do and the things we must do is based on a decision made at a point of apparent fatigue. To demonstrate: Imagine that you’ve come home at the end of a long, stressful and frustrating day. You know that you should go ride your exercise bike and listen to that educational CD, but... *you say to yourself that you are absolutely exhausted*. So instead you plop down in front of the TV with a big bag of chips and a bowl of ice cream. You’re soaking in the soaps (or whatever else happens to be on) when you hear a knock at the door. Reluctantly, you get up

to answer it. There on your porch step, flanked by a camera crew, is Ed McMahon with a sweepstakes check made out in your name.

Now, if you tell them all to come back tomorrow because you have no energy today, then by all means, go back to the couch. But if you're ready to call the neighbors, have a party, and go shopping, where did all that energy come from? The truth is that you had it all the time; you were just waiting for an excuse to tap into it, for some external stimulus like winning the lottery to spark it for you. The technical scientific name for this syndrome is – LAZY! If you want to live your life with a sense of purpose and a spirit of adventure, then it is your job to discover and activate those things which will galvanize your energy, because the Publishers Clearinghouse Sweepstakes is not going to do it for you.

“If an unusual necessity forces us onward, a surprising thing occurs. The fatigue gets worse up to a certain point, then, gradually or suddenly, it passes away and we are fresher than before! We have evidently tapped a new level of energy. There may be layer of this experience, a third and a fourth wind. We find amounts of ease and power that we never dreamed ourselves to own, sources of strength habitually not taxed, because habitually we never push through the obstruction of fatigue.”

William James

Choose to be enthusiastic

Enthusiasm is the emotional spark plug. There are two essential steps to being enthusiastic. First is controlling negative emotions; anxiety and fear, anger and envy, guilt and self-pity are enthusiasm-killers. The human mind will automatically gravitate toward negative, frightening and depressing thoughts unless it is consciously directed in a positive direction. The second step is deliberately stoking positive emotions. Enthusiasm is a series of choices. It begins with the company we keep and the activities we undertake. If you spend time hanging around with negative people who can only complain about how hard life is, or if you while away the hours parked in front of the TV watching bad news and sitcoms that make humor out of putting people down, your enthusiasm will evaporate. Conversely, when you spend time with positive people and inspiring books, the experience will fire up enthusiasm.

“Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!”

Anne Frank: *Diary of Anne Frank*

Be your own Spark Plug

Think of the best thing that could happen to you today. A big promotion, a financial windfall, a reunion with a long-lost friend or relative. How much energy would that give you? How much brighter would it make your day? Now consider these questions: Why would it take an outside event to spark the energy that was always there, sitting dormant inside of you? What can you do to spark that energy, and give

fuel the powers positive relationships, a successful career, and a meaningful life. Guard your energy like the precious resource it is. Protect it from those who would drain it from you, and don't waste it on worries and activities that aren't related to your important goals in life. Take care of yourself.

“Fatigue is often caused not by work but by worry, frustration, and resentment. We rarely get tired when we are doing something interesting and exciting.”

Dale Carnegie: *Stop Worrying and Start Living*

Appreciate that energy is a self-renewing resource

When you make the decision to have energy, and then to expend it, you expand it. When you come home after a long, hard day at work and do not give in to the temptation of lounging in front of the television set having your brains transformed into pudding but instead go for a walk, or when you determine yourself to pick up the phone and make the call that you have been putting off, you not only lose the energy it takes for that action, you will find that the energy you thought you had expended has actually come back to you stronger than before. When it comes to your personal energy:

$$e \neq mc^2$$

In other words, since you do not have to destroy matter to create energy, at least for your own inner sources of energy, Einstein's famous equation is not correct. You create energy by using it!

Courage and energy are interdependent



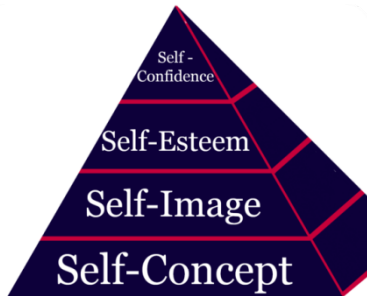
Courage without energy is just a good intention; energy without courage is more likely to run away as it is to stand tough and take action. Fear is a reaction, a natural hardwired facet of the human condition. Dr. M. Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled*, said that the absence of fear is not courage – it's brain damage! Courage is a decision, the determination to act even in the face of that fear.

You can download my *Never Fear, Never Quit* webinar as well as the free eBook editions of *Never Fear, Never Quit: A Story of Courage and Perseverance* and the *Everyday Courage for Extraordinary Times* workbook at the link below. You can also download the poster above – make it your screensaver, print out copies to post where you'll see them every day, to remind yourself to do the things you are afraid to do but which you know should be done, and to ask for help when you need it (that is from Wednesday's Promise on Determination in *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* – you can also download that mini-poster and slide show at the homework link):

Raise your self-esteem

Understand how your self-image and self-esteem influences your time management skills. People with low self-esteem often waste lots of time agonizing over whether they even deserve the favorable outcomes that would come with getting something done. Indeed, low self-esteem can be a sneaky disguise for cowardice and laziness (“I don’t deserve a job like that, so I won’t even apply”). If you feel stuck, spend some time every day creating a visual mental image of yourself as a winner, a caring and deserving person whose success will help not only yourself but the many others you care for.

Build upon The Pyramid of Self-Belief™



Belief is a force of nature, like gravity or magnetism. Unlike gravity, belief is subject to mental control. By using techniques of affirmation and visualization you can boost your energy, enhance your belief, and wire yourself for success. Self belief is developed at four levels. Imagine a pyramid, with self-concept at the foundation, self-image and self-esteem in between, and self confidence at the top. Each element rests upon, but also interacts with, those below. In other words, working on changing any element of the pyramid will cascade through the whole.

Level One, Self-Concept: An underlying awareness, either implicit or explicit, of your role as a human being in this universe. What do you see when you look around you: a world of scarcity and risk, or a world of abundance and opportunity? What is your concept of a higher power, and of your relationship to that higher power? Questions like these cannot be answered in an absolute sense, but rather depend largely on what you choose to see as you look around you and within you.

Level Two, Self-Image: What do you see when you look in the mirror? A winner? A victim? You will never on a sustained basis exceed your self-image. If your self-image is that of being a victim, no matter what happens, you will always be a victim. On the other hand, the self-perceived winner who loses everything will eventually find a way to get it all back, and probably sooner rather than later.

Level Three, Self-Esteem: Do you like what you see when you look in the mirror? People with high self-esteem get a lot done and make substantial contributions; people with low self-esteem tend not to. Self-esteem is not arrogance – quite to the contrary, arrogant people are often hiding low self-esteem: the only way they can feel good about themselves is by making other people feel bad about themselves.

Level Four, Self-Confidence: Do you believe that you have skills and resources to meet the challenges of your life and to effectively pursue your dreams and goals, or you are reasonably certain that you can obtain whatever you need but are now lacking. Genuine self-confidence is usually quiet, as opposed to the loud boastfulness of arrogance. You are not born with self-confidence, it is earned through experience.

Take to heart the seven promises of The Self-Empowerment Pledge™

There is energy in empowerment, but the only genuine empowerment is that which you give to yourself; if someone else can give it to you, they can also take it away. *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* has 7 simple (not always easy) promises that will change your life, if you take them to heart. And all you have to do is invest 365 minutes in yourself – one minute a day for a year. Simply repeat each day's promise to yourself at least four times (morning, noon, afternoon, evening). As you begin to internalize the meaning of that promise, you will ineluctably begin to change your attitudes and behaviors, and thus you will achieve more positive outcomes. And (this is a guarantee!) you will have more energy. Print out mini-posters [at this website](#) and put them up where you will see them often. Listen to the audio tracks. Read the stories. As you increasingly act in a self-empowered way, you will find in yourself an incredible wellspring of previously untapped energy.

Commit yourself to a positive attitude

Your attitude will determine your altitude. Here are steps you can take to do a better job of managing your attitudes and your emotions in a way that fosters achievement of your big goal.

Accept complete and total responsibility for your life: Memorize, internalize, and operationalize *The Self-Empowerment Pledge: Seven Simple Promises that Will Change Your Life* (above). You are well on your way to accomplishing your goal when you stop blaming other people for your circumstances and your outcomes. For example, fact that you don't have enough money is your own fault – not that of your employer, your banker, your parents, or anyone else. As you become more responsible, accountable, and determined in managing your money (the first three promises of *The Pledge*) your financial picture will improve dramatically. And worrying about money can be a huge energy drain.

Focus your dissatisfaction: Dissatisfaction can be an incredible source of energy and motivation, if you don't dissipate it with promiscuous complaining. If the only thing you allow yourself to be unhappy about is your credit card debt, that focused dissatisfaction will grow into a raging inferno of ambition. You'll start waking up in the middle of the night with ideas for how to make the dream home become your real home, and getting up in the morning with the inspiration to take action on those ideas.

Avoid negative people: One of the surest ways to change your attitude and your behaviors is to change your reference group (that's the fancy term that sociologists give to the people you choose to hang around with and identify with – and it is a choice). If you spend your time with negative,

the other hand, spend more time with positive and optimistic people and you will take on those qualities.

Be a Dionarap: Don't try to find this word in the dictionary – I made it up. Dionarap is the word paranoid spelled backwards, and if you can be a backwards paranoid, you'll be a lot more successful and a lot happier to boot. Expect the best from others and you'll likely get it. Negative expectations create negative energy and entropy; positive expectations create positive energy and synergy. Expect the best – from others and from yourself.

Practice power poses

In a now-famous TED Talk, Amy Cuddy shows research on how body posture influences attitude, which in turn has a profound impact upon how we are perceived. For example, Cuddy advises anyone about to go into a job interview to spend several minutes alone in the restroom practices Superman or Superwoman poses. This, she says, will give them a mental edge for the interview. Sitting up straight is more powerful than sloughing down. Walking fast is more powerful than sloughing along. A smile is more powerful than a frown. Your mind listens to your body; make sure you are giving yourself the right speech. Here is a link to the [Amy Cuddy talk](#).

Don't pick fights you don't need



I once pulled out onto a road in front of a pickup truck hauling a big horse trailer that was lumbering along. I thought I had plenty of space, but the driver of the truck obviously did not. For the next ten miles he tailgated me honking, and when I turned off he shouted a few choice profanities and a middle finger. Whose day do you think was ruined, mine or his? His anger not only didn't bother me, it gave me something to laugh about. He, on the other hand, ruined what should have been a great start to a beautiful day, and in all likelihood took that anger to work and told anyone who would listen about the jerk he thought had cut him off in traffic. In effect, this man picked a fight he did not need to have. The only harm done was that he might have had to slow down by a few miles per hour and be a few seconds later to work, but he reacted as though I had insulted his wife and kicked his dog. This jolt of negative energy might well have set the tone for the whole rest of his day, and quite possibly for his return home.

Don't do work that doesn't need to be done

The late management guru Peter Drucker said that nothing is more useless than doing efficiently that which does not need to be done at all. But according to the Pareto Principle, each day more than 80

For many of us, on many days, that is closer to 100 percent (for example, going from one boring meeting to another without ever focusing on your priority).

Keeping two lists – a daily To Do list and your “Big Ticket Item” list – can help you escape what I call Pareto Prison and stop wasting time on what a friend of mine calls “Pretend Work” and devote your energy to getting meaningful work done.

Identify your ONE Thing

In his book *The ONE Thing*, Gary Keller (with Jay Papasan) asks a question that can be life-changing: What one thing, if it were accomplished, would make everything else easier or unnecessary? I recently spent a week alone in the Grand Canyon, and took that question with me. My answer on the hike out was completely different than my answer would have been on the hike in. The question gave me a higher level of clarity about what my immediate priorities should be, and how working on that one priority would facilitate achieving other priorities more quickly and efficiently later.

“Every person and every organization is the product of a coalition and the forces within the coalition are always at war. The war is between the trivial many and the vital few. The trivial many comprise the prevalent inertia and ineffectiveness. The vital few are the breakthrough streaks of effectiveness, brilliance, and good fit. Most activity results in little value and little change. A few powerful interventions can have massive impact.”

Richard Koch: *The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Success by Achieving More with Less*

No can lead to nowhere, or it can lead to now

When I was a student at the Stanford graduate school of business, the most popular class was creativity in business taught by Professor Michael Ray. In an experiment to use capitalist principles to award class assignments, that year the school gave students one hundred points to bid on classes. It took all one hundred to get into Michael’s class. I’d bid ten points on another class I really wanted to take and my 90-point bid was insufficient to make the cut for Creativity in Business. The first day I showed up anyway and told Michael I was going to audit the class, to which Michael replied that he did not allow people to audit his classes.

I pointed out that this was, after all, a class on creativity and suggested that there had to be a creative way for me to learn how to be more creative. Michael finally relented and I took the class for no credit. It was without a doubt the single-most important class I’ve ever taken, and the most important insight I gained was that creativity is often synonymous with courage. When I pointed that out to him years later, he smiled and winked and said “Don’t tell anyone – they never would have let me teach a class on courage.

As a result of my auditing his class, Michael and I became great friends. I was the very last guest speaker at his Creativity in Business Class before he retired. He even wrote about my work at Values Coach in his book [The Highest Goal](#).

Open a book to a random page to get unstuck

Winston Churchill once said that if you don't have time to read, you should at least periodically pass your hand over the bookshelf and fondle your books in the hope that you will pick up something through osmosis. I take that one step further: when I find myself stuck (for example, giving in to the excuse of "writer's block"), I'll walk over to the bookshelf and pick up a random book, then open it to a random page and read a random paragraph. It is amazing how often that paragraph is like a message from the Universe telling me exactly what I need to know and/or what I need to do – though often that instruction is telling me to do exactly the thing that I have been putting off doing.

To again test this hypothesis, after having typed the paragraph you just read I went over to the bookshelf and pulled out a book. It happened to be *What Matters Most* by Hyrum Smith (CEO of FranklinCovey). I opened the book to a random page and put my finger down on the following paragraph. By way of full disclosure, I have clinically-diagnosed RBADD (*really bad* attention deficit disorder) and a big-time planning phobia. I can make any excuse as to why flying by the seat of my pants is more effective than sitting down to write out a boring plan.

I've heard all the aphorisms about why I should be more conscientious about planning – plan your work and work your plan, failing to plan is planning to fail, etc. – but they do nothing to help me overcome this planning phobia of mine. This randomly-selected paragraph from a randomly-selected book, on the other hand, goes right to the heart of the matter: a plan turns a lovely dream into a work program that carries with it a risk of failure:

“One of the biggest reasons that we don't usually plan is the fear of commitment and its close cousin, fear of failure. It is okay to think about what we need to do to accomplish something, but if we make definite plans and put them on paper, we might fail. This fear of commitment and consequent failure is actually one of the strongest evidences of the power that preparing a written plan can bring to any endeavor. I know of no better way to succeed and to make a realistic plan and let that plan be the motivating force to carry it through to completion.”

Hyrum Smith: *What Matters Most: The Power of Living Your Values*

PS: Shortly after writing this section I received an email from my brother, who likes to put quotes from famous people in his signature line. The one he has today is from musician Jon Bon Jovi and it says: “Map out your future. Just do it in pencil.”

Recognize that not all time is equal and allocate accordingly

My good friend, and one of my heroes in life, is Orrin Hudson. Orrin is a former Georgia state trooper who now uses his formidable skills as a chess master to keep young people out of trouble by teaching them how to make the right moves in life (you can learn more about his nonprofit organization at <http://www.besomeone.org/>). Orrin is a master of brilliant one-liners, and one of my favorites is:

Spend heavyweight time on heavyweight things and lightweight time on lightweight things.

This principle recognizes the reality that we each have a limited amount of optimally-productive time in each day, and that such time needs to be optimally allocated. If you are sharpest and most focused early in the morning, you shouldn't waste those hours checking email (which is why time management expert Julia Morgenstern titled her book *Never Check Email in the Morning*).

It also recognizes that while lightweight activities can be multitasked (most of us can eat chips and watch television at the same time), heavyweight activities require a concentrated focus (you cannot give your best effort to writing a new book chapter if you are checking email every ten minutes).

Break the complaining habit

The first step to breaking the complaining habit is to get a handle on how much of it you do yourself. I don't just mean out loud – I mean every time you think a thought that meets the above four criteria for complaining. Trust me: once you track it you will be appalled at how much complaining you engage in yourself. For the next two weeks, carry around a notecard and a pen. Every time you catch yourself mentally complaining about something – anything – simply pull out the card and make a mark on it.

At the end of the two weeks, pull out your card (deck!) and count up all of the marks you have made. Then multiply that number by your estimate of how long the average mental complaining session lasts (for the sake of the exercise, you can assume one minute, but I've had people tell me that their average is eight hours!). Now translate this into hours. The resulting number is the proportion of your life that got burned up in the ashtray of toxic emotional negativity during that period.

When you are mentally complaining, your mind cannot focus on anything else; gratitude for the blessings in your life, dreams for the future, appreciation for co-workers or for family. That part of your life is certainly and irrevocably lost.

Give your complaints the Valley Forge test

Whenever you find yourself complaining about something, imagine being transported back through time to Valley Forge during that horrible winter of 1776-77. Visualize yourself describing this complaint of yours to the freezing, starving patriots who sacrificed so much to win the freedoms that you now enjoy. If your suffering makes them cry out in sympathy, then, by all means, you *do* have a legitimate gripe, so keep whining about it if you must. If, on the other hand, your mind's ear hears these poor wretches whose sacrifices gave us the freedoms we enjoy today laughing at your "problem," then either drop it or deal with it, but for heaven's sake stop whining about it.

[“What is it going to be for you: a positive attitude or a negative attitude? The choice seems fairly simple, doesn't it? The problem is that we often forget we have a choice. That is one of the master keys to unlocking your greatness in life – exercising your power to choose your attitude](#)

and your approach to life's challenges... You should choose your attitude thoughtfully because it determines how you respond to the many challenges you will encounter."

Keith Harrell: *Attitude is Everything: 10 Life-Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action*

Focus your dissatisfaction

Dissatisfaction can be an incredible source of energy and motivation, if you don't dissipate it with promiscuous complaining. If you are sitting on a thumbtack, you will be incredibly focused on that one problem, and powerfully motivated to move! If you can focus your dissatisfaction on one thing that really matters, and not promiscuously spread it around on every little thing that irks you, you will have created for yourself a great source of motivation. Say, for example, the one and only thing you allow yourself to be unhappy about is your crummy home (like Jeff Foxworthy's redneck, your house has wheels and your car doesn't!). If you refuse to complain about anything else, then your focused dissatisfaction will grow into a raging inferno of ambition. You'll start waking up in the middle of the night with ideas for how to make the dream home become your real home, and getting up in the morning with the inspiration to take action on those ideas.

Take The Pickle Pledge

Stop looking like you were born with a dill pickle stuck in your mouth! Eradicate toxic emotional negativity from your life by refraining from criticizing, complaining, commiserating, and gossiping. These victim-like behaviors sap your emotional energy and spiritual vitality and drain the enthusiasm that's necessary to achieve any big goal. This simple promise that you will turn every complaint into either a blessing or a constructive suggestion can change your life. I know it has mine, and I've heard from hundreds of other people how it has improved their emotional state, as well as from organizations about how collectively it has fostered a more positive and productive workplace culture.

So if you have to park six blocks away and walk all over the mall, instead of complaining, be grateful that you have legs (there are people in wheelchairs who would give anything to have your aching feet), and that you have a mall and don't live in Haiti or Afghanistan. Then remind yourself if you ate fewer donuts and spent more time at the gym, walking six blocks would not be such an imposition. There truly is nothing you can complain about that cannot, with a little thought, be transformed into a blessing and/or a constructive suggestion.



Erase the graffiti of negative self-talk

Nothing can sap your belief in yourself or in your dreams more quickly and thoroughly than your own negative self-talk. In his book *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the New Millennium*, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi showed that for a variety of evolutionary reasons, the human mind automatically gravitates toward negative, frightening, and depressing thoughts. It is your challenge to confront these self-inhibiting notions before they interfere with your pursuit of your future vision. Here is a seven step process for using *The Janitor in Your Attic* to confront negative self-talk and transforming it into positive affirmations.

Catalog: Pay attention to all of the negative self-talk going through your mind. Hint: it will almost always be in the second person (“You are an idiot,” not “I am an idiot”). Chances are, you allow your own inner critic to speak to you in abusive ways that you would never tolerate from anyone else. Every time your Inner Critic verbally abuses you, make a note of what is being said. You might end up with pages full of such notes, but it’s an essential starting point for neutralizing what can in many cases be *Your Own Worst Enemy* – the little vandal who paints that attic of your mind with mental graffiti.

Identify: Negative self-talk is usually a voice from the distant past that has metastasized into something far more critical than was the original intention of the speaker. For example, I once had a teacher tell me that I’d “never amount to a hill of beans.” He was trying to get me motivated to complete an overdue homework assignment, but that accusation comes back to me every time I set out upon a new venture, every time I face rejection or failure, sometimes even before I get out of bed in the morning. Being able to identify its origin goes a long way toward helping me appreciate that it is not truth, it is mental graffiti.

Pay Attention: Having made a catalog of your negative self-talk, and identified the source for at least some of it, now pay attention. It is important that these inner lies be confronted immediately, before they can take root. By paying attention to your inner soundscape, you can catch negative self-talk before it effects your attitudes and actions.

Relabel: One reason negative self-talk can be so destructive is that we believe at some level of consciousness that it is telling us the truth. Offset this pernicious influence by relabeling negative self-talk for what it really is – graffiti being spray-painted on the walls of your mind. In my seminars, I actually encourage people to paint a mental picture of the little graffiti vandal, and to give it a name.

Erase: Once they’ve given a name to the vandal up there in the attic of their minds, I have seminar participants create a mental picture of *The Janitor in Their Attic*, and give him or her a name (my Janitor’s name is Spike). Every time the little vandal paints graffiti up on the walls of “the attic,” they visualize “the janitor” coming along with a utility cart and painting it out.

Replace: Whatever the graffiti of negative self-talk that has been painted over (“You are such a loser”), then gets replaced with an attractive sign stating the exact opposite, along with a positive affirmation (“I’m a winner, and I keep on chugging when the going gets tough”). Notice that the graffiti was in the second person, while the affirmation is in the first person. That’s the difference between an ancient lie and a truth of today.

Repeat: It takes repetition to override harmful old mental circuits and replace them with positive new ones – what he called “survival of the busiest.” Likewise, overruling negative self-talk takes repetition over a period of time. But, as referenced in the book quote that follows, neuroscientists have shown that by reprogramming your thinking you can actually have a physiological impact on the workings of your brain. You can make positive thinking your natural mental state by reprogramming the software, which in turn will transform the hardware.

Researchers have shown that the human brain has an extraordinary capacity to rewire itself in response to both experience and thought. The technical name for this capability is “brain plasticity.” Using a computer metaphor, it is as if by changing the software you can actually have a transformative impact on the hardware. In other words, if you make a good faith effort to change your inner self-talk, over time you will actually begin changing the physiological structure of your brain so that negative self-talk is more automatically replaced by a positive inner dialogue.

“[W]e are seeing evidence of the brain’s ability to remake itself throughout adult life, not only in response to outside stimuli, but even in response to directed mental effort. We are seeing, in short, the brain’s potential to correct its own flaws and enhance its own capabilities.”

Jeffrey M. Schwartz, M.D. and Sharon Begley: *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*

Program Yourself with The Janitor in Your Attic™

Download the two *Janitor in Your Attic* audio programs “Morning Motivation” and “Evening Meditation” (each about 25 minutes). Load them onto your iPod or other device and set the morning program to start playing 25 minutes before you need to get out of bed and start the evening program just as you get into bed for the night. Here is the link for both audio programs:

<http://www.valuescoachinc.com/audio> .

Change your self-image

People who have a positive and strong self-image tend to have more energy than those who don’t like what they see when they look in the mirror. In their book *Mental Toughness*, Dr. James E. Loehr and Peter J. McLaughlin say that “improving self-image is the key to successful coaching in every sport; the players will be as good as they believe they are... Your self-image is the most important tool in your mental arsenal; it controls your emotions when a challenge appears. If you see yourself as someone who can surmount the challenge, you will.” Cultivating a more positive self-image can be a powerfully effective way to increase your energy. You will not for long exceed the capacity of the person you see

when you look in the mirror. So make sure that you don't look in the mirror and pretend to see less than what is really there!!!

"Passion generates a supply of positive energy far more abundant than vitamins, exercise, or any other health remedy you can imagine. When you're passionate about what you do, it's not just the destination that matters, but the entire journey. From beginning to end, the journey is an adventure. When you love what you do, you have the energy to overcome any obstacle.

*Cynthia Kersey, **Unstoppable***

Change your reference group

Sociologists tell us that one of the most important, if not *the* most important, influences on our lives is the people we spend time with, the people with whom we identify. This is what they call our reference group. People tend to hang around with others who are like them in terms of attitudes, opinions, income level, etc. We are all profoundly imprinted by the characteristics of the reference groups with which we identify, in both conscious and subconscious ways. If your reference group consists primarily of people who are depressed, pessimistic, and chronically whining about how the world has made them a victim, over time it will be almost impossible for you to not fall into that emotional quicksand. On the other hand, if you are depressed and anxious but spend time with people who are confident and optimistic, their attitudes are likely to rub off on you. One of the surest ways to enhance your courage is to change your reference groups. You do this by consciously seeking out people who have the qualities you would like to emulate. This entails sticking your neck out, making those proverbial cold calls, joining Rotary or the Optimists Club, and otherwise getting out of your shell. The payback can be enormous, however, both personally and professionally.

Just as a recovering alcoholic can no longer go into a bar, or a recovering smoker needs to stop hanging around with other smokers, as soon as the complaining, whining, gossiping starts, you need to close your ears, and if possible get up and walk away. I once had a cancer survivor tell me that one of the most important things she did was get up and walk away as soon as the complaining started. She said that she was amazed at how toxic emotional negativity drained her of the energy she needed to fight the cancer, and how much brighter her life became when she refused to be a part of it. She told me that: "I learned the difference between a true friend and a bitch buddy, and that I wanted more of the former and none of the latter."

"To perform well consistently... you have to produce your positive attitudes internally, by means which you control, rather than allow your emotions, and hence your ability to be at your best, to be determined by external factors... The world is a powerful conditioner. It's working on you all the time – negativity is normal, positivity is abnormal. To win, you must train to beat that external conditioning, to overcome the brainwashing exerted by a powerful world of negative influence. You must follow a separate path."

*James Loehr and Peter McLaughlin: **Mentally Tough: The Principles of Winning at Sports***

Couple “impossible” goals with “impossible” deadlines to create an overpowering sense of urgency

During World War II, the Sea Bees famously said that the difficult they accomplished immediately, while the impossible took a bit longer. Committing yourself to an “impossible” goal with an “impossible” deadline has a wonderful way of clarifying and focusing the mind on key priorities such as getting out of debt or breaking addictive behaviors.

Impossible #1 + Impossible #2 = Inevitable !!!

Put a value on your time

In my workshops, I will sometimes walk around the room asking participants if they will give me a hundred dollars. As you might imagine, I get very few takers. Then I ask people if they will give me 8 hours of their time. Of course, they're in the middle of doing just that. The point is that if we were just as judicious at how we give out our minutes as how we give out our dollars, we would make much better use of those minutes. Would you pay \$72 for a DVD of a movie? If you buy a \$12 DVD and value your time at \$30 an hour, then spend two yours watching that movie, that's exactly what you're doing. Putting a value on your time will help you treat that time as the precious resource that it really is – and that will help you to energize yourself. Key point: it's not really about money – if you're a parent, I'm sure you would value two hours playing with the kids more highly than you'd value those same two hours shopping or watching a movie.

Remind yourself of your own mortality

In his 2005 commencement address at Stanford University Apple founder Steve Jobs spoke of death, and how the realization of its inevitability should inspire us all to put our best energy into our best work (you can read the text and view the video [at this link](#)). Quoting something he had heard when he was 17, Jobs said you should live every day as if it was going to be your last, because someday it will be. When we procrastinate, when we put off making the tough choices and taking the actions that scare us to death, we are implicitly assuming that we will live forever: “Oh, I'll get around to going back to school and starting that business and writing that book – someday.” Reminding yourself that someday you will be dead is a great way of energizing yourself to make those decisions and take those actions now, while you are still alive. Here is an excerpt from Jobs' speech, but I strongly encourage you to watch and/or read the entire speech:

“Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure – these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.”

Steve Jobs: Stanford Commencement Address, 2005

Distinguish between problems and predicaments

As mentioned above, dissatisfaction can be a powerful source of personal motivation if, *and only if*, it is effectively channeled. To complain about anything and everything, though, is to fritter away that motivational power. Pay attention to the things you complain about (even if you're just complaining silently, not saying the words aloud). Are you complaining about problems or predicaments? Here's the difference: a problem has a solution, a predicament does not (a problem is an alcoholic neighbor, a predicament is an alcoholic mother-in-law; you can deal with a problem but you have to live with a predicament). When you are clear about whether whatever it is that's bothering you is a problem or a predicament, then you can cease wasting your emotional energy on either. If it's a problem, start working on a solution. If it's a predicament, grin and bear it. And remember the famous Serenity Prayer:

“Grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

Reinhold Niehbur: *The Serenity Prayer*

Be an energy faucet

Are you an energy faucet or an energy drain? When you leave a group, do others feel energized by your smile and cheerfulness, or exhausted by your pessimism and complaining? People like to be around those who energize them, and seek to avoid those who sap their energy. To have more energy yourself, be an energy faucet who energizes others. Energy faucets are to an organization, or to a family, what spark plugs are to a car. They're what makes it go.

Avoid energy drain people

In his book *Million Dollar Habits*, Robert J. Ringer says to avoid people who drain your energy. This includes the ones who are always criticizing, complaining, gossiping, pointing fingers, and anything else that saps you of your energy. Here's what Ringer says:

What all drain people have in common is that they drain you of time, energy, peace of mind, relaxation, comfort, and/or money. Interpersonal conflicts waste time and energy, and Drain People are masters at causing interpersonal conflicts.

Can you think of any better reason to stay away from negative people?

Be a friend

Mark Twain said *to have a friend, be a friend*. More than bringing friends into your life, being a friend can increase your energy. One study showed that having more close friendships was associated with 19 percent greater life satisfaction and a 23 percent greater sense of optimism (this study was reported in *The 100 Simple Secrets of the Best Half of Life* by David Niven). And, of course, optimism and life satisfaction are great sources of energy. So go ahead. As the classic sixties song (by the group Friend and Lover) put it, *reach out in the darkness and you may find a friend*. It takes energy to build and sustain friendships, but that investment will result in even more energy coming back to you (and that is

Learn to worry effectively

Worry can be a serious energy drain. Like fear, worry is a natural human condition that can be managed, but really cannot be made to go away. In his book *Worry*, Dr. Edward Hallowell says that one of the keys to an effective and successful life is learning how to worry well. Two key steps, he says, are: 1) to focus on your goals rather than on your fears and 2) to attack problems quickly (before they attack you!). So anytime you find yourself overwhelmed with worry, ask this question: *What is the problem about which I am worrying?* Transforming the worry into a problem will direct you toward the actions you can take to ameliorate the worries by solving the problems.

“Worry is a real killer; worry saps strength, causes people to be random in their work and thinking, breeds anger and confusion, and breaks out many friendships because of irritation and frustrations. In substance, worry is caused by one’s inability to see a successful solution to a problem. What to do about worry and anxiety? There are two basic things: make a list of your worries, then analyze them.”

George Shinn: *The Miracle of Motivation*

Know when to just wait

In his book *Making Miracles* Paul Pearsall describes his bout with cancer. One of the things he learned to do was sit and wait. “When we face a crisis,” he says, “our instinct is to respond with ‘Quick! Now what do I do?’” Instead, the best approach is sometimes to do absolutely nothing. He concludes: “When we feel pressured to achieve some form of closure, some immediate problem-solving strategy, it may be more helpful to be quiet and try to be open to the infinite options and clearer Way that might come to us if we don’t scare them away by the intensity and urgency of our search.” It takes a lot less energy to “wait, listen, feel, and look for meaning and oneness” than it does to rush around in a panic trying to find answers – and, as Pearsall points out – is often more effective.

I once read about a man who had kept two journals for most of his working career. One was labeled “Plan and Work” and the other was labeled “Pray and Wait.” After he retired, he went back through the journals and found that the “Pray and Wait” journals had the biggest dreams, and also the goals that were most likely to have been, eventually, achieved.

Take the time to enjoy your life (the only one you will have on this earth)

“Success can give us many good things, but it usually fails to give us either time or the ability to enjoy it.” That is part of the paradox of success described in the book of the same title by John R. O’Neil. He says that the belief that every moment of our time must be somehow valuable and productive is actually pretty harmful. When you give yourself open-ended time, he says you can “create space for your seldom-heard desires, needs, and notions to assert themselves, and you begin creating a model for a different, more friendly relationship with time.”

Go to bed

Sleep deprivation can increase anxiety and worry, says James Mass in *Power Sleep*. When you skimp

problems or moderate workloads; increase in worry, frustration, and nervousness; and inability to maintain perspective, or to relax, even under moderate pressure.” Most of us require *at least* eight (8!!!!) full hours of sleep every night. “The process of sleep, if given adequate time and the proper environment, provides tremendous power. It restores, rejuvenates, and energizes the body and the brain.” Turning off the TV and setting aside that mystery novel so you can go to bed earlier can help you be more fully alert, creative, enthusiastic, and alive during your waking hours.

Your smart phone can help you fall asleep, sleep more soundly, and wake up more refreshed. Here is a link that includes a [Review of smart phone sleep aid apps](#).

Don't waste your time, and your life, being bored

Boredom is a major risk factor not only in an unfulfilling life, but also in causing depression and other serious and potentially fatal diseases including heart disease. To get out of your rut, begin seeing your life as an adventure – doing new things, or doing old things in a new way. What does this have to do with energy? Lots. When you're sitting around bored, your mind will automatically gravitate towards negative, depressing and frightening thoughts, and you will – *worry*. And worry zaps your energy. In today's world, with so many exciting things to do and so many serious problems to be overcome, there is simply no excuse for being bored.

“Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing, do it with your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson: *Essays*

Pay attention and act with intention

In his book *Act Now!* Dr. Dale Anderson describes the Stanislavski acting method. The great acting teacher told his students to forget about their feelings, to stop striving for a certain emotional state, and instead to focus on the three things over which they had some real control – *attention, intention, and action*. It turns out that's pretty good advice for creating energy as well. Pay attention to the positive aspects of your life, keep your intentions focused on your key goals, and take the actions that transform your dreams into reality and you'll find that you have much more energy.

Rewrite your past

We all have painful memories that can drag us down emotionally. The troubling paradox is that many of those memories are simply not accurate. It's amazing that someone who will forget the name of a person they were introduced to only moments ago will allow their lives to be made miserable by regret, anger, and guilt over things they remember from years, even decades, earlier. Those destructive memories can sap your energy and take the zest out of your life. What's the answer? Change them. Dr. Kenneth Pelletier, in his book *Sound Mind, Sound Body*, said that: “The ability to reflect upon and consciously reconstruct an early life experience and thereby more comprehend it marks one of the most

Psychologist James Hillman has done research on people of genius, in which he found that a great many of them “manufactured” a past by consciously directing their memories in directions that were nurturing and supportive of their desired futures. Every historian knows that the past is substantially what you choose to remember. That being the case, why don’t you choose to make yours a good one.

“The past lives now only in your memory, but the future holds a myriad of possibilities. No matter where you find yourself at this moment you, too, can begin the renewal process. Just as your body is constantly regenerating itself physiologically, you can renew yourself mentally by replacing worn out, stagnant thinking with thoughts that stimulate a sense of hope and positive anticipation about your future.”

David McNally: *Even Eagles Need a Push*

Placebo yourself

The Placebo Effect refers to the phenomenon of sugar pills making people well simply because they believe they’re taking medicine. Identify some food, activity, or location that does something positive for you, like increasing your energy or bringing you a sense of peace. Then believe that every time you expose yourself to that “placebo,” it will have the desired effect. One way to build that belief is to repeat a verbal affirmation each time you practice the intervention – “I love bananas because they taste so good, and I feel so *energized* every time I eat one!”

Hawthorne yourself

In a series of studies on the productivity of workers manipulated various conditions (such as pay levels, lighting levels, frequency of rest breaks), researchers discovered every change, no matter what it was, at least temporarily increased productivity. This was true of individual workers as well as of the group as a whole. The researchers concluded that it was not the changes themselves making a difference, but rather that workers were responding to the fact that they were being observed, and being observed by people who were expecting to see a change. The Hawthorne Effect, named for the factory where the studies were conducted, is a term for bringing about a change in behavior simply by watching for that change. In other words, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Another important finding was that the productivity changes tended to be transitory.

The Hawthorne Effect is closely related to the Placebo Effect, and can likewise help you increase your energy. Try new things with the expectation that they will energize you, and observe carefully how you respond. Chances are, there will be an improvement. Chances are that the improvement will not last. When the effect starts to wear off, it’s time to try something new – “Hmm, I think today instead of having a banana for my afternoon snack, I think I’ll try a Power Bar; I like that title, Power Bar! I’ll bet they really work!!”

Do everything twice

The first time do it in your mind, and the second time do it in the world of matter. When you’ve seen yourself do something in your mind, you can flow through that activity more efficiently when you

the morning just as they're going to sleep the night before. That simple exercise always helps us get up and get moving on cold mornings.

March!

One of the things that made Napoleon's armies so formidable was that they marched at a cadence of 120 steps per minute (try that yourself for twenty miles or so and you'll be impressed!) when the standard of the day was only 70 paces per minute. As a result, they often showed up where they were not expected, and when they attacked an enemy line, they hit with extraordinary force (since, as Napoleon himself recognized, in a military assault as in the physical world, the physics law of $\text{Force} = \text{Mass} \times \text{Velocity}$ applies). In their book *The Warrior's Edge*, military special forces experts John R. Alexander, Richard Grollier and Janet Morris recommend "cross crawls" to stimulate both hemispheres of the brain. The simplest cross crawl exercise is marching in place with the left arm and right leg lifting in unison, followed by the right arm and left leg. This should be done in a free-flowing, relaxed, and stress-free manner. Ten minutes or so every day will enhance energy and creativity.



Doing the Cross Crawl

Double time yourself

Make a list of all the chores you have to do: grocery shopping, laundry, mowing the yard, etc. Now, figure out how you can do each of these in half the time. With grocery shopping, for example, you can have a better organized list, refuse to engage in impulse buying or comparison shopping (since your time is more valuable than the modest amount of money you might save), and push your cart more decisively down the aisles. This will give you a double benefit. By moving faster, you will be more energetic. You'll also have more time in which to invest that energy in more productive and enjoyable activities (hopefully, you do not consider shopping to be one of your more productive and enjoyable activities!).

Use the Five-Get-It Formula for getting things done

Get Ready, Get Started, Get Help, Get Finished, Get On to the next priority.

Take the stairs

When I pass through O'Hare Airport, when I have time I'll work on an ongoing observational survey. If

a set of long escalators on either side. You may have noticed that there is a staircase sandwiched between those escalators. Extrapolating from my counts, for every one person who hikes up the stairs, more than ten thousand (that's 10,000+) people stand in line so they can be passively and effortlessly hoisted to the upper level like so many cattle on a conveyor belt (in fact, some of them are so obese they look sort of like cattle).

Taking the stairs is not only good for your health and for keeping down your weight. It is also a great way to boost your energy. When I reach the top of the O'Hare staircase, I always have more energy than I had at the bottom. Partly that's because physical exertion of any sort catalyzes both physical and emotional energy. And partly (I admit it) it's because I feel a certain sense of superiority to the tele-tubbies who look at me with astonishment as I pass them by on the way to the top.

"I've never seen an energy drain climb very high up the ladder of success. Nobody wants to elevate someone who brings people down. Successful people are always high-energy people, and they are always anxious to share their energy with the people around them. But even more important than professional success, it's hard for me to imagine an energy drain being very happy in their personal life."

Roger Looyenga (with Joe Tye): *Take the Stairs*

Guard your energy

Jesus was a man who got things done, yet he always seemed to have time for people. In her book *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*, Laurie Beth Jones describes some of the ways that Jesus made time. One of the most important was that he guarded his energy. He did not waste physical or emotional energy on judging others, negative self talk, argumentation, or procrastination. Over the ages, many people have tried to emulate Jesus in order to be better people; Jones shows how you can emulate him in order to be a better time manager.

Keep two lists

The first list, of course, is your daily to-do list. The second is much shorter – the list of your Big Projects, the things that really matter. Every morning (or better yet, each evening before you go to bed) go over each item on the first list and ask whether and how it will help you achieve one of your Big Projects. For most of us, the Pareto Principle (the 80-20 rule) will hold and most of your to-do list will not advance your most important goals. You might still need to do the trivial 80 percent, but you should do them after you've done the important 20 percent. One of the most energizing things in the world is immersing yourself in work that is meaningful and important (your Big Projects). And one of the most de-energizing things in the world is being bogged down with trivia.

Get in shape

Becoming physically stronger will give you the stamina to persevere when you'd rather quit, and to focus your energy more intensely. It does not take several hours a day at the gym to make a difference; exercise physiologists tell us that even something as simple as walking for twenty minutes three times a

week is a whole lot better than doing nothing at all. If you spend a lot of time on the road and use that as an excuse for not exercising, you know that you are fooling yourself. Most hotels now have fitness rooms with exercise equipment, and if they don't, they have stairwells that can be used for simulating walking up and down hills. There is actually a website with information about exercise facilities in airports: www.airportgyms.com. Likewise, airplane and automobile time can be used for simple isometric exercises that strengthen abdominal and leg muscles, as well as using little squeeze balls to strengthen hands and wrists.

“When your body is strong, it will bend to your command; when your body is weak, you will give in to its demands.”

The Samurai Paradox

3x10 is better than 1 x 60

If you don't have time to exercise for an hour, this is really good news! It turns out that three shorter workouts of say 10 minutes each might actually give you a greater benefit than one long workout of an hour. Recently there has been a lot of publicity around what is called “the 7 minute workout,” a grueling series of exercises that is supposed to give optimal benefit in minimal time (if you can maintain a pain level of 8 on a 1-10 scale for seven minutes). *Anyone* can find seven minutes in even the busiest of days to exercise – finding the determination to do it is the challenge. You can read about the exercises in the article below, and if you Google it you'll even find apps to help you get started.

[Read about The 7 Minute Workout in The New York Times](#)

Do one push-up



Doing one push-up is like trying to eat just one potato chip. Once you're down on the floor and have done one, chances are you will suddenly have the energy to do another. And another. So if you just commit yourself to doing just one push-up (and one sit-up and one knee bend etc.) you will find that you progressively do more. And even if you don't, you'll feel better about yourself for having met your commitment to yourself of doing one push-up that day.

Be careful about trading your life's energy for money

In their book *Your Money or Your Life* Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin say that money is just something

also your emotional, physical, and spiritual energy. Joseph Campbell once said that anyone who gets paid for a job they hate is a prostitute. Make a list of things you are trading for the money you get from work, is it worth it? The more you spend your money on things, the more time, and energy, you'll end up spending on taking care of those things. Here is a potentially life-changing question, one that I often ask people who are in the midst of a career or life transition (or both, they often come together):

What would you do if every job paid the same and had the same social status? If your answer is different from what you are doing now, how can you build a bridge from where you are to where you would ideally like to be?

Build a bridge from where you are to who you are



San Antonio River Walk Bridge by artist Joe Tye Jr.

What would you do if every job paid the same and had the same social status? That can be a life-changing question because it strips away all of the externalities and gets to the heart of your real mission and passion in life – of the “meant to be” you. What could be more energizing than knowing that you are doing the work you’re meant to be doing and being the person you are meant to be?

Of course, it’s often not realistic to just stop doing what you’re doing now and start living out the answer to that question. There are, of course, trains to catch and bills to pay. But you can build bridges that will allow you to bring your answer to that question into your current work, and that will create a path from where you are to who you are.

Question #1: How can you bring your greatest passion into your current work? I once met a nurse who loved nursing and was good at it, but her real passion was writing poetry. She knew that she couldn’t make a living as a nurse poet, but she could write poems for her patients and her coworkers. And who knows – perhaps someday she’ll give a poem to someone who shares it with a big-time publisher (that is how Robert Fulghum was discovered after someone shared his little essay “Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” – and when the publisher called to ask if he has more his answer was “of course – I’ve been writing for a long time”).

Question #2: How can you build a foundation so that someday you are able to move from your current work to doing your ideal work? My role model in this is my Dad, who painted the painting above. He was a very dedicated career Air Force officer, but every evening and weekend he could be found at his

already had enough people begging him to paint their favorite airplane, that he was able to launch his second career as a professional artist.

For more ideas check this video:

Video: [Build a bridge from where you are to who you are](#)

Conquer your laziness

Your worst enemy could be your own laziness. Don't be offended – we're all lazy in some way. It may just be unwillingness to work hard. It could also be your unwillingness to make lifestyle changes that would give you more energy for that work. For some, it's the refusal to confront their own defects, acknowledge their imperfections, and set about to make changes. Laziness can take the form of giving in to fear, allowing imagined dangers (fear of rejection, failure, even success) keep you from taking the actions that need to be taken. Low self-esteem can be a particularly insidious form of laziness, often taking the form of an excuse for inaction ("I'm not worthy of that goal, so I won't even try").

"When adversity threatens to paralyze us, we need to reassert control by finding a new direction in which to invest psychic energy, a direction that lies outside the reach of external forces. Whenever aspiration is frustrated, a person still must seek a meaningful goal around which to organize the self."

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: *Flow*

But... master the fine art of strategic laziness

Imagine trying to pound a nail into a piece of wood by pushing on it with a hammer. It will go a lot faster if you bring the hammer back to a resting position then swing it down hard onto the nail. That's an apt metaphor for strategic laziness. We all need quiet time, time alone for reflection and recuperation. Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is stop working on the urgent demands that always seem to be at hand, and take some time to think about the important matters that can profoundly change the direction of your life.

"I've spent a good deal of time in 'poor' countries, particularly in Asia and the Caribbean. There, pleasure, laughter, and humanness seem more authentic. People stop to admire the sun on the sea, rather than just take a picture of it to bring back as proof to their friends of how worthwhile their vacation was. Everyday life seems richer and fuller. We have much to learn from them. I want to shout 'slow down' at those who believe that only money can buy them a 'better life.'"

Stephan Rechtschaffen, M.D., *Timeshifting*

Do something for the first time

It is easy to get into a rut. It is also de-energizing. One of the best ways to get out of a rut is to do something you've never done before. And the crazier, the better. Go skipping down the halls of the place where you work singing a happy song. Write a poem. Stand on a street corner reciting a poem

South Kaibab Trail at Grand Canyon and watch the sunrise at Ooh-Ah Point. Hike all the way down to the Colorado River and spend a few nights at Phantom Ranch or Bright Angel campground. But I don't recommend jumping into the Colorado River, which is what I did in this video.

Video: [When's the last time you did something for the first time?](#)

Confront Resistance – Turn Pro

In his (highly-recommended!) little book *The War of Art*, Steven Pressfield describes Resistance (he capitalizes the word to connote that it is a real thing, a noun if you will) as the inner force that keeps us from doing our most important work and from becoming our authentic meant-to-be selves. The antidote to Resistance, he says, is to turn pro. By that, he does not mean simply to work for money or to become part of a profession. Rather, he means to show up every day and do your work. It is the way to overcome writers' block, the way to overcome the fear of rejection or failure, the way to energize yourself to fulfill your goals and your dreams. Resistance will sap your energy the way a bucket of water puts out a fire. Turning pro – showing up every day on time to do your work, and to do it with enthusiasm – will help you keep that spark of energy alive and burning.

“The most pernicious aspect of procrastination is that it can become a habit. We don't just put off our lives today; we put them off till our deathbed. Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny. This second, we can turn the tables on Resistance. This second, we can sit down and do our work.”

Steven Pressfield: *The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle*

Use *The Janitor in Your Attic*™ to conquer procrastination

One of the most severe energy drains of all is having lots of unfinished projects and un-started good intentions hanging over your head. The ever-growing mental list of undone projects can be enervating, whereas just getting started on something – and better yet, finishing it – can give you a powerful shot of energy. Are you procrastinating on something that is important to you, either because it's something you want to do (take night classes) or that you really must do (complete your taxes)? Well, if the traditional (boring) approach hasn't worked for you, give *The Janitor in Your Attic* a try. It just might.

Traditional (Boring) Approach

- Explore with your shrink the relationship between delayed potty training as a child and procrastination as an adult.
- Break your project down into small chunks.
- Buy yourself a candy bar each time you complete a chunk.

***The Janitor in Your Attic* Approach**

Think of all the things holding you back: fear (including fear of rejection, failure, commitment, success), self doubt, guilt, low self esteem, lack of energy, and whatever else that's blocking you from doing what

- Visualize each source of obstruction as a rock that's part of the wall of resistance standing between you and the achievement of your goal.
- Visualize The Janitor in Your Attic sitting at the wheel of a giant yellow bulldozer. Watch him turn the ignition key, and listen to the dozer's massive diesel roar to life. Look at your Janitor's determined expression as he stares at that wall of resistance – Ali staring down Foreman; Joan of Arc on the ramparts of Orleans! **Unstoppable!** Mimic that expression on your own face.
- Now your Janitor slams the bulldozer into gear and jams down the gas pedal. Watch it picking up speed, heading straight for the wall that's been holding you back. Clench all your muscles as you brace yourself for the impact.
- **CRASH!** See it, hear it, feel it slam into that wall at full throttle. **POW!** Rocks are flying everywhere!! All the fear, the self doubt and low self esteem, guilt, and other emotional obstacles have been **CRUSHED** into tiny pieces.
- Watch your Janitor use those pieces to build a nice straight road that leads to the accomplishment of your dreams. Through the alchemy of metaphorical visualization, the fear that once paralyzed you is now the energy that catalyzes you. Self pity becomes transformed into a genuine concern for other people. Guilt becomes the motivation to try a little harder. Lethargy becomes a new commitment to focus your limited reserves of energy.
- Now, play it again. The wall of resistance. The roaring of the bulldozer. The iron-eyed look of determination on your Janitor's face. The crash. The splintered fragments of your fears flying through the air.
- When the wall tumbles down again, you feel a surge of inner power as you look down the road toward your accomplished goal – transformed into a *memory of the future*. Play it again. **SLAM!!!** Down comes the wall and up goes the road. Again – **KAPOW!!!** And again – **CRUNCH!!!**
- Each time you play this mental video, you are reinforcing your belief in the inevitability of your dream. (In fact, recent research advances in the field of neurobiology have demonstrated that vivid mental visualization can actually cause a real change in the wiring of your neural circuitry, giving a whole new meaning to the notion that you'll see it when you believe it.)
- By the tenth time, you are so energized you can hardly sit still. **BAM!!!!**

Now see yourself *running* down the road toward your cherished goal. *Right now*, before that feeling goes away, jump out of your seat and get started on the first action step you need to complete so you can begin the journey down that new road that leads to the realization of your dreams.

Use DDQs to focus your energy

The most simple yet powerful technique I've discovered for keeping your energy focused on things that really matter is the *Direction Deflection Question* (DDQ). Every DDQ is a variation on this one question:

Ask that question often enough, and you will make changes in your attitudes and in your habits that alter your direction in life, leading you toward becoming the person you are meant to be and achieving your most authentic goals and dreams. Here's an example of a DDQ for getting out of debt (overwhelming debt can be a huge energy suck!!!!):

Is what I am about to spend my hard-earned money on going to help me achieve my goal of having all credit card debt paid off by the end of this year?

What is a Direction Deflection Question you can tattoo in your mind and in your heart *now* so that it can guide your actions in the year to come, keeping you on target for achieving your Big Goal?

Think fast

Speed is more a state of mind than it is a state of motion. For example, when you think of shopping as a nuisance activity that interferes with getting done the things that really matter, and not as a form of entertainment or recreation, you will get it done a whole lot faster. Going to the grocery store with an organized list and a determination to get it done in half the time will free up more time for you to (spend time with the kids, apply to graduate school, write the Great American Novel, whatever).

Give yourself a change of scenery

Sometimes all it takes to give yourself a boost of energy is a change of scenery. If you find yourself stuck, make a trip to the library or local coffee shop and work there for a while. Go sit by a river bank or on a bench in the park. Go for a walk in a new neighborhood. Changing what you see on the outside can energize what's happening on the inside.

Keep breathing

Attentive breathing is a fundamental element of every meditative tradition, from transcendental to Zen to centering prayer. Here's one way you can focus on your breathing: lie quietly on your back on the floor. Let everything else flow by as you concentrate on your breathing. Each time you inhale, notice how your abdomen rises; as you inhale more deeply, watch your chest rise and your abdomen subside. Believe that as you inhale you are bringing into your body cosmic energy beyond your comprehension. Exhale slowly through the mouth, in a controlled way, and believe that the tired old air is taking out with it stress and worry. As we discussed with the Placebo Effect mentioned above, believing that it will work will help you assure that it does work.

"Regular meditation not only restores our inner harmony and vital energy, but provides us with an actual experience of the peace we seek."

Diane Dreher: The Tao of Inner Peace

Understand that energy is a logarithmic function

Consider the following formula, where T is time, E is energy, A is achievement, and ^{log} indicates a logarithmic function.

$$T \leq E^{\log} \Rightarrow A$$

This simply means that energy can be converted into time and achievement, and that it is a logarithmic function – in other words, each additional increment of energy yields a disproportionate increment of result. It's out there at the margin that super achievers operate. It's the difference between Ray Kroc operating at 100 percent and creating a fast food empire and a McDonald's franchiser running at 98 percent and owning a string of stores. Whenever you think that you're working hard and applying a lot of energy, pick up the pace because that extra little bit of energy is going to translate into results far greater than the first increments of energy you applied. The more energy you apply, the more you will achieve and the less time it will take you to achieve it.

Understand that energy at the end is worth more than energy at the beginning

If you watch a race in the Olympics, you know that most of them are decided in the last few yards (or even in the last few inches). That is a great metaphor for life: at the beginning of any project, energy comes easily. There's enthusiasm and optimism and everyone is on board. It's toward the end that, like the marathoner starting the 26th mile, energy flags and enthusiasm wavers. But it is precisely then that another injection of energy will push you across the finish line. So whenever you find yourself ready to give up, do whatever it takes to summon up one more increment of energy because you just might be about to run through the tape.

You often hear the scary statistic that most new businesses fail (I've heard as many as 8 in 10 fail within five years). That is not accurate, especially if you take out the "businesses" where someone sticks a toe in the water by setting up a website and then the business "fails" when it turns out that it's going to take a bigger investment and a lot of hard work to get people to visit that website. But in a larger sense, it's also not true. Businesses don't fail, owners quit. For every business that "failed," you can probably find another where the owner(s), faced with the very same circumstances, injected a little more energy to make one more sales call, visit one more bank, to do whatever it took to keep the doors open for one more day. They understood this principle: energy at the end (close to the finish line) is far more powerful than energy at the beginning. Remember:

Businesses don't fail – owners quit!

Don't multitask – mono-task

The research has been done and the jury is in: multitasking is both less efficient and less effective than mono-tasking. Working on one thing at a time, and giving it your complete concentration, gets things done faster and gets them done better. It also makes for a more rewarding experience of work; you are much more likely to achieve a state of what psychologists call "flow," which is a sense of total immersion in the work itself, and is one of the most enjoyable of human experiences.

Let a big hairy audacious goal be your flywheel

One of the characteristics that many of the visionary companies that Jim Collins and Jerry Porras describe in their book *Built to Last* is a tendency to set "big hairy audacious goals," or BHAGs. Magnificent goals do more than focus your energy and attention on a dream; they can also serve as a

get discouraged and are ready to throw in the towel. It may be that external forces are holding us back, or that we're losing confidence in ourselves.

At those times when you feel you don't have the energy to push your way onward, having a big dream out there in front of you can be the source of energy that pulls you through the difficulties. If you read the stories of great leaders in business, politics, or any other realm of human endeavor, you'll find that they all experienced times of doubt and discouragement. Even when they lost faith in themselves, however, their commitment to a dream that was bigger than themselves gave them the energy to carry on.

"In my conversations with hundreds of top salespeople over the years, I have found that they all have one thing in common. They all have clear, written goals. They have taken the time to sit down and create a blueprint for themselves and their future lives. Every one of them has been amazed at the incredible power of goal setting and strategic planning. Every one of them has accomplished far more than they ever believed possible in selling."

Brian Tracy: *Advanced Selling Strategies*

Think like an owner, not like a renter

Have you ever changed the oil in a rental car? You are much less likely to invest energy in something you're renting than in something that you feel a sense of ownership for. Any time you hear someone say something like "That's not my job," that person hasn't really taken ownership for the work, they are just renting the job. And thus are much less likely to put energy into the job. The best to create energy is to use it, so by thinking like an owner rather than a renter, and investing an owner's energy into your work (and your life), you will have more energy.

"When a person talks about feeling 'empty' at work, or uses the word 'meaningless' to describe his job, I have come to realize this almost always means the person lacks connectedness at work. Most people derive a feeling of meaning from connecting to something we believe – other people, a team, and/or a mission. Without such a connection, no matter how much money you make or how famous you become, you will probably feel empty or dissatisfied."

Edward Hallowell: *Worry: Controlling It and Using It Wisely*

Put a little love in your work

Almost everywhere I go, I meet people who tell me that they wish they had work to do that really matters, work that they could do with joy and passion, work that had the feel of calling. More often than not, however, the problem is not with the work so much as it is with the worker. They have convinced themselves that the work they do has no meaning, or that they don't get paid enough to treat that work as though it had meaning.

This is as true of highly-paid medical doctors who advise young people to stay out of medicine because "the bureaucrats" have taken all the fun out of it as it is for "the bureaucrats" who sit Dilbert-like in their cubicles relishing every opportunity to share the latest gossip or complaint instead of doing their

work with joy and passion. One of the main reasons (perhaps the only reason) that people become bored or burned-out on their jobs is they have forgotten how to do their work with love. When we were two, no work was drudgery – it was all fun and exciting. We understood at the deepest level what Kahlil Gibran wrote in *The Prophet*, that work is love made visible – to which I would add that the best way to add more love into your life is to put more love into your work. Read these lines from the poem “To Be of Use” by Marge Piercy (included in Bill Moyers’ book *Fooling with Words: A Celebration of Poets and Their Craft*)...

The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight...
The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real.

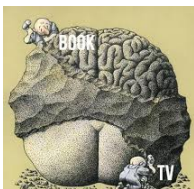
Swim off into your work with sure strokes to make a difference somewhere – somewhere where it really counts. There’s nothing like feeling like you’re making a difference to give you energy.

Focus your energy on your One Big YES

Focus means two things: 1) Target – having a limited and manageable number of objectives at any given time, and 2) Concentration – bringing to bear all available resources on the achievement of those objectives. One of the great paradoxes of life is that the more willing you’re to deny yourself distraction and temptation and stay focused on your key priorities, the more you will end up getting done over a lifetime. I have this poster on the wall where I can see it from my computer and from my telephone to serve as a constant reminder that if I want to accomplish big things, I can’t waste my time on trivial matters:



Unplug the plug-in drug



According to A.C. Nielsen and Company, the average American watches three hours and forty six minutes of television each day (which would account for more than 52 days of non-stop TV watching per year). Time-use researcher John Robinson has discovered that some 40% of an average American’s “free” time goes directly down the tube (no,

that is not a misprint – the average American spends 40% of his or her time having their intelligence insulted by the boob tube). By age sixty-five, that average American will have spent nearly *nine years* glued to the tube. They will have seen more than two million TV commercials, and witnessed over a million murders and other acts of violence during that time. Put another way, by age 65 the average American will have spent *17 years'* worth of 8-hour days watching television.

What can you do in 17 working years? Almost anything! People complain that they never have enough time or money to do the things that they want to do. One of the chief culprits is right over there in the corner, plugged into the wall. It's been called *the plug-in drug*, and for good reason. Chronic TV abuse can be just as addicting as narcotic drugs, and just as deadening.

“If you pay attention at every moment, you form a new relationship to time. Your own absorption slows you down internally. The slowing down feeds your sense of deep appreciation and at the same time produces more energy. In some magical way, by slowing down you become more efficient, productive, and energetic, focusing without distraction directly on the task in front of you. Not only do you become immersed in that moment; you become that moment.

Michael Ray: *Creativity in Business*

Be a shark

Here's a great exercise: Create a mental image of yourself as a shark. Because of its primitive gills a shark must be perpetually on the move or it will drown. The next time you feel yourself getting bogged down, imagine giving yourself a flick of that powerful tail fin of yours to renew your momentum. If you don't want to be a shark, visualize yourself as a racecar, or a rocket ship. Through the magic of *metaphorical visualization* you will absorb the energy of that which you see racing through the theater of your mind.

Power your way into obstacles

My friend Sue Thompson is founder of [Mountain Biking for Life](#), which uses mountain biking as a metaphor for achieving goals and living a great life. Her book of that title shares many great lessons, one of the most important of which has to do with maintaining momentum in tough terrain. When we run into obstacles and brick walls, the tendency is to slow down and take stock (and take a break). But the best response is often to put your foot on the gas. In business and career and in life, as in mountain biking, it's easier to keep your balance when you have positive forward momentum going for you. Sue says that more eloquently than I do:

“Riding a bicycle is about balance and forward momentum. The two elements work in conjunction with each other: the slower we ride, the more difficult it is to balance. The faster we ride, the easier it is to balance. Balance is improved by speed and momentum. It is our self-preserving nature, to see something daunting on the trail, and slow down. *Slowing down gives us the illusion of increased control.* But riding slowly requires more control, balance and energy. When we ride cautiously, the rocks are bigger, the climbs longer and the ability to stay upright

balance and skill demands. Momentum carries us over obstacles with less exertion and effort. When we approach a part of the trail our inclination is to slow down, we should try the opposite and speed up. It takes a bit of courage to do this! But courage and momentum will carry us over the obstacles with greater ease.” (emphasis in original)

Susan Thompson: *Mountain Biking for Life: Finding Your Path*

Break out of Pareto Prison

You’ve probably heard of the 80/20 rule – also known as the Pareto Principle, named for Wilfredo Pareto, the economist who first expounded it. Essentially, this principal describes the natural tendency that about 20% of your efforts will generate 80% of your results. That means that eight percent of your time is not spent very productively (think about the hours spent in boring meetings, watching television, doing paperwork, etc.). I call this Pareto Prison because as long as your results are defined by this rule, your potential is seriously limited. Here’s a great way to generate more energy: identify the twenty percent of your time that is most productive, and catalog your activities during those hours. Then take ¼ of your less productive time and stop doing whatever it is you’re doing, and start doing what you are doing during your most productive moments. Then, instead of operating in 20/80 mode, you’ll be in 40/60 mode.

In theory, your results should double with no additional expenditure of time. In reality, however, your results won’t merely double – over time they will increase geometrically. I am convinced that one of the most important commonalities between super achievers in every field is their ability to break out of Pareto Prison and make better use of their time. Now, before you tell me that you don’t have the energy to turn eight unproductive hours into eight productive hours, be honest with yourself. Chances are, the unproductive hours (meetings, memo, television) are actually de-energizing, whereas the productive hours are re-energizing.

Have fun on the job

In their book *Lessons from the Top*, Thomas Neff and James Citrin interviewed 50 of America’s top business leaders about their secrets to success. There were, of course, a number of common themes in their responses to questions about what it takes to build a great business. One might surprise you; *having fun*. Almost all of these leaders think it’s important for people to be enthusiastic, passionate, and excited about their work – and to have fun on the job. Being enthusiastic and having fun generates energy; being bored and miserable destroys energy. By changing your attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors, there are almost always ways you can bring a little more enthusiasm and fun into your job. The payoff will be more energy to do the job well and to do it fast, meaning more time to have fun off the job as well.

“Flow is the state of mind in which you lose awareness of time, place, even of yourself, and you become one with what you’re doing. In these states we are at our happiest as well as at our most effective. The doorway to flow is play. You can play it *anything* you do. Play... can turn

activity, [it is] creative engagement in whatever it is you are doing. The opposite of play is doing exactly what you're told to do."

Edward Hallowell and John Ratey: *Delivered from Distraction: Getting the Most out of Life with Attention Deficit Disorder*

Ask better questions (and ask "dumb" questions)

The questions you ask are more important than the answers you receive. When I was a student at the Stanford Graduate School of Business I took the class "Creativity in Business" taught by Professor Michael Ray (who also wrote the book of that title). It was probably the most important class I ever took, in part because it taught me to ask dumb questions (one of the "live withs" Michael taught in the course and that are described in his book). It takes courage to ask dumb questions, but dumb questions are the ones that change the world.

At one time, it was a dumb question to ask how every book and musical score that has ever been written could be loaded onto a single machine that would fit into a shirt pocket (the question behind the iPod); it was a dumb question to ask how all of the information everywhere in the world could be organized in such a way that it could be immediately accessible to everyone in the world (the question behind Google); and it was a dumb question to ask how women could be given career opportunities where advancement depended solely on performance and not on gender (the question behind Mary Kay Cosmetics). Yet each of these "dumb" questions changed our world in a material way. As Marilee Adams says in the book quoted just below, if you want to change your life, begin by changing the questions you ask of your life.

"A world of questions is a world of possibility. Questions open our minds, connect us to each other, and shake outmoded paradigms. I have a vision of the workforce and a society – of individuals, families, institutions, and communities – that are vibrant with the spirit of inquiry. Our orientation would shift from one of the answers and opinions to one of questions and curiosity. We would see quick judgments, fixed perspectives, and old opinions give way to exploration, discovery, innovation, and cooperation."

Marilee Adams: *Change Your Questions Change Your Life*

Take adversity in stride

Running into obstacles, setbacks, and adversity can be energy-draining and downright depressing. It is also inevitable. The next time you're feeling held back or knocked down, keeping a positive perspective can help you renew your energy. In their book *Built to Last* James Collins and Jerry Porras describe the characteristics of "visionary companies" that dominate their markets year after year. One of the biggest surprises in their study was that the highly successful companies of today were far more likely to have encountered, and overcome, serious setbacks and failures in their early years than were the also-rans. Conquering the challenges helped mold the character of the company's people, and created a culture of mental toughness and perseverance. So the next time you feel like you can't go on,

“The courage to risk the disapproval of others, while at the same time going through the doubt of self-examination, is rare. When we begin to examine ourselves, we feel most insecure. It is then that we most look for approval. Finding none, we abandon the quest. This is the time courage and perseverance [are most needed].”

Laurence Boldt: *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*

Be willing to take risks

According to John O’Neil, author of the book *The Paradox of Success*, many people are stuck in “a dead end with a pretty good paycheck.” It takes a lot of courage to let go of the apparent security of a job, especially if it has a pretty good paycheck and benefits, but if you’re not growing, it’s something you may have to do. As we’ve already seen, staying complacently in the center of your comfort zone only gives you access to a limited access of energy. O’Neil says that friends and family members can weave a “comfortable by deadly cocoon of caution,” but that excessive risk-aversion can be a prison.

Don’t chase what you don’t really want and don’t want what you know you can’t have

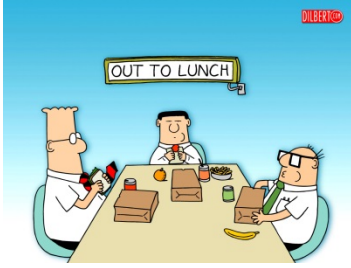
This sounds so simple, doesn’t it? The problem is, most of us want everything. We even want things we don’t want! For proof of this, you need look no farther than all of the attics, garages, and storage sheds that are filled with the things we just had to have but now no longer need. All of this stuff represents a use of time, money, energy, and attention that was not devoted to achieving something of lasting significance. The problem is accentuated by our advertising-driven economy, a key function is which is to encourage us to want even more. We become like the kid at Christmas, rushing from one package to the next without stopping to play. Many people answer the question, “What do you want?” in much the same way that the Supreme Court defines pornography: “I’ll know it when I see it.” A much better approach is to crystallize in your mind those things which are truly important, and to devote yourself to their achievement, and to not chase the things that you really don’t want or want the things you can’t have.

Save your money

Every time you spend money, it represents an expenditure of past, present, and future energy. It’s past energy because the hours you worked to earn it are now stored in that money, and once spent they are now gone. The current energy is not just that required to go shopping, but also to manage all the subterranean emotions that go along with the process of expenditure and acquisition. Of course, anything you buy today is with an expectation that you will use it in the future, meaning an expenditure of energy at that time. Finally, there is often a correlation between your bank balance and your energy state. Being close to the edge financially is associated with negative states of anxiety and depression, whereas having a healthy “safety net” is more likely to generate confidence and enthusiasm. Think of it this way: a penny saved may be more than a penny earned; it may also be a unit of energy earned. Someday you’ll be glad for both.

“There is a Zen-like serenity to having money in the bank.”

Don't catch Dilbert Disease



If you read the comic strip *Dilbert*, you know that the “hero” of this strip hates his job, can’t stand his boss, and despises the morons he has to work with. You also know that his biggest fear is losing his job. That’s a neurotic condition I refer to as Dilbert Disease. You probably know people who are suffering from this condition, and you may, on occasion, experience these symptoms yourself. Beware! Dilbert Disease is contagious and it is malignant. People with Dilbert Disease are low-energy, low-performers, and their negativity tends to rub off on those they spend time with. In his beautiful book *The Prophet*, Khalil Gibran wrote that “work is love made visible.” One of the surest ways to build your energy is to put love and enthusiasm into your work, and to stay far away from people with Dilbert Disease.

“Work is the very fire where we are baked to perfection, and like the master of the fire itself, we add the essential ingredient and fulfillment when we walk into the flames ourselves and fuel the transformation of ordinary, everyday forms into the exquisite and the rare.”

David Whyte: *The Heart Aroused*

Use time fragments wisely

A great way to build energy and keep your momentum going is to make effective use of those fragmentary down times we all experience – waiting in line at the bank, the commute to and from work, being put on hold. Though each may be insignificant by itself, they add up to quite a bit of time. They can also zap your energy but blocking your momentum. You can prevent this by having a book in your pocket so you can read several pages while waiting in line, having an educational or motivational audiotape to listen to in your car, and repeating your positive affirmations while you’re on hold. If you’re not sure that all those time fragments are really worth the effort of capturing, remind yourself that’s how J.K. Rowling made the time to write her first *Harry Potter* book, and in the process become a rich and famous author who now has the money to hire other people to do the things that she doesn’t care to waste her time on.

Make the first hour of the day your most productive hour

If you read every book on how to manage time, how to achieve goals, and how to get things done, you will come away with the overwhelming conclusion that the experts believe that you need to give special attention to that golden first hour of your day. One authority (Julie Morgenstern) even entitled her book *Never Check Email in the Morning* because email is such a distraction from the things that are most important (email is part of the trivial 80%, not the vital 20%). So get that first cup of coffee on board,

was quoted above – calls Resistance), close your door (at least metaphorically speaking) and give a good solid hour to that most important Big Project.

Make fear your ally

Fear is the greatest thief of all, capable of stealing your freedom to act, your desire to succeed, your willingness to take risk, and your capacity to care. It is also the source of much procrastination and apparent laziness, and a lethal barrier to creativity. Career success and personal happiness both depend substantially upon your ability to understand your fears, to deal with them in a rational way, and to transform the negative energy of fear into the energy for constructive purpose. Fear is nothing more than emotional energy, and it is up to you to transform it from negative energy that holds you back into positive energy that catalyzes you to move forward.

“Just as fire transforms the energy of a dead tree into warmth, light, and protection, so our fears ignite us. They create energy that can prepare us for danger before it arrives, stimulate us to take action, and keep us moving when we are exhausted.”

Art Mortell: *The Courage to Fail*

Tough love yourself

The thirteenth century poet Rumi included this advice in one of his poems: Pray for a tough instructor to hear and act and stay within you. There are many people, Rumi wrote, willing to comfort and console you during times of trouble, but more often than not they're offering what you least need. What you really need is tough love! A kick in the pants might be superior to chicken soup and a pat on the back when you have big problems to overcome and mountains to climb!

Question: What is the one thing you least want to do today that, if you were to do it, would make it a great day and help you achieve an important goal?

Take pride in your appearance

The “power tie” used to be an essential component of a businessman’s wardrobe. Chances are, however, it was more effective at making the person *feel* powerful than *look* powerful. As Marc Myers said in his book *Making Luck*, looking sharp is a great way of feeling, acting, and becoming a lucky person. When you feel good about the way you look, it can give you an extra shot of energy.

Keep your work area organized

I’ve seen estimates that the average American worker spends up to seven weeks per year looking for lost papers. *Seven weeks a year!* What a waste of energy that would be!!! In their book *Office Design that Really Works*, Kathleen R. Allen and Peter H. Engel say that the image you create in your office is important because an organized workplace enhances morale, builds respect and trust, saves time and energy, and fosters ownership. Even if you are running a business from your home, take pride in your work area, acting as though it were your own little business office, which it is. You will find yourself feeling more capable and professional, and having much more energy, than if you are working in a

Strike up the band

Pick some musical you associate with mental vitality, and whenever your energy begins to flag, put it on. Some possibilities from the classical repertoire include: either the first movement of Beethoven's 5th symphony or the last movement of his 9th; Dvorak's 9th Symphony, "From the New World;" Wagner's The Ride of the Valkyries; the Sabre Dance from Khachaturian's ballet Gayaneh; Tchaikovsky's 1812 overture; or Borodin's Polovtsian Dances. If you're not into classical, how about Gloria Gaynor's rousing rendition of "I Will Survive?" Or what about waking up to George Thorogood and the Destroyers doing "Bad to the Bone?" or riding a magic carpet with born to be wild Steppenwolf?

Experiment with it – do a web search with terms like power. When I typed the words "power music classics" into [Spotify](#) it took me to Volume #5 – Power Classics of the Reader's Digest Classical Music Library. As I type this, I'm listening to Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" on that album. If Copland doesn't fire you up, listen to the song "We Will Rock You" by Queen (and see if you detect a Copland influence).

"In the past two decades, new brain-imaging techniques have linked music and its effects on our nervous system to improved mood and well-being. Mental, emotional and physical energy gets a big boost every time you immerse yourself in an ocean of music that moves you."

Jim Karas (with Cynthia Costas Cohen): *The 7 Day Energy Surge*

Eat before hungry; rest before tired

If you are riding a bike up a hill, you want to shift gears before gravity forces you to do so by bringing you to a full stop. It's a great metaphor for maintaining momentum in life: shift gears before you have to. Listen to your body. Eat just before the point of being hungry and set the fork down just before the point of being full. Rest just before you get tired and then resume your work at the first spark of renewed energy. This is one of the metaphors that I included in my as-yet unpublished little eBook **Learning to Ride the Bicycle of Life**.

Pay attention to what you eat, and to how it affects your energy

An entire library could be filled with advice on what you should eat, not to mention the checkout stand of every grocery and department store. Some of the advice is good, some of it is terrible, and probably very little of it applies across the board to all people. When it comes to energy, the best advice is to be conscious in your food choices, and to pay attention to how they affect you. As one example, many physicians who write from the perspective of optimal cognitive and emotional function (as opposed to losing weight or lowering cholesterol) believe you should avoid eating high carbohydrate breakfasts such as cereal, pancakes, and toast because they tend to suppress energy. Instead, eat high protein meals for breakfast and lunch – eggs, cheese, nuts, low-fat meats – and save the carbohydrates for dinner, when you want to start winding down. For more information, check out the books *Brain Longevity* by Dr. Dharma Singh Khalsa or *Change Your Brain, Change Your Life* by Dr. Daniel G. Amen.

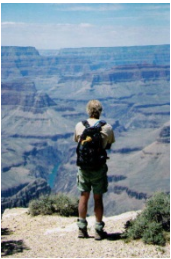
Travel light

It is unlikely that you will ever see a horse win the Kentucky Derby carrying a three hundred pound jockey. You can always travel more quickly if you travel light. You will build your dream house a lot sooner if you're not cluttering your life with all kinds of material things now. You will sooner achieve emotional equanimity and spiritual peace if you stop dragging behind you the dead weight of old grudges, regrets, fears, and anger. Complexity is the enemy of focus, and simplicity is it's ally. The more you can simplify your life – physically and emotionally – the sooner you will achieve the goals that really matter to you.

“It is an undoubted truth that the less one has to do, the less time one finds to do it in. One yawns, one procrastinates, one can do it when one will, and, therefore one seldom does it at all; whereas, those who have a great deal of business must buckle to it, and they always find time enough.”

Lord Chesterton

Appreciate the power of solitude and silence



The Grand Canyon is one of the few places on earth where you cannot see or hear anything made by humans. It's awe-inspiring to be where all you can hear is your own imagination and the voice of God, and the challenge is knowing the difference. In his book *Solitude*, Anthony Storr wrote: *The capacity to be alone is necessary if the brain is to function at its best and the individual is to fulfill his highest potential.* Giving yourself time alone in the wilderness (at least metaphorically speaking) can give you a tremendous boost of emotional and spiritual energy.

Commit yourself to immediate and sustained action

Dave Ramsey, author of a number of bestselling books on managing personal finances, says that whenever someone gets out of debt on a fast-track schedule, they do so by putting *serious* emotional energy into the challenge, and moving quickly to take action. It's the same with the accomplishment of any big goal. Speed and momentum pay off, big time. Here are three actions that can get you started:

Create a prototype. Having a prototype mindset can help you overcome fear of failure, procrastination and perfectionism, and help you build confidence while minimizing risk. You can create a prototype for almost anything: some of the bestselling business books grew out of journal articles; signing up for a network marketing company is a low-risk, high-leverage prototype for learning about starting your own business; and taking a night class at the community college is a prototype for going after your PhD.

Commit to one small action every day. What you do matters less than the fact that you have committed yourself to *daily* action – small things do add up to bring about great changes.

Ask for help. This is what Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen call “The Aladdin Factor” in their book of the same title – “asking the right question of the right person at the right time.”

Help someone else increase their energy

The strategies for increased personal energy that are included in this special report all work. Some might be more effective for you than others, but they all work, if you work on them. But if you really want to become energized, don't stop with just increasing your own energy. Be a real energy faucet, a real Spark Plug sort of person, by helping others enjoy the benefits of more energy in their lives. It might be the greatest gift you can give to them, and it is a gift that will give back to you in return.

“The more you lose yourself in something bigger than yourself, the more energy you will have. You won't have time to think about yourself and get bogged down in your emotional difficulties.”

Norman Vincent Peale: *The Power of Positive Thinking*

Do it now

Procrastination robs you of energy. Don't put this off. Go back through this special report and pick one action that you will commit to today. Then do it again tomorrow. Do it every day until you've done all 101 of the actions. Then start over.

“Every time we postpone some necessary event... we do so with the implication that present time is more important than future time... for when we delay something, we simultaneously admit its necessity and refuse to do it. Seen more extensively, habitual delays can clutter our lives, leave us in the annoying position of always having to do yesterday's chores. Disrespect for the future is a subtly poisonous disrespect for self, and forces us, paradoxically, to live in the past.”

Robert Grudin: *Time and the Art of Living*