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## Executive Book Summaries®

## 5 Gears

### How to Be Present and Productive When There Is Never Enough Time

#### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

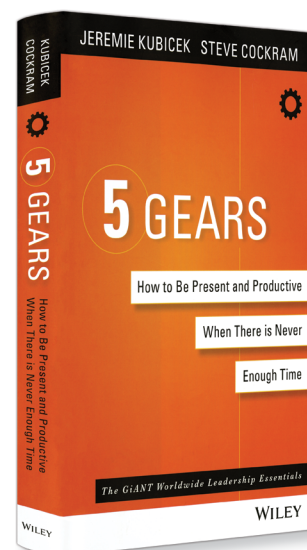
Would you like to be present and connect more effectively, all while being as productive as possible? *5 Gears: How to Be Present and Productive When There Is Never Enough Time* introduces you to the five different gears, or mindsets, that carry you through various facets of your day, and teaches you to shift into the right gear at the right time so that you can grow in your relational intelligence and increase your influence.

All too often people go through life without truly connecting and can, as a result, miss out on experiences and relationships that have the power to bring them great joy. By understanding how the five gears work, you can improve your ability to connect with the world around you; explore why some people stay disconnected from the people and events around them and why others always seem to have a deep connection to their friends, family and surroundings; learn how to set triggers and markers that help you shift into the right gears at the right time, which will increase your relational dynamics and make you more productive; create positive change in the dynamics of your relationships; and improve your respect and influence.

*5 Gears: How to Be Present and Productive When There Is Never Enough Time* is the perfect resource for anyone who wants to live and lead connected.

#### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The five gears and how to identify your dominant gears.
- How to shift gears and match them to the right time and place.
- To challenge yourself and create a plan to obtain greater connection and influence in your life and organization.



by Jeremie Kubicek  
and Steve Cockram

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: 5 GEARS

by Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram

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## SECTION I: CONNECTIVITY

### Driving Too Fast

It is not that we want to run people over, and yet we often do. We drive 50 mph in a 20 mph speed zone without being aware — consumed by schedules and agendas — and we run right over those we care about the most.

When someone feels the pressure of a deadline or fears the roar of a boss's voice, it is natural to shift focus to alleviating the immediate concern rather than focus on our long-term relationships. The urgent pressure trumps the important relationships most of the time, which tends to steal, kill and destroy our presence to those we are closest to most of the time.

People run over other people when they are not present or focused on the person or people they are with in the moment. This is where most influence is undermined as people get tired of getting run over. Eventually people move away from those who are not present to others who have more life and less drama.

People don't mean to run each other over, but the truth is that we can all have moments when we are in a different gear than the other person. Our minds can easily get stuck in work mode or kid stories or random thoughts, and we can, unknowingly, run others over with our chatter and self-absorption. Whether it is speaking at the wrong time, failing to listen to those speaking directly to us or ignoring the most obvious social hints, unawareness is pandemic.

It usually gets worse in the office environment. Some leaders become different people the moment they walk

into an office setting. For some they shift into the “dominator” mode as they bark orders, forget about an employee's birthday or send emails that would make their mother blush.

### Disconnections

This social behavior creates disconnections, which lead to the consequences of fighting, discord and an overall lack of harmony in relationships, both personally and professionally. All of these issues cost organizations and people as these disconnections breed drama and frustration.

Connectivity is about time, settings, people, places and motive. It is not as simple as being somewhere physically but is a combination of emotions, physical connection, spiritual cognizance and mental aptitude. This understanding is a practical view of improving the quality of our lives and leadership through the art and science of connectivity.

Connectivity is directly related to peace, productivity and personal happiness. When you connect deeply with someone, a peace of mind and sense of gratitude occurs. To have this type of connection, you must learn how to be still and present in the moment. ●

### Reality Check

So, let's get to your reality. Do people really know you? Would they say that you are normally present with them or constantly in your own world? It is time to get real and honest with your ability, or lack thereof, to connect with others, to be present with them and to be able to balance work and life in a meaningful way.

Before we get started here on a solution to help you connect more vibrantly with others and to increase your



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influence and your leadership abilities, explore a few of these powerful questions:

- What are your priorities? What are they in order? And are they what they should be?
- When do you tend to run people over?
- Is there a character issue in your life that is causing you to disconnect or disengage?
- Is there one relationship that needs to be made right?
- Where has your influence declined?
- What are you afraid of losing?
- Do people want to follow you or simply have to follow you?
- When do you start working? Do you wake up and begin to check your email as the very first thing?
- Do you recharge well at home?
- Do you get quality time with others?
- Would others say that you know them?
- What is the reality of your meetings?
- What is your demeanor when you come home?

Write down your thoughts. Talk to someone who knows you well about some of your answers. The goal here is to help you get to your reality, see yourself in a mirror and begin to increase your influence on those you lead. By doing so you may have just started the process of reconciliation or personal peace, or you may see an uptick in productivity as you address the issues that make your realities unsustainable. ●

### SECTION II: 5 GEARS FOR PRACTICAL CONNECTION

## Getting in Gear

Driving is difficult, with all of the inputs and decisions that need to be made. The same goes with leadership. Communicating a vision, managing people, dealing with issues, all as you try to stay focused on your own personal tasks and goals can be quite difficult. Leading well is similar to driving well.

There are parallels with shifting gears in a car and the rhythms and routines of our lives: There is a right order and a right time for each gear. Conversely, there is also a wrong gear for the wrong time.

1st gear is meant to lead to 2nd and so forth. Each gear has a purpose, and if you understand that purpose and apply this driving analogy to the way you “drive” your life, aligning the right gear with the right speed and situation of your day will allow you to have a smooth journey.

With our metaphor, each gear represents a different mode of connecting through living, leading, working and resting. To lead yourself well and connect appropriately in your relationships, your day needs to begin in 1st gear, after which you shift up into other gears. You can go from 1st gear to 5th in life, but it is not recommended, and the consequences can be damaging, just like with your car. You can also go from 3rd gear to reverse, but just because you can does not mean you should, considering cause and downstream effect.

The best drivers understand when to shift and when not to. The same is true with the best leaders. They understand the gears:

- 1st gear represents being fully recharged.
- 2nd gear represents connecting with family, friends or colleagues.
- 3rd gear is the social gear.
- 4th gear is the task gear that allows us to work hard while also multitasking.
- 5th gear is focus mode that allows us to “get in the zone” without interruption.
- Reverse is the responsive gear. It is used when we need to back up and start again or apologize.

If you understand how to drive your life with these gears, you will unlock depths of connection and influence in your relationships that you never knew existed.

In our culture, most adults suffer from one or two of three connectivity problems:

- They rarely understand which gear they are operating in at any given moment.
- They rarely know what gear the other people in their life are operating in.
- They rarely take the time to practice shifting and operating in each gear.

This combined lack of awareness and practice explains why we have so many people suffering from the realities of workaholism, social awkwardness, rude commentary and a rash of disconnection within families, spousal relationships, boards and teams. ●

## 5th Gear — In the Zone

5th gear is focus mode. It is the gear where the ability to hyperfocus and experience the flow of your work becoming something productive is key. To someone watching you operate in 5th gear, you might appear to be in a trance, completely unaware of noises, voices and the normal distractions that might cause others less focused to

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shift their attention. When people get into 5th gear, they tend to not need anything other than their work.

A car's engine will tell you when it's time to shift gears — so, too, does your work. It simply takes discipline to shut the door, turn off your email and let people know that you are shifting into 5th gear — going into overdrive. When you reach this gear, your productivity reaches the highest levels possible.

Here are some points that will help you understand the correlation of overdrive to your personal 5th gear.

- A healthy 5th gear makes it possible to cruise at a sustained speed for a period of time.
- Because 5th gear occurs mostly when we are either passionate about our work or simply competent at it, our engine speed is actually lower, while our sustained speed can be quite fast. Therefore, less energy is needed to produce quality or high speeds. Focus can lead to high levels of productivity.
- 5th gear can produce great results and high speeds for a period of time. However, people (similar to engines) are not meant to stay in 5th gear all day long.

For executive leaders, 5th gear can be seen as the strategy gear, when you are working on the business and thinking in the long-term strategic planning zone. This might include dreaming, vision casting, exploring ideas or thinking of major changes in life, work or business.

### Stuck in 5th Gear

5th gear is helpful, but it can also be damaging. Certain personality types so love this gear that they begin to crave it, longing to escape into their own little world. The problem, though, is the disconnect that results from being in overdrive too much or for too long. Eventually, tensions arise for those relying on the 5th gear enthusiast — the team members who need their communication, the boss awaiting a report or even the family waiting at home.

5th gear can create tunnel vision for people, causing them to miss opportunities to connect with others, learn something new or simply encourage someone in their life. ●

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## 4th Gear — Leading in a Task World

Eighty-five percent of the time, leaders are in 4th gear. It's no wonder. We live in a task-driven, task-dominated world. To-do lists, task sheets and productivity tools flood the market as adults are trying to get organized, stay organized and become as proficient as possible in their world.

This desire for productivity from individuals, bosses and organizations leads to a tendency to move from one task to the next, checking things off throughout the day without slowing down much, if at all. And so we move in a given day from phone calls to meetings to emails to meetings to calls to texts and maybe some project work before we head home. That is a normal day for the majority of people in the marketplace.

Task-mindedness can become a habit or, rather, a way of life. People can become so married to their to-do lists that the daily tasks begin to control our lives. Do you normally check your email when you first wake up? Do you catch yourself just needing to “catch up on the day” really fast before getting in the shower or getting dressed? Jumping directly into 4th gear is like trying to pull out of your garage and shifting from reverse directly to 4th — it is virtually impossible. We need to start our days in the right gear, and 4th gear is simply not it.

If you have ever left work feeling tired and wired at the same time, it may not be the coffee or the late afternoon chocolate making you jittery. Instead, it may be the overconsumption of 4th gear. When we train our minds to multitask for long periods of time, we receive a garbled mix of data, people and tasks. An example would be if we worked all day on our computers just opening files without closing any of them during the day. Our computer screens are full of information, and consequently it is hard to find what you need in a moment because of the mess that has been made. That is life when we are consumed by 4th gear.

### Why Using All the Gears Makes 4th More Productive

If you will take the time to implement the other gears in your life, you will find that your everyday, multitasking 4th gear will become more productive.

- You will finish projects while in 5th gear, which will make 4th gear feel more productive.
- When you insert 3rd gear appropriately, you will become much more at ease with people and will watch your influence climb because you are not too distracted by the cloud of tasks hanging over your head.
- If you insert 1st gear recharge into your task world, you will have more energy and more peace about you.
- When 2nd gear is used correctly, the people most important will become prioritized above the urgent tasks, which will lead to healthy relationships and peace for you.

Practice getting better at 4th gear, and learn to insert the other gears for your best and the best of those you

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lead and love. If you have a hard time getting into 4th gear, then find someone who is brilliant at it, and begin to mimic what you see. ●

### 3rd Gear — Why Being Social Matters

3rd gear is all about being social. For example, 3rd gear looks like lunch with colleagues, a weekend party, a round of golf, an after-work gathering, a game night or a meal with friends or family. It is a mindset. It is the space between task-driven, hyperfocused work and the no-work, relational connection of being with your family, spouse or close friend.

That in-between space can be onerous to manage. For some, work is comfortable. That is where your identity is and where you are confident in your competency. For others, work is tiring. Your identity lies in your social group, whether that's a club or a sports team or a special group of some sort.

#### Why Business Happens in 3rd Gear

There is a reason why companies spend resources doing social events. It is where business really happens — in the relationship. Gatherings like these represent 3rd gear time, and it is vital to the success of the organization. Why? Because when you spend time with people outside of the normal 4th and 5th gear time, you are focusing on the relationship — talking about family, history, sports and the like. This time of relationship building allows those you are with to know you better and vice versa. They are observing your character, going deeper than a one-hour meeting, and deciding whether or not they want to be around you for any length of time or do business together.

Shifting into 3rd gear is not as hard as you might think. What are you interested in doing? What are your hobbies? Do you know anyone else who is interested in those same things? Could you gather some people together to talk about or do those things? That is where most connections happen. Here are some questions to ask that help to connect with people and be present in 3rd gear space.

- “Where is your hometown?”
- “Who is the most famous person from your town, or what is something unique about where you live?”
- “What do you love to do outside of your work?”

When you do 3rd gear well, you will notice your influence increase dramatically over time. It is partly due to the respect that others give you because you respect them, but it is also due to the demeanor and confidence

that naturally occurs inside you. People are attracted to confident people, and there is a direct correlation between confidence and respectful curiosity. This respect leads to increased influence, which leads to more opportunities.

#### Overdoing 3rd Gear

3rd gear can be just as dangerous as 4th and 5th gear if abused, especially if a person is insecure and is trying to get their identity from the social space. You know you have an unhealthy 3rd gear if you procrastinate and miss doing real 4th gear work; need a party at all times; have a lack of discipline and professionalism; never go deep enough and remain superficial; double-book relationships and miss the depth; your colleagues think you're lazy; feel like you have a mask and you never want to go deeper; try so hard not to miss out that you actually miss out. ●

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### 2nd Gear — Connecting Deeply

When was the last time that you truly connected with someone in a meaningful way? How did that experience make you feel? When was the last time you went deep with someone and left the meeting fully recharged? This is what 2nd gear is truly about — the ability to shift into connect mode and become present with someone in your life who brings you joy. Whether work colleagues, family or friends, it is time geared toward relationship building without an agenda or pressure to be productive.

What are your 2nd gear opportunities? Make a list of all the people in your life and the moments where 2nd gear could take place. Are you spending purposeful time here, or are you skipping it?

In the same way that there is a logical flow into 3rd gear, there is a clear path to connect via 2nd gear as well. Here are some tips to incorporate into your life and leadership:

- **Take the time.** When you sense that there is an opportunity to connect, go for it.
- **Listen.** The way to connect comes through your ears, not your mouth.
- **Don't force it.** Be you, be present and be patient.
- **Give yourself away.** When you risk by going deep and giving yourself away to help the other person, you increase your chances to receive far more than you imagined.
- **Cut what binds.** Consider moving things to a different time of the day if they are having an adverse effect on your relationships.

It is amazing what happens psychologically and emotionally when you are at peace with those closest to you.

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You work smarter and produce more results. Connecting is an art form. And it takes practice. When you begin to master 2nd gear, you will begin to experience a deeper level of respect and trust.

### Warning Signs

You know you have an unhealthy 2nd gear if

- You obsess about the key relationships in your life and not the person you are talking to;
- The desire to go deep in conversation keeps you from 3rd gear connectivity;
- Talking too much and too long is your normal pattern;
- There is an inappropriate amount of time spent caring at work rather than working;
- You put unrealistic expectations on people to connect; make people feel bad and eventually isolate yourself;
- You constantly struggle with having the right conversation in the wrong context; you are so present-focused you struggle to see the big picture. ●

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## 1st Gear — Learning to Recharge

Do you have an intentional recharge zone or a routine you have disciplined yourself to follow that helps you downshift to rest, refuel and renew your energy?

When you are not recharged or fully rested, it is almost impossible to be present with someone else, let alone add value to his or her life. When you are charged up and rested well, then you have the ability to impact those around you, which will simultaneously impact your influence.

Spending intentional time in 1st gear is the key to recharging. It is the gear needed at the start of the day and the end of the day. Starting in 1st helps you get into the day in a way that will not wreck your own internal transmission.

### How We Recharge

Recharging does not happen the same way for everyone, though, and it is important to note that your natural personality and wiring will influence how you need to recharge. Introverts recharge internally, like a battery pack. They need to plug into an energy source directly and recharge on their own from within. Extroverts, on the other hand, are like solar panels: Their recharge happens from external power sources like ideas or people or experiences.

Some examples of typical battery pack-type recharge sources for introverts are sleeping — introverts usually need a bit more sleep than extroverts; reading — like novels or biographies; exercise — long runs or walks alone; devotions — introverts are normally more disciplined with

their personal time; meditation — this normally becomes a place for peace; and time to yourself to pursue individual hobbies like art, gardening, cooking, woodworking, etc.

Some typical solar powered-type recharges for extroverts are time with a mentor; ideas — some extroverts are enamored with ideas, which can bring life to them; 2nd gear time — extroverts tend to get recharged with people; enlivened experiences — a concert or movie; speaking; reading; exercise. The method of recharge is not the issue; making sure you know how you need to recharge is.

Some of you are saying, “I rest a lot. I come home and binge on a TV series, lay on the couch, eat some food and zone out.” Is that rest? A lot of you think it is because that is all we know. It may look like rest, but crashing is simply stalling out. You work 60-plus hours per week handling all types of issues. You then come home and deal with the family, teenage issues or a frustrated spouse. Your diet is full of heavy carbs and sugars, and you recharge with coffee and more work. Then you get sick, take a couple of days off and literally crash. Crashing is not resting; it is actually just crashing.

In reality, this is a horrible way to live. True rest allows you to come fully alive. Following the battery-recharging kind of rest, you smell the roses, notice the birds, feel the air and enjoy your relationships. True, healthy rest restores you so you can continue being the best you. ●

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## Reverse — Being Responsive in a Resistant World

Reverse is a great gear. Having it in your car gives you the ability to parallel park or to hook up a trailer or fit into a tight spot. Without reverse, a driver is severely impaired. To translate this into leadership language, reverse simply means to back up, pull back or apologize — to be responsive.

### Do You Know How to Apologize?

Have you learned the etiquette of apologizing to others when you make a mistake? Did your parents and teachers embed this simple concept in your younger years? More importantly, do you mean it when you say it? To master this, you need a few skills in your back pocket.

There are two types of people — responsive and resistant. You hire responsive ones and fire the resistant. Responsive people are self-aware and have a consciousness that is not steeped in victim mentality but rather in responsibility. They understand that they are responsible

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for their actions and will make amends when they have clearly overstepped their bounds. Responsive people are the best employees, spouses and children.

Resistant people, on the other hand, are exhausting. They hate to admit their mistakes and will more easily pass the blame than admit a fault. Resistance is basically pride, which shows itself as insecurity. These people do not want to appear weak, so they would rather exasperate others than get to the peace that comes from admission. Resistance will fight rather than resolve, blame rather than admit and run away rather than run toward reconciliation.

Admitting mistakes is a fundamental part of being responsive. When you find a responsive person, you will find someone with deep character and a person to build companies or initiatives around.

People respect people who admit their mistake and then hustle to do better next time. People do not respect others who refuse to own it when they mess up and continue to blame others. Respect, then, is gained or lost directly by the way we apologize or not.

To be authentic and transparent is to be real. If you want to increase your influence, become more transparent. To do that, you must learn how to apologize and use your reverse gear. ●

### SECTION III: LIVING AND LEADING CONNECTED

## Master Your Settings — Right Time, Right Place

By using the 5 Gears appropriately, you can minimize being in the wrong in relationships, conversations and situations if you understand time and space. Let's start with time.

There is an appropriate time for everything. To increase your ability to connect, then you must know what season or time you are in before you communicate. That knowledge leads you to knowing yourself, leading yourself and then shifting into the appropriate gear at the appropriate time.

Here is a version of a normal day for those going to an office job. The times will be different for each of us, but for the purpose of illustration, this example gives you an idea of how to tie the time of day with your gears.

6 A.M. — Wake Time — 1st Gear

7 A.M. — Drive Time — 1st or 4th Gear

8 A.M. — Work Time — 4th or 5th Gear

12 Noon — Lunchtime — 3rd or 1st Gear

1 P.M. — Work Time — 4th or 5th Gear

5 P.M. — Drive Time — 4th or 1st Gear

6 P.M. — Dinner Time — 2nd or 3rd Gear

8 P.M. — Social Time — 3rd or 2nd or 1st Gear

10 P.M. — Bedtime — 1st Gear

As you can see, there is a natural time for the gears. Morning time should not start in 4th gear, just like a car shouldn't begin there either. We need to warm up before we shift up to drive through our day.

## The Right Place

Have you ever had an experience where someone enters a 3rd gear time, whether at a dinner or a fun social setting, and yet brings their 4th and 5th gear office world with them? Mr. Kill Joy! It feels odd. We shift in our seats and try to listen or speak to them about their topic for a bit. Over time people flee these types by moving seats or turning their heads away from the person who has not learned how to connect with people in the right time and in the right space.

Places and time are tied together. Breakfast restaurants are usually not open for dinner. Drive-in movies were built for nighttime. Places have a natural meaning for the type of connection around a specific time. What types of connection and which gears come to mind when you think of the following places: A Starbucks coffee shop? An office? The golf course? A concert? The romantic restaurant? A hotel? A playground or park? A church?

When a person enters these places in the wrong way, they immediately start in a negative position and often are not aware of it. If you start off a relationship in a negative position, it is always hard to get to a strong positive impression. If the person remains in the wrong gear in the wrong time in the wrong place, then they begin to quickly lose influence and connectivity. ●

## Shifting Well — Learning How to Transition

All of our relationships require us to learn how to shift and shift well. Over time, as our relational shifting skills improve, what begins as a methodical, potentially awkward, step-by-step process evolves to feel automatic as we become unconsciously competent at connecting and being present with those in our lives.

When you begin to know what gear you should be in and what time or place you are in, you can begin to practice. Start by being aware — think. Where are you? Who are

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you with? This is when you practice shifting in your mind. What gear should you be in at that moment? Practice!

### Using Markers as Trigger Points

Trigger points are actually mind tricks to help shift into a different gear. These markers are vitally important to the success of the 5 Gears to achieve the desired changes you want. Here are some examples of using markers to trigger action to downshift.

- Picking a marker two to five miles from home as your trigger point to downshift into 2nd or 3rd gear. For example, a QuikTrip gas station sign two miles from home can be a trigger to connect with family.
- Using your neighborhood sign to put your phone in your purse or bag. When you reach your neighborhood, put your phone in a bag or purse and leave it in your car or by the front door so that your family gets you, not your phone.
- Using the :58s as a marker. If you have a meeting at 2:00 P.M., then use 1:58 as your marker to shift from your 4th gear activity to 3rd gear. Think about whom you are meeting and what you are trying to accomplish. When you see that person, start with 3rd gear conversation, and then slide into 4th.
- 5th gear signs at work. A number of leaders have created signs on their office doors or desks to let people know that they are in 5th gear. ●

## Making the U-Turn — Challenge and Plan

Now is the time to begin to work on the U-turn and to make the changes that actually bring new levels of influence and respect. It's time for you to experience the benefits of being present and connected.

If you are willing to accept the challenge of retooling your gears, practicing and implementing them into your life, then you will experience a deeper level of fulfillment that is rarely talked about in most leadership books or conversations. We call this applied leadership learning. And yet, before you can experience this, you need to challenge yourself. This challenge requires that you get to the core of who you are.

At GiANT Worldwide, they share a tool for self-awareness called the Core Process:

**Call It** — Be honest with the issue at hand. Get real and name it.

**Own It** — Admit it. Know yourself and admit that the issue is yours to own.

**Respond** — Lead yourself with a plan to respond to what you have owned.

**Execute** — Choose a time to implement your plan of response.

Calling it might sound something like, "I am constantly in 4th gear and I can't seem to get out of it. I wake up and check my email, talk to colleagues on the way to work and email until I climb into bed. I think I am addicted."

Owning it would then sound like this: "It is my fault. I have not put boundaries in place at my work to let them know when I can or can't talk. I think, too, that I like being needed and have really created a monster as I am completely out of balance in my life."

Responding to it might look like this: "So, I plan to reorder my gears. I realized that I need to add some real 1st gear into my life, which will help me become more organized in my mind and more healthy as I run. I am then planning to use the marker plan as a trigger to turn off. I have a sign about five miles from my house that is going to be the drop call zone. I plan on coming home connected, not distracted."

Executing would then look like this: "I am starting tomorrow. I know it will take a while for my family to feel the change, but I have already taught the 5 Gears to my team. I plan on teaching my wife and kids after I have done it for myself a couple of days. I am fired up to see the changes!"

The 5 Gears is a lifestyle. Do it well, and experience a life that is fulfilling and the influence that goes along with someone becoming a person that others want to emulate. It will take your self-awareness and intentional willpower to learn to shift well and lead others into their own personal breakthrough.

Give everyone a gift — you. Be present with those in your life and those that you lead. When you do, you will watch your influence thrive and your respect flourish. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *5 Gears*, you'll also like:

1. ***Extreme Productivity* by Robert C. Pozen.** Learn how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.
2. ***The 5 Choices* by Adam Merrill, Leena Rinne, Kory Kogon.** Insights from FranklinCovey to redefine time management in ways that will increase the productivity of individuals, teams and organizations.
3. ***Time Traps* by Todd Duncan.** Duncan explains all the traps that steal your time, and shows why you should abandon the pointless pursuit of time management and, instead, adopt a far more actionable approach: task management.