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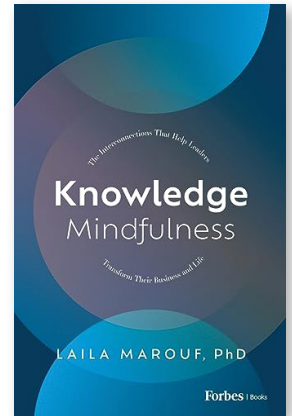


Executive Book Summaries®

Knowledge Mindfulness

The Interconnections that Help Leaders Transform Their Business and Life

by **Laila Marouf, PhD**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The world of business is rapidly transforming. Now more than ever, leaders must understand the true potential of knowledge and how it's directly linked to long-term success.

The book *Knowledge Mindfulness: The Interconnections that Help Leaders Transform Their Business and Life* revolutionizes a leader's approach to knowledge. It paints a comprehensive, yet colorful picture of concepts such as holistic knowledge management, the emergent power of knowledge, using knowledge to reshape organizational culture, and cultivating mindful leadership.

Author Laila Marouf extracts valuable insights from psychology, social sciences, business, and neuroscience to craft a well-rounded roadmap for leaders to expand their knowledge and their organizations to higher levels of resilience, innovation, and success.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to understand knowledge, yourself, and the external world.
- How to embark on the path to knowledge maturity.
- To create yet renew, connect yet disconnect, capitalize yet keep acting.
- How to achieve Knowledge Mindfulness.

Introduction: A World in Transition

The new framework of Knowledge Mindfulness reflects a re-framing of knowledge management to encompass not just individuals as nodes within networks of knowledge, but also the recognition that individuals are themselves networks – multifaceted human beings made up of many different desires, goals, values, beliefs, and unique perspectives and themselves deeply interconnected with many other systems and networks.

Seen through this lens, the organization emerges as a complex living system made up of countless other complex living systems. To lead organizations effectively, then, we need to recenter the individual, conceive holistically, and work to understand all the hidden connections within which each individual is embedded.

Only by understanding these interconnections, and all the pressures and possibilities that come with being an individual in a world of transition can we drive both individuals and organizations forward and develop adaptable, purposeful, and compassionate ways of thinking and being in a chaotic and ever-changing world.

Chapter 1: The Need for Knowledge Mindfulness

Knowledge mindfulness is a practice that offers key insights by integrating an additional domain – self – into the outdated conception of individual knowledge. It adds a new emphasis on the importance of reasoning and intuition as equally important aspects of the totality of our knowledge. The totality of our internal and external knowledge comprises “all that we know” from what we are mindful of in the external world to our self-knowledge that makes up “all that we are” – our body, our personality, and our spirit.

Knowledge Mindfulness brings out the best in us as leaders and equips us to bring out the best in others too. That’s good for us and good for our organizations. Whether you’re currently a leader or simply hope to become one, Knowledge Mindfulness is the augmented human-centered approach and toolkit you need to succeed.

But Knowledge Mindfulness shouldn’t be seen as a shortcut to the top of your profession or to achieving excellence as a leader; it can help with those things, but it isn’t just about getting to the pinnacle faster. Rather, it’s about making sure that you’re climbing the right mountain and that you aren’t climbing alone.

To reach higher in your work and personal life, you need to consciously evolve and expand your knowledge and understanding – in an integrative way – to better grasp yourself, the world around you, and the interconnections between the two. You need to strive for an understanding of who you are, what matters to you, and what your deepest needs, desires, and beliefs add up to.

Chapter 2: Understanding Knowledge

Knowledge isn’t just about consuming packages of information. It’s about curiously and critically ripping off the wrapping, looking inside those packages, spotting new connections between one package and another, and reveling in the new sparks that fly as we make each fresh connection.

The knowledge we consciously acquire and process through our five senses is just the tip of the iceberg. There’s a whole lot going on beneath the surface. I see our knowledge springing from three key sources:

- Our conscious mind and its rational interpretation of everything that we “draw in” from our five senses.
- Our subconscious mind and its mediation of rehearsed or reflexive knowledge that comes to use without thinking
- Our unconscious mind and its surfacing of deep-seated spiritual values that are truly instinctive and part of our DNA.

Together, our subconscious and unconscious knowledge make up what is often referred to as our intuition – the quick-fire hunches, reflexes, insights, and gut feelings that enable us to operate without the laborious process of engaging our conscious mind and rationally thinking things through.

The more you use intuition, the stronger your intuitions become, and the more confidence you gain in using your intuition when you need it most. The intelligence of the unconscious is in knowing without thinking. Accessing the totality of your knowledge and understanding and learning to add more nodes and strengthen the connections that run through your knowledge, is as transformative as knowing the meaning rather than just the sound of the words you use. Knowledge Mindfulness means learning to engage, expand, and evolve the totality of our knowledge.

Chapter 3: Understanding Self

Who are you? It’s a simple-sounding question, but not one

of you can answer simply by showing your business card or even by looking in the mirror. Your sense of self is necessarily multidimensional: I'm a partner, a mom, a researcher, an author, and a businesswoman. We contain multitudes – some complementary, some contradictory, and all important parts of who we are.

More than just the different roles we play in our lives, though, our selves are multidimensional because they are composed of different, yet integrated dimensions. We need to think through the different levels on which ourselves exist and can be understood. These levels include:

- Physiology (our bodies and physical sensations)
- Psychology (where subconscious emotion signals rise in reaction to the sensory information mediated by our conscious experiences.
- Conscious mind (where we process every sensory information and emotional responses into rational thought and intellect.
- Parapsychology (the deep-seated spiritual and human values that truly define who we are)

These “layers” are actually parts of a dynamic system. We don't sit back passively and let knowledge move inward through sensory signals. The reality is much more active – something closer to what Augustine meant when he wrote of perception as being “the soul's attention striving to reach out and sense things through the flesh.”

For longer-term and more purposeful and fulfilling motivators, we need to tap into and expand our cognition by bringing it into contact with the unconscious self – the authentic self. We must look inward as well as outward and develop knowledge maturity that lets us pull free of our own uninspected biases and rise above our fears and doubts. To achieve this harmonious, holistic sense of self, we need to acknowledge and understand the interconnections between the different dimensions of our “selves.”

Chapter 4: Understanding the External World

As leaders, we need to know what our company does, of course. But we also need a clear image of how our organization operates. In order to overcome unprecedented challenges, we need to lead our companies in new directions and unlock the creativity and insight of our employees. To achieve that, we need a new operating metaphor. The knowledge-mindful leader recognizes that the world – and

the organization – is much more complex and interesting than people normally imagine.

They see the organization not merely as a mechanical system, but rather as a living system: messy, organic, ever-changing, and comprising systems of knowledge expressed through networks of connected individuals, who are in turn part of a larger and densely interconnected ecosystem.

When you view your organization as a living system, your own self-image changes. Your job as a leader is no longer simply to blow the whistle or pull the lever that fires up the machine you've built. Instead, your job is to nurture the entire living system, by nurturing in turn the informal networks where communication and connection happen. Your job isn't simply to issue directives – it's to cultivate your own presence in ways that benefit the entire ecosystem and create an environment in which your organization and its knowledge can thrive.

Remember, confidence and humility are both powerful tools, and it's by using them both appropriately that the knowledge-mindful leader turns other people's knowledge into a potent resource.

Chapter 5: The Path to Knowledge Maturity

As we move into discovering the path toward knowledge maturity, I'd like you to start by thinking back on the “three circles” we previously discussed: the totality of our knowledge, our self, and the external world.

These three deeply connected windows form what I call “the golden triangle” of Knowledge Mindfulness – because when they work together in harmony, they become the engine for long-term sustainable transformation and growth for yourself, others, and your entire organization. Personal wisdom sparks collective wisdom, which accelerates your journey toward personal wisdom – a constant cycle of self-improvement, engagement, and elevation.

Knowledge maturity, in simple words, reflects your capacity to integrate the principles of Knowledge Mindfulness into your own life, expanding and transcending the totality of your knowledge. It requires you to capitalize on your knowledge to achieve success – but not to see your success as an end point. It requires that you use the processes and tactics of the Three Cs Loop to integrate the principles of Knowledge Mindfulness into your life and work. The Three Cs Loop includes:

- Create (yet keep renewing)
- Connect (yet keep disconnecting)
- Capitalize (yet keep acting)

Chapter 6: Create (yet Keep Renewing)

Every leader needs to use knowledge as a creative and transformative force – and to keep driving that creativity back in on itself, to refresh and renew the generative processes and methods of learning that power us forward.

If Picasso had gotten stuck in his Blue Period, after all, he'd be remembered as a minor artist. It was his commitment to using everything he'd learned to find new ways of acting and creating, and then to harness those insights to learn in entirely new ways – to unlearn and renew his knowledge – that made him such a success.

Like Picasso, we need to keep on challenging and reinventing ourselves by continuously regenerating ourselves, renewing our knowledge systems, and empowering our teams to do the same to find new ways of succeeding and new ways of thinking about success.

Chapter 7: Connect (yet Keep Disconnecting)

For leaders, our knowledge – and our knowledge maturity – isn't much good if we keep to ourselves. We need to be outward-facing and engaged and work intentionally to connect with those around us.

That means being and behaving in an open, inclusive, respectful, and trustworthy way and connecting from a deeper and more integrated sense of self anchored in a “we” rather than an “I” identity. It means creating a nurturing climate where others can flourish and share more than mere information and also bring their more authentic selves into the conversation. Above all, it means finding ways to make our knowledge maturity resonate across our entire ecosystem.

Paradoxically, though, the path to knowledge maturity also requires us to disconnect. It's by tuning the world out that we can best connect with the totality of ourselves and avoid getting caught up in the noise and momentum of the world around us. Knowledge maturity thus requires a “both/and” approach rather than an “either/or” approach. We must constantly turn out toward the world and turn inward, toward the totality of our own knowledge and selves, in order to truly drive enduring success.

Chapter 8: Capitalize (yet Keep Acting)

A knowledge-mindful leader understands that knowledge isn't simply something to amass and refine – it's something to build, share, and use continuously. Knowledge is a fast-moving river, not a pond full of stagnant water. The real test of knowledge maturity is your ability and willingness to keep that river flowing, open, and refreshed – not just for your benefit, but for the benefit of everyone around you.

The key, however, is to remember that successfully capitalizing on your knowledge to achieve your goals at any given moment isn't necessarily a sign of knowledge maturity. Knowledge maturity can certainly help with shorter-term and concretely tangible goals, but it also depends on recognizing the importance of long-term goals and intangible results.

We need to orient our actions around holistic goals – from helping ourselves to helping others and encompassing both tangible results (like money or innovation) and intangible results (like personal growth or fulfillment). The key is to draw on your insights about knowledge to make your action more intelligent and effective – and thereby generate better results for you and those around you.

Conclusion: Make Your Life Worth Living

So, what makes a life worth living? Finding that path forward starts with understanding that success isn't a single thing. Money can help to make you happy, of course, but research shows that once you get to a certain level of financial stability, acquiring more money doesn't add anything to your total happiness and well-being.

Success, then, can't just be about how rich you are, how much stuff you have, or what title you have on your business card. Instead, it's something that emerges from the interconnected systems of which we're a part. Joy and fulfillment aren't at odds with more traditional measures of success – instead, they make conventional success easier to achieve.

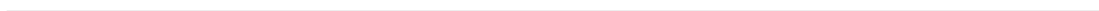
In today's economic climate, when leaders are constantly being asked to do more with less, Knowledge Mindfulness offers a way to slice through the Gordian knot and unlock new efficiencies, strategies, and ways of creating values. Finally, know that working consistently to elevate your knowledge maturity might not always be easy, but it will always be rewarding – and for today's leaders, it's the path to a life that truly is worth living.



Dr. Laila Marouf is founder and Chief Knowledge Officer of the Knowledge Mindfulness Group, a pioneering organization dedicated to evolving and elevating leader's knowledge maturity using the integrative methodology of Knowledge Mindfulness. Dr Laila spent over two decades studying, researching and consulting in Knowledge Management, knowledge sharing and knowledge behavior and has published over 35 peer-reviewed articles.

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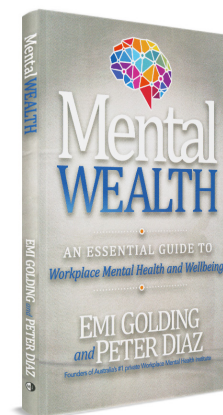
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Mental Wealth

An Essential Guide to Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing

by **Emi Golding and Peter Diaz**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Each year, one in four people suffer from a mental disorder. Suicide rates are on the rise. Average psychological injury claims in Western countries average \$250,000 and are climbing. It's clear that whatever we've been doing to address this issue is not working. As a business leader, it's time to do something about it. There is a direct and powerful link between a team's mental health and the quality and quantity of output for a business. Mental Wealth is this link between a team's mental health and the bottom line.

In *Mental Wealth: An Essential Guide to Workplace Mental Health and Well-being*, authors Emi Golding and Peter Diaz show business leaders how to transform workplaces into happy, healthy, and psychologically safe places. A manager with the ability to join the dots and see how taking care of his or her team's mental health impacts the bottom line will be able to build happy, resilient, high-performing teams.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why mental health impacts the bottom line of an organization.
- How managers play a key role in the mental wealth of their team and organization.
- What a mentally wealthy workplace looks and feels like.
- Seven characteristics of a mentally wealthy workplace.

Managers are the Key to Mental Wealth

Managers are pivotal to a team's mental health. Research has shown time and again that people leave bosses, not jobs. That means you are massively influential - for better or worse. As a manager you are best placed to spot the warning signs of mental distress and take action before things get out of control. And if you're responsible for getting the best out of your team in a high-pressure environment, why shouldn't you be given the tools to build and maintain resilience? Bad mental health is very bad for you and your business, costing the economy billions of dollars every year. Good mental health is fun and means lots of good returns for you and your business. While poor managerial practices equal bad mental health, managers with good mental-health practices have extraordinary teams.

In the workplace, it is not the manager's role to be a counselor or therapist but the principles of respect, dignity, and choice are most certainly applicable. This is particularly important right now because mental health issues in the workplace appear to be getting worse. Not only that, but they come with a great cost - for the organizations that people work for as well as the people experiencing mental distress themselves. To define and, therefore, help managers build mental wealth in their organizations they can use pillars that were created to answer the question, 'What does a mentally healthy workplace look like?'

The 7 Pillars of a Mentally Wealthy Workplace

Workplace mental wealth describes the business potential of an organization in terms of being the direct result of how well the organization fosters the mental health of its people. It's a measure of your organization's ability to create, collaborate, problem-solve, and take initiative. It's a measure of your team's resilience and ability to keep going when things are tough and uncertain.

Mentally wealthy workplaces display the following characteristics:

- People are focused, creative, and highly productive, and free of debilitating chronic stress and anxiety.
- The dynamic between people is one of respect and inclusion, where people feel free to voice opinions and contribute ideas, for which they are valued as an employee and as a person.

- Leaders truly recognize the value of people and encourage diversity in values and styles. They actively curtail behaviors that diminish or demean each other.
- There is a positive organizational climate, absent of bullying and harassment, mental injury and stress claims, and mental health crises.

To define, and therefore help managers build mental wealth in their organizations, they should implement the 7 Pillars of a Mentally Wealthy Workplace.

Pillar 1: We Not You

Mentally healthy workplaces think in terms of 'we' not 'you'. This means that the focus is not on 'those' individuals with a mental health problem, but on the health and wellbeing of all employees, managers included. It recognizes that mental health problems can affect anyone, and that we all go through challenges in life and work at one time or another.

At the individual level, the question is not: 'What do YOU need to do to get better.' It's 'What can WE do, together, to be healthy and perform?' At the organizational level, it's about creating policies and procedures that work for any of us, should WE become unwell or need assistance at any point in time.

Using 'us' and 'them' language can be a sign of existing stigma within the organization. A mentally wealthy workplace displays unconditional positive regard. This is a term from psychology which describes a position where the help provider has an unwavering respect and appreciation for the person receiving help as a good and worthy human being, regardless of that person's particular behaviors or demeanor. In an organization demonstrating unconditional positive regard, people are convinced that managers value and appreciate them as contributing members despite their mental health challenges and, at times, even because of them.

Pillar 2: Organizational Plasticity

Organizational plasticity is a key trait of mentally wealthy workplaces, where authentic flexibility replaces fear and rigidity. The modern workplace recognizes the benefits of a diverse workforce, where each employee brings their unique blend of skills, talents, and background to the job at hand. No longer is the employee expected to fulfil the role of a machine in exactly the same way the next person would. Instead, employees are expected to think, problem-solve, show initiative, and so on. But in return for these demands, and when recruiting a diverse workforce, we must be willing to

Learn what works for them to feel good at work. . . You don't have to read their minds. You can simply ask them.

cater to the different and unique needs and styles of those employees. We need to be flexible to accommodate and get the best out of different people.

Managers can apply this pillar by getting to know your own mental health filter, or unconscious way that you view mental health. Knowing your own filter, be it medical, spiritual or something else, allows you to see your own bias and then be careful not to push it onto your employees. You also need to get to know individual employees that report to you. Learn what works for them to feel good at work. Find out the ways the organization can be more flexible and better accommodate the needs of employees. You don't have to read their minds. You can simply ask them. At the organizational level, this means offering a range of avenues for support that cover different filters. For example, for people with a trauma filter, do you have information about various support groups in the area? For people with a diet and exercise filter, do you offer subsidized gym memberships? As you explore the different filters, you start to expand the range of options which you can offer employees, so they can select the things that will help them.

Pillar 3: Nothing About Me Without Me

Mentally wealthy workplaces practice dignified inclusion rather than secrecy. Many people who have recovered from severe mental ill-health have said that one of the things that made their recovery so difficult was when so called professionals and people trying to help them made decisions about their life without their involvement. Some common decisions that people with mental health problems have had made for them by others are things like when they will be hospitalized and released, what medication and how much of it they will take, and what they are capable of doing or not. When you remove a person's ability to make decisions for themselves, they become more and more disempowered, and more and more incapable of making those decisions for themselves in the future.

This pillar is about respecting the dignity of the person, and including them, rather than creating secrecy and distrust.

In short, no conversation is to take place, and no decisions are to be made, within including the person whom they're about. Managers can apply this pillar simply by making a commitment to include the person in any conversations about their mental health and wellbeing or their career. At the organizational level, it is about making sure there is true engagement of stakeholders at all levels of decision-making about mental health. For example, this could mean including people with an experience of mental ill health in the design of workplace mental health policies and seeking their input when it comes to planning and implementing activities related to mental health and wellbeing.

Pillar 4: Total Integration

Mentally wealthy organizations see resilience and wellbeing as an integral part of their culture, not just an add-on. To have a mentally healthy workplace, an organization can't simply bolt on some mental health policies, procedures, or activities. It needs to integrate these into existing processes. For example, the Wellbeing Committee plans an event where everyone comes together, talks about how important mental health is, and that's it for another year. When these events occur in isolation, they are usually seen as being tokenistic, even if that wasn't the intention. Mental health and wellbeing need to permeate your policies and how you move the organization.

At the managerial level, this is about consistency in your interactions with every person. You can't say you care about mental health one minute, and then take actions that are not helpful for a person's mental health the next. At the organizational level, this will mean reviewing existing policies and processes and planning your framework with ongoing commitment, not just a one-off event.

Pillar 5: Mutual Responsibility

Mutual responsibility is about moving from a culture of blame to one of mutual concern, where everyone is seeking a positive outcome. Everyone shares responsibility for mental health - their own and their team members'. In a culture of blame, people pass the buck. A manager may think, 'It's not my problem - people should leave their personal prob-

lems at home.’ That’s simply not going to happen. People are people, not robots. It can be very difficult for people to simply ‘switch off’ whatever else is going on for them outside of work. And besides, who’s to say that the issue originated at home? Workplaces can themselves be toxic and, oftentimes, no amount of self-care on the part of the unwell person is going to make a difference if the environment they come to everyday is full of bullies, unrealistic expectations, or constantly shifting goalposts.

This pillar empowers individuals to take action. At the individual level, it’s about supporting the person to do what they need to do to stay well. For organizations, it’s about taking responsibility for their legal and moral requirements.

Pillar 6: Understanding Complexity

This pillar recognizes that we need to move from very simplistic understandings of mental health to really appreciating the complexity of the topic. When we think we know enough about something ourselves, rather than seeking expert advice we risk complacency. Even if you’ve been through a mental health issue yourself, or have supported someone with one, it doesn’t mean you have the full picture when it comes to all potential issues, especially as they relate to the workplace. By recognizing that people and situations are complex, taking a step back, and coming at the problem with an enquiring mind, and an intention to help the individual, you can achieve a lot.

At the individual level, we can apply this pillar by recognizing the unique circumstances and explanations of each person, and not trying to ‘solve’ the mental health issue for the employee. Know the limits of your role and expertise and don’t be afraid to ask for help if you need it. For the organization, it is about seeking expert advice in the planning and

delivery of workplace mental health activities, so the really do get desired outcomes for the business and employees.

Pillar 7: Wrap-around Strategies

A preference for integrating mental health initiatives over applying Band-Aid solutions demonstrates an organization’s commitment to ‘wrap-around strategies.’ Awareness programs, identifying ‘first responders’ that employees can speak to when needed, and Employee Assistance Programs are all good initiatives, but they are often offered as the only strategy. You don’t want a situation where there needs to be a crisis before we put some plans or activities in place. You need a combination of prevention, early intervention, and elegant response systems.

Managers need to make sure they have all the stages covered in terms of how they look after all team members’ wellbeing in the absence of any problems, how they identify stress early if any team member is struggling, and how they respond for an early intervention or in a crisis situation. Organizations need prevention strategies like resilience programs, supportive policies, and management training that will save time, money, and suffering for everyone.

As a manager, you are called to action. Building a mentally wealthy culture requires you to ensure the psychological needs of a diverse workforce are catered for. It is well worth the effort in the form of more profit, a better culture, more creativity and innovation, and the moral benefits of knowing you’ve done the right thing. Commit to taking one action today that will improve the mental health or wellbeing of your team or organization.



Emi Golding is a Registered Psychologist, Fortune 500 Consultant and founder of the Workplace Mental Health Institute. She is a member of the Australian Psychological Society and expert panel member on the development of guidelines for organizations on the prevention of mental disorders in the workplace.

In addition to being an author, Peter Diaz owns a number of companies, is the CEO of the Workplace Mental Health Institute, and a trusted mental wealth authority. Peter helps Fortune 500 companies increase profits by enhancing the mental health, wellbeing, resilience and productivity of their workforce.

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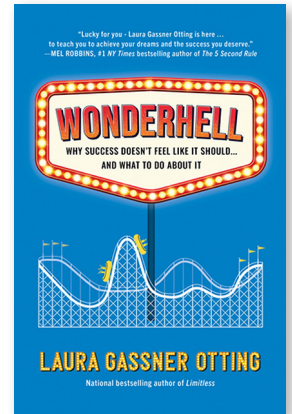
4520 - Wonderhell

Laura Gassner Otting

Wonderhell

Why Success Doesn't Feel Like It Should...
and What to Do About It

by **Laura Gassner Otting**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Success! It's wonderful, isn't it? The thing you created, built, or launched is working! The work you did opened more doors than you *ever* thought possible and maybe you're thinking now, *I want more*. There is a *you* before this moment and there is a *you* after it, and now *you* can't go back. Instead of success bringing you happiness, it handed you an increased hunger, a faster pace, and bigger goals. And as a result you also found uncertainty, self-doubt, anxiety, and stress.

Success is *wonderful*. But it is also *hell*. Success is *Wonderhell*. Wonderhell is you, in the space between your past success and your next accomplishment—between who you were and who you just realized you can become. In ***Wonderhell: Why Success Doesn't Feel Like It Should...and What to Do About It***, author Laura Gassner Otting helps readers see this space of uncertainty, doubt, and overwhelm not as a *breakdown*, but as a *breakthrough* instead. And in doing so, we learn that success isn't a final destination, but a portal that opens to reveal your truest self and purpose—an invitation to achieve more than you ever thought possible.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to embrace your ambition
- Imposter syndrome and the new you
- How to negotiate your response to doubt
- Why success requires doing it all again

Impostertown: Embrace Your Ambition

It's time to stop shrinking into the smaller box built for you by others—or even the safe, secure, but suffocating box you built for yourself—and start taking up a space of your own. It's time to embrace your ambition. First stop: Impostertown!

Learning to Play Bigger

When looking at where they want to go and what they want to accomplish, the priorities you choose have to be in consonance with who you are. Consonance is what allows you to be fully and unapologetically you. And finding your Wonderhell rests upon that essential goal—being intertwined with who you are at your core and what you hold most dear.

For your working life to *feel* right for you, it has to actually *be* right for you. When you pursue consonance, you get a sensation of alignment and flow that comes when *what* you do matches who you *are*.

But once you begin working toward the wonderful goal that is so meaningful to you, you'll find that it's the one to trigger that hell because, this time, you actually care. Finding Wonderhell means finding that meaningful goal, and this requires doing some things differently.

The life you want is right there on the other side of a decision, waiting for you to believe it can be yours. All you have to do is let yourself play bigger. Accept the challenge of living up to the new you. Grab hold of past failures that will instruct future growth. Trade fear and regret for something new: adventure.

Making Your Own Luck

We all know people that appear to magically, easily, always get what they want. And we also know people who just seem to be cursed—opportunities never seem to break their way, and things just don't work out for them. Some people are just lucky, and others are unlucky, and there's not much we can do to build the life we want. Right? Well, not exactly.

Good fortune isn't just determined by fate. Some people do things that put them in a position to create what we call “good luck,” while others do the opposite and create what we call “bad luck.” And onboarding certain mindsets, outlooks, energies, and traits can help you build good luck into your life.

The four factors that make someone lucky, according to Dr. Richard Wiseman in his 2003 book, *The Luck Factor*, are:

- Creating and noticing opportunities
- Listening to intuition
- Having positive expectations
- Adopting a resilient attitude that turns bad outcomes into good outcomes

So, it doesn't matter whether you've been “unlucky” in the past, or whether you attribute past success to nothing more than a random stroke of luck. You can create your own luck starting today, to match your newfound potential. On their own, these factors won't really make you any luckier. These traits just prepare you to take advantage of the opportunities or lessons that come your way.

Grit and resilience come when you laugh in the face of failure, knowing the lessons learned will help you reach a happy result eventually. Striving to exist in this state of mind—along with continued, concerted effort—is what brings success, even though to the outside world it looks a whole lot like luck.

Figuring Out Who You Are

Our identity is shaped not individually but collectively. We imagine ourselves in this perceived but fixed looking-glass form that reflects who we think others think we are, rather than as malleable, ever evolving, and full of power. In the bargain, we give up the power to *choose* our identity, and therefore our future.

Wonderhell is a before and after moment for you. The moment you catch sight of the other side and understand the larger battle is yours, if you want to fight—the moment you realize that your idea has legs, that it, and you, can be bigger—Wonderhell has got you.

There is the *you* before and the *you* after—forever changed. You've decided to see yourself differently. But what if trying out your new identity makes you feel like an imposter?

Maybe you've feared that people will figure out you don't belong, you aren't worthy of the promotion, you aren't good enough to be in the room.

Or maybe you've done the opposite, giving your best impression that you belong, and unwittingly stirring up everyone else's insecurity. The more you act like you belong, the more they feel like an imposter.

This phenomenon—where we push each other deeper into our respective imposter syndrome corners is called *pluralistic ignorance*. It traps us in a perpetual cycle of overcompen-

Before you diagnose yourself with depression or low self-esteem, make sure that you are not, in fact, just surrounded by assholes.

sation and it's holding you back because it stops you from being you. Imposter syndrome is gaslighting you.

As the imposter you have three options: You can hide who you are. You can change who you are. Or you can lose who you are. And each option just exacerbates that feeling of not belonging.

But perhaps the problem isn't you at all.

Perhaps being surrounded by manipulative mirrors is making you doubt your sense of reality, and the real problem is the world in which you are trying to operate.

The idea of imposter syndrome emerged in the 1970's when leadership was far more homogenous and the world was far less willing to acknowledge how people have to deal with racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and so forth. Yet the vestiges of victim shaming are rampant in the self-help mania that positions you, the so-called imposters, as the root cause.

When the very systems you operate in were built for people who don't look like, act like, think like, pray like, or love like you, it is impossible to cast off that feeling that you are an imposter. But that doesn't make you inadequate. It makes the systems inadequate.

One particular quote, attributed falsely to Sigmund Freud and probably spoken instead by an exacerbated woman) perfectly sums up the best advice on what to do: "Before you diagnose yourself with depression or low self-esteem, make sure that you are not, in fact, just surrounded by assholes."

You're not an imposter; you're an innovator. So, ignore those assholes, and pay attention to the voice that's been guiding you all along: your own. If standing on the edge of our incompetence makes us imposters and we take the step anyway...congratulations and welcome!

Doubtville: Renegotiating Your Response

You embraced your ambition and envisioned something

you didn't think was possible: a bigger and better you. But now a tsunami of emotions is roaring toward you, and they aren't all good. Not only that, but you have no idea where to go, how to be, or even who to be.

Your jumbled up emotions are screaming at you to stop and hightail it to safety. But what if those emotions are merely a sign that you're on the right track? You're on your pathway to growth, and the next stop is Doubtville.

Managing Uncertainty

Showing up when things get hard gives you knowledge, data, and options. Seeing the potential outcomes for yourself requires getting a lay of the land and feeling things out. Anything is possible when you're willing to get uncomfortable.

The only way to embrace your true potential is to get comfortable pushing the limits and forging ahead. To figure out who you are and who you want to be next, you'll need to listen to your voice of uncertainty and train your brain to perceive it not as a *limitation*, but as an *invitation* to push beyond what you previously thought possible.

Don't silence it. Increase its volume and get excited by it. Let it be your cheering section, convincing you that you are worthy of that dream.

When you don't have all the information, the first step to get past the doubt is to simply do *something*. Anything, in fact. When struggling to make big life choices, action beats stagnation. When you're unsure about *what* to do, you'll be happiest if you just choose *something* to do.

The best antidote to inaction is action and the road to action is through accountability. Being accountable to others will get you back on track when everything in your core yearns to slather itself in indecision, uncertainty, or malaise.

When you're facing something formidable, accountability focuses you on the here-and-now activity, not the unknown result.

So, look around, figure out the first action to take, and ask a friend to join you. Simply putting one foot in front of the

other gives you a feeling of power, control, and choice. Whatever step you choose to take, even if it's intentional stillness to gather more information, you are answering the external uncertainty of the moment with the certainty of action.

Flying without a Net

The script you have written for your life is just an illusion. There are no guarantees. And the only way we can truly grow is to remain open to flying without a safety net. Even if we fall, we still have whatever tools and talent got us here, and that will help us get to the next level, too.

In any high-pressure scenario, the key is to remember you didn't just suddenly come to life in that moment. Instead, that moment is the sum total of everything you have done before it.

Don't believe it? You can prove it to yourself. Start by making a list of the things that make you proud: your accomplishments, achievements, awards, conquests. Be bold! List everything of worth you've ever done, both large and small. The cold, hard facts about what you have achieved will bring your work ethos into stark relief.

Next, list everything you're afraid might go wrong. Some of your fears will seem silly when written in black and white. But when you allow yourself to air your doubts and anxieties, the solutions will seem obvious and probably easy enough to execute.

Some of your fears will seem overwhelming, but they have solutions, too. Doing what you can do to prepare, bearing in mind that you will never have perfectly complete information, will go a long way toward quieting that inner critic.

Remember, you don't rise to the level of your hopes and dreams; you sink to the level of your preparation. So do the work, and let it remind you of your worth. You may be flying high without a safety net, but your experience and training will support you nonetheless. You've got this.

Finding Your Own Way

Not only is it permissible to admit that finding your way again and again through the work is hard, but in fact, it is a sign of something crucial. You are doing something that demands you to do your best every day. And that fact that you want to do just that is an indication that you have found the work you love most of all.

Most of us are surrounded by people all too willing to offer unwanted and unsolicited advice. And when we tell

them about our next big, hairy, audacious goal, expecting enthusiasm or at least a tiny nod of approval, instead we get a wet blanket.

Maybe it's coming from a place of love. They know you from the past and think you can't handle this and may get hurt. Maybe it's coming from a place of jealousy. Their scarcity mindset won't allow them to bathe in the glow of your achievement.

Or maybe it's coming from a place of fear, like when you run into a friend at the coffee shop and tell her your crazy new dream, and she says, "That's so scary!" but what she really means is that it's too scary *for her*.

These aren't bad people; they just aren't *your* people. So don't feel bound to listen to them. Focus instead on what you do best—whatever you're building, creating, innovating, and willing into existence.

As you're navigating your next Wonderhell, you get to decide who gets to tell you what you can and can't do. Stop giving votes to people in your life who shouldn't even have a voice. The only one who really has any say knows you best: you.

Gaining Perspective on Other People

Here's an unpopular opinion. It's okay to burn bridges. This is not something to say flippantly and it's a decision you should not take lightly. But when it needs to be done, it needs to be done.

As we encounter each new Wonderhell, in that moment between yesterday's accomplishment and tomorrow's dream, we often stop in our tracks, listening to lies in our heads and letting them deter our progress.

One lie you tell yourself—*People won't like the real me*—is especially worrisome because it's true. The lie isn't that they won't like you. The lie is that these people matter.

Some people will disapprove of the life you'd really like to be living. They won't like the *you* that you want to become. Here is the truth bomb: when you grow—when your life gets bigger—you are inevitably going to outgrow the people who liked you when you were smaller. Whatever the reason for it, you may find that as you move forward, it's best to leave them behind.

Your potential is limitless. So why live in a way designed for the comfort of people who want to limit you. Go ahead, burn that bridge. Or at least stop checking it every day.

Differences in certainty have an important impact on sustained attention. Uncertainty leads people to stick around to resolve what they don't know.

Burnout City: Do it All Over Burnout City: Do it All Over

You've made it through Impostertown, where you gave yourself permission and owned up to your next big dream, and Doubtsville, where you confronted mixed emotions and forged ahead.

Now you know that you truly do belong on this new, bigger stage. And you've even gotten comfortable with being uncomfortable as you pursue those bigger dreams.

But wait! Wonderhell has one more magical island of fun to discover. Success is not a finite destination. Good news: you're not done learning. Bad news: you're not done learning. Ahead lies Burnout City—where you get to do it all again.

Saying No to Hustleporn

You may suffer from the affliction of hustleporn. We live in a constantly connected, always-on, work-from-anywhere world.

For years, you've plowed ahead, going from one trophy-acquiring project, program, or promotion to the next—never realizing the exertion, exhaustion, and enervation that this pace was drip-drip-dripping into your overachiever's veins.

And yet we ignore not only the symptoms but also the cause. The misguided insistence that all this hustle is helping us create better work is false and it's making us sick.

Have you ever been in the shower, or out on a leisurely run, or headed to school pick up, when you had the best idea ever? Have you ever been stymied by something complex, only to find it beautifully mapped out in your mind as soon as you stop thinking about it constantly?

This is what happens when we let our brain rest. It's not that you do your best thinking in the shower; it's that the shower is the only place you actually stop to think.

Yes, you can always be working more. You can always be working harder. You can always be picking up more trophies. But should you?

You know what all this work, work, work does? It makes us

too tired to enjoy the spoils of success. It takes us away from the reason we originally set out to do this work. It traps us in an unending cycle of having to outdo ourselves, when what we really need is a nap.

Focusing on What Matters

A common refrain as we travel through Wonderhell is, "I'm too busy." *I want to volunteer, but I'm too busy. I want to work out, but I'm too busy. I want to be a better friend, but I'm too busy.*

Are you really too busy or have you decided this is something that just doesn't matter that much, isn't the best use of your time, or doesn't rank high enough for you to prioritize?

When we have a habit of overfilling our plates, whether because we were asked to manage more than we can handle, because we derive self-worth from being busy, or simply because everyone else is doing so.

Then we seek out productivity hacks, up our caffeine consumption, work more and sleep less, all while we are cheered on as if we can bend the space-time continuum and *do it all!* That's bullshit.

To avoid entering the "I'm Busier Than You" Cage Match of Death, you must make a crucial decision: What really matters most to you?

We all prioritize, and when we do, we make time for our real goals. And when you don't make time for them or claim you are too busy for them, the reality is that they are not that important to you.

The truth is that when you find yourself running *toward* what you want instead of running *away*, you will miraculously find the time. The stress will turn to excitement. The path will be paved with control and certainty. You will see a clear vision of your life the way you'd like it to be. And you will make it happen.

Standing Tall When the Floor Drops Out

A little bump along the way is one thing, but what happens when crisis hits and the floor completely drops out from underneath you? You'll be damaged, diminished, and de-

stabilized. And, you'll learn how crisis brings clarity, forcing you to recognize, accept, and even capitalize on your new reality—so you can face whatever comes next.

Each of us chooses our path, and we may feel absolutely certain about it—until chaos strikes and flings everything up in the air. What if, instead of letting crisis stop us in our tracks, we allowed it to redefine our proverbial stage and expand beyond what we previously thought possible?

What if whatever shakeup you are facing right now is offering you a chance to show up in new and different ways that add to whatever makes you special? To reimagine your work, so you could be even better for the people you love and the causes you hold dear?

When the bottom falls out, we can become paralyzed by doubt and indecision. We tend to look elsewhere for something to blame. Instead, we should look at our own response to the crisis, which is the true problem. But we can also be the solution. We just need to transform, using vulnerability as a super power to guide us through Wonderhell to a new, more meaningful truth.

In the grip of terrible pain, it can be easier to spend your days hiding in shame, making up stories, pointing fingers, justifying your actions, and denying what has happened.

Or, you could choose to own your story, to be vulnerable and imperfect, to know that growth often comes through the most unwelcome of circumstances, and to let this new reality show you that a different life is possible.

This acceptance of your new reality isn't just giving up. It is intrinsic to expanding your view of what is even possible for you. And it starts by fully embracing the vulnerability. That means making a fundamental shift in the question you ask yourself. When something unexpected or dreadful happens, instead of asking, "Why me?," ask a more practical, meaningful question: "What next?"

Adopting a Beginner's Mindset

You might be tempted to hold on to where you've already been, but that will slowly steal your wonder and leave you with nothing but the hell. Like every crisis, every success brings a new opportunity to rewind, recalibrate, and restart from the bottom up, so you can find your next Wonderhell. We can start anew anytime we want. We just have to adopt a beginner's mindset.

The comfort of success starts to feel a bit like boredom.

The repetition of the work eventually blossoms into resentment about all the things that are no longer exciting and fun. Performing the same roles and responsibilities over and over leaves you with nothing but emptiness and tedium.

If this sounds familiar, it's time to break the monotony and step into the unknown. Increase the challenge. Build out a new offering. Or move on. A beginner's mindset is not just okay, it's necessary. It's how we grow.

We need to get comfortable restarting as a beginner, knowing that we are not going to get it right every step of the way. Starting from scratch is disruptive. It is messy. And sometimes, it is the road to brilliance.

In your moments of Wonderhell, you, and only you, get to decide if you will remain in hell, or if you will live into the wonder. It's where you figure out what more you are made of, what more you can do, and what more you can be.

It invites you to dive into that discomfort, expand your boundaries, and get introduced to your true promise. It asks, *Are you going to let this moment pass you by? Or are you going to live into your budding potential and power?* Because Wonderhell isn't your breakdown. It's your breakthrough.



Laura Gassner's secret superpower is seeing your greatness and reflecting it back on you, so that you can get "unstuck" — and achieve extraordinary results. Through *Limitless Possibility*, Laura collaborates with entrepreneurs and investors to push past the doubt and indecision that consign great ideas to limbo. She delivers strategic thinking, well-honed wisdom, and catalytic perspective informed by decades of navigating change across the start-up, nonprofit, political, and philanthropic landscapes.

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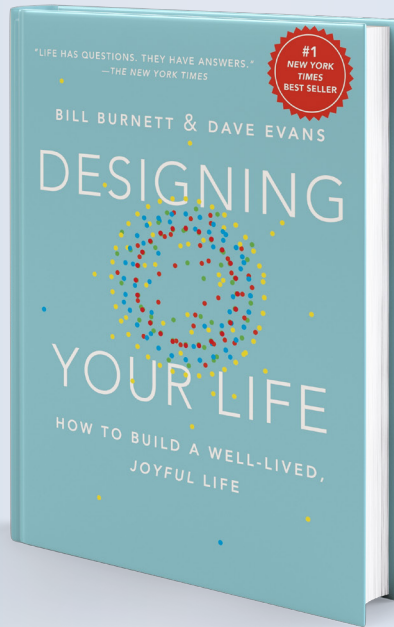
· Book 4 of 16 ·

Designing Your Life

Bill Burnett, Dave Evans

BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read



Designing Your Life

How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life

By Bill Burnett and Dave Evans

Bill Burnett is the executive director of the Design Program at Stanford.

Dave Evans is an adjunct lecturer in the Product Design Program at Stanford, a management consultant, and a co-founder of Electronic Arts

Designing a Life You Can Thrive In

In *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*, authors Bill Burnett and Dave Evans attempt to convince their reader that they should develop a design mindset if they want to create the life of their dreams. In the book, they explain concepts of design and how they apply to planning out a life. Burnett and Evans engage with dysfunctional beliefs and help their readers replace these dysfunctional and limiting beliefs with other beliefs that are more productive and inspiring. This is an important task as Burnett and Evans believe that “true happiness comes from designing a life that works for you.”

Burnett and Evans start out by saying that designers focus on problems. After all, inventions such as the toothbrush come about because someone recognized a problem and set out to rectify it. Oftentimes these problems have no one solution but rather multiple possible effective solutions. When facing design problems, people need to brainstorm many different possibilities and try things out until the desired outcome is achieved. Burnett and Evans say that “a well-designed life is a life that is generative - it is constantly creative, productive, changing, evolving, and there is always the possibility of surprise.”

Burnett and Evans believe that life designing will help make even great lives better because people can flourish in ways never even considered before. In their book, they give people questions to ask and strategies to try, but they cannot provide insights or aha moments. All of that depends on the work of the individual reading the book. They encourage their readers to read this book and work through it in tandem with others. They call this group of people a design team. Members of a person's design team can help motivate them and support them along the way. Another key to thinking like a designer is to actually try things out, what the authors call prototyping. The tactics they provide deal largely with careers because that is where people spend a majority of their time, but they encourage their reader to approach all aspects of their life with this design mindset. Burnett and Evans have five mindsets that will help people design their life. These are “curiosity, bias to action, reframing, awareness, and radical collaboration.” They believe that when a person focuses on these five mindsets, opportunities will begin to present themselves.

Beginning

Designers find the act of problem finding to be as important as the act of problem solving. After all, if people focus on the wrong problems, they waste valuable time, possibly their entire lives, attempting to solve the wrong problems. One type of problem the authors do not want their readers wasting time on are gravity problems. These are problems that do not really have a solution because they are not things that can be reasonably overcome. A gravity problem exists, for example, if a person wants to be a poet but wants to make a lot of money. Poets generally do not make a lot of money. A gravity problem is merely a situation or a circumstance. When fighting with reality, reality will always win.

This is not to say that people should avoid difficult fights. Some problems are just really hard and not impossible. Those fights very well may be worth the effort. For example, it is very hard for someone who has been unemployed for five years to find a job. This is a reality. But there are actions job-seekers can undertake that can eventually land them a job. They cannot change employers' views of the long-term unemployed, but they can change how they themselves come across by doing volunteer work to fill in the gaps on a resume, and they can search other less ageist industries to apply to. The difficulty they face is a large one, but it can be overcome with hard work.

Burnett and Evans advocate creating both a worldview and a lifeview. A lifeview consists of answers to questions about how life is going and what makes a life worthwhile. A worldview, on the other hand, explores why a person works and what makes for good work. The authors advocate for coherency in life which means that there is a connection between who a person is, what they believe, and what they are doing. It allows a person to live with integrity and in alignment with their values. It is not always a perfect life as sometimes compromises are necessary, but it is a coherent life. To get started on this journey, the authors recommend their readers write a worldview reflection that answers key questions about why they work and what work means to them. They then advocate writing a similar lifeview reflection that explores questions such as the meaning of life and what is good and evil. After completing both of those assessments, the authors advocate integrating these two by looking at areas where they overlap, clash, and can drive each other. These documents can help a person determine whether they are on the right track.

Wayfinding

One of the dysfunctional beliefs that Burnett and Evans try to combat is that work is not supposed to be fun. They believe that enjoyment is often a guide to showing people their path. The authors then move on to discuss flow which is a state of heightened engagement and is described by some as being euphoric. Flow, they say, is something a person should strive to experience in work as often as possible. People also should seek out activities at work that give them energy and joy. These should not come at the expense of finding purposeful work. Rather, energy and joy can help set a person on the right track. After journal-

ing for a couple of weeks to determine which experiences bring flow, joy, and energy, people can examine their journal through asking AEIOU questions. These questions focus on the Activities the person was engaged in, the Environment they were in, the Interactions they had, the Objects they were interacting with, and what other Users were involved. People also ought to search their past for clues in helping them find the direction they should go in their current situation.

The authors move on to discuss the importance of generating a lot of ideas. Many people find themselves stuck, and the authors encourage people to embrace this state. It can happen at times because people believe they need to find the one right idea when the authors propose instead considering as many ideas as possible from which to choose from. One way to do this is through mind mapping. A mind map is a visual brainstorming technique where a person writes down one idea and then branches out and writes five or six ideas that stem from it. They then take those five or six ideas and branch out from there. These word associations can help people generate a large number of ideas in a short period of time. Here the authors caution against anchor problems. These are problems that people cannot get over because they get married to one possible solution. To overcome these anchor problems, people often need to reframe their problems and prototype different solutions.

The authors are convinced that there is not one perfect life to live. Rather, they believe people have many different options for how to live meaningful and joy-filled lives. To examine different possibilities, Burnett and Evans encourage their readers to develop three possible Odyssey lives. These are three different paths a person could take for the next five years. The first plan should be a continuation of the life a person is already living. The second should be the life a person would choose should their current circumstances suddenly be gone. The third plan is the choice a person would pursue should money or object not be a concern. The authors then give their readers multiple things to consider with each plan including creating a dashboard for each plan that takes into account considerations such as whether the person likes the plan, has the resources to carry out the plan, whether the plan is coherent, and how confident the person is about being able to bring it to fruition.

Prototyping and Job Seeking

Because designers have a bias towards action, Burnett and Evans advocate prototyping as many options as possible. They say, "Prototyping the life design is all about asking good questions, outing our hidden biases and assumptions, iterating rapidly, and creating momentum for a path we'd like to try out." They believe any path can be prototyped and that it is best to make prototypes as simple as possible. One simple way to prototype is to speak with people who are already living that life. The purpose of these conversations is not to procure a job. The purpose is to find out more information about people's lives. As such, a person should spend more time listening than speaking. Sometimes it is possible to have prototype experiences such as brief internships, and these can be helpful as well. Brainstorming, particularly with others, can help people find different prototypes at their disposal.



... it is easier to create a dream job than to find one already out there.”

According to Burnett and Evans, most jobs are not posted on the internet and some of the ones that are posted are just a formality, and the hiring team already knows the candidate they want for the job. Sometimes applying online is necessary, however. When applying for a job online, Burnett and Evans recommend tailoring the resume to the exact words used in the description. It is important to focus on how the job seeker can meet the exact needs of the employer.

The authors believe that it is easier to create a dream job than to find one already out there. The best way to do this, they say, is through the prototyping conversations described above. If people have enough of these conversations, they often find positions or organizations they would thrive in. At that point, they recommend asking the person they are conversing with how someone might become part of their organization. They say it is important to word it in this manner rather than asking if a job is available because often there is not a ready-made job waiting. Networking, they say, is a key part of finding a job, and while many people have negative connotations about networking, all it really is is asking people for directions. People want to help each other, they say, and as such, they are often happy to help if someone asks them how to go about getting a certain job or meeting certain people.

Choosing Happiness

Burnett and Evans encourage their readers to choose happiness. Part of this process involves gathering many ideas, narrowing down those choices, and then making a decision. Then, instead of agonizing over whether it was the right decision, people should move on. People frequently have difficulty narrowing down their options, but they are often able to break their options into categories and then choose the best from each of those. When people really don't know which option to choose, they can eliminate at least some of the options. Usually they will know right away if they eliminated a good option because they will instinctively feel something is wrong. People can also grok a choice. By this, Burnett and Evans mean that once people have made a choice, they can live in their minds as if that choice were a reality. Then they can see how it fits.

Part of being happy is learning to accept failure. The authors want to help their readers become immune to failure, not by having them never fail, but by having them understand that failure is learning. Failing more often actually helps people succeed sooner because they learn from their prototypes what does not work. Ultimately, Burnett and Evans do not believe that life is a game of winners and losers. As an example of this, they discuss a young man who spent years of his life wanting to win a student government election. He finally won in his senior year. Years later,

he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease. His lifetime history of failure taught him to quickly accept reality and move forward. In short, his experiences with failure had made him immune to failure. The authors suggest readers log their failures and then categorize them as screwups, weaknesses, and growth opportunities. Screwups can be readily fixed, and growth opportunities are easily fixable. Weaknesses tend to follow people around, and people have to decide whether to fight against these weaknesses or to avoid the situations in which they are likely to come up.

The whole process of designing a life works best in a team. People should surround themselves with those who support them, those who actively participate in the life design process, and those who are intimate with the details of the person's life. People should create a team of individuals who are on the same journey as they are. Community is important for people and when forming communities, people should focus on forming a group that has a joint purpose, that meets regularly, that has similar values or points of view, and in which people both seek to be known and to know.

Burnett and Evans wrote their book to help people approach life with a design mindset. Crucial to this mindset is a willingness to consider as many possibilities as they can and to prototype these possibilities. All of this works best when people avail themselves of as much help from mentors and co-seekers as they can. The authors give practical advice and techniques readers can use to help them design their own best life. These practical tips combined with solid ideas about life purpose and integrity provide the reader with an inspirational and pragmatic approach to life-design.

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Everything Connects

Faisal Hoque

Everything Connects

Cultivating Mindfulness, Creativity, and Innovation for Long-Term Value

by **Faisal Hoque**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The rise of technology has caused more global interconnection than ever before. In *Everything Connects: How to Transform and Lead in the Age of Creativity, Innovation, and Sustainability*, Faisal Hoque offers a holistic approach to help you transform your work environment into one that supports these connections while increasing creativity and productivity. In today's economy, while companies are working to create cheaper products, others are seeking the development of a new product that makes the original obsolete. To avoid being swept away by this "creative destruction," a successful business must constantly invent things and be able to adapt to market changes. It's not just technology that's changing, but also the way we do things. If a company can't recognize and adopt the latest developments in communication and remote work, it will fail.

The holistic approach offered in this book uses both new and old methods to help executives drive innovation and collaboration. A fresh mindset requires avoiding stress and staying open to new ideas, including meditation, to gain mindfulness. Entrepreneur Faisal Hoque reveals a wide range of mindful behaviors to fuel innovation.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How practicing "mindfulness meditation" can help you achieve a beginner's mind and understand your environment.
- The humanistic understanding is that all of our "working lives" connect and can promote growth.
- To organize clusters within your organization.
- To create and maintain a personal observation and decision notebook.

Part One: When, Who, and How Are You?

Efficiency isn't the opposite of innovation, but many behaviors that create efficiency are. This is the first thing you need to understand in your journey. If you want to make as many widgets as possible in a short amount of time, your well-being isn't important – until you die of exhaustion.

Chapter 1: Understanding When, What, and Who We Are

Your cup can be full or empty and each of these circumstances has its own implications. Think of your mind as a cup. If it's completely full, you may have an impressive amount of knowledge, but there's no room for anything else. To be innovative, we need to develop what Buddhists call a beginner's mind. In a beginner's mind, there are many possibilities and we're open to new things. In an expert's mind, there are few. Practicing a beginner's mindset involves approaching experiences without assumptions and it's one of the keys to mindfulness meditation.

Chapter 2: Mindful Experience, Authentic Self

Most of the practices we describe focus on the long-term: sustainable, ongoing, and continual. While it's true that the best businesses grow over years, we can only interact with this timeline in the short term. Every short-term situation is responsible for long-term growth. Finding our way requires two parts: knowing the destination you're seeking and the step-by-step process of getting there.

Mindfulness meditation is a process that can help you develop a beginner's mind. It enables you to focus on the present with openness. Instead of reacting to things around you, you will be able to respond mindfully. Daily meditation enables you to gain new perspectives on yourself and your environment. Start with 10 minutes a day for three weeks. Follow these four steps:

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor and a straight spine. Rest your hands on your thighs.
2. Be aware of your breath, focussing on the exhale.
3. As you focus on your breath, be aware of everything else you sense.
4. Your mind will wander off. This is a good thing! Simply say "thinking" and acknowledge your thoughts.

The most important component of change is devotion. With the right effort, the right mindfulness, and the right concentration you can change your experience from the bottom up. Devotion is mindfulness and mindfulness is devotion. Daily practice will allow us to improve ourselves.

Chapter 3: What We Talk about When We Talk About Working Together

Partnerships are essential to success. Some key principles can help you take care of these partnerships.

- Honesty
- Directness
- Thinking Ahead
- Inspire and Influence
- Create a Community
- Think Long Term

When we talk about working as a team, there are some things to keep in mind. An organization is its people. Humans are designed to work together. Management is time management and time management must be conscious. For people to be creative, they must have time and space to get their work done. Finally, an organization is made up of partnerships. Your team needs to believe in you and feel invested.

Chapter 4: Long-Term Plans, Dynamic Present

We work for the long term. Success doesn't happen immediately; we devise strategies that will create greater wealth over time. This is how we define vision. Vision is often narrowed down to a single statement – something to guide the direction of your organization. While it's important to have a vision, it must also be fluid. As our workflow changes, we need to pay attention to the processes and skills we develop to meet changing needs. By paying attention to our customers, we can find opportunities. This allows us to take advantage of the skill sets already available in the company.

The long-term is directly impacted by the short-term. Chains of events in the present will cause the results we see in the long term. Attending these present-tense events will help us improve the lives of our employees and customers.

Part Two: Personal Experiences, Shared Cultures, and Other Rhythms

We've established that our world is in constant upheaval

and that we must embrace this to perform meaningful work. We must also develop a healthy relationship with ourselves before we can develop positive relationships with others. Defining the present is critical to shaping the future. The handed-down methods of structuring organizations and organizing people don't work. Let's look at what leaders can do to create a flourishing culture.

Chapter 5: Structures of Innovation

Doing what comes naturally to you may hinder your organization. For example, research shows that hiring people you click with can obstruct innovation. Leaders must be mindful of the culture they are creating. What comes automatically may not be the best.

When companies are built without mindfulness, they die out. Organizational structures aren't inherently harmful but they can take away from value. It's important to create a culture that's focused on your vision, not the product you're trying to create. Just as clinging to structure kills innovation, clever mixing of different groups can encourage it. Clusters are a powerful tactic for finding new platforms, but they demand a culture of openness. Clusters represent different phases of development for a product, service, or process.

Chapter 6 Performing Innovation

Much like an actor plays a role in a performance, each person plays a role in a company. There are four main roles:

- Ideation roles – those that invent and spread ideas
- Guiding roles – the management, navigation, and overseeing
- Building roles – implementation and execution
- Improving roles – expanding, reducing, and altering existing products or processes

Roles and clusters are similar in that they are all temporary and fluid. They fit the task at hand and use what's needed to get the job done. To do their best work, people need to know their role in the company and be free to do their job the way they see fit. This happens best in a culture that promotes autonomy.

While autonomy is important, so is structure. Freedom requires responsibility, so there must be both quantitative and qualitative measures of productivity. The pace of progress in an organization depends upon trust among members. High-velocity organizations have a culture of trust.

Chapter 7: Leading, Sustaining, and Other Ways to Grow

Wanting to work and having to work are two different things. The best innovation comes from people who want to work. The relationship with the people you work with and your appreciation of the work you do is directly correlated to the strength of your organization.

Talent is curated by leaders who gather people within an organization for a common goal. When the right people are gathered in the right way, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Gathering at the right time is also crucial. Beyond rewards and bottom lines, people need to feel growth. Mindfully cultivating growth is to lead with precision. The rewards will follow.

Part Three: Flowing Ideas, Grounded Decisions, and Long-Burning Value

There's an old Chinese saying that when you've made it ninety percent down the path, you're halfway to your destination. This logic reflects the frustration experienced in completing any project. The last bit is always the most difficult. In the last phase, we look at how ideas become strategies that work in the real world.

Chapter 8: Creating Constant Creation

Ideas are the beginning of the strategy. The discovery process is parallel between individuals and organizations. Innovation becomes sustainable through continuous discovery, planning, and implementation. The key to continuous innovation is diversity. We can diversify many things in our lives to arrange for more innovation-generation:

- Consuming diverse types of media
- Networking
- Attending events

We can also become more deliberate about training ourselves to participate mindfully in our experiences.

Chapter 9: Blueprinting Decisions

When we develop blueprints or maps, we make better decisions. In order to plan out a step-by-step process for reaching goals, we need to have a solid understanding of what our goals are and how to get there. Mapping this out gives us a better understanding of how we work.

When blueprinting our decisions, it's important to keep in mind that insights don't always find the right answers the first time. We may have the right insight, but we may not have the right product. This is part of the process. We want to map our decisions with precision. The more accurate we are about our inputs, the richer the feedback we'll receive to improve the process going forward.

Chapter 10: When Value Becomes Long-Term

In business, we want to create value. But what is value? What makes something valuable? In economic terms, value is the price someone is willing to pay for a product, but this isn't the full picture. There must be tangible value and it's both immediate and long-term. Every transaction has consequences, whether they are positive or negative. As a business, you want these transactions to be positive, which is value.

To create long-term value, build platforms. Continually investing in our capabilities is the most sustainable way to create value. The core of this is understanding ourselves and others.

Part Four: Change, More on Mindfulness, and Building Resiliency

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a tremendous amount of change in the way organizations to operate and necessitated the addition of this section. This transformation in our personal and professional lives presents a huge opportunity.

Chapter 11: What's Changed?

The short answer to this question is everything: how we live, play, work, and interact with each other is different now than it was before the pandemic. Here are some highlights to consider:

- Remote work has exploded.
- We gain our information from different venues, like social media.
- Health care has become remote and virtual.
- Virtual learning is now a mainstream method of education.

Recognizing and understanding the changes that have taken place puts you in a better position to take advantage of them, rather than allowing them to dictate your life. Employers must understand that the attitudes of employees have changed. Employee priorities aren't limited to benefits and

salaries; they also want to believe in a company's mission.

Chapter 12: Mindfulness

Mindfulness encompasses more than the time you spend meditating. It's the ability to be fully present in everyday life. Mindfulness meditation crosses over with "everyday mindfulness." This is an ongoing exercise to rein in scattered thoughts. It allows us to be engaged and make better decisions. It also makes us happier and connected to the task at hand.

Using the acronym STOP is a technique that allows for mindfulness in any situation. Here's what it means:

- S – Stop what you're doing.
- T – Take a deep breath.
- O – Observe what you are feeling, thinking, and sensing.
- P – Proceed with the task at hand.

Applying the STOP technique for even a few moments can clear your thoughts and give you a calmer outlook. Mindfulness should be practiced every day, consistently.

Chapter 13: Resiliency

The uncertainty and volatility of today's world make resilience critically important. This doesn't dismiss the challenges faced by previous generations. Knowing that historical challenges were overcome should build confidence that we will do the same. While some people are naturally resilient, a strong sense of resiliency can be learned. Watch for negative thoughts and reframe them on a positive note. Being empathetic to the challenges others are facing is a powerful strategy to help foster your own resiliency.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this book is the beginning of the process of transformation. It is a journey and a collaboration. Incorporating mindfulness into everyday business practices is exactly that – a practice. There is no start or end, only the journey that exists in the present. Developing a beginner's mind that is open to accepting new things and learning to be present at the moment will help you develop the tools to reach your goals.



Faisal Hoque is an accomplished entrepreneur, senior executive, author, thought leader, public speaker, and advisor to management teams and BODs with more than 25 years of cross-industry success. He is the founder of SHADOKA, NextChapter, and other companies. They focus on enabling sustainable and transformational changes. For more info, visit www.faisalhoque.com

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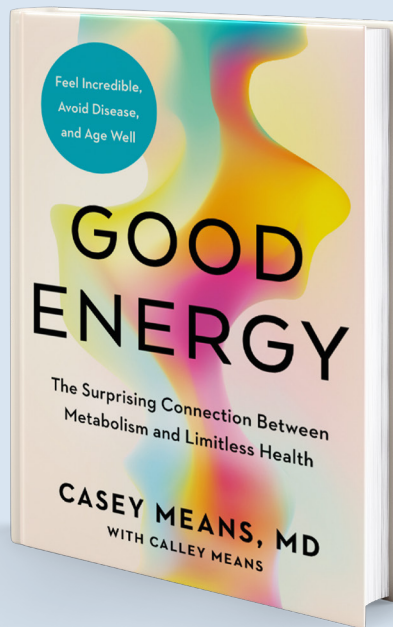
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Good Energy

Casey Means

Book Snaps™

In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.



Good Energy

The Surprising Connection Between Metabolism and Limitless Health

By Casey Means, MD

Casey Means is the Chief Medical Officer and co-founder of Levels, a health technology company with the mission of reversing the world's metabolic health crisis. She has been on faculty at Stanford University, lecturing on metabolic health and health technology. She received her undergraduate degree with honors from Stanford, where she was President of her class. She graduated from Stanford Medical School and trained in Head & Neck Surgery at Oregon Health and Science University before leaving traditional medicine to devote her life to tackling the root cause of why Americans are sick.

A Book Review by Soundview

Optimizing Our Health, Now and in the Future

In her book, *Good Energy: The Surprising Connection Between Metabolism and Limitless Health*, Casey Means, MD explains the importance of good energy and metabolic health on the proper functioning of the human body. Means explains how she became invested in good energy after the death of her mother. Her mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer less than two weeks before she died. Her mother had been trying for years to get her health under control but still fell prey to this disease. Means believes that much of what underlies lifestyle diseases as well as cancers including the pancreatic cancer that took her mother's life is poorly functioning cells within the body. When cells are not fueled properly, the body suffers, and this is exhibited in any number of symptoms and diseases including heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. The first part of Means's book explains why good energy is important. The latter parts of the book lay out a plan for readers to follow to get their cells working properly and to minimize or eliminate both the development and the symptoms of disease.

A Broken System

Means did not always focus so much of her time on the concept of good energy. At one point, she was firmly entrenched in the medical system and excelled in her field. She began to get frustrated, however, that traditional medicine was so focused on using pills to treat symptoms rather than on using food and other modifications to actually eliminate the underlying disease or malfunction. A doctor herself, she understands that the overwhelming majority of doctors spend countless hours and go into significant debt to become physicians. They do not do this to gain wealth. Rather, they pursue this path out of a genuine desire to heal. The motives of the doctors are not the problem.

What is the problem is a broken system that is too closely tied with a pharmaceutical industry that is primarily concerned with profits. While she believes the motives of doctors are generally good, she does not grant the same for the pharmaceutical industry. Her book aims to help people improve their health through non-pharmaceutical means so that they can become less reliant on this industry that does not place patients' best interests

above profit. Means writes that “preventable lifestyle conditions are responsible for 80 percent of modern human deaths... and the ability to prevent and reverse these conditions – and to feel incredible today – is under your control and simpler than you think.” While diet plays a large part in helping cells work properly, Means does not limit her exploration of health to just food; rather she touches on multiple different areas of lifestyle including exercise, the environment, and psychology.

Good and Bad Energy

Means states that “Good energy is also known as metabolic health. Metabolism refers to the set of cellular mechanisms that transform food into energy that can power every single cell in the body.” Cellular metabolism is important because cells can only work properly if they are properly nourished. Cells are what make up all of the human body and are responsible for making sure that it functions properly. The reason people are struggling with their health so much during the present day is attributable to an evolutionary mismatch. Cells and human biology “evolved over hundreds of thousands of years.” The human body developed to function well over that vast span of time, but it struggles now as its environment has changed so drastically in recent decades. These changes include changes to diet, “movement patterns, our stress levels, and exposure to nonnatural chemicals.”

When cells are subjected to bad energy, whatever bodily function or mechanism those cells serve can fall into a diseased state. Means uses the example of ovarian theca cells. When these types of cells malfunction, the body suffers from polycystic ovarian syndrome, and when liver cells do not get the good energy they need, a person can suffer from nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, a disease state Means speaks of throughout her book as a prevalent 21st century problem. The current medical model seeks to eliminate or lessen symptoms of these disease states rather than cure the underlying issue that causes the problems in the first place. Means states that “93 percent of Americans are in the danger zone on at least one key metabolic marker.” It is important that people take control of their health as soon as possible because the choices people make today will affect the diseases they develop in the future.

For Means, the problems go deeper than just medical issues. She believes modern culture is undergoing a spiritual crisis that arose when people became disconnected from their bodies as well as from the body’s core needs. She writes, “We are locked into a reductionist, fragmented view of the body that breaks us into dozens of separate parts. This view does not foster human flourishing.” Throughout her book, Means maintains the interconnectedness of all parts of the body and rejects a symptom based or specialty based medical mindset.

Energy-Centric Health

Means was trained as an ENT. She realized, however, that she was largely an inflammation doctor. The illnesses she treated as an ENT ended in the suffix, -itis which refers to inflammation. Examples of these disease states are sinusitis, otitis, and cellulitis.

These conditions are frequently treated with anti-inflammatory drugs, and when that fails, doctors go in and surgically create pathways through which inflammatory fluids can escape the area.

Means explains that the inflammatory response is a positive one in the body. It is caused when the body detects an illness and initiates a coordinated response to fight off that infection. When the infection has been cleared, the body is then supposed to shut down that response and the inflamed tissues should then return to normal. What is happening in patients today, however, is that the inflammatory response is activated when there is no threat, and then it does not clear away, causing any number of problems in the body. Upon this discovery, Means began focusing on what she calls the pyramid’s base, helping patients both achieve and maintain health rather than focusing on fighting off disease. Her focus now is on the cellular level because disease, she states, occurs because of dysfunction on this level.

Means states that “an underpowered cell – metabolically dysfunctional, struggling to make energy, and sputtering along through its daily work – is a cell that is threatened and at risk. This flailing cell will send out chemical alarm signals and recruit the immune system to help it. In their efforts to help, the immune cells cause immense collateral damage – creating a literal war within the body to protect itself from itself – that results in worse symptoms.” Means explains that this process is the reason why chronic inflammation and metabolic dysfunction often go hand in hand. The dysfunction prompts an inflammatory response. Because of this, Means believes health can be measured by the degree to which cells’ mitochondria make energy. When a group of cells is not working properly, symptoms ensue. Means writes that “most of the chronic symptoms we battle today are simply different expressions of this same disaster happening in other parts of the body,” namely, mitochondria that are damaged due to lifestyle factors. These damages occur because of both over-nutrition as well because of nutritional deficiencies that result in part due to soil depletion as well as from a lack of diet diversity. Other causes include a sedentary lifestyle, chronic stress, medications, sleep deprivation, environmental toxins, circadian disruption, and a lack of temperature variation. When mitochondria are damaged, they cannot properly convert fats and glucose, and they are then stored inside fat cells. The fat in cells then impairs glucose functioning leading to glucose intolerance. Because the glucose cannot get into the cells easily, it causes problems by staying in the bloodstream. Both the mitochondrial dysfunction as well as the insulin resistance lead to inflammation.

Means states that 93,2 percent of American adults deal with metabolic dysfunction. A person can gauge their level of metabolic health by measuring their “triglycerides, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, blood pressure, and waist circumference.” When several of these factors are not in the optimal range, a person is said to have metabolic syndrome. Means finds hope in all she has learned because she now realizes that contrary to popular opinion, many diseases are not caused by genetics but are rather within a person’s ability to control.



...many people get addicted to ultra processed foods because they have been “pushed on every person in the United States from birth.”

Finding Answers

Means advocates for the use of wearables to allow people to better understand their own health. The first of these she discusses is the use of continuous glucose monitors. These are devices that can be easily attached to the body to measure the blood's insulin level continuously. She tells the story of Emily. Emily was a pregnant woman who underwent the traditional glucose tolerance test that the overwhelming majority of pregnant women in the United States undergo around week 24 of their pregnancy. This test requires women to consume a drink high in glucose and then wait for their blood sugar to be tested at certain intervals. This test is meant to diagnose gestational diabetes. Emily passed her glucose tolerance test, but the cgm she was wearing during the test revealed a different situation as her blood sugar was repeatedly out of range during this time. This is consistent with data that show that oral glucose tests miss approximately 20% of cases of gestational diabetes.

Continuous glucose monitors are relevant for all people seeking to improve their health, not just people with diabetes or pregnant people. Means lists numerous benefits people obtain by using continuous glucose monitors. One of these benefits is that people can see how foods and activities affect their blood glucose. This can help people to avoid sugar spikes that ultimately end with drops in sugar leading to cravings and anxiety. They can also encourage healthier eating habits as well as help people detect glucose disturbances before standard blood tests can detect them. These monitors can be paired with food diaries to help people develop a clearer understanding of the ways in which food impacts them.

Means then goes on to recommend using wearables to detect both activity levels as well as sleep patterns. Many people cannot accurately determine the amount and quality of sleep they get, but wearable devices can help remedy that. Many wearable devices such as Apple watches and Fitbits can also measure activity levels and step count. Frequently they can also detect heart-rate variability. HRV refers to the differing amounts of time between heartbeats. High hrv correlates with low stress and strain levels and is ideal. Wearable devices can also detect resting heart rate. Means describes a current situation of bio-observability. What this means is that patients can now get access to much of their health data without needing a doctor to act as an intermediary. This can empower patients to take control of their health in ways that were previously made much more difficult by the medical establishment.

Means describes symptoms as gifts because they can give people important information about their health. She tells her readers and patients to see symptoms as indicators that something is

off and to try to figure out what the problem is. Biomarkers obtained through blood tests can also provide more clues as to what is going on inside the human body, and some labs now can do lab tests directly for consumers. Blood tests ought to look at triglyceride levels, HDL levels, and glucose levels. People should also consider testing their triglyceride-to-HDL ratio as well as numerous other tests including uric acid, liver enzymes and vitamin D that Means itemizes in her book. Means explains what readers' optimal levels of each lab test should indicate. These sometimes differ from what is considered clinically relevant in the medical field. In many cases she believes that interventions are needed before results fall outside of the currently accepted norm.

Good Energy Eating

Means describes many people's relationship to food in terms of an addiction. When she compared what she saw in patients regarding dietary habits to patients dealing with opioid addiction, she came to see that both populations were dealing with addictive substances given to them legally. Most opioid addicts become addicted after getting a legal prescription. Likewise, many people get addicted to ultra processed foods because they have been “pushed on every person in the United States from birth.” She quotes the National Institute of Health as saying addiction is “a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences.” The over one million deaths caused by ultra processed foods each year are some of these adverse consequences.

Dealing with this crisis is difficult, in part, because there is so much widespread disagreement over what the best diet is. Instead of advocating for a specific diet, Means recommends certain broad eating principles people can follow, principles that are compatible with numerous different dietary eating plans. One of her main recommendations is that people should focus on eating as many unprocessed foods as possible. This is easier, she says, when people find awe in their food. When she eats, she tries to consciously make herself aware of all that was necessary to get this food to her and then what will happen when the food interacts with her own cells. Further, she advocates for organic and ideally regenerative unrefined fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, beans, herbs, and spices and pasture raised, organic meats and dairy products. She further advocates strongly for “reverse osmosis or charcoal-filtered water” and recommends people never drink tap water that has not been properly filtered. She explains that she has not included grains on her list because she sees no benefit from grains and since up to 93 percent of American adults suffer from metabolic disturbances “avoiding carbohydrate-predominant foods with a laser value of protective substances within them is a wise choice.”

Means goes on to describe the three part classification system for foods. The first category contains unprocessed or minimally processed foods. Unprocessed foods are not altered at all, such as an apple picked from a tree, and minimally processed foods consist of foods that are only slightly altered such as those that are ground, canned, or boiled. Most of what a person eats should come from this category. Processed foods are those that are manufactured in order to increase their durability or sensory qualities. They are often created “by combining minimally processed foods with processed culinary ingredients.” It is important to read labels closely to determine whether a certain processed food is compatible with healthy eating. Most processed foods are not good for metabolic health. The worst offenders are in the ultra-processed foods category. These “foods are created in industrial factories by combining various extracted and adulterated parts from different foods with synthetic ingredients, like preservatives and food colors.” She goes as far as to call these foods Frankenfoods and advocates against eating them. She admits that a diet high in unprocessed and minimally processed foods can be costly but that the medical consequences of not eating healthy foods will cost far more in the long term. In addition to explaining what foods are beneficial, Means lists three bad energy foods which include “refined added sugar,” “refined industrial vegetable and seed oils,” and refined grains.

Non-Dietary Factors

Means’s plan is not based solely around food. She also encourages readers to do whatever they need to do in order to allow the body to function according to its circadian rhythm. This requires people to get into the sun every day and as early in the day as possible as well as to turn off or dim lights in the evening. Bright light during the day can help the body remain sensitive to insulin, and sunlight is also beneficial for improving mood. She also tells her reader that getting the proper amount of high quality sleep is important because a lack of sleep is seen as a danger signal to the body. Furthermore, people at increased risk of sleep apnea are encouraged to get tested and are reassured that weight loss can eliminate or reduce symptoms. In addition to enough quality and quantity of sleep, people should also make sure their sleep schedule is as consistent as possible.

When it comes to exercise, Means explains how frequent movement is more beneficial than movement that is confined to a short period of time during the day. This is difficult for many who work from desks. She also explains the importance of getting into extremely hot and cold environments when possible. This can be done in saunas, through hot yoga, as well as through ice baths and cold showers. Finally, she advocates for the elimination of as many environmental toxins as possible.

Means spends the majority of her book explaining the bad energy most people’s cells are suffering from. This is the cause behind many of our most troubling health problems today. This is a cause for hope rather than despair because people can improve the energy they provide to their cells. Means provides her readers with numerous quizzes to help them determine which areas need the most and most urgent work. She then

gives a four week plan readers can follow to overhaul their health and get themselves on the right track quickly. Her book also provides numerous lists of healthy foods, foods to avoid, as well as ways to improve particular biomarkers in the reader’s body. Means’s plan touches on many different aspects of life in order to improve metabolic health, but she tries to make it as simple as possible as readers are encouraged to focus on just a few areas at a time. Means left her training as an ENT in order to be able to focus on helping patients improve their health at the cellular level, and this book is one way in which she is able to help as wide a range of people as possible.

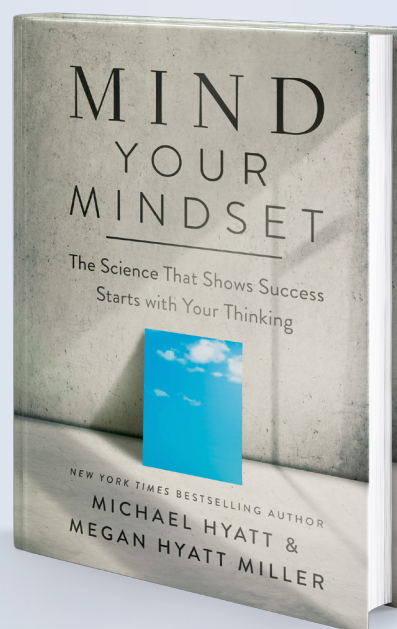
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Mind Your Mindset

Michael Hyatt, Megan Hyatt Miller

BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read



Mind Your Mindset

The Science that Shows Success Starts with Your Thinking

By Michael Hyatt and Megan Hyatt Miller

Michael Hyatt is the founder and chairman of Full Focus. He is also the author of several New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today bestselling books, including *Platform*, *Living Forward*, *Your Best Year Ever*, *Free to Focus*, and *The Vision Driven Leader*. With his daughter, Megan, he is coauthor of *Win at Work and Succeed at Life*.

Megan Hyatt Miller is the president and chief executive officer of Full Focus. Cohost of the popular business podcast *Lead to Win*, she is also Michael's oldest daughter and coauthor with him of *Win at Work and Succeed at Life*. As the architect of Michael Hyatt & Company's standout culture, she is committed to helping her team win at work and succeed at life, while also delivering phenomenal results to their customers.

Do You Trust the Voice in Your Head?

In *Mind Your Mindset: The Science that Shows Success Starts with Your Thinking*, authors Michael Hyatt and Megan Hyatt Miller discuss the ways in which the stories people tell themselves affect their daily lives as well as the outcomes they experience in their lives. They break their book up into three sections: the first helps the reader identify their narrator; the second helps the reader learn to challenge that narrator; and the third shows the reader how to train their narrator.

Creating Stories

Hyatt and Miller begin the book by discussing how in a healthy child in a healthy environment, “a child learns to successfully live and adapt in the dynamic world of interpersonal relationships and environmental change.” In some children, however, this process is disrupted by trauma. Learning how to successfully navigate the world is crucial to a person's success and ability to achieve goals. The authors believe that nearly all of the challenges that people face begin in the brain and stem from the stories they tell themselves.

When encountering a problem, Hyatt and Miller encourage readers to look for what they can change in a situation. Always looking outwards for the causes of problems leads people to feel like a victim. The basis for the author's whole discussion to come is centered around the knowledge that people's brains are vast networks and that the connections made within these networks “both are how we think and shape how we think.” These networks also produce memories and make predictions. The stories people tell themselves affect both “how we see the world and act within it.” Where people get stuck, they say, is in trying to solve problems with strategies that no longer work. Between a problem and a strategy lies a moment in which the brain tells a story. This is the key moment to focus on.

The authors explain how human beings create concepts in their minds. These are formed by synapses in the brain. When people encounter something new, their brain tries to attach this new phenomenon to a concept previously held. “Our brains tell stories to help us understand what's happening around us and how to respond.” It searches out cause and effect relationships. The job of the internal narrator is to gather all of the information around a person and create a coherent story.

In the next section, Hyatt and Miller discuss assumptions. These, along with our purposes, drive a person's stories. They explain that experiences are stored in our memory. There are two kinds of memory. There is episodic memory which deals with memories that involve the person, and there is semantic memory which deals with information that is important but that does not directly involve the person such as data and facts. Episodic memory is subjective, but if a person replays those memories over and over, the memory starts to feel objective. Hyatt and Miller explain that this is why a person might remember a childhood slide as being extremely tall even though it is not. Memories of that slide were replayed over and over, and that impression from childhood then came to be viewed as being objective. "Those distortions of our memory shape the stories we tell about ourselves, other people, and the world." Social networks also shape assumptions because people must rely on others to tell them things because they cannot possibly know everything themselves. Changing the stories the internal narrator tells is difficult and can take quite a bit of time, but it is possible.

Stories Are Not Reality

Hyatt and Miller say that "A story about a thing is not the thing. It only represents it." They then go on to explain that the central drama of a person's life resides in the gap between who a person is and who they want to be. People never experience reality directly because everything is mediated through the mind. When a person approaches new situations, they can reflect back on similar situations in order to determine how to act. Stories "are the narrator's attempt to represent reality to us." They are not reality. Sometimes these stories are incorrect because situations change or the person who created and shared the story was wrong. While the narrator can help guide a person, it is not always accurate. What is essential for progress is to revise the stories when they are determined to be incorrect.

The next portion of the book centers around interrogating the narrator. In order to interrogate the narrator and determine its reliability, it is important to first look at the facts. "Not all thoughts are facts." At the same time, a person needs to put emotions to the side. This is because emotions do not reflect objective reality. When a person becomes cognizant of a story, it is important to consider whether the story is based on objective fact. Is it true? While people crave certainty, certainty is not always possible.

Hyatt and Miller then move on to discuss metaphors. Metaphors can be helpful for allowing people to understand problems, but they are not perfect. Problems arise because when people compare one thing to another, this very comparison can blind them to aspects that the two do not have in common, creating blind spots. "If we say x is like y, we may fail to notice that it's more advantageous to see it like z." Despite their weaknesses, metaphors are useful for helping people understand the world quickly and efficiently.

The words people use are also important. The words people use influence their stories, and they can also point to errors. "Disempowering language is an early warning sign of a false story," Hyatt and Miller say. Purposes also shape stories. An example

of this can be seen when two people look at the same set of facts but create different stories about these facts leading to different conclusions. People can also allow their subconscious to pay more attention to facts that support their own previously held conclusions.

Intuition and Certainty

In the next chapter, Hyatt and Miller discuss how "we can often know things before we can articulate or explain them." This is because our unconscious mind is always working in the background. In regards to intuition, they state that these intuited predictions are based on real connections people have made that they just are not aware of yet. Hyatt and Miller believe people use intuition quite frequently in their day to day lives. Sometimes a person needs to press on for more information to garner more certainty before making a decision, but sometimes that is not possible. In these cases, it might be most prudent to trust one's intuition. That is not to say, however, that intuition is perfect. It has limits and people must keep those in mind. Intuition is most reliable in areas where a person has expertise because intuition is based on assumptions and experience. In the end, Hyatt and Miller say that intuition is better than a sixth sense because it is "a function of your brain ceaselessly scanning your environment to find relevant connections. It is a form of knowing."

In the next chapter, Hyatt and Miller confront certainty. They begin by discussing how daunting it can be to question long-held stories. Some things make the questioning of stories even more difficult. For example, if a story is important and treasured, people will find it harder to question it. This is because brains crave the certainty they can muster when they believe they will know what happens next. Therefore, reconsidering stories is threatening because it means not knowing what may happen next.

Changing Stories

Risk is unavoidable, however. Hyatt and Miller explain that the goal of thinking better, can be threatening to the brain because the brain's main purpose is to stay safe. To explain this, they discuss how the human brain was trained centuries ago to think that sugar and fat were good. This story was important for survival because human beings faced scarcity. People are no longer living in a civilization where food is scarce, but their brains still tell their bodies to store food as if it were scarce. This is because the brain has not changed its story. This is the same thing that happens when people are confronted with the prospect of changing their stories in other aspects of their lives. The prospect of this change can cause existential anxiety. This is not a bad thing, however, if a person is confronted with that anxiety because it means they are engaging deeply with these concepts.

Hyatt and Miller say they are sometimes falsely attributed as saying that nothing is true. This is not the case. They maintain that there is truth, but that does not mean that people can always determine what that truth is. The authors recommend using humility when dealing with stories, especially when a person is presented with new information. They say, "We simply don't know everything. Despite our best intentions, our stories



... just as our brains make connections,
many of our stories are connected.”

about the world are often wrong, or at least incomplete.” They go on to say that just as our brains make connections, many of our stories are connected. This can mean that many stories will fall when one of the foundational stories is questioned and changed. They find this process to be fruitful. Hyatt and Miller charge their readers with embracing the challenging of stories as an opportunity for growth.

Training the Narrator

The final section of the book is devoted to helping the reader to train the narrator. Here Hyatt and Miller state that the brain is good at identifying patterns, and when a person encounters new situations, their brain tries to find something to relate it to. People have a hard time coming to new conclusions about an idea because once they have an established neural pathway, their brains tend to use it without straying. Therefore, in order to develop a new story, a person must break those thought patterns. To do this, a person must get their brain away from those tried and true neural pathways. Unfortunately, when self-limiting ideas such as “I can’t do that” are challenged, people begin to defend them, and this can harden the person’s thinking around the problematic story. One way to start to change these thoughts is through self-awareness. Hyatt and Miller recommend that people pay attention to their words and emotions and ask themselves why negative emotions crop up. Once a self-limiting story is identified, then the person can work to create a more empowering story. If a person cannot believe the story swap at first, they can act as if it is true instead. Eventually reality will catch up with the beliefs.

Hyatt and Miller then move on to discuss the push back technique. They say, “there’s a direct correlation between our ability to think creatively and our willingness to stand apart from normative ways of thinking.” This means that people must be willing to ask questions that others are not willing to ask. This can help the mind make new connections. One way to do this is by considering questions such as “What if we knew we could not fail?” Another method is to hold two contradictory ideas and let the mind “resolve the difficulty.” This creates new neural pathways.

Hyatt and Miller encourage novelty. They explain that in brainstorming sessions, the brain first “exhausts familiar pathways before trying to create new connections between existing concepts.” They also encourage looking at situations from the mindset of a beginner. This can be done by asking questions such as how a fifth grader would look at the situation. This forces a person to re-examine what has become invisible to them.

Oftentimes resistance to new ideas will come from within. To overcome this, Hyatt and Miller recommend developing an

experimental mindset in which a person decides to pursue an avenue and see what comes of it. Stories can always be changed, so if a person wants to try a new one, this does not have to be permanent if new and better information comes along.

Hyatt and Miller also encourage soliciting feedback from others. Everyone’s assumptions are different. Feedback can come from the mouths of other people or from resources such as books and the internet. At one time at Bell Labs, engineers were quite productive because their laboratories opened up into a long hallway where people ran into each other and chatted with people from other departments. This prompted new ideas. The authors say, “If the only thoughts you’re willing to think are the ones you currently have, then the only results you’ll get are the ones you’re getting.”

Hyatt and Miller mention that “when we imagine or reimagine a story, we’re not creating something entirely new. We’re mostly finding new relationships between the concepts and contexts we already possess.” They encourage taking breaks and letting the subconscious mind work when solutions to problems are hard to find. When people rest, their brains bounce between their executive network which is the conscious part of the brain and their default network which is largely subconscious. The default network works best when it has been “primed” by the executive network. To think creatively, they recommend thinking deliberately about a problem and then letting it be for awhile.

Hyatt and Miller end with a discussion of how to make the brain an ally. Here they say that, “Our potential is bound only by our imagination.” Changing one’s thinking requires a person to overcome their fears. Throughout this book, the authors share how they have overcome some of their own self-limiting stories. These personal insights into their struggles as well as their tips and guidelines for dealing with narrators help the reader learn to take self-limiting stories and turn them into motivating stories.

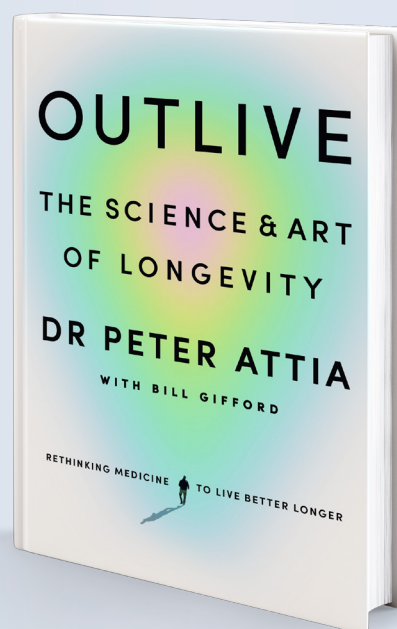
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Outlive

Peter Attia MD

BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read



Outlive

The Science and Art of Longevity

By Peter Attia, MD

Peter Attia, MD is the founder of Early Medical. He received his medical degree from the Stanford University School of Medicine and trained at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in general surgery. He also trained at the NIH as a surgical oncology fellow at the National Cancer Institute, where his research focused on immune-based therapies for melanoma. He serves on the editorial board for the journal Aging. He is the host of The Drive, one of the most popular podcasts covering the topics of health, medicine, and longevity.

Rethinking Medicine to Live Better Longer

Peter Attia, MD, in his book, *Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity*, has as his goal, to improve both the lifespan and the healthspan of his readers. This is the same goal that he has with his patients in his practice. Lifespan refers to how long a person lives, whereas healthspan refers to how many years that person can spend disease-free. Attia sees too many people who spend their last years miserable and in pain and in poor physical health. He wants to use his expertise and the data people can obtain about their health to improve both lifespan and healthspan. He believes that current medicine, which he calls Medicine 2.0, is primarily concerned with helping people once they are sick, in short, when the damage has already been done.

An example of this, he points out, is how most people are not treated for diabetes until their A1C level reaches a certain number. Before that, people are left to continue on how they are living. He prefers a Medicine 3.0 approach that realizes that many chronic diseases begin many years before they reach a critical level and that a person's blood sugar level should be cause for concern well before they reach the diabetic threshold. This can stave off diabetes and give people greater chances of positive health for many decades.

The Four Horsemen

Attia discusses what he calls the four horsemen: the four diseases that most negatively affect people in old age. These are diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's Disease. He explains that studies of centenarians, people who live over a hundred years, find that these people tend to develop chronic illness later, sometimes much later, than people who do not live as long. In general, centenarians are in relatively good health for many years, and when they do die, their suffering is more short-lived.

Attia discusses non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and nonalcoholic steatohepatitis. He says that one in four people worldwide suffer from one of these afflictions which is associated with both obesity and too much cholesterol. These diseases are reversible, but they can cause significant damage when they go undetected because of the scarring the associated inflammation causes. Part of the reason why these liver conditions are of concern is because they are steps on the way to type 2 diabetes, and diabe-

tes often leads to the other three horsemen diseases.

Attia separates obesity and diseases of metabolism. They are correlated as many people with metabolic issues are also obese and metabolic disease can increase obesity, but there are also considerable numbers of people of normal weight who also suffer metabolic dysfunction and may not even know it. In the 1980s there was a study done on Syndrome X which is now called metabolic syndrome. This syndrome has five characteristics: high blood pressure, high triglycerides, low HDL cholesterol, central fat distribution, and elevated fasting blood sugar. Insulin resistance is the central factor in all of this, Attia explains. Because of this, Attia sees obesity as a symptom of these problems rather than being the problem itself.

Attia explains metabolism as the process by which food is broken down and sent to its proper destination. Hormones are what ultimately decide what happens to the food, and insulin is key among these hormones. Storage of extra energy is safely managed in subcutaneous fat, but eventually those cells fill up and if a person reaches the extent of their storage in these fat cells, the fat is released as triglycerides in the bloodstream, stored in a person's liver, and stored as fat around crucial organs. This fat is quite harmful. Historically, people benefited when they could store fat because they had difficulty obtaining food and were better off if they had fat stores. Society changed more quickly than genes could, however, and as such, what was once helpful is now causing disease in our overabundant society. Another problem affecting humanity is that fructose is plentiful in modern society, and people's bodies were not made to be able to process fructose at the pace in which the modern Westerner now consumes it.

Attia then goes on to discuss cardiovascular disease. Of the four horsemen, this one kills the most people, but he does not believe that this needs to be the case as he believes that if interventions are employed early enough, then people should be able to eliminate the mortality associated with cardiovascular disease. What Attia is not primarily concerned with is the cholesterol in people's diets. Much cholesterol in a person's circulation, he explains, is created in a person's own cells. He maintains that while coronary events often appear to come on suddenly that this is not the case. The problems start years and even decades earlier.

Attia dislikes what he considers the over simplistic idea of good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. He believes that in order to make progress, science needs to get a better understanding of HDL cholesterol, and science needs to develop tests to better detect cardiovascular risks. Attia believes that in people whose relatives had heart disease at a young age, they need to get a test to find out Lp(a) levels because some people have abnormally large concentrations of this particle, and this puts them at greater risk for cardiovascular disease. Attia believes that if numerous factors are taken into consideration, atherosclerotic disease would not "even be in the top ten causes of death." He does not believe that for many patients, these changes can be made without the use of drugs as diet alone will not reduce levels of crucial particles to a safe level.

Cancer, Attia says, still kills "at almost exactly the same rate as it

did fifty years ago." Unfortunately, cancer often is not detected until it is too late to fully cure. Once cancer has metastasized, treatments tend not to be all that effective over numerous years. Attia has a three part strategy for beating cancer. First, is to help people avoid cancer. Second is to use better treatments that play off of cancer's weaknesses, and third is early detection. Part of the difficulty of treating cancer is that cancers vary so widely. The only real similarities common among cancers is that they can spread to different parts of the body and they do not stop growing when they should. He sees two attributes of cancer that can be used against the cancer. These are that they consume large amounts of glucose and that they are able to evade the immune system.

In addition, Attia sees a link between metabolic disorder and cancer, and he believes that this is because of inflammation and growth factors like insulin. Inflammation can create an environment that is conducive to cancer, and insulin can accelerate its growth. Because of this, Attia believes metabolic therapies can help fight cancer. Certain diets can also make chemotherapy more effective. He also believes that immunotherapy is key; these are therapies that help the immune system fight off disease. Part of this is developing methods that can help the immune system recognize and defeat cancer. Early detection also must be a factor in decreasing cancer deaths because the more the cancer grows, the harder it is to kill it off. Some doctors are hesitant to do too much screening because of the cost, both in money and in emotional toil that such tests and possible false positives can entail.

The final horseman is neurodegenerative disease. This is an area where Attia says that speaking about prevention is taboo as scientists find it hard to predict who will succumb to one of these diseases. Once a disease like Alzheimers is detected, there is no known way to reverse it. There is a genetic component to Alzheimers and certain genes have been implicated. Because some people know they are at a high risk of developing the disease due to their genes, they can focus on prevention. One thing people can do is to increase their cognitive reserve by engaging in activities like learning new languages and learning to play musical instruments.

People who develop Alzheimers who have significant cognitive reserves may decline less rapidly. He explains the theory of one scientist that states the Alzheimers may be a "vascular disorder of the brain" caused by decreased blood flow to the brain. Others claim that Alzheimers may stem from glucose problems and that insulin resistance may play a key role. Attai says, "All this suggests that metabolic and vascular causes of dementia may be somewhat overlapping, just as patients with insulin resistance are also prone to vascular disease." Attia believes that diet and exercise can help prevent Alzheimers, and people should aim to "diversify the brain's fuel source from only glucose to glucose and ketones." Exercise is the biggest deterrent he believes. Finally, adequate sleep is crucial in limiting the prevalence of Alzheimers.

Determining Tactics

In the third part of his book, Attia discusses some tactics to help stave off the four horsemen. He sees five different areas in which to employ tactics:



... exercise is the “most powerful longevity drug.”

- Exercise
- Nutritional Biochemistry
- Sleep
- Emotional Health
- Exogenous Molecules

Attia believes exercise is the “most powerful longevity drug.” Exercise can help reverse decline, maintain health, and keep a person from facing what could be life shortening injuries later in life. He says, “study after study has found that regular exercisers live as much as a decade longer than sedentary people.” People need to focus on numerous areas in their exercise. One is their VO2 max which is “the single most powerful marker for longevity,” and it represents how much a person can utilize oxygen. Ideally, people would work on improving their VO2 max with one or two workouts a week that target this. People also need to focus on both muscle mass and strength. He points to studies that showed that exercise interventions were just as good or better than certain drugs at “reducing mortality from coronary heart disease, prediabetes or diabetes, and stroke.”

Attia points to the notion that people’s abilities will decrease as they age, so if they want to be able to run a mile twenty years from now, they need to be able to do far more than that now. He pays particular attention to Zone 2 exercise which is exercise that allows people to hold conversations while still taxing them. This type of exercise can improve mitochondria and make a significant difference in health. The body can use fat and glucose much better with healthy mitochondria. For someone starting out, two thirty minutes of zone 2 exercise a week can be helpful, but the ideal is three hours per week at zone 2. Attia discusses the importance of strength training and also explains how quickly strength can be lost. Because it can be lost so quickly, stability is important because falls and injuries can lead people to stop their training which can lead to a rapid decline particularly in the elderly.

When it comes to nutrition, Attia believes there is a lot that science does not know. He refers to nutrition as nutritional biochemistry because he believes this change in terms makes people feel less dogmatic about the issue. He sees three main methods people use to lose weight: calorie restriction, dietary restriction, and time restriction. The second refers to limiting or eliminating food groups, and the third refers to limiting the hours of the day in which a person allows themselves to eat. All three, he says, are basically a means of calorie restriction just by different methods.

He believes it is important to limit calories in order to lose weight, but this can lead to other problems. He believes that the quality of a person’s diet is important and that people need to eat less of the Standard American Diet. He describes the four macronutrients of diet: “alcohol, carbohydrates, protein, and fat.” Tools like continuous glucose monitoring can help people understand how particular foods affect their particular bodies as some people are more or less susceptible to the effects of foods than others are. Fats are another group that affect different people in different ways.

Sleep is crucial for maintaining health. Many of Attia’s patients’ problems are mitigated with better sleep. One reason is that poor sleep is harmful to a person’s metabolism. Sleeping too much can be a problem as well as it can indicate that a person is getting poor quality sleep. Low sleep can also affect hunger hormones in people. Additionally, chronic sleep deprivation is commonly seen as an actual cause of Alzheimer’s disease. Quality sleep can help with cognition and help clear away the clutter in people’s brains. Sleep is especially important for disease prevention in a person’s forties and sixties.

Quality of Life

In his final section, Attia details his own struggles with mental health issues. He entered institutions twice to address these issues which threatened to destroy his life and his relationships. Through this, he learned that merely living longer will not help a person if they do not focus on their emotional health in a way that allows them to fully appreciate life.

Throughout his work, Attia attempts to help his patients improve both their lifespan and healthspan. With his patients, he is able to use quality testing to improve their chances of health in many areas. In this book, he explains the different genes that affect health as well as the interventions people can take to improve their health. Some of this can be accomplished on one’s own and some require tests ordered by doctors and other practitioners. With this book, he empowers his reader to take control of the factors that can affect their longevity so they can live as long and as well as possible.

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Overworked and Overwhelmed

Soundview Executive Book Summaries



Overworked and Overwhelmed

The Mindfulness Alternative

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

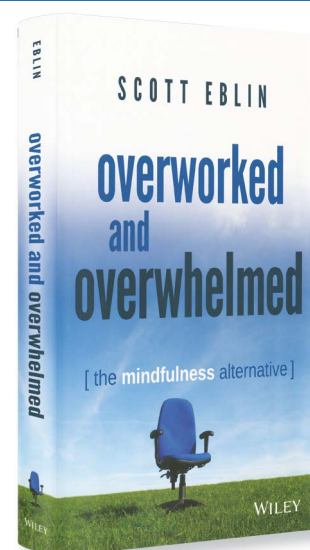
New research shows that the smartphone-equipped professional is connected to work 72 hours a week. Forty-eight percent of Americans report that their stress level is up and that the number one source of stress is the job pressure of a 24/7 world. What's the alternative?

In *Overworked and Overwhelmed*, top leadership coach and educator Scott Eblin offers practical insights for the executive, manager or professional who feels like their RPM is maxed out in the red zone. By making the concepts and practices of mindfulness simple, practical and applicable, Eblin shows that mindfulness that makes a difference doesn't require meditating like a Buddhist monk.

Overworked and Overwhelmed is a handbook for more mindful work and living that offers "must know" mindfulness basics that today's professional needs to thrive in a 24/7 world, simple routines to reduce stress and sustain peak performance, and a personal planning framework for creating the outcomes that matter most. Even small increases in mindfulness can lead to big changes in productivity and quality of life for the overworked and overwhelmed professional. *Overworked and Overwhelmed* is a guide for doing just that.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The real costs of living in a chronic state of fight or flight.
- What mindfulness means and how to begin practicing it.
- How to find the right physical, mental and spiritual routines so you can be your best.
- To discover your true purpose and define success for you.



by Scott Eblin

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: OVERWORKED AND OVERWHELMED

by Scott Eblin

The author: Scott Eblin is the cofounder and president of the Eblin Group, a professional development firm that supports executives and managers in exhibiting leadership presence by being fully present. As an executive coach, educator and author, Eblin works with senior and rising leaders in some of the world's best known and regarded organizations. He is the author of *The Next Level: What Insiders Know About Executive Success* (2010).

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Reality Bites (Or Does It?)

Why is it that so many professionals feel so overworked and overwhelmed? If you're like almost all the people I work with, it's because your calendar is racked and stacked with very little white space between all of the work, family and community commitments on your plate. But is that calendar the cause or the effect of being overworked and overwhelmed?

Why It Feels Crazier Lately

There are two macro factors at play. The first is that the corporate restructuring that began with the retrenchment of the Great Recession of 2008 hasn't stopped. As companies downsized to deal with the financial crisis, they learned how to do more with less. And the people who remain are dealing with the blessing and the curse of the second big factor that emerged in the same period: the rise of the smartphone.

A survey of executives, managers and professionals (EMPs) conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership in 2013 shows that the typical smartphone-carrying EMP is interacting with work an average of 72 hours a week. That's 43 percent of the 168 hours that are in a week. When you take the working and personal care out of the mix, that leaves just 24 percent, or 40 hours, of your week available for everything else you want or have to do.

You Must Be Present to Win

Leadership presence is composed of three big categories of behaviors:

Personal presence: how you view yourself and how others view you.

Team presence: how you get things done through and with the team you're accountable for on a day-to-day basis.

Organizational presence: how you work outside of your day-to-day team to get bigger things done than you can do on your own.

What each of those subsets of leadership presence has in common is that to exercise them you actually have to be present. Not just physically present but also mentally, relationally and even spiritually present. How can you show up with presence when you're so overworked and overwhelmed that you're struggling with even being fully present? The answer is, you can't.

Here's some good news, though. It doesn't have to be that way. What's the alternative that offers hope? The answer lies in developing some level of mindfulness as an alternative to struggling to keep up with the overworked and overwhelmed state in which it's all too easy to find ourselves these days. It's not as hard or as challenging or even as intimidating as it might seem. ●

What Does Mindfulness Even Mean Anyway?

Jon Kabat-Zinn created the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in 1979, and he offered a simple definition of mindfulness in February 2013 when he said, "Mindfulness is the awareness that arises by paying attention on purpose in the present moment and nonjudgmentally." Let's break that down piece by piece:



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SUMMARY: OVERWORKED AND OVERWHELMED

Awareness is another word for noticing what's going on.

Paying attention on purpose suggests that we can make a choice to be aware and notice.

In the present moment means focusing on what's happening right now, not ruminating on what's already happened or worrying about what might happen.

Nonjudgmentally means we don't waste mental or emotional energy labeling events or thoughts as good or bad. We just acknowledge what we're seeing, thinking or feeling.

Mindfulness is about managing the gap between your thoughts and actions. Awareness of what's going on externally in the outside world and internally in your mind gives you the insight to choose an intentional response. Awareness operates in two big domains, external and internal, and one big time frame, right now. Once you're aware of what's going on externally, outside of you, and internally, inside of you, what is the next best choice to intentionally make?

Through awareness and intention, the mindfulness alternative sets you up for high performance. It helps you identify the difference between extrinsic interference that you can't control and the intrinsic interference of thoughts that can keep you from performing at your full potential. The more you mitigate the intrinsic interference, the more your performance equals your potential.

What Are the Barriers to Mindfulness?

Mental chatter: Is there anyone who's not familiar with thoughts bouncing from one seemingly unrelated thing to another? Of course not; we all are. Being aware of the chatter is the first step to overcoming it.

Distractions: Research shows that you're likely interrupted once every 11 minutes and that it takes about 25 minutes to get back to the original task you were working on before the interruption.

Lack of Awareness in Your Story: There are two categories of stories: the micro story and the macro story. The micro story is the story you're telling yourself about whatever is happening right now, whatever happened in the past that seems to affect right now, or whatever might happen in the future. Quite often the story will focus on a specific source of extrinsic interference you're noticing. The macro story is the one you tell yourself about why you're doing what you're doing.

Get Ready for Your Moment of Truth

How do you become mindful enough to become more aware of your story and perhaps set some different intentions around what comes next? It might entail being ready

for and awake to moments of truth when they present themselves and then processing what you learn from them.

Media magnate Arianna Huffington tells the story of one of her moments of truth. It was when she woke up in her office in a pool of her own blood after collapsing from exhaustion and hitting her head on her desk on the way down to the floor. By the standard definitions of modern success — power and money — she was among the most successful people on earth. Collapsing in her office was the wake-up call that led to making changes in her life that created a richer and broader definition of what *success* means for her.

When your moment of truth comes, what do you do with it? How do you stay aware and intentional enough to work with it? How do you train your body and mind to work with you rather than against you? ●

What's Going on in There, and What Can You Do About It?

With some systems in our body, it pays for us to mindfully intervene. One of those is the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS, along with the central and peripheral nervous systems, enables us to do everything we do as human beings. The ANS is subdivided into three complementary systems: the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), and the enteric nervous system. We're most concerned with the SNS and the PNS.

The SNS is where the fight or flight response resides. The PNS is often called the rest and digest function, and activating the PNS counterbalances the fight or flight response of the SNS. The goal is to keep your SNS and PNS in a state of balance or homeostasis.

The challenge for many leaders and high-capacity professionals is that stress-inducing factors can leave them in a low- to high-grade state of chronic fight or flight.

What Chronic Fight or Flight Does to Your Brain and Body

Perhaps you've noticed that your decision-making capacity isn't at its best when you're feeling chronically stressed. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) results from a study showed that chronic stress leads to atrophy of the prefrontal cortex (the part of the brain where higher-order thinking and decision making reside) and in the brain circuitry that controls goal-directed decision making.

Remember that from an evolutionary standpoint, the fight or flight response was what protected our prehis-

SUMMARY: OVERWORKED AND OVERWHELMED

toric ancestors from saber-toothed tigers and other wild beasts that would have been happy to have them for lunch. The threats today — packed calendars, tough decisions, jammed in-boxes, family pressures — are subtler but more persistent. If you end up in a chronic state of fight or flight because of them, the toll on your body can be severe. They include heart disease, gastrointestinal problems, anxiety, insomnia, weight gain, infections, cancer, heart disease and premature aging.

The entry point to mindfully responding to feeling overworked and overwhelmed is awareness and intention. It's about being aware of the factors that can make you feel overworked and overwhelmed and intentionally activating your rest and digest system to counterbalance your fight or flight system. ●

Where Do You Want to Go?

The Life GPS® is a simple tool that can help make a seemingly complex subject like mindfulness more manageable and easier to access. The Life GPS is an easy way to organize your mindfulness game plan and to stay on track with it.

Creating an integrated life blueprint is what the Life GPS is all about. It's built around three big questions that, when mindfully considered and acted upon, can change your life.

The first big question is all about recognizing the characteristics and behaviors that reflect how you are when you're showing up as the best version of yourself. The implications of your answers to this question and how they relate to the rest of your life can be surprising and even life altering.

The second question is, "What are the routines that would enable you to show up at your best?" The routines that will become part of your Life GPS fall into four domains: physical, mental, relational and spiritual. The third question is, "What difference would showing up at your best make in your three big arenas of life?" These arenas are your life at home, your life at work and your life in the broader community. ●

How Are You At Your Best?

Developing an understanding of how you are at your best becomes a benchmark and reference point for creating the outcomes that are most important in the three big arenas of your life: home, work and community. Operating from how you are at your best is working from a state

of pure potential. The interference, whether it's extrinsic ("out there") or intrinsic ("in here") falls away.

How to Determine What Your Best Looks Like

What does your version of being "at your best" performance look like? Here's a process for clarifying that.

Step 1: First, find a quiet place where you won't be distracted for 30 or 45 minutes. Perhaps grab a cup of coffee or tea and find a comfortable seat. Put your feet on the floor or tuck them up under yourself. Close your eyes for a few moments and take three deep breaths.

Step 2: Remember when you were in the zone. Now that you're a little more relaxed, consider the past six to 12 months of your life. What peak experiences do you remember from the different arenas of your life — home, work and community — when you felt completely absorbed in what you were doing, when were you in that state of flow that athletes call being in the zone?

On the left-hand side of a blank sheet of paper, start jotting down some headlines that summarize each of those experiences for you. To the right of each of the headlines, jot down the primary arena for that peak experience — home, work or community. Write down as many as come to mind.

Step 3: Remember how it felt. Once you have your list of headlines, use the right side of your worksheet to jot down what it felt like to be in each of those situations. For instance, a key customer problem-solving scenario might generate descriptors such as calm, creative, focused or collaborative.

Step 4: Look for common denominators. Take three more deep breaths and shift your attention from the dance-floor perspective of recalling specific memories about states of performance to the balcony perspective of looking for patterns. Look for a common denominator among "at your best" characteristics that seem to cut across multiple experiences. Highlight or circle those words. You're not trying to come up with a list of ways that other people think you should be; you're building a list of characteristics that you know from deep personal experience represent you when you're at your best.

Step 5: Congratulate yourself. Congratulations, you've just gotten a fix on the short list of characteristics that describe you when you're showing up at your best.

That list you just created is essentially the true north of your Life GPS. Knowing and understanding how you are at your best gives you a reference point for how you want to show up as a leader, as a professional, as a family member, as a friend and as a person. ●

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What's the Secret?

The one commitment you need to make to successfully pursue the mindfulness alternative is to intentionally manage your time so that you have a fighting chance of showing up at your best. There are 10 best-practice management tips, but you don't have to adopt all 10 to make a difference against feeling overworked and overwhelmed.

Time Tip 1: Recognize and Overcome the Tyranny of the Present. There's a certain amount of stuff you've got to do every day to keep the game going, but keeping your ante of that stuff as low as possible gives you the space to actually be fully present for the things that matter most.

Time Tip 2: Ask, "Is This Really Even Necessary?" Chances are, you're doing things on a regular basis that aren't really even necessary.

Time Tip 3: Push Your Calendar's Reset Button. What's most important to get done today? What could be postponed? What could be outsourced?

Time Tip 4: Understand and Set Your Operating Rhythm. Learn what works for you in optimizing your time, energy and attention throughout the day.

Time Tip 5: Schedule the Most Important Rocks First. High-capacity professionals are clear about what else is important to them other than work and make sure that those items go on their calendars first.

Time Tip 6: Give Yourself Time for Unconscious Thought. That may look a lot like taking a walk, riding your bike, cleaning your house or playing with your kids.

Time Tip 7: Set Boundaries and Guardrails. There are two steps you need to take to have boundaries. The first is to recognize what they need to be for you to consistently show up at your best. The second step is once you have boundaries, let other people know what they are.

Time Tip 8: Use Yes and No Strategically. One of the quickest ways to end up feeling overworked and overwhelmed is to mindlessly say yes to every request.

Time Tip 9: Tame the Distraction Dragon. Schedule checking your email at specific times during the day, and ignore emails for the rest of the time.

Time Tip 10: Consider Your Impact. If you're in a leadership role, people are taking their cues from you whether you know it or not. ●

You Are What You Repeatedly Do

When was the last time you stepped back and took a look at the routines you go through most days to ask if each of them is really in service of your showing up at

your best? By focusing on the routines that add value, it will be easier for you to identify and change the routines that reduce value. The point isn't to advocate specific routines but to help you identify a few that will enhance the level of mindfulness you need to bring a focused sense of awareness and intention to your life.

Seven Principles for Choosing and Following the Routines That Work for You

Strive for rhythm, not balance: By focusing on rhythm, you acknowledge there are times when your pace is going to be much more oriented to work, home or community, and there are times when the counterpoints of the other aspects of your life come to the fore.

Start where you are. Your routines have to work for only one person — you.

Feed your sweet spot. Look for routines that help you keep the strengths that represent you at your best in the sweet spot.

Choose what is easy to do and likely to make a difference. Start with the easy routines. You'll master those soon enough, and the ones that were more challenging will seem easier at that point.

Ditch the dogma. Pay attention to the best practices, and ditch the dogma.

Take baby steps. Sometimes the progress that comes from those small baby steps is so slow and incremental that it's indiscernible. And then, suddenly and without warning, one day you're doing it.

Remember that less is more. There might be 10 new routines you want to incorporate into your life. Ignore eight or nine of them — at least for now. ●

It Starts With the Body

Since your physical health is the foundation for everything else you do in life, we'll start by unpacking the physical routines that could be relatively easy for you to do and that would definitely make a difference in your life.

Movement: The Killer App of Physical Routines.

There are some big reasons why movement, especially forms such as walking, running, cycling, Jazzercise, Zumba, yoga, and light weight-lifting that have a repetitive rhythmic element to them, is the Killer App of physical routines: Movement can be free and portable, and it can get you out of your head by giving your mind something else to focus on other than your thoughts. Movement can make you more productive. Also, movement begets movement, or at least the ability to move. Finally, movement builds your confidence.

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Sleep. Many overworked and overwhelmed professionals don't sleep enough. Research conducted by Gallup shows that 40 percent of Americans get fewer than seven hours of sleep at night. A lack of sleep has the biggest effect on the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that controls higher-order decision making and emotional regulation. Here are some tips to get better sleep.

1. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
2. Limit the amount of food and alcohol (water too) that you consume two or three hours before bedtime.
3. Establish a going-to-bed routine that helps you relax.
4. Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet.

Eat Mindfully. A diet high in saturated fats and refined sugar leads to health problems such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes. That kind of diet also impairs your cognitive ability. Conversely, vitamins, minerals and omega-3 fatty acids reduce the chance of disease and increase the neural plasticity of the brain. What you eat is the fuel for your body and mind. Consider starting some routines that will fuel your body well: Avoid eating lunch at your desk or multitasking while eating. You're more likely to make bad food choices and mindlessly eat more in the process. Learn more about healthy snacks and drinks. Set some ground rules to keep you, your team and your family healthy. ●

A Beautiful Mind

The process of deep breathing is a mainstay of mindfulness-based stress reduction programs called STOP. It's an acronym for **s**top what you're doing, **t**ake some deep breaths, **o**bserve what's going on with yourself and your environment, then gather your thoughts and **p**roceed. It's a simple way to stop your fight or flight response in its tracks; reduce the chatter and clear out the clutter in your mind; and increase your focus on what's actually going on and what, if anything, you need to do about it.

The Killer App of Mental Routines: Breathing

Breathing is the tool that's always available to you when you need to gather yourself. In its simplest form, mindfulness meditation is about closing your eyes and focusing on your breath. When your mind wanders to thoughts other than your breath, as it inevitably will (it happens to everybody), just notice that, and come back to your breath.

It's not a big complicated thing, it's simply a process of training your mind to recognize when it's distracted and to bring itself back to a point of focus without making a big deal out of it. Within reason, the more you do, the

stronger you get. With some practice using the Killer App routine of breathing, you'll learn how to use it to help you throughout the day.

Routines to Navigate the Time Frames of Mind

Past Tense: Reduce Regret and Remorse. We all make mistakes in life and do things we regret. It's part of the human experience. Unfortunately, we can make the rest of that human experience a lot more difficult if our minds are cluttered with the remorse and regret that cause us to relive again and again stuff that's already happened. If you're in that remorse and regret place, you have to move out. Here's a routine that can help you do so.

Step 1: **Breathe.** Bring yourself more into the present by spending 15 minutes to just focus on your breathing. (Don't have 15 minutes? Try five. Don't have five minutes? Try three deep breaths from your belly.)

Step 2: **Learn the Lessons.** Learn some lessons that will set things on a more productive path. Your *lessons learned analysis* can be organized around three simple questions: What was supposed to happen? What actually happened? What would I do differently next time?

Step 3: **Take Action Now.** Based on your answers to the third question in Step 2, you have some options for taking action now. And by now, I mean now. What are one or two things, if any, that you want to do in the near future to mitigate what went wrong or to set things up for better outcomes in the future?

Present Tense: Playing with Presence. One of the big benefits of the breath-based mindfulness meditation routines is that they strengthen your recognition of when your mind is wandering from the present moment. Take a moment to identify a routine task later today where your intention is to be fully present. If you're cleaning the pots and pans tonight, pay attention to the temperature of the water, the quality of the soap bubbles, the spots you missed in the pan on the first pass, and all the other aspects of the experience. If you find your mind wandering off to that meeting you had today or the presentation you're doing tomorrow, no big deal. Just notice it, and then come back to the pots and pans. Playing with presence in little ways can help you be more present when it matters most.

Future Tense: Visualize Worry Away. If you find your mind cluttered with worries about the future, it's difficult to stay focused and show up at your best. The good news is that you recognize that you're worrying about the future. Recognizing and being aware of the thought pattern is the first step in moving toward one that's more productive. From there, you have a lot of options, but here are two routines that can make a big difference.

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The first is the routine of reassessing your priorities and resetting your calendar if necessary. The second routine, which is particularly helpful when you're anxious about something you have to do in the future, is visualization.

"What am I trying to do? How do I need to show up to do that?" Asking yourself those two questions about a future event and going a little deeper with some thought-provoking follow-up questions can make a huge difference in raising your confidence level and reducing any anxious thoughts that you have about an important future event.

Some good follow-up questions include, "What do people know, think, feel, do, believe if that conversation, presentation is successful? If I reverse-engineer back from a successful outcome, what are the critical steps for getting to that result?" Questions like these can also help bring you back to the present moment by identifying specific steps you can take to create successful outcomes.

Choosing the routines that work best for you in the physical and mental domains can set you up for the kind of relational routines in your Life GPS that can help you create the conditions for the kind of outcomes you hope for at home, at work and in your community. ●

In Right Relationship

Relationships, and all of the important things that flow from healthy and vibrant ones, are suffering as a result of the nonstop distractions epitomized by our addiction to the smartphone. But what, exactly, suffers as relationships suffer?

Your results: There are behaviors that drive results and behaviors that build relationships. The second category is critical to the first. Getting things done depends on people working together. To get results over the long run, you have to attend to the relationships.

Your health: Researchers at Brigham Young University found that having weak relationships is more harmful than not exercising, twice as bad as being obese, and about as bad as being an alcoholic or smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. If you want to live a longer, healthier life, you need to nurture strong relationships.

Your humanity: As human beings, we can look at relationships as transactional, or we can look at them as transformational. In the former, we tend to view other people through the lens of what they can do for us. In the latter, the way we treat one is the way we treat the whole. When you look at and engage with other people and the world from the perspective of the whole, you start to change it.

The Killer App of Relational Routines: Listening

If you can better understand your typical style of listening, what drives it and when to use it or not use it, you'll be much better equipped to show up at your best. To help you connect your listening style with the mindfulness alternative, here are three different styles of listening:

- **Transient listening:** This style is all about you and shows up a lot when you're operating in a state of chronic fight or flight.
- **Transactional listening:** This style is all about getting stuff done in conjunction with other people. Doing this effectively requires a shift out of fight or flight but doesn't necessarily require a deep level of presence.
- **Transformational listening:** This is the style that helps strengthen relationships by building connection. You make connections between ideas, and more important, you establish connections between and with other people. Transformational listening is what you demonstrate when you're fully present and attentive during a meeting or conversation. If mindfulness is the demonstration of awareness and intention, transformational listening is the mindfulness alternative in action.

What's Your Purpose Here Anyway?

What's the purpose in your life that informs what you're trying to do at home, at work and in your community, and how do you need to show up at your best to make those outcomes more likely?

Spiritual routines can help you get clear about the answers to those "What are you trying to do?" questions and remind you of how you need to show up to make following through on your answers more likely. Your spiritual routines can be religious or nonreligious; many different traditions and perspectives can inform your approach.

The Killer App of Spiritual Routines: Reflection

Routines of reflection help create the space for you to be present with your thoughts in a way that ties back to our working definition of mindfulness — an awareness of what's going on in and around you that leads to intentional action. The purpose of reflective routines is to slow down your mind enough to notice what's going on with your thinking and your actions.

Here are five routines of reflection to consider as part of your Life GPS and mindfulness alternative. Start with one.

Taking time for gratitude. You can counteract the fight or flight response by adopting a routine of taking a deep breath and a few moments to ask yourself through-

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out the day, “What is going right?” In other words, what are you grateful for?

Centering through visual focus points. Another way to activate your sense of gratitude is to just look around the space you’re in. It is likely that there are visual cues or focal points that will remind you of what you’re grateful for. Or it may be that you have focal points that help you center and reflect on what you’re here to do and how you’re showing up for that purpose.

Reflective reading. Regularly taking time to read material that inspires you, challenges you, broadens you or sparks thoughts that help you connect the dots can be a great routine of reflection.

Repetitive prayer or meditation. If you’re really wound up with the hormones and neurochemicals that stem from a condition of chronic fight or flight, your breath may not be a strong enough focal point. If that’s the case, you could probably benefit from a meditation routine that focuses on a word, phrase or image that you rhythmically repeat to yourself for five to 20 minutes.

Journaling. Keeping a journal of your thoughts and feelings and the hopes you have is a time-tested routine of reflection. By regularly writing in a journal, you can both create space for reflection as well as capture insights that come from reflection. ●

What Are You in It For?

Because extrinsic factors are not in your control, you don’t have complete control over your outcomes. That’s not to say, however, that you shouldn’t consider the kinds of outcomes you hope for in the three big arenas of life: your life at home, your life at work and your life in the community. You should consider them because having intention around your outcomes will inform and reinforce the actions you take each day.

Just don’t hold on too tightly to your ideas of what the very specific results of those outcomes should be. Holding tightly to specific notions of how things should be now or will be in the future is the source of a lot of the stress that causes people to feel overworked and overwhelmed.

What Does Success Really Look Like? Creating Mindful Outcomes at Work

An important question for you to consider as you think through the outcomes you’re hoping for from your work is “What does success really look like?” One way to think about your answer is to consider the range of possible out-

comes on a continuum from transactional results to transformational results. There’s no judgment here about one end of the spectrum being bad and the other being good. It is just a way to frame up what you’re trying to do in your work, how you need to show up to make that likely, and why all of it is important to you in the first place.

By their very nature, outcomes on the far end of the transformational spectrum will require a greater investment of your energy, time and attention. For example, when Danae Ringelmann cofounded the crowdfunding site Indiegogo, she did it because she wanted to bring personal connection back to finance. That transformative vision is what makes it worth the hours she invests in leading a high-profile startup.

For Jim Campbell, the former CEO of GE Appliances, transformation depended on him showing up as a positive leader with a plan to lead the business through the financial crisis and recession that began in 2008. The energy and focus that Campbell and his team brought to the table led to thousands of GE Appliance jobs coming back to the United States.

Transformational outcomes can be large-scale or they can be smaller-scale results focused on individual people. Sure, there will always be work that is just transactional by its nature, but don’t sell yourself short. As you consider the outcomes you hope to create at work, factor in opportunities for transformation.

We all have gifts, but none of us have all the gifts. It can be an inspiring exercise to consider how your gifts align with the gifts of others in creating positive outcomes at home, at work and in the community. And although we can’t control the future, focusing on the mindfulness alternative can raise the awareness and intention that can improve the odds. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Overworked and Overwhelmed*, you’ll also like:

1. ***The Next Level* by Scott Eblin.** Eblin identifies the key behaviors and beliefs that successful executives pick up and let go of. For every rising executive, Eblin’s practical coaching is invaluable for achieving success.
2. ***The Resiliency Advantage* by Al Siebert, PhD.** Dr. Siebert details a five-level program for becoming more resilient, which is a valuable resource for learning how to meet the challenges of work and life head on.
3. ***Springboard* by G. Richard Shell.** *Springboard* will help you reevaluate your future and envision success on your own terms. It may even change your life.

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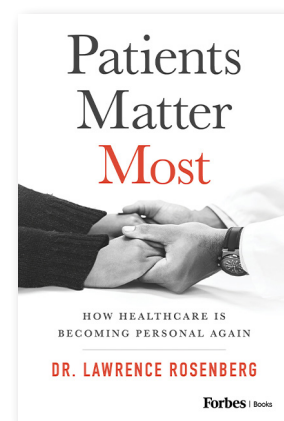
Patients Matter Most

Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg

Patients Matter Most

How Healthcare Is Becoming Personal Again

by **Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Today, personalized medicine has cascaded into every aspect of our healthcare system. But what exactly is personalized medicine? What impact does it have on our professional activities? Is it time for healthcare providers to rethink what they do, how they do it, and where they do it?

The book *Patients Matter Most: How Healthcare is Becoming Personal Again* connects the dots between healthcare delivery and technology and why it's time for healthcare providers to adapt to this change. The book also unravels how we can benefit from understanding this change, when we must embrace it, and when we must be cautious.

By breaking down the workings and capabilities of personalized healthcare, author Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg tells healthcare is becoming personal again and what new responsibilities we must all learn to manage successfully.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why healthcare is becoming personal again.
- The role of technology in healthcare delivery.
- How personalized healthcare hands us new responsibilities.
- How to take advantage of this change.

Introduction

Healthcare delivery has long been described as a system, which can imply that institutions and individuals have pre-ordained, set roles, but this book calls for reimagining those roles. The system is evolving, and people who understand what is happening are better positioned to take advantage of the changes.

For those of us who deliver healthcare or administer various aspects of the system, the message will be that it's time to reset our expectations for what we can control.

The transformation of computing from mainframe to mainstream and its exponential growth in power is both a cause and a pattern for the emergence of a more people-centered healthcare system. People are being empowered with knowledge that allows all of us to take unprecedented personal responsibility for our health. The pages ahead will explain why personalized healthcare both empowers us and hands us new responsibilities we must all learn how to manage successfully.

Chapter 1: Healthcare Reborn: A Predictable, Unstoppable Disruption

Previously, healthcare was a job that experts performed in centralized facilities that were staffed and maintained at great expense. Today, however, we're moving back to a decentralized system.

Healthcare delivery is evolving parallelly with the rapid development of technology that is usable by more people in more places. It is becoming more of a personal responsibility; Big technology companies are getting into the act and the emergence of connected care is changing the face of healthcare delivery. This democratization of medical technology and information requires those of us working in medical centers and as physicians and specialists to reimagine our roles and recognize the upscaling of our colleagues' and patients' abilities.

Decentralization can lower the cost of care because large academic medical systems are very expensive to maintain. But a lot of smart decisions must be made to ensure we can sustain the high level of specialized care some patients need.

Chapter 2: Understanding the Complexity of Systems and Networks

The business world may have recognized the drawbacks of

individuals or departments operating in their own silos, but this concept has not fully reached medicine yet.

Sure, the traditional, freestanding hospital or Medical Center can be a quintessential silo. A more naturally occurring healthcare system would deal with issues across the continuum of care, as opposed to just episodic, acute diagnosis, and treatment. But the decentralization and digitalization trends are pushing healthcare into a network structure.

As with the business world, technological innovations in the world of healthcare are seen as disruptive. But it can be an oversimplification to call what's happening a disruption. From a systems point of view, what's unfolding is a natural evolution of ecosystems. Let's take a deeper look into where technology-driven change is leading healthcare.

Chapter 3: Digitalization and Real-Time Health Systems

A variety of digitalization initiatives currently operate in healthcare. Some of these include remote patient monitoring, interoperable data collection, virtual visits, AI screening of data, and paying more attention to the social determinants of health (SDOH).

Healthcare services increasingly reach people where they are, sometimes with the help of startups or big tech companies. The ability to monitor signals from anywhere, at any time, and from anybody creates a connected care system and enables a real-time health system (RTHS). Together, these systems are more patient-centered than our traditional medical center-based establishment. In the next chapter, we take a deeper dive into the data available about individuals through advances in precision medicine.

Chapter 4: Precision Medicine: Why It's Personal Now

The US National Institute of Health defines precision medicine as "an emerging approach for disease treatment and prevention that takes into account individual variability in genes, environment, and lifestyle for each person." It is emerging partly because science is giving us more knowledge of genetics and genomics every day.

Within our healthcare networks, we are amassing a tremendous amount of data from the connected and real-time healthcare system. A lot of that data is personal, involving

not only the patient's physical condition and prescriptions but also the patient's history, lifestyle, health behaviors, and socioeconomic factors. With all this data at their disposal, people have the power to become more engaged in their own decisions around their own health and wellness.

Ultimately, investing in wellness and prevention is closely knit with personalized medicine. Measurements that get down to an individual level, whether done in a barber chair, at home, or by a genetic testing company can provide knowledge to make informed decisions about our health. The science is advancing on its own, and it is becoming cheaper and easier to get good data.

Chapter 5: Decentralization Is Driving Changing Circumstances

Grabbing people from different departments on the fly to set up a command center and respond to the needs of patients during the COVID-19 wave was a manifestation of decentralization. The organizational governance structure follows the invention of the product. The form follows function. Ideally, the technology that allows us to provide the right care in the right place at the right time should produce efficiency and cost savings.

Our institutional, legal, economic, and regulatory structures must adapt to the emerging decentralization. In a decentralized healthcare system, we are more interested in outcomes and results than in structures. As the individual becomes the center of the medical economy, companies that are used to selling devices and supplies to hospitals and doctors' practices must learn to refocus their marketing on the end consumer. Healthcare institutions also must learn to focus on what other industries call the customer experience. Centering healthcare on people is empowering to individuals and will lead to better outcomes and more sustainable systems. Many physicians are reluctant to give up the control they have in managing their patients' healthcare, but the pages ahead will explain why that has already begun happening. Technology is fueling amazing but sometimes chaotic changes in access to health information and knowledge.

Chapter 6: Democratization of Knowledge

Empowering individuals with not only information but also understanding and knowledge of how to take control of their health is a positive development. But this process car-

ries a lot of complications. Decisions must be made about who has access to our private health information, who owns it, and under what conditions it can be sold or transferred to third parties. Given the sensitivity and value of health data, institutions are recognizing their obligation to protect our privacy from theft and misuse.

As health information, in general, becomes more widely available, doctors have had to adjust to having others encroaching on their realm of expertise. More people have the knowledge to take more responsibility for the wellness of themselves or others in their care.

Chapter 7: Democratization of Technology

Ultrasound machines used to be a big deal in terms of size, so they were mostly confined to the radiology departments of hospitals. Then, these machines became portable enough to be wheeled to the side of a patient's stretcher bed. Today, hand-held ultrasounds could fit in a large pocket or small purse. Some medical practices are more likely than others to move in the direction where AI performs diagnoses previously done by specialist physicians.

Smaller, cheaper, mobile, easier-to-use diagnostic and therapeutic equipment is filling a niche in healthcare and contributing to its dispersal from large hospitals into community clinics and homes. This decentralization empowers individuals by giving them information they can act on to take control of their own health and wellness. The democratization of technology involves putting tools into the hands of more people to do more to stay informed and gain understanding and control of their health. The result is a loss or shifting of control.

The transformation, however, carries an obligation to update our systems for training and accountability to ensure the technology is being used correctly, and the devices are properly certified for what they are being used for.

Chapter 8: The Devolution of Control

As large corporations become more involved in more widely distributed healthcare delivery, they will inevitably exploit technology to cut costs. They will use AI to replace medical specialists in dermatology, radiology, pathology, and any field where AI pattern recognition can provide the same or better diagnosis than physicians do.

The need to rethink what healthcare providers do, how and where they do it, and who gets paid for what is already apparent will only grow as AI capabilities develop further. Healthcare delivery must confront its problem of wasted resources because decentralization could lead to more duplication. The consequence of taking control away from doctors is that patients have more control – and responsibility – for managing their own health care. Big tech companies will be pervasive in the new healthcare landscape because they can offer convenient, efficient solutions with the promise of cost-effectiveness.

But the challenge for society and achieving cost-effective Healthcare is making people interested in taking control of their wellness to prevent chronic illnesses. In the next chapters, we will examine the consequences of disintermediation and the dangers lurking in a system that provides care everywhere.

Chapter 9: Moving Toward Sustainability

Around the world, societies developed healthcare systems that paid providers based on the volume of services they delivered. These systems are all struggling in different ways which shortfalls of human and financial resources to keep up with demand.

Governments and private intermediaries, such as insurance companies, have propped up the systems with regulations and limits that are reaching the end of their sustainability. Failing to prevent and treat medical conditions only leads to more costs downstream.

Healthcare has been taking up an increasing share of our economic resources for years, reaching great crisis levels during COVID-19. The pandemic also brought home to healthcare providers the need to be more consumer-friendly when their revenue was hit by people skipping routine visits and turning to telehealth.

The convenience of telehealth won over a lot of people and forced legacy healthcare providers to face up to how far behind other industries they were in using digital communications such as text reminders, online scheduling, and tools to shop for services. People already annoyed by long wait times for appointments and lack of price clarity were increasingly willing to try something new, like telehealth or store-based clinics.

Chapter 10: Virtual Care: Not In-Person but Still Personal

Entrepreneurs ranging from startups to multinationals have seen rich opportunities in virtual care for more than 55 years. The necessity of expanding virtual care during the pandemic led to innovations in telehealth and hospital-at-home programs. Increased acceptance of virtual care has been seen across society, although some physicians are reluctant to embrace such a big change in their practice.

But virtual care, if done right, can provide people with a more personalized service in which they have more control over scheduling and choice of providers. In the process, people's medical records and sensitive personal data must be online in a database that can be accessed by authorized staff more widely than what has been standard in the medical establishment.

Chapter 11: The Issue of Privacy and Autonomy

Privacy is an issue healthcare has been addressing for centuries, instilling ethical standards for providers to protect confidentiality and, within our lifetimes, redesigning facilities to put walls, not curtains, between beds.

With the democratization of knowledge and technology and the decentralization of care, we are in a new era of digital privacy concerns we must urgently address to avoid unintended consequences.

Technology companies must provide convenient, accessible tools to give people autonomy and control over their personal medical data. Individuals must take control with their eyes open to the personal responsibility and accountability involved.

Chapter 12: What Now?

The inextricable link between healthcare delivery and technology is only getting stronger. To end up in a better place, we must train our healthcare professionals to function in a rapidly changing environment. Professional schools must meet future needs as technology redefines jobs and makes it possible to deliver quality care in less centralized settings.

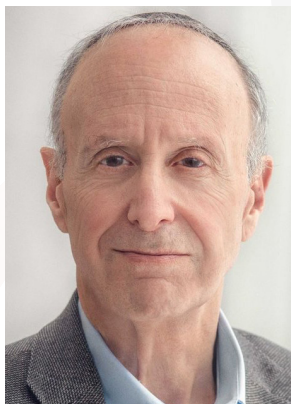
In that much better place, individuals will have more control over their bodies, more say in their care and will be better informed about how to manage their lives to avoid

chronic, preventable diseases. Together, we will have a more sustainable healthcare system.

Conclusion

Technology has made healthcare more of a personal responsibility than it has been since a couple of centuries ago. We can mail off a sample and learn about our DNA. A storefront can offer procedures that used to require equipment and specialists housed only in hospitals. This convenience of care everywhere comes with a few catches. The more autonomy people have in where they seek care, the more issues we have sharing their data among providers without jeopardizing privacy.

Because healthcare is becoming more personal, we must make sure people avail themselves of the services that promote wellness, prevent disease, and keep our healthcare delivery systems sustainable.



Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg is president and CEO of the Integrated Health and Social Services University Network for West-Central Montreal. Before assuming this position in 2015, Dr. Rosenberg was Chief of Surgical Services and then executive director of Montreal's Jewish General Hospital. Prior to that, Dr. Rosenberg served as director of the Multi-Organ Transplant Program at Montreal General Hospital and as Associate Chair of Surgery (Research) in the McGill Department of Surgery. He is a professor of surgery and medicine at McGill University.

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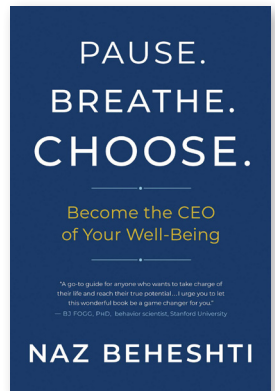
Pause. Breath. Choose.

Naz Beheshti

Pause. Breathe. Choose.

Become the CEO of Your Well-Being

by **Naz Beheshti**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The key to thriving in today's high-pressure business world and culture of life is to find a balance between deep self-awareness and strong emotional intelligence. Together, these skills will help to facilitate mindful choices that will transform your life for the better as one conscious move in the right direction leads to another, and another.

In ***Pause. Breathe. Choose.***, author Naz Beheshti shares the keys to improving yourself and your workplace, providing a guide to self-discovery, improved decision-making, and purposeful growth across all areas of life and business. Professional success cannot be sustained without a long-term, holistic approach that takes into account emotional health and other non-career factors. From relationships and self-development to self-care and goal-setting, the right system can help us both do well and be well at every stage of our journey. This highly effective framework has been used for industry-leading clients for over ten years, empowering leaders at every level to fulfill their highest business, personal, and social potential.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Master mindfulness to access your authentic self and make better choices.
- Strengthen self-awareness and emotional intelligence to cultivate stronger connections.
- Upgrade your mindset and behavior to take charge of your life and better manage stress with resilience.
- Connect your head and heart to lead with both passion and purpose.

Master Mindfulness

We see light because we have seen darkness. We know our strengths because we know our weaknesses. We feel love when fear is absent. We feel peace because we know what distress feels like. In other words, we understand something by knowing its opposite. Similarly, to truly know and understand mindfulness, one must have experienced its opposite. In order to consciously and intentionally pursue a connected life, we must understand the disconnected life.

Mindfulness is the foundation of authentic self-discovery and a life well-lived. Mindfulness provides many practical benefits that improve our lives on every level. One of the most important is addressing the wellness gap. This arises when we neglect our well-being, or when we believe that success means sacrificing our self-care. Mindfulness helps us recognize stress, and it increases our awareness in the moment, both of ourselves and others, and these things improve our energy, effectiveness, decision-making, and leadership.

When we are not present, we are often thinking about either the past or the future. When we pause, we stop our mind from wandering. When we take a conscious breath, we engage in the present moment, which in turn, equips us to make a better choice. The Pause. Breathe. Choose method aligns our head and heart and awakens us to infinite potential.

Mindfulness in Action

Mindfulness can be elusive in today's world when we don't create space for it. We so easily become lulled into a state of complacency, numbness, stress, and distraction. Once the cycle begins, it can be hard to break. Taking the time to pause and then to breathe is a small but powerful step. That small step opens the door for mindfulness to enter the room and for mindful awareness to become mindful action.

Apply Better Choices to Manage Stress and Build Resilience: The Seven A's

Being mindful is the heart of the Seven A's and the Three P's, and it is the foundation for making mindful choices.

The Seven A's are a set of interconnected strategies you can use to upgrade your mindset and habits to make better choices to live a healthy, engaged, and connected life. This necessarily begins with the first two of the Seven A's: You

must first adopt a healthy lifestyle and allocate time for play and recovery in order to effectively practice the other five strategies and achieve sustainable success.

The concept of the Seven A's is designed to help you make better choices, manage stress, and build resilience beyond just bouncing back and surviving, but rather bouncing forward and thriving amid challenging situations. The quality of your life depends on the quality of your choices.

Unfortunately, we are not born with the ability to make good decisions. We must learn the critical skill of decision-making, often the hard way. The choices you make throughout your life determine whether or not you will promote your Self to the CEO of your well-being.

If practiced consistently and with awareness, these seven strategies can rewire your brain. Our current patterns of thought and behavior are not permanent, which has been shown by a wealth of research on the science of habit formation.

If we do not make a conscious effort to live a healthier lifestyle, we are willing to accept premature death. If we do not fully connect with ourselves, with our work, with others, and with the world around us, we will find ourselves living on autopilot. We will settle for something less than our best Self.

What can we do? We can be mindful. We can pause and breathe before making a choice. We can shift our mindset to avoid living on autopilot. We can choose to engage the world with self-awareness, to notice and address stress, to make adjustments when necessary, and to align our actions with our goals.

Practicing mindfulness and the Seven A's is about adopting a happier and healthier life. You have the choice, so why not choose happiness?

Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle

Every single day that we live on autopilot, doing without being, over-stressing, overworking, sacrificing sleep, and neglecting our self-care, we invite disease and choose to accept premature death. No one can force us to change or act on our behalf. Thus, the first of the Seven A's is to Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle, which is a matter of life and death.

Only you can choose to make a change and create better lifestyle habits in order to achieve your highest potential and perform at the top of your game. Ultimately, this is how you promote your Self to the CEO of your well-being.

Allocate Play and Recovery Time

It is up to us to make the lifestyle choices that lead to joy and creativity as part of our self-care. In our work lives, we often face an overload of decisions to make and fires to extinguish every day. Such heavy mental work taxes our reserves. In order to be a visionary CEO, we must reboot daily to function optimally.

We reboot through a combination of play and recovery, which constitutes the second of the Seven A's. These two overlapping, fundamental, and interrelated activities give our brains a break, a change to recharge and reset.

Avoid Unnecessary Stress

When it comes to leaders from small startups to executives at large global companies, the same story is true for everyone. Managing stress is a daily reality. Decision-making is constant. You wear many hats, each with its own pressures and responsibilities. What happens when your clarity and creativity, your ability to make good decisions, become blocked by stress? You learn how to tap into good stress and avoid bad, unnecessary stress by using the ACE method—embracing Acute Stress, which is necessary stress; avoiding Chronic Stress, which is dangerous; and seeking Eustress, or desirable stress that involves being in the zone and experiencing a state of flow.

Alter the Situation

When something needs to change, there is no point in being professionally ambitious if you cannot be energized by the challenges such ambition brings or if you cannot enjoy the journey. When you make changes to improve your well-being in a holistic way, powerful transformations can occur in your life and career. If a situation isn't serving you, take control for yourself and change your story.

Adapt to the Stressor

Flexibility and adaptability in our thoughts and behaviors build our resilience reserves, enabling us to thrive. When faced with the unknown, if we cannot avoid or alter our situation, we have no choice but to adapt.

Accept What You Cannot Change

Every minute that we attempt to control the uncontrollable is a minute wasted. Learning to accept what we cannot change is a step toward gaining peace of mind. Acceptance is recognizing what has occurred and then responding appropriately. We cannot control the past, the future, or

other people. Accepting what we cannot change is a crucial strategy in managing stress and building resilience. It also frees our energy to be creative and productive.

Attend to Connection with Self, Others, World, and Universe

In order to live an authentic life and to see change in the world, you must attend to your connections with your higher, true Self first. Then, move outward to others, the world, and the universe. Expand your mind and your heart by attending to these connections in order to improve the quality of your life.

Promote Yourself to the CEO of Your Well-Being: The Three P's

So far, we've explored how mindfulness is the bedrock of well-being and presented the Seven A's, tools and strategies for living a healthy, happy, connected life. Now we'll delve deeper into purposeful growth and introduce the Three P's: pain, prana, and purpose. These represent powerful dynamics that can lead you to achieve your fullest potential and evolve into the best version of your Self.

Scattered across the map of life are experiences of pain. Pain can be physical or emotional, and it can stem from both personal and professional life. A business or organization can experience pain as well. Pain is a universal experience, but suffering is a choice. If we choose to reframe our pain, it can serve as our greatest teacher and as a catalyst for growth. We can take pain and turn it into drive, and then use that drive to change our life (or our business) for the better.

The pain of growth leads us to realize the significance of life, breath, our vital energy, and flowing prana. When we tap into our vital energy, our prana, we can tackle the pain of growth and emerge from challenging situations stronger than before. The mindful choices represented by the Seven A's help unblock our prana, which promotes healing. Our goal is to achieve a prana flow state that enables us to attain and sustain peak performance.

Then, when this vital energy is aligned with a higher purpose, it animates our life and gives it meaning. We experience the best version of our Self. When we realize our purpose, we have more than a job, more than a career. We have a mission in life.

Ultimately, when we put everything together, we become a Mindful MAP Maker. The acronym MAP stands for master

mindfulness, apply the Seven A's, and promote your Self to the CEO of your well-being, and it represents adopting a holistic approach to life. In practice, this means we see the big picture and take empowered and aligned action to create the life we desire. Charting a life purpose is akin to mapmaking: we connect the dots of the past to lead to our desired future, creating a coherent and meaningful narrative that shapes our story and destiny. A Mindful MAP Maker designs and pursues a life of purpose.

This begins by asking: What is important to you? Is it to lead by example? To have a competitive edge? To be respected? To love and be loved? To be happy? To have a sense of belonging? To make a dent in the universe? To make the best decisions for your family, friends, colleagues, and employees?

You can only work toward your goals effectively if you are the CEO of your well-being. In order to promote yourself to CEO of your well-being, you must allow pain to teach you, optimize your prana to a higher purpose, and become a Mindful MAP Maker. When we settle for something less than the best version of our Self, we are like a middle manager—competent perhaps, maybe successful and reliable, but with the potential to be much more.

Through the journey in this book, you can learn to live a healthy and successful life that does not sacrifice self-care or connection with family and friends. Life is an integrated whole, a single ecosystem. You can have it all if you're ready to take the next big step.

Pain, Our Greatest Teacher for Growth

Pain, at its worst, invades and paralyzes us, making us vulnerable to chronic stress and disease. At its best, pain

is our greatest teacher and prompts growth and resilience. Pain is a tool in promoting our Self and bringing us closer to becoming the CEO of our well-being. Turn an obstacle into an opportunity by being curious and uncovering the upside of the situation. There is no such thing as 'failure,' only experience that provides us with the feedback, insight, and wisdom to steer us back on course and evolve.

Prana, Our Energy to Be Fully Engaged at Work and in Life

Prana is the Sanskrit word for breath and life force. It is the universal principle of vital energy and defines our lives and well-being and is the very essence that keeps us alive and thriving. Tapping into the prana flow state is when you effortlessly achieve peak performance and access your highest potential. The key to activating your prana flow state lies at the intersection of action and awareness.

Purpose, Our Drive for Meaning

Self-esteem and self-actualization are at the peak of the pyramid of human need, and they are the needs most often ignored. While we can survive without them, they are crucial if we are to thrive, innovate, and pursue our purpose.

Your purpose is about being human and humane—being good and doing good in a self-actualized way. Purpose is what fulfills us and helps others: a source of joy and healing that keeps us grounded and motivated as we navigate the physical world. It is our life's message or mission: what we wish to drive in the world.



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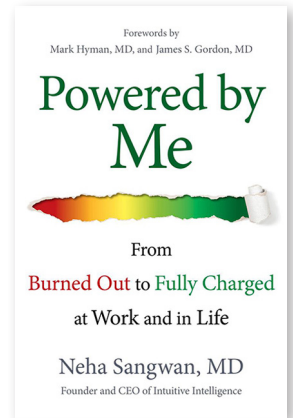


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From Burned Out to Fully Charged at Work and in Life

by **Neha Sangwan**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In your life, as new challenges arise, your energy will fluctuate and you may need to assess where you are on the spectrum from burned out to fully charged. To do this, you must be able to recognize and decipher important visible and invisible data to pinpoint where you're losing precious energy.

In *Powered by Me: From Burned Out to Fully Charged at Work and in Life*, author Neha Sangwan will guide you back to being fully charged with valuable lessons like: how to identify where you are experiencing a net gain or drain of energy, methods to decipher the early signals coming from your body so that you can change course, ways to overcome mind traps that drain you of energy, how to navigate challenging emotions by responding rather than reacting, recommendations for drawing healthy boundaries and prioritizing your self-care, and best practices to reconnect to meaning and purpose in your life.

When you heal burnout in a comprehensive and balanced way, you decrease your stress, build a foundation of self-care, strengthen your relationships, and most of all, save precious time and energy.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why burnout is a wake-up call and can be reversed by focusing on self-care.
- How our internal navigation system consists of body, mind, heart, relationships, and spirit.
- How to heal from burnout and develop a new relationship with our bodies.
- How to assess energy levels and strategies to recharge yourself on each level.

INTRODUCTION

We find ourselves in a world moving faster than most of us can keep up with. At the root of this epidemic are three simple phrases:

- Do more with less.
- Faster is better.
- Success requires struggle.

These beliefs have been the engine driving how we think, behave, and live.

Despite all we've accomplished with these efficiency-driving, money making measures, why do we feel so depleted and behind?

Burnout is not merely a case of working too hard or feeling physically exhausted for an extended period of time. And burnout is not a personal failure. Burnout is due to prolonged stress on multiple levels—not only physical but also mental, emotional, social, and spiritual—resulting in a net drain of energy on one or more levels. And over 75 percent of professionals experience burnout at some point in their careers

Burnout is a misalignment of our inner and outer worlds. It occurs when we ignore the invisible data such as our body's physical cues, our mind's conflicting thoughts, our heart's painful emotions, and our spirit's longing for purpose and meaning.

If you're burned out, your work, health, and relationships suffer. Your capacity to navigate challenging emotions, address conflict, or draw healthy boundaries diminishes.

To reverse burnout, we need a different kind of map—one that identifies and addresses burnout on the level(s) where it's happening and replenishes our energy with simple, powerful steps toward healing.

Each of us has a unique internal dashboard that integrates data from five main parts—the body, mind, heart, relationships, and spirit.

THE BASICS OF BURNOUT

1. Exhaustion
2. Cynicism
3. Ineffectiveness

Burnout doesn't happen overnight. It's a gradual process.

A Different Kind Of Prescription

Research published in MIT Sloan Management Review reported that during the Great Resignation, “toxic corporate culture” was the number one reason people left their jobs. If you find yourself casting blame on your employer, the government, capitalism, technology, or even the world, it naturally leads to feeling trapped and resentful. This outside-in approach has us disproportionately blaming our environments, and all that does is drain our energy.

When you use an inside-out approach, you take into account all factors, visible and invisible, to create more personal power. Don't be mistaken: resilience is NOT about enduring the adverse circumstances that you may find yourself in. Rather, it is about becoming empowered to take care of yourself.

Revealing where you are on the spectrum from burned out to fully charged can be determined by identifying where you're experiencing a net gain (+) or net drain (−) of energy on one or more of these five levels—physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual.

YOUR NAVIGATION SYSTEM

Each of us has a unique internal navigation system that integrates data from five main inputs: body, mind, heart, relationships, and spirit.

Your physical energy is governed by biological rhythms and has built-in feedback loops to alert you when your fuel is running low.

Your mind serves as the micro processing unit of your internal system, using logic to transform all incoming data—internal and external—into thoughts.

Your heart reveals your current coordinates—exactly where you are emotionally at the present moment. When you ignore challenging emotions, they don't go away.

Paying attention to your relationships determines whether you feel lonely and move deeper into burnout or experience a sense of connection and support that moves you toward healing.

Spiritual energy can serve as a source of faith and hope and can help you navigate a chaotic world with grace and ease.

Just like personal and professional stressors are deeply intertwined, so too are these five energy levels continuously influencing one another.

Developing a new relationship with your body will change everything.

PART I: PHYSICAL ENERGY

Too much stress for too long will ultimately undermine our physical health. Burnout can have long-term health consequences. Investing in feeling physically well has a ripple effect on every other aspect of your life.

When we're focused on the external data of everyone and everything around us, it's easy to miss the internal data of what's happening inside us. Recognizing and healing burnout depends on how attuned you are to interpreting your own physiology and responding to the data your body is sending.

The data from your body typically falls into one of three main categories:

1. Everyday guidance helps you navigate daily situations and changing environments.
2. Chronic depletion alerting you to a drain of energy and lack of alignment.
3. Emergency breakdown letting you know that something is seriously wrong and needs your immediate attention or medical support.

It's time to take a quick inventory of your physical energy.

If you've been feeling more depleted than usual, are having trouble sleeping or are unable to function at your normal pace, your hormones might be out of balance.

If you've been under prolonged stress at work or at home, you may feel as though, despite your time off on the weekends or on vacation, you can no longer recover.

Developing a new relationship with your body will change everything. It's time to ask yourself, are you pushing through your body or are you partnering with it? To heal burnout, you need regular practices that will recharge you and create a net gain of energy, helping your stress-fighting organs heal so they work for you not against you.

You can improve many of the physical symptoms of burnout by simply paying attention to your nutrition. How well we nourish our bodies affects us not only physically but also

on a mental, emotional, social, and spiritual level.

Sleep is not a frivolous activity or a nuisance. It's a non-negotiable step toward your health and healing. You will burn out without proper rest.

Routine and consistency are the key to developing good sleep habits. Set a wake time and bedtime that you can follow, and then stick to them.

While you sleep, you're doing three important functions:

1. Repairing your muscles and immune system
2. Consolidating your memory
3. Emotionally processing the experiences of the day

How do we get better sleep?

- Sunlight
- Exercise
- Caffeine Limits
- Nutrition
- Emotional processing
- Prepare your environment

At Nighttime:

- Reduce stimulation
- Avoid substances that interfere with sleep
- Set yourself up. Keep your bedroom dark or use a sleep mask. Use ear plugs.
- Ritual. A sleep routine is important for your physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

The Benefits of Movement

Research has shown that daily movement serves as a powerful brain and mood-booster, sleep-improver, and physical energy-enhancer.

What's important to remember is that there are three types of movement essential to long-term health and well-being:

1. Aerobic exercise strengthens the most important muscle in your body, your heart.
2. Resistance training builds strong and healthy muscles, bones, and joints.
3. Flexibility is important to stretch your muscles, increase your range of motion, and reduce injuries.

PART II: MENTAL ENERGY

We develop ways of thinking to adapt to and survive stressful situations. Becoming aware of our mental strategies and thought patterns allows us to assess if they are still serving us or just stressing us out.

You get to consciously choose your thoughts. A common culprit of losing mental energy is that we misinterpret data, are misled by assumptions, make judgments, and fail to get curious about what else the data could mean.

Get curious, not furious. Curiosity allows you to hit pause, gather more information about a situation or person, and expand your perspective.

There are three main thought patterns: personalization, projection, and generalization.

- Personalization is self-focused.
- Projection is other-focused.
- Generalization is about factors bigger than either party involved.

Once you understand how you form your thoughts, you'll be able to navigate any situation in your life with more confidence.

Feedback Is Your Friend

Many people would rather live in denial than face the emotional discomfort of receiving feedback. Avoiding feedback prevents us from growing, learning, and transforming our energy drains into energy gains.

In order to take personal accountability, it's important to acknowledge how others are perceiving us. Here's the key: whenever someone highlights a weakness, would you be able to receive it differently if you knew that a weakness is just a strength overused?

PART III: EMOTIONAL ENERGY

One of the most important aspects of emotions is that, no matter how uncomfortable or difficult they are, they can be simplified into one word. What makes emotions more complex is that they're tied to our physical sensations, such as muscle tightening, jaw clenching, or stomach turning.

Once you understand what's happening inside and can articulate it, you will gain a new level of confidence in your relationships. Emotions are important real-time data.

Knowing how to name emotions will also boost your confidence and clarity in decision-making, allowing you to communicate more effectively, and letting you connect more easily with others.

True resilience doesn't come from an emotion-free life; it comes from knowing how to surrender, experience them, and allow them to guide you.

Anxiety: Life in a Pressure Cooker

Who hasn't experienced anxiety? Maybe it starts with a little self doubt or fear and progresses into worry. It's one of the most common emotions motivating us to work too hard and go too fast.

Anxiety is important data that can help identify areas where we might feel less confident, highlight what matters to us, and protect us from upcoming surprises. This emotional state triggers the nervous system.

While anxiety can be useful, it can also undermine you, heightening your stress and draining you of energy.

Building self-trust is the path to healing anxiety. If you trust that whatever happens, you're resourceful and can figure out what to do next, you won't need to run endless loops of worst case scenarios in your mind.

Anger: When we Explode

When people think of burnout, they commonly think of exhaustion, depletion, and overuse. They don't realize that anger could also be depleting their energy. Anger is driven by fear, pain, or both.

Anger is not simply a challenging emotion—it's potentially life-threatening when left unchecked. Research shows that chronic anger is directly linked to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

Grace, compassion, and forgiveness are the way out and through anger.

How conscious are you about infusing joy into your days?

Release Anxiety and Anger

When you find yourself angry or anxious, practices that connect your body and heart can help unwind and disentangle these challenging emotions.

Stuck in Sadness, Depression, or Grief

If you are not just going to survive, but actually thrive in today's fast-paced environment, you must invest in building your resilience and increasing your capacity to process challenging emotions. It's natural to attempt to dull sadness and grief because they can consume us if we're not careful. The problem is that when we do this, we also snuff out our joy.

Disappointment is often situational. If you decide to address it, maybe all you need to do is breathe and allow yourself the time and space for it to clear. But if left unaddressed, it will likely grow or show up as a recurring pattern at work or at home, depleting you of even more emotional energy.

From disappointment, you can move into a deeper sense of melancholy. The most tangible step to address sadness may surprise you: let it out. When sadness goes on for too long—for six months or more—it's classified as depression. Suicidal thoughts are at the most extreme end of this spectrum. There is an urgent need to identify and deal with emotions before they lead to loss of life.

Grief is a deep and profound sense of loss that doesn't only follow death.

If you find that you are on the more extreme end of stuckness it's worth considering how trauma could be playing a role. Unhealed trauma is often at the root of underlying sadness and pain, and if we continue to run from that pain, we'll never solve the problem.

Jump-Starting Joy

How conscious are you about infusing joy into your days? We can get too caught up in our to-do lists, and then after crossing off the day's items, we need time to recover from everything we've done.

Humor is a powerful tool for healing and gaining energy and

can best be enjoyed with others. The feeling that someone finds the same circumstances funny, gets your jokes, and shares your sense of humor means that they understand you.

On your journey out of burnout, please take joy and fun seriously. Elevating your ability to feel joy is the result of living authentically.

PART IV: SOCIAL ENERGY

Social energy focuses on the exchange between you and others. You are still 100 percent in charge of your own energy levels. The reality is that whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, you are always interacting with other humans. It's simply a part of life.

There are four main work styles: Doers, Thinkers, Seers, and Feelers.

Most people exhibit some combination of these four styles. The truth is that we have varying levels of proficiency with each, but one is usually our strongest cornerstone—the one we naturally default to under stress.

When we don't appreciate diverse perspectives, it can work against us, creating stress for everyone involved. But when we value approaches different from our own, we can harness the gifts and vulnerabilities of each of us to get more done and in the best way possible.

Why Boundaries Matter

A lot of the time, burnout is about boundaries, or the lack thereof. You might be wondering where intentional boundary-setting might be most valuable to you. The answer is wherever you're losing energy.

Boundaries may seem selfish at first, but in fact, they help you care for yourself so that you can consistently be there for others.

Problems arise when boundaries are drawn too tightly and rigid or too loosely and porous.

Choices and Conflict

It takes bravery to lean into conflict. The reality is that you can't be courageous and comfortable at the same time. If you choose to lean into the discomfort now, you may feel uneasy initially, but after facing the reality of what's happening, you'll have the opportunity to create the best outcome for you.

On the other hand, if you avoid it now, it will likely grow bigger, eventually reaching a point of crisis where you're forced to face the impact of your earlier choices.

PART V: SPIRITUAL ENERGY

Strengthening spiritual energy comes down to the combination of identifying your highest values, believing in yourself to take risks, and making complex decisions based on what matters most

Although many people mistake burnout to be a sign of weakness or failure, it's not. Burnout is a wake-up call. It's often rooted in a breach that began on a spiritual level.

Strengthening Self Trust

As you learn to integrate different forms of data, both external and internal, to make effective decisions, you'll build self-trust. The more self-trust you develop, the greater your spiritual energy. Trusting yourself includes a deep certainty that when circumstances, events, or opportunities change, you can rely on yourself—and collaborate with others—to figure out what to do next. It's a surefire way to become even more me-powered.

Making Better Decisions

Rather than making decisions solely from the outside-in, what if you had a quick and effective way to assess what matters most to you? This five-step decision-making tool uses one question from each of the five energy levels to expand your perspective and integrate your body map, thoughts, emotions, and values to determine:

Spiritual Energy: Does this align with your highest values?

Physical Energy: Does this result in a net energy gain or drain?

Emotional Energy: What's the primary emotional driver that you're experiencing—fear or excitement?

Mental Energy: On what timeline will this opportunity impact you—immediately, short term, or long term?

Social Energy: What potential impact could this opportunity have on others in your world?

When you feel you're off track, take the time to reconnect to your highest values and you'll be heading back in the right direction.

Navigating Control and Change

Personal power is generated from within; it's me-powered. When personal power is solid, you're able to make quick, easy decisions and take inspired action.

The Power of Surrender

Realizing that you need to surrender is often the result of ongoing struggle. Surrender does not mean admitting defeat. Surrender is opening your eyes to the reality that there is another way—and most likely, a better way.

Becoming Me Powered: Five Levels

Level 1: Other-Powered

One hundred percent of your focus is external. This is the danger zone and the fast track to burnout!

Level 2: Me-Conflicted

You're focused on external data, but you're beginning to notice your internal cues. You still aren't prioritizing yourself, so internal conflict is likely your biggest source of energy drain.

Level 3: Me-Aware

You have an inspired practice of quieting your mind and listening to your body, heart, and spirit, and you may even tune in at a designated time. You're on the right track as you embark on the journey of self-care and have moments of clarity and integration.

Level 4: Me-Aligned

You're aware of when your body is talking and can recognize when something is off. You're well on the path to healing burnout and living an aligned life.

Level 5: Me-Powered

You know your highest values, make decisions based on them, and take action according to what you stand for. You're well equipped to navigate an ever-changing world.

Depending on where you are, what's happening in your life, and what roles you play, you may fluctuate among these

five levels. That's perfectly normal. Be kind to yourself. It would be nice if we all continuously lived on level 5, but let's be honest, we're human.

When you find yourself under pressure, it's more important that you recognize what level you're on, so that—with self-awareness and your me-powered toolkit—you can re-route and do a Take 2. This will enable you to integrate both external and internal data to realign with your highest values.

Trust your inner wisdom. It will guide you toward a purpose-filled life filled with love, joy, impact and meaning—the best destination of all.



Dr. Sangwan is the CEO and founder of Intuitive Intelligence, an engineer, physician, and communication expert empowering entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, and organizational teams to excel under pressure. She has pioneered comprehensive programs that combine the science of medicine with the art of communication to catalyze resilient and healing organizational cultures. Neha is the co-founder of the Conscious Business Leadership Academy (CBLA), a program for CEOs to learn and implement the principles of Conscious Capitalism in their organizations.

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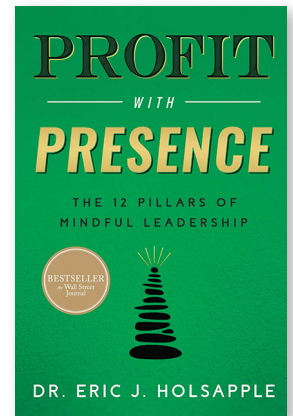
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Eric J. Holsapple

Profit With Presence

The Twelve Pillars of Mindfulness

by **Eric J. Holsapple**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In the world of mindfulness, money and profit can seem like the two pieces that simply won't fit into the puzzle. The truth, however, cannot be any different. By unlocking the deepest spiritual crevices of our inner selves, we stand to pave the path for our affluence and influence.

Humans have the ability to dwell in the realms of both duality and nonduality. *Profit with Presence: The Twelve Pillars of Mindfulness* unlocks how leaders can make a difference, make a profit, and live a life of purpose in the world of business. Throughout the book, we journey across a variety of frameworks and models that help bring positive transformations in both our inner and outer worlds.

Author Eric J. Holsapple distills twelve powerful laws that guide leaders toward achieving mindfulness and identifying their purpose in life. *Profit with Presence* lays out age-old mindfulness techniques that help manifest positive and lasting change both in our personal and professional lives.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to navigate the conceptual framework of presence and transformation.
- How to apply the twelve pillars of mindful leadership in your own life.
- How to identify your purpose in life.
- How to create affluence and influence using mindfulness.

Introduction

Practicing mindfulness isn't necessarily synonymous with giving up your material possessions and living a life of seclusion. Mindfulness is about connecting with your inner world and determining your purpose in life.

The application of mindfulness in business unlocks a positive influence on long-term profits, transforms the world for the better, and helps find solutions to the problems that plague our world today. Being guided by mindfulness helps you take back your focus, and make a real difference for yourself, your business, your family, your community, and the world.

Part 1: Conceptual Framework

At its core, presence is the state of existing, or being, and being present in the moment. Presence and spirituality reside in the world of "nonduality" whereas profit, material success, and science exist in the world of "duality."

What exists in the world of duality can be observed, studied, understood, and dissected. Whereas what exists in the world of nonduality can be true if you believe it. Think about it, consciousness, awareness, love, compassion, belief, and trust – all of these are true if you believe it.

The concepts of duality and nonduality are both important when it comes to leading a meaningful life, accomplishing things in the material world, and making a profit.

According to Rupert Spira's analogy, we are the movie screen of Presence, and our life experiences play out as the contents within the movie. In other words, our Presence (the movie screen) does not change regardless of the contents of our experience in the material world.

Physics defines transformation as an induced or spontaneous change of one element into another by a nuclear process. When it comes to mindfulness, transformation is a change from being primarily identified with thought, form, and ego to being primarily identified with Presence or consciousness. A powerful combination of slow boils and transformational socks can help reach the peak of Presence.

Slow boils are everyday activities such as practicing Yoga, meditation, journaling, affirmations, and gratitude. These activities are simple, productive actions that, if repeated consistently over time, help make a massive difference in your performance in life. Also known as "the slight edge," slow boil actions can cut both ways. For example, if you

walk a mile each day, you're walking 365 miles a year which can make a massive difference in your health. Similarly, if you eat a doughnut every day for a year, you'll probably end up having a serious health condition.

Transformation shocks are more dramatic experiences compared to slow boils. They typically slow down the mind and open the window for a high level of Presence in a short period. Naturally, your first experience with Presence as the dominant way of being can come as a shock. You may not even recognize it other than the feeling of joy or spaciousness! There are a variety of ways to achieve transformational shocks including workshops that help create an experience devoid of time and space. The result? You're thrust directly into Presence and consciousness.

Bodies move at a ninety-degree angle to create a precession effect. In business, the precession effect means the side effects of an intentional action are often the main event. For instance, the precession effect of a cold call will probably be the receiver avoiding the salesperson. But genuine community service work with a nonprofit can generate valuable relationships with other leaders to create business partnerships. Precession effect can cut both ways and demands a deep understanding of the impact of your actions – both positive and negative.

Part 2: The Twelve Pillars of Mindful Leadership

Pillar 1: Be Present and Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present and aware of where we are and what we are doing in a nonjudgmental state. It boosts your health, happiness, social life, self-control, brain function, perspective, and productivity.

Controlling your breath is one of the most important parts of practicing mindfulness. Sit in a quiet place, with your spine erect, and notice your breath. Keep your eyes open with a softened gaze focused on the downward direction. Hold your breath for a count of 3, and count to 6 as you exhale. Repeat the pattern for several minutes each day.

You can also practice mindfulness less formally throughout the day by paying attention to your breath, taking short walks while being very conscious of your surroundings, focusing on your food and chewing it slowly, and so on. Aside from mindfulness, yoga, meditation, and mindful athletics are other ways to notice the inner energy body.

Pillar 2: Identify Your Purpose in Life

The primary biological purpose of every human being is survival. Once the purpose of survival is established, it's time to start searching for a higher purpose. Your life has an inner purpose and an outer purpose.

Inner purpose or the primary purpose is a state of being and an experience. Aside from biological and egotistical inner purpose, there is also spiritual and cross-cultural purpose. But how do you find your inner purpose? The answer lies in another question: how do you discover the awareness and presence of who you really are?

The outer purpose, on the other hand, is simply what you're doing in the moment. Inner and outer purposes must always be aligned so you can use your innate abilities and personal skills to make the most of your life. Use Presence as a tool to awaken your inner purpose and let your soul bind your inner and outer purposes.

Pillar 3: Create Clarity, Vision, Intention, Commitment, and Habits

The processes involved in the third pillar of mindful leadership are guided by the law of attraction. When it comes to manifesting anything you want in life, it is critical to create clarity, vision, intention, commitment, and habits. A lack of clarity can blur out our purpose, vision, what our culture has instilled in us, and so on. Through vision, you can make way for a new reality and start to put it into action. Intention is focused awareness that helps desire a specific outcome. Through commitment, you begin to take action and eventually construct habits. Once formed, habits strengthen your commitment.

Pillar 4: Success Is a Mindset of Be-Do-Have

You can have it all but the question is, will you be happy or satisfied? If not, what can you do to get there?

Start by understanding that success and happiness are states of being. Unfortunately, the do-have-be model of culture postpones being Present until we've accomplished everything on the list. Before everything on the list is accomplished, more things are put on the list. Replacing the do-have-be model with the be-do-have one, on the other hand, means that you separate your ways of being from results. In other words, the latter model paves the path for happiness, success, contentment, and so on. It puts you inside jobs that make you more successful. With the be-do-have model, you're happy now and the same happiness will increase your likelihood of success.

Never stop training your mind so you can always live in Presence while achieving your goals and vision. Foster a strong mindset that rests on being rich and having a life of abundance.

Pillar 5: Show Up, Take Action, and Detach from Results

Mindful leaders often ask themselves, "What can only I do?" They align their inner and outer purpose to assure motivation. They prioritize their duties with precision and detach themselves from results. Finally, they constantly train and practice to deliver their vision so they can be Present every single time.

Pillar 6: Be Responsible, Practice Nonjudgement and Compassion

Being responsible, practicing non-judgment, and having compassion are critical skills of a mindful leader. Through nonjudgement, leaders can start seeing people as people. Through compassion, they can stay connected rather than disconnected.

Pillar 7: Foster Relationships with Your Word and Listening

When it comes to being trusted and having influence, giving and keeping your word is key. Aside from being powerful speakers, leaders must also be deep and empathetic listeners to establish valuable relationships. Finally, having a forgiving nature is critical to clear away any negative energy.

Pillar 8: Be in Flow, Create Affluence, and Influence

The importance of being in the flow of optimal experience (or Presence) cannot be stressed enough. Always be in flow with people that are important to your being a mindful leader and anyone else that is important to your business. Manifest and create affluence to increase influence. As long as you're responsible, wealth and affluence can help create a lasting positive force.

Pillar 9: Be Grateful, Give Generously, and Serve

Grateful individuals feel alive and vital during the day. Being thankful helps them stay more connected to others. The best methods of practicing gratitude include making daily entries in a gratitude journal, remembering the bad (how much worse life might be than it is), using visual reminders such as positioning the words "give thanks" where you can see them, and watching your language. Abundance and

success naturally come to leaders who are grateful, give generously, and serve tirelessly.

Pillar 10: Acceptance Means to Stop Resisting and Complaining

Acceptance means to see reality, see things as they are and not as we wish them to be. It is about not complaining about anything, even to oneself. When what you resist persists, it's best to surrender and accept so you keep moving instead of falling into the loop of complaints and resistance.

Pillar 11: Take Everything Impersonally and Let Life Flow Through You

To be a mindful leader, it's important to take everything impersonally and know what others do is usually about themselves, not you. Remembering you are empty of separate existence and not as dense as you think you are helps you stop resisting "what is." It lets life flow through you.

Pillar 12: Beginner's Mind Means to Know Nothing Absolutely, and Be Curious

When you're in the first stages of practicing meditation, your mind will naturally run wild. Our minds have been like that most of our adult lives, we just haven't noticed.

Thoughts create a dualistic solution, whereas Presence is non-dualistic. By keeping a beginner's mind, you're putting yourself in a state of Presence. On the other hand, when you're an expert in something, you naturally begin to judge.

Knowing nothing is a term from Buddhism that simply means you know very little absolutely. You can spark curiosity only when you have the confidence to say, "I don't know" regularly. If you're willing to stay curious and ask questions, you'll learn faster and be more respected.

tion, shareholders, executives, and employees. It also means being grateful, giving generously, and serving others.

The tools of mindfulness available in the Twelve Pillars of Mindful Leadership help businesses transform into mindful corporations. Corporations that include mindfulness end up increasing their bottom line. When infusing your workplace with mindfulness, it's important to first achieve some stability in your personal practice. Next, offer mindfulness training that doesn't include formal meditation until you know when it's the right time to share it.

Conclusion

The world is largely a mystery. We know we exist, and that Presence, love, and compassion exist. Humans have the ability to evolve and manifest with Presence. At the same time, humans can maintain physical form and create Profit with Presence.

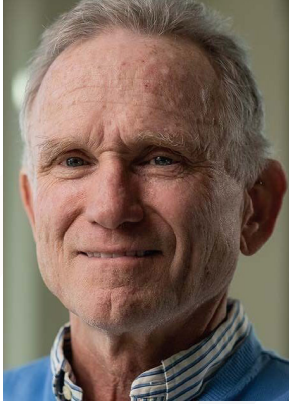
Business and creative destruction can be the melting pot for our perceived differences, and impetus for spreading mindfulness around the globe. But Presence must be discovered, cultivated, maintained, and nurtured, especially if you want to access it in everyday life.

We largely live in a story, either one that culture creates for us or that we create for ourselves. Establish presence as the inner purpose of your life. Practice mindfulness to unlock the possibility of life playing out as the most empowering story you create for it to be. Become the Soul captain of your ship and let Profit with Presence point you towards your dest

Part 3: Practicing Mindfulness In Your Business

Chapter 5: The Mindful CEO

A mindful CEO is not perfect, in a state of Presence 24/7, or has absolutely no material possessions. On the contrary, they are present and mindful and know their purpose. They reside in Presence regardless of what they're doing. To them, profits are important but not the purpose of their life or organization. They know how to take responsibility and are compassionate and nonjudgmental. Being a mindful leader means creating affluence for your family, organiza-



Eric J. Holsapple is a successful developer and entrepreneur with LC Real Estate Group, in Loveland, Colorado, who has used mindfulness to transform his life and business, and helps others to do the same. Eric has a PhD in economics, has been a real estate CEO and developer for nearly 40 years, has lectured in real estate at Colorado State University for 20 years, and has practiced Yoga and meditation for 30 years. Holsapple has a unique perspective on how merging business and mindfulness can be a catalyst in changing lives.

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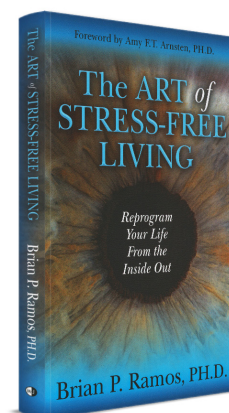
The Art of Stress-Free Living

Brian P. Ramos

The Art of Stress-Free Living

Reprogram Your Life From the Inside Out

by **Brian P. Ramos Ph.D.**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Our fast-paced lives often leave us feeling stressed, frazzled and out of control. Chronic exposure to stress alters our bodies and brains, ingraining unhealthy responses as primitive parts of our brains grow stronger. Luckily these effects can be reversed, and we can learn to reduce our response to stress. In his book, neurobiologist Dr. Brian Ramos offers to help us regain our sense of efficacy and joy in our lives.

The Art of Stress-Free Living is the product of the author's two-decade study into the art of conscious living and his desire to impart the 'secrets' he has learned, to inspire readers to live with laughter in their hearts, free of stress, anxiety, and chronic illness. He says, "I want you to learn how to tap into your own inner strength...to better cope, manage and conquer anything that may seem insurmountable at the start."

We can make our lives exactly what we wish them to be, discovering the Master Artist within each of us, so we can begin to paint the canvas of our lives with the colors of truth, love, health, happiness, beauty, radiance and creativity.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How stress alters our brains and bodies.
- To heal your temple through diet and mindful eating.
- About neutralizing stress and learning coping strategies.
- How to tap into your inner strength for self-healing.

What is Stress?

Stress is the silent killer of our generation. As we navigate through the world, our bodies constantly assess whether we are in danger, preparing a fight or flight response if our survival is at risk. Under normal circumstances, stress is an ally, mobilizing vital biological responses in a life-threatening situation. However, the majority of us live in protected, safe environments and we are rarely exposed to danger.

Long Term Response and Adaptation

We routinely activate our stress pathways due to pressures in our lives. An inability to relax in healthy ways keeps our bodies saturated with toxic levels of stress hormones, increasing our risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Close to 80 per cent of all doctor visits in the United States are related to stress.

Living in a State of Alarm

Living in a state of alarm all the time is very unhealthy to your mind and body. One example is a military lifestyle, especially during moments of war, where the alarm is on too often; you see many cases of psychiatric problems related to frontal lobe dysfunction.

Chronic Stress and Disease

Chronic stress decreases our disease resistance, increasing our risk of conditions including diabetes, heart disease and cancer – the slow and silent killers of our generation. Glucocorticoids, like cortisol, can act as immunosuppressors, making us more vulnerable to common ailments like cold and flu.

Healing Your Temple

How can we make meaningful progress toward mental and physical health when we are a nutrient and sleep deprived culture? If you do not take care of your body, how can you expect to enjoy freedom from chronic illnesses and aging? You can become relatively free from any physical ailment if you live, eat, and breathe in a healthier and more powerful way.

Mindful Eating

Your body is where your consciousness, who you are, resides. Thus, honor it and purify it with the right food. Mindful eating can help you rediscover a healthy relationship with food. It brings you to full awareness of what you are experiencing while eating and drinking, reducing the

chance of overeating and increasing your enjoyment of what you eat. You should observe your food closely, taking your time to savor its rich textures and flavors.

Neutralizing Stress

You are the architect of your body. You choose how your body develops, adapts and changes over time. Life changes often require adaptation and thus can be stressful. Even trivial obstacles can become bigger problems if not handled with perspective and balance. Change is a part of life, and you must remain adaptable and flexible for success in managing stress.

Working with the Breath

Your breath can be your ally to help bring you back to the present, stabilize and calm your mind, and reduce agitation. Your breath reflects your inner world. Observing your breath can tune you into the current state of your body and mind. Breath control can be a valuable tool during times of stress: you can slow down your breath and extend the exhale to reduce the feelings of anxiety or panic.

Walking with Mindfulness

When you breathe in, you take one step, and when you breathe out, you take another step, going as slowly as possible. Be aware of the movement and how it feels in the joints and the contact between the soles of your feet and the ground. Think with one step: “I am present,” and with the next step: “I am here.” Ground yourself with each step and imagine you are forging a new path, a new destiny for yourself.

Self-Healing

People who take charge and begin a mind-body program end up being more resilient and, on average, use 43% fewer medical services than the year before. Massage decreases levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, and increases the levels of serotonin and dopamine, to help elevate mood and enhance motivation and pleasure. Your hands can be powerful sources of healing and vital energy.

Yoga and Guided Meditation

Modern life is driven by power, activity and a sense of accomplishment. If you listen to the natural, intuitive wisdom of your body and give it what it needs, this is often the opposite of what your mind craves. Yoga should be practiced with precision and pause. Poses should be held while focusing on the space between your eyebrows and the flow

Rather than cultivate the destructive and overwhelming energies of stress, build and maintain the energy of mindfulness to keep it working in your favor

of subtle energy through the body. Research has shown that guided meditation is the key to transformation and growth. If you do not take the time to just be and explore aspects of yourself that remain veiled, you are limiting your potential for growth and self-realization.

Working Overtime

We cannot let our work interfere with our ability to relate to our loved ones, sleep well, find time to exercise and take care of ourselves. We work mainly to make money, but it can also be a way to connect with the world, to do something meaningful. Integrating your spiritual and mindful practices into your workplace and in your daily activities can be very helpful to establish a routine of nurturance, self-care and growth.

Maintaining Awareness

Rather than cultivate the destructive and overwhelming energies of stress, build and maintain the energy of mindfulness to keep it working in your favor. Just as you practice mindful eating and mindful walking, you can challenge yourself to practice mindful working. Practice breathwork to de-stress in the middle of the day, allow yourself to recharge and refocus and create a reserve of energy that will help propel you along.

Relaxation and Sleep

Chronic stress induces a state of hyperarousal so that even when we do fall asleep, when we wake up, our mind starts racing. Sleep is crucial to reduce the levels of glucocorticoids, which can make it harder for you to fall asleep, and sleep disturbances can quickly become a problem, exacerbating other stress-related disorders, such as depression or anxiety.

Habits and Diet

Just think about how restful and deep your sleep was when you were a young child. What can you do to help yourself with insomnia? First, establish a regular routine, going to bed and waking at the same time each day, eating at regular times and avoiding napping. Create a ritual of relaxation

that prepares your nervous system for bed.

Sleep-Inducing Techniques

Regular practice of body scanning and meditation naturally enhances our ability to relax. Yoga inversions such as headstand, forearm stand or downward-facing dog can promote sleep. So-Ham meditation, with feet flat to the ground, and the repetition of “sooooo” during inhale and “hummmm” during exhale, can bring you to drowsiness.

Natural Remedies for Sleep

One of the first things to do to manage your elevated stress levels is to ensure you are receiving proper nutrition. Ayurvedic literature recommends tea containing cardamom, nutmeg and chamomile added to warm, non-dairy milk to promote sleep. Eating cherries can help reduce mental stress and fatigue, and tomato juice contains lycopene which promotes deeper quality sleep.

Finding Time to Love Yourself

Time has become one of the most common stressors we experience today. We think that overcoming time stress can be accomplished by doing more in less time. The antidote to this time dilemma is to invest more of your time on yourself, in non-doing. To discover real peace and break free from worries about time crunches, you must find inner stillness.

Be Present

Remind yourself that time is a product of your own consciousness. You do not have to be in a state of doing all the time. By working in the present and infusing it with joy and passion, we bring time almost to a near halt, making an hour seem like ten minutes. Doing more of what you enjoy will bring you more vitality and health.

Doing Your Duties Mindfully

One clear effect of stress is a feeling of pressure caused by having to fulfill a variety of roles. Balancing work and family can become an ordeal.

Overcoming Role Stress

To overcome role stress, work on being present in the roles you play and see the positivity in these roles. Often, we blame our roles for our feelings of anxiety, depression or discontent. Adaptability and mindfulness are key ingredients to restoring the balance of who you are. You may have to assume a variety of roles or personas but ground yourself in your True Self so as not to lose the stability that it can provide.

Unseen Forces

Our thoughts and words have power. When saturated with sincerity, conviction, faith and intuition, they can have a sublime effect. Excessive or idle talkativeness, gossip or untruths are harmful to your mind. Become a person who utters sincerity in your words. Find the calm inner voice that will guide you through difficult moments with tranquility and firm resolve.

Healing Your Consciousness

We should reduce the inner chatter of a monkey mind to bring clarity to what we do in the present and make us more focused. To tame your unruly mind, practice silence at least once a week, practice mantras daily, keep a thought journal, establish a meditation routine or join a wellness program.

To give your mind relief, minimize mental toxins, such as violent movies, news media, excessive noise or harmful relationships. During withdrawal of the senses, or pratyahara, you allow your consciousness to reach its natural state of emptiness, your mind calms down and inner thoughts arise in awareness.

Taking It to the Next Level

You have all the tools at your disposal to make significant changes in your habits, behaviors, outlook, health and relationships. You have willpower, concentration, reason, intuition, common sense and faith. In addition, you may already have people in your life willing to help you. Surround yourself with people who are role models in the areas you feel you are requiring growth.

Practice Makes Perfect

Develop a disciplined practice that includes meditation. Work on being present in the moment at all times. Integrate mantras or affirmations into your life, while driving, walking exercising, or doing the dishes. Cry if you feel like it, it is cleansing and can be an antidote to stress, hypertension and anger. Let go of judgements that keep you bound to a reduced version of yourself. Try to tune into your breath, as this will bring about a state of increased relaxation, calmness and stability.

Breaking Away from Stress

You deserve to be happier and enjoy the fruits of your labor with a crystal-clear mind, a healthy body and many loving relationships. Let's work together to make you free of stress and all its complications.

To make headway in conquering stress and gaining greater freedom and joy, you must keep practicing. Keep pushing forward with resolve and confidence. Smile and laugh more. Practice being free in the present. You can do this.



Dr. Brian P. Ramos earned his bachelor's degree in clinical microbiology from the University of Puerto Rico - Mayaguez in 1999 before obtaining his Ph.D. in Neurobiology from Yale University in 2005. Dr. Ramos is the author of numerous publications in the area of neuroscience and molecular psychiatry. He has been the President and owner of Miami Healthy You Vending since 2016 as part of an effort to bring more wellness options to corporations looking to improve the mental and physical health of their employees.

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The Ideal Life

Mark R. Congdon



Executive Book Summaries®

The Ideal Life

7 Steps to Harness Your Stress, Discover Your Purpose, and Achieve Your Goals

by **Mark R. Congdon**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Can we truly be happy once we get what we want? Unfortunately, no. The fact is, once we achieve something, our inner reward system shuts down – unless there are more goals queued up. Instead of chasing the fictional ideal of happiness, why not embrace and harness the power of our human nature toward meaningful action?

The book *The Ideal Life: 7 Steps to Harness Your Stress, Discover Your Purpose, and Achieve Your Goals* blends powerful scientific insights with actionable frameworks to help us gain control of our lives. From defining our Ideals to laying out immediate goals, we learn to build our very own I GOT This framework for living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Author Mark R. Congdon offers a set of powerful tools and principles to help us not just build multiple layers of goals but also achieve them. His strategies help us decode our inner reward system, so we develop a growth mindset, discover our purpose, harness our stress and anxiety for positive outcomes, and ultimately achieve our goals.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to clearly define your goals.
- How to harness stress toward meaningful outcomes.
- How to make happiness a habit.
- How to build a solid I GOT This framework to achieve our goals.

Introduction

There is a lie that we all tell ourselves: happiness can only come from achieving our goals and getting what we want.

The problem with this approach is that it doesn't work. Whether it's going through a midlife crisis or just trying to make it through another day, we all are haunted by that same question: what's next? Why? Because we're human, and humans are designed to feel stress. The fact that we regularly experience stress is not the problem – our bodies are made for that. The problem is that our modern minds often can't make sense of how that stressful energy is serving a purpose. For our early ancestors, that purpose was survival. These same survival instincts are still triggered today, but we aren't usually faced with the physical enemy to fight or predator to flee. All of the chemicals that are released to get our muscles moving are instead left to linger in our bloodstream, resulting in meaningless anxiety and a wide range of negative impacts on our health.

Fortunately, we can learn to harness our stress and repurpose it toward an even greater meaning than that of our evolutionary design. In this book, you will learn how the psychology of your mind can empower you to not just survive but to thrive by using the I GOT This framework, which is an acronym for Ideal, Goal, Objectives, and Tasks. It begins with the best-case, future scenario of an ideal life, and then backs into the present through a carefully crafted sequence of goals. By breaking the framework down into seven simple steps that can be repeated over and over again, you can consistently apply this framework and experience sustainable results.

Chapter 1: Into the Ideal

In this chapter, I'll set the stage for the seven steps of the I GOT This framework by providing an argument for how stress can be harnessed to create happiness and why this process inevitably leads to joy.

The complex feelings associated with joy are generated by a surprisingly small number of chemicals that create all of the emotions of the human experience: Dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins. These chemicals are released to reward us for both the pursuit and achievement of goals and make us feel motivated, connected, fulfilled, and blissful. On the other side of the equation is cortisol, which manages our stress response. Cortisol can give us a boost of focused energy when it is controlled, but it is also the source of chronic anxiety when allowed to run rampant.

Joyful living involves being aware of life's emotions, both pleasure and pain, and learning how to balance the chemicals of our internal design by connecting both the high times and the low to the same focal point of purpose. Now, the reason why your focus on purpose can generate joy is because of the way goals help our brains make sense of life. The world is a chaotic place, and our brains do not like chaos.

Goals are how our brains create order. When we quickly filter out the things that don't matter, then we can make better decisions about what to do next. We do this through an internal hierarchy of goals, at the top of which is an ideal outcome for our life that represents the type of person we wish to become. In the I GOT This framework, the "Ideal" represents this top-level goal. The Goals, Objectives, and Tasks of the framework represent the long-, medium-, and short-term goals that can be connected to the ideal through a step-by-step process designed to establish alignment and create the inner order your brain craves. Each of the following chapters in this book is dedicated to one of the framework's seven steps that lead to this alignment.

Chapter 2: Step 1: Identify Your Master Goal

Whenever humans experience something really great, like a vacation or accomplishing a major goal, there is often a comedown that overshadows the positive mood that we just experienced. The reason for this is dopamine, which is released to reward us when we achieve something important or experience something new. But once those rewards are received, the dopamine stops flowing, and we feel the negative effects of that crash.

When we place all our focus on goal achievements or major life milestones, we risk falling into this dopamine trap. The bigger the reward, the bigger the potential for a letdown. The more we identify with goal achievement, the more we experience our post-achievement crash, and the higher the likelihood that we will develop anxiety and depression. No matter how fully we fill our days, there still seems to be something missing, and the same question haunts our souls: what's next?

So, what's the solution? No, we don't need to give up on our goals, we just need to make sure we don't run out of them. The solution is to choose a "master goal" so far in the future, and so difficult to accomplish, that you'll never actually achieve it. This is what I call the Ideal because it represents the best possible version of yourself, one you can never fully

Our goals play an important role in joyful living because they can translate the abstract Ideal into a specific path of pursuit. . .

realize but that you can spend your entire life pursuing.

The exercise that first helped me to identify my personal Ideal was the “funeral exercise,” found in Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* which helps to connect the reader to the version of themselves they wish to become before they die. Why does this work? Because thinking about who we will be there at the moment of our death instinctively creates an image of the type of person we wish to become before we die.

Think about how you would want people to talk about the way you lived at the end of your life. Write as much as you can think of in 10 minutes, and then circle any themes you recognize. Consider your Ideal to be like a North Star that would guide your life: your Mantra, Mission Statement, Core Values, and Vision Statement. Your Ideal could be written as a paragraph or just a sentence. You can either use the exercises at The Ideal Life to come up with an Ideal or create one on your own.

Chapter 3: Step 2: Visualize (but Don’t Fantasize)

The next three levels of the I GOT This framework – Steps 2 through 4 – are all part of the “Goals” element of the framework. Even though every element is technically its own type of goal, these three steps – which include Dream Goals, Horizon Goals, and Milestone Goals – are given the designation of “Goal” because they represent the types of outcomes that we generally think of when we consider what we want to accomplish in our life.

Our goals play an important role in joyful living because they can translate the abstract Ideal into a specific path of pursuit, and they also provide a measurement of forward progress as they are accomplished. By better understanding how the brain uses its goals in the pursuit of the Ideal, you can harness their power without allowing them to control your life. This is easier said than done, however, and the journey toward the Ideal can be a precarious path. Before we dive into Dream Goals, then, I’ll explain how the I

GOT This framework is carefully crafted to help you master the art of goal setting.

If you have ever read a book on goal setting or participated in a goal-setting workshop at work or school, odds are that you have run into the SMART acronym – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. It is by far the most widely used method for constructing an effective goal. But setting a SMART goal from scratch tends to create a resistance in people that ends up preventing them from taking action altogether. That’s because the natural inclination of the human brain is to find the easiest way of doing things to conserve energy. Rather than fight this resistance, the I GOT This framework embraces it through an incremental progression through each of the SMART elements as you move from the abstract Ideal down into the ordered structure of the Task.

The Ideal, which was introduced in Chapter 2, is Relevant, meaning that it is connected to the subconscious vision that you have for your life. However, it lacks Specificity and an effective method of Measurement, is not Achievable, and as such has no clear Timeline of completion.

The Dream Goal, which will be the focus of this chapter, is a long-term goal for your life that is technically possible to achieve but not necessarily likely to happen. Because the Ideal helps craft Dream Goals, they are inherently Relevant to your personal purpose, and they also add in another element of the SMART criteria by being Specific. This allows them to move your Ideal down the funnel of an inner goal hierarchy.

The solution to converting dreams into action is through a process called mental contrasting. The framework for this is WOOP: Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan. First, you allow yourself the freedom to indulge in the daydream of what you Wish will come true in your life. Then, you add specificity to that wish by carefully detailing the actual Outcome you want to occur. After that you list out the Obstacles that you are likely to face, and then finally you make a Plan for how you will deal with those challenges.

Write down a “bucket list” of major goals that you would

like to accomplish in your lifetime. Have fun with it— there is nothing too big for this list! Choose one of these dreams and create a vision board made up of pictures that help visualize turning that dream into a reality. You can draw these images yourself or print them from the internet. Now, mentally contrast that positive visualization by journaling about all of the challenges currently holding you back from pursuing this dream. Finally, think about a plan for overcoming one of these challenges.

Chapter 4: Step 3: Outline the Story of Your Life

The third step in the I GOT This framework is to map out a set of medium-term outcomes that establish a path forward toward the long-term destination of a corresponding dream. These are called Horizon Goals in the I GOT This framework, and they add a level of Achievability to the Dream Goal because you are confident that you will accomplish them (you just don't know when). They are Specific, Achievable, and Relevant to one of your Dream Goals, but you do not need to consistently measure your progress or commit to a definitive date.

Horizon Goals provide just enough detail to provide direction but are still far enough away where we can't focus on the details. This allows us to benefit from the energy of the goal pursuit without feeling the stress of confronting our failures. An example of a Horizon Goal might be to run a half-marathon when you are still just training for a 5K, to get a promotion even though you just got hired,

I have found that I am best able to identify a Horizon Goal by starting with one Dream Goal and then working my way backward to establish its potential path of achievement. At each step I ask myself, what would I need to have done first to achieve this goal until eventually I get to something that meets the criteria for a Horizon Goal (in other words, I am confident I could eventually achieve it)?

When outlining the story of your life, you can begin by defining your life roles and then establishing a clear path of goals within each one. Based on my research into the psychological study of human motivation, I have identified seven universal life roles – based on four fundamental human needs (the Four Cs) – that you can use to categorize how you will pursue your Ideal. Here's how the Four Cs align with seven universal life roles:

- Work and wealth: The roles for Control.

- Family and community: The roles for Connection.
- Health and wisdom: The roles for Competence.
- Faith: The role for Clarity.

Identify at least one specific role that you play within each category. If you can think of more than one, list all that come to mind. Select the role that you feel you have focused on the least over the past three months. Using the “bucket list” that you came up with in Step 2, choose one Dream Goal that relates to this life role. Using that Dream Goal, write down a list of three to four steps that would need to occur before that dream could become a reality.

Chapter 5: Step 4: Find the Sweet Spot of Success (Milestone Goals)

Now it is time to use that Horizon to set a Milestone Goal that you can begin working toward immediately. The Milestone Goal represents the successful outcome that you can achieve right now (losing weight, for example). These goals are Specific, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. If you have taken the time to properly align your next major goal with longer-term stepping stones that lead to a personal vision of a fulfilled life, then you will be rewarded with the joy of feeling you are on the right path.

Chapter 6: Step 5: Control the Controllables

In Steps 5 and 6, I will introduce the next two levels of the I GOT This Framework – Objectives and Tasks. Objectives are short-term outcomes that will put you in the position to achieve the Milestone Goal, and Tasks are the baby steps that lead to the habit formation that will make these outcomes possible. You can think of them as levers you can count on to provide a consistent reward whenever you make the effort to push on them, just like the pigeons who learned how to control their access to the food pellets.

Along with Tasks, which we will look at in the next chapter, Objectives also fulfill all the criteria of a SMART goal – they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. The important part of this step is breaking a goal down into smaller chunks and making sure that their outcomes are fully within your control.

Stephen R. Covey describes in his book how all the issues in the world that we are aware of, along with all our personal

... happiness is not an outcome. It is a habit.

goals, can be placed inside a “Circle of Concern.” Within that circle is a smaller circle encapsulating the things that we can actually influence through our actions; this is our “Circle of Influence.”

The gap that exists between our Circle of Influence and our Circle of Concern is the source of our anxieties; when we worry about something without being able to change it, this leads to stress. If we can shrink that gap (either by enlarging the Circle of Influence through skill development or shrinking the Circle of Concern by choosing not to think about things outside our influence), then we will naturally become happier by reducing the amount of unnecessary stress in our life.

Using a Milestone Goal that you identified during Step 4, think of three controllable Objectives that would put you in a position to achieve that goal. For each of those Objectives, write down the skills you think you need to successfully accomplish it. Circle the skill that you are weakest in, and write down a plan that you can implement to improve that skill over the next few weeks.

Chapter 7: Step 6: Make Happiness a Habit

The Task represents the final piece in the path toward purpose. As you have learned by now, happiness is not an outcome. It is a habit. That’s why the element of the Task in the I GOT This framework is designed with the latest science of habit development in mind. Because the Task is connected directly to the Ideal through the path of Objectives, and Goals, your habits will become ingrained into the identity of the person you wish to become.

A Task is an activity that you can perform on a regular (preferably daily) basis. It meets all of the criteria of deliberate practice, over time, the deciding factor in performance was not natural ability but the consistent execution of deliberate practice. Think about a habit that you want to work on in your life. Over the next seven days, maintain a tracking system that clearly shows when you succeeded and

failed at keeping that habit. At the end of the week, look back at the failures that you recorded. On a scale of 1-10, notice any trends (e.g., the failures occurred at the same time of day, or when you were the same person) and write those trends down. Finally, make a plan for how you will prepare for those trends over the following week and track your results to notice any improvement.

Chapter 8: Step 7: Deliberately Flow

Now that you have put in the work of planning your goals, it is time to execute them. But first, it’s important to understand the result that occurs when you implement the I GOT This framework. I call this reward Deliberate Flow, and it is the key to maximizing the benefits of the framework in all areas of your life.

Deliberate flow is an explanation for how Anders Ericsson’s deliberate practice theory and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory connect. Both of these psychologists studied the psychology of success from their own lens of perspective. For Ericsson, it was about the stress of pushing beyond one’s current comfort zone through goal achievement. For Csikszentmihalyi, success was feeling happy and in control all the time. But when you look closely, there is a lot of overlap between their respective ideas.

First of all, deliberate practice and flow theory both share similar criteria. For example, they both have a clear path to goal achievement that requires specific tasks which demand both focus and feedback. The only area where they clearly diverge is in regard to one’s comfort zone: in deliberate practice you must get just outside of this zone, while in flow your aim is to toe the line of that boundary. Unfortunately, simply because of this one apparent contradiction, they both considered the other’s theories to be fundamentally flawed.

In order to visualize how deliberate flow works, we can use the “flow channel” that Csikszentmihalyi used to delineate when one enters and exits the experience of a flow state. As we saw in Step 5, the flow channel exists where challenge and capability meet. When our capabilities do not meet the requirements of a challenge, we will experience anxiety because we cannot

fully control the task at hand. It lies just outside of our Circle of Control, yet still inside the Circle of Influence – this is the channel where deliberate practice takes place.

Conclusion

At this point, we have covered all the steps of the I GOT This framework that require action on your part. To summarize, it all begins with the Ideal — a vision of the life you want to live and the person you wish to become. Then you set a long-term Dream Goal that brings focus to the Ideal, and a Horizon Goal that reveals the path it would take to get there. From then you set a short-term Milestone Goal and establish a set of controllable Objectives that would put you in a position to achieve success. Finally, you create the conditions required to deliberately practice a Task that will lead to a comfortable habit that complements the efforts required to complete the Objectives.

Regardless of where you are in your life, I hope that you are finishing this book with a renewed growth mindset in which you realize that you can control your inner joy. Don't be afraid to fail because failure is the path to improvement. Stress is inevitable, but the way in which we choose to harness that stress can be controlled. Never perfectly, but better and better every day. Take it one step at a time and get ready to be amazed at how far that will take you. You GOT This!



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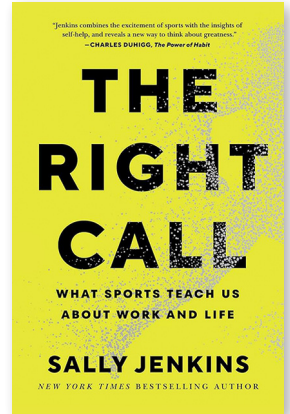
The Right Call

Sally Jenkins

The Right Call

What Sports Teach Us About Work and Life

by **Sally Jenkins**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

“Who can describe the athletic heart?” In *The Right Call: What Sports Teach Us About Work and Life*, author and sportswriter Sally Jenkins makes an effort to answer that challenge - to try to catalog the inner qualities that allow ordinary people to overcome pressures, elevate their performances, and find champion identities, even when they don’t always win. The skills of professional athletes and their coaches are not a matter of natural talent but attainment. Most important, their alertness and executive cool in critical moments is earned and learned. Which suggests that others can learn it, too, even those of us who test our limits at a desk. Champions are essentially the product of their own work.

Understanding the impact of conditioning, practice, discipline, candor, culture, failure, and intention can shed light on what makes a great leader and a cohesive and successful team. In reading, you may decide an athletic heart is worth acquiring for yourself.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The benefits of developing a deliberate practice routine.
- The importance of embracing a culture of candor and open communication.
- How learning from failures is an opportunity for growth.
- Why maintaining a strong intention and purpose for your work matters.

The Elements

How coaches and athletes act under the stresses of competition can show us how to become more skilled at enacting deliberate, intentional action in our own spheres. Elite performers are highly methodical in their processes, precisely because they deal in fluid situations. Consistent champions don't just drift through the circumstances of their day; everything they do is deliberate. A chief characteristic of the high performers in these pages, one identifiable personal quality they all possess, is this: they care more about the overall endeavor than their status.

These are the elements of a good process for anyone who wants to choose and act well in the face of extraordinary pressures:

- Conditioning
- Practice
- Discipline
- Candor
- Culture
- Failure
- Intention

Conditioning: The Body

Anyone who wants to be consistently excellent at their living must have a more-than-passing acquaintance with conditioning, even those who suppose they work purely above their necks. The tempo of demands in the twenty-first century have made conditioning a growing requirement—and a topic of inquiry—among great deciders in all realms.

The willingness to undergo hard conditioning—to marshal their physical and mental resources in an organized way to meet discomfort—is the difference maker between those who compete over a long career and those who flame out. It's what gives them professional resilience.

For twenty years, Michael Phelps swam for five miles a day, six and seven days a week, trawling through resistant liquid, staring at a black line on the pool bottom. Phelps swam on Sundays, and his birthdays. “Nobody else did that,” his coach Bob Bowman says. When Phelps's chest began to bloom with gold medals, outside observers attributed it to a genetic gift. But that missed the most important fact about Phelps, one with significance for all of us. “The thing that

made him great was the work,” Bowman observed.

Practice: The Mind

Practice differs from conditioning: it's strategic, informed, targeted work, usually under the evaluative eye of a teacher or coach. Though the two can have some overlap, conditioning is about broad development of capacities, whereas practice is about refinement of skills through diagnosis and rehearsal. The word “practice” evokes tedium, but it's really a matter of being interested in and willing to work at critical details.

So what constitutes the right kind of practice for a particular endeavor? First of all, your practice must have a purpose, a sure understanding of what the point of it is. Second, it should have measurable results.

The difference between elites and amateurs is that elites practice those things they are worst at and dislike the most, while the rest of us run around our backhands our whole lives, or live with a weak left hand, or avoid doing math.

Why does deliberate practice work so powerfully?

The brain is improvable. To learn to do anything, whether catch a pass or speak a language, awakens intricate sets of circuits involving motor function and visual-audio processes.

All elite coaches and playmakers concur on what constitutes good practice: it's purposeful, prioritized, detailed work that results in a measurable enrichment of skill. It's the only route to what might be called polish, in anything. Through it, good decision-making under pressure becomes smoother and faster, with less hesitation and more dependable results. It's the ultimate paradox: The end result of all that dirty, technical, tiresome rehearsal can be a surpassing grace. Maybe even magic.

“It was a perfect example of preparation to avoid feeling pressure,” Manning recalls about the “wet ball” practice drills he completed weekly for years. “Pressure would be to wake up in Miami for the Super Bowl and it's raining and you say, ‘Oh my gosh, it's going to be wet; I'm not sure I can get the snaps from Jeff.’ I left the field a lot of times saying I wish I could have had a play over again, or a series over again. But I never left the field saying that I thought I could have done more to get ready for the game. And that always gave me peace of mind at night.”

Discipline is the voluntary regulating of behavior that drives repetitive excellence.

Discipline: The Framework

Discipline is of course essential to good decision-making. Without it, a leader is left to sift through unreliable factors and behaviors in making choices, and the result is haphazardness, the quickest way to sabotage any endeavor.

With shared discipline, uniform standards are set. Consistent attitudes and practices make results easier to analyze and the wrong calls or weak links more detectable. All actions and their causes and effects become cleaner, and clearer.

But it's just as important to understand what discipline is not. Discipline is not petty militaristic enforcement. No full-grown professional happily accepts someone else's orders unless he or she lives in a barracks. Overflexing of authority is not discipline, and it fails.

Discipline is not obedience, enforcement, or punishment. Then what is it? One definition of discipline is that it's a form of self-rule. Discipline is the voluntary regulating of behavior that drives repetitive excellence. Successful performers develop strong personal and institutional habits that are like clockwork. Discipline therefore is not an imposed construct, but rather a fostered inner construct.

The flip side of the clarity bred by a disciplined leader is the distrust engendered by an inconsistent one. Leaders had better be an example of personal discipline themselves if they want their decisions to work.

Can you stay disciplined, even if it's uncomfortable, for just a minute longer? Most of us judge the worth of an activity by how it feels in the moment. But athletes judge the worth of an action by how they feel when they are done. This is a fundamental outlook anyone can borrow from, and you don't have to be former shortstop and Miami Marlins CEO Derek Jeter to practice it. The secret of successful deciders is that they train themselves into a higher tolerance for tedium, and in time their better habits begin to feel gratifying rather than denying.

Believe this: disciplined people are not average. They are determined to be above average. And maybe even alone at the top.

The ultimate misconception of discipline is that it is somehow inhibiting, the opposite of choice. In fact, discipline is liberating. "I don't want to be a manager or a dictator," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski reflected. "I want to be a leader—and leadership is ongoing, adjustable, flexible, and dynamic."

Candor: The Language

All endeavors essentially begin in dark waters. The vital first step for a good leader; then, is to spell things out, to "clarify and define the issues."

If you want to breed trust, you don't just tell someone what they did wrong; you tell them how to do it right. Great leaders never present a problem to the team or a player without also presenting that it can be solved. They stress the remedy or resolution.

A trove of business scholarship has been devoted to "LMX Theory," shorthand for "leader-member exchange." This is a scientific-sounding term for what otherwise might be called collegiality. Leaders who are expressive, who seek the input, understanding, and agreement of others in frank and welcoming exchanges, tend to see better results across the board.

A boss who "imposes" decisions, and who blocks out others because of ego or a need to consolidate power, is a lonely and ultimately blinkered, even fearful leader. Good deciders are searching conversationalists, who learn from their associates. Which in turn allows them to better manage everything from office politics to personal insecurities.

The language of leadership has four basic characteristics: it is illuminating, not obfuscating; it is well structured to prevent misunderstanding; it is trustworthy; and it is emotionally connective, expressive. You know it when you hear it. Great deciders communicate from honest centers with ears for others and tongues that avoid blame, and this allows them to form powerful alliances.

Hear the tone of honest and kind inquiry in Bonnie Stoll's exchanges with long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad. Listen to the fundamental self-effacement of basketball coach

Steve Kerr in crediting his most complicated player, Draymond Green, for teaching him how to be more attuned. Consider the plainspoken gallantry of Cowboy's Dak Prescott's acknowledgment of his issues, which only deepened his team's belief in his underlying strength.

Culture: The Environment

"Culture" is a word that can drive one crazy with its overuse and vagueness. What is culture, anyway? Its hazy usage results in any number of bumper sticker slogans on the walls of offices.

But what can be said with firm certainty is that it's about creating a healthy base atmosphere that nourishes success.

All of us have at least felt culture, even if we didn't know what it was, in an unhappy or toxic workplace. In a losing culture, operations are balky, and underlings mistrust the deciders and even work at cross-purposes with them. Cynicism is the language, bad habits the custom. So how exactly does a leader build a winning culture, in which people share high standards and give decisions credence?

"The values that are important to you have to come alive," Steve Kerr observes. "And that's how culture is defined."

What makes a culture strong and sustainable is the right match of materials, plans, and people.

Look anew at organizations with indelible cultures, both sports and non-sports, and notice how their leaders align every detail.

The New England Patriots complement Bill Belichick's "Do your job" mantra with their payroll strategy, filling the roster chock-full of effortful, undervalued, and workmanlike players.

The Golden State Warriors and their "Splash Brothers" mentality are the result of Steve Kerr's commitment to exuberant playfulness in all facets—down to crazy shots in the warm-ups.

Patagonia's "treat work as play" code has long been accompanied by founder Yvon Chouinard's convicted public environmentalism and willingness to hire adventurers over MBAs.

These are just a few examples of organizations that have their purposes, sensibilities, and structures in well-arranged synchronicity.

That is culture.

Failure: The Teacher

Four inches. That was the margin by which the Chiefs had suffered one of the most anguishing failures in NFL history. The Chiefs could have been incensed at the pettiness of the officiating call. Or they could have blamed defender Dee Ford for the loss.

But head coach Andy Reid took a different tone. He told the team, "We all could have been four inches better. We've got to move forward." For the next year, Reid made "four inches" the Chiefs' mantra. Every day, they worked for a few millimeters of improvement. The result? A year later the Chiefs were the victors in the Super Bowl. Asked after the game to identify what quality had carried his squad to the title, Reid replied that everyone had simply decided to get "four inches better."

The question haunts every decision-maker: What if I fail? Consequences may be the single most hesitancy-inflicting factor faced by someone trying to make important choices. Fear both is personally paralyzing and leads to organizational inertia.

But elite sports competitors have learned what an entire field of psychologists would love to be able to teach: how to persist professionally in the face of failure without losing your fundamental confidence.

Leaders who choose denial or blame shifting in the face of setbacks tend to stay stuck in failure mode. Show me a team that complains about officiating and I'll show you one that is likely to lose again next year, too.

In business, this cycle can sometimes lead to massive exposure. Paul C. Nutt cites the Firestone disaster of the 1990s as an example: Radial tires installed on popular Ford SUVs were separating and curling, causing the cars to veer all over the highways and in some cases flip.

At first, executives at both Firestone and Ford denied there was a major design issue and declined to do recalls, deeming it too expensive. After more than eleven hundred accidents, Congress convened hearings on the matter. In the end the cost was in the billions.

Good deciders ask: What was an avoidable mistake, and what was a reasonable or even acceptable failure? What was pure coincidence? Where was the competitor simply better? They recognize the uncertainties, pressures, and urgencies of the moment that affected the outcome.

Leaders who expect every decision to be a winner will wind up with teams that tend to freeze in “the clutch.”

Intolerance of failure leads to hesitancy. Leaders who expect every decision to be a winner will wind up with teams that tend to freeze in “the clutch.”

“Losing is only temporary and not all encompassing,” John Wooden said. “You must simply study it, learn from it, and try hard not to lose the same way. Then you must have the self-control to forget about it.”

According to a 2019 study, “Quantifying the Dynamics of Failure across Science, Startups and Security,” that appeared in *Nature*, successful tech start-ups had a method for making well-directed modifications to their initial failures.

The authors looked at failure data across forty-six years of ventures and concluded that the eventual succeeders had made “critical refinements to systematically advance towards success.”

Whereas those who repeatedly failed reacted in a disjointed, unorganized way. In short, great leaders fail with a more organized sense of purpose.

It’s counterintuitive, but chronically conservative decision-making can eventually force you into ever-more-uncomfortable risks.

What makes a worthy decision-maker is the ability to see the winning and the losing as deeply intertwined and equally valuable. This is what enables us to lose without losing heart. And continue on.

Intention: The Motive

At the age of forty-three, when any other football player his age would have limped into retirement to play bad golf with a steadily thickening middle, Tom Brady instead sought a second wind by leaving the only team he had ever played for, the New England Patriots, for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. It was a potentially cringe-worthy move that could have made him look like an overripe diva clinging to the spotlight too long.

That spring, in May of 2020, he took part in a charity golf exhibition match in Florida with Phil Mickelson, Tiger

Woods, and Peyton Manning. It was a meaningless affair on a balmy, palm-waving day in the middle of the off-season.

Yet a couple of hours before the event, broadcaster Charles Barkley spotted Brady running sprints in the parking lot of the golf club, pouring sweat in the tropical heat. “What the hell are you doing?” Barkley said incredulously. “I’m trying to win a Super Bowl,” Brady said.

When the most prominent figure at the very top of an organization is the most intentional person in it, the impact is pervasive. Intention is more than just a declarative statement of temporary purpose. It’s the conscious decision to work toward a self-crafted identity, to refuse to let events—or other people—decide who and what you will be.

His six Super Bowl rings gave him silent credibility, but it was his daily intentionality that was more important in fully seeding their belief. Before Brady’s arrival the Buccaneers had led the league in penalties in 2019. But now they became as tightly tucked in as a shirttail and wiped out two-thirds of those penalty flags.

The social psychologist Robert Hogan, a pioneer in using personality assessment to profile leaders, contends that we study leadership from exactly the wrong perspective. We tend to evaluate it—poorly—by looking at individuals who aggressively get to the top. When, in fact, we should evaluate potential leaders by asking those below them whether they find them worth working for.

People have to grant their cooperation for any idea to work, no matter how brilliant you are. And if they distrust your intentions, if they find you selfish or not genuine, they will withhold it.

Hogan therefore identifies good intentions as the most essential quality in any leader. “Credibility as a leader depends vitally on perceived integrity: keeping one’s word, fulfilling one’s promises, not playing favorites, and not taking advantage of one’s situation.”

The source of true power is not individual authority. The source of true power is buy-in.

The very best leaders don't tell people what to do. They ask them what they want to do together. They recognize that all anybody really wants from a leader, whether elite NFLers or laborers at their desks, is someone who works well with others in the room, who has expertise certainly, but who puts the enterprise first and creates the conditions for success.

Has there been a more effective modern corporate leader, with less jaw thrust, than Bob Iger of Disney? Initially, when Iger was named CEO in 2005, he seemed an unspectacular choice after years of steady service in the company.

A "loyal drone," one critic labeled him. A key shareholder insisted "there are stronger candidates out there." Iger's predecessor Michael Eisner damned him with faint praise as "not brilliantly creative."

So how did he become one of the most influential and transformative leaders in the entertainment industry? "The answer... lies in his discipline, his thoughtful and straightforward management style and a knack for forging trust with business partners," the *Los Angeles Times* wrote.

Epilogue: The Heart of Greatness

The elements we've explored—conditioning, practice, discipline, candor, culture, failure, and intention—these are at the root of acumen in any field, and they can give all of us, no matter our profession, the poised ability to think and choose more clearly.

Still, these principles have to be activated by a deeper purpose. If you don't care about your chosen profession, you're just ditch digging. All the achievers in these pages have found meaning in their work that animates them.

When people love their daily endeavor, they're the masters of themselves rather than prey to emotional turmoil and regret about what they're doing. That's important when circumstances seem overwhelming.

Sometimes there is no good choice, and sometimes the competition is simply better. What carries the best performers in those instances? Their love of the endeavor for its own sake—what it calls up of their effort, how it tests the integrity of their own internal judgments, and their willingness to be actors rather than spectators.



Sally Jenkins has been a columnist and feature writer for The Washington Post for more than twenty years. She was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2020 and in 2021 was named the winner of the Associated Press Red Smith Award for Outstanding Contributions to Sports Journalism. She is the author of twelve books of nonfiction including *The Real All Americans*, the story of the Carlisle Indian School and its use of football as a form of resistance following the close of the Indian Wars. In 2005, she was the first woman to be inducted into the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Hall of Fame.

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