



The Power of Full Engagement

Book Notes by Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD

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Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Copyright year: 2003

ISBN: 0-7432-2674-7

Author's bio: Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz are senior partners at LGE Performance Systems. They co-developed the Corporate Athlete Training System. Each of them has worked with hundreds of senior executives and managers. As a performance psychologist, Jim has coached hundreds of athletes. Jim Loehr is the author of twelve books.

Authors' Big Thought: In our relentlessly fast-paced world, time management is no longer a viable solution. The authors demonstrate that managing energy, not time, is the key to enduring high performance as well as the key to health, happiness, and life balance. The number of hours in a day is fixed, but the quantity and quality of energy is not. This fundamental insight has the power to revolutionize the way you live your life. This book is a highly practical, scientifically based approach to managing your energy more skillfully both on and off the job.

Chapter notes:

Part One. The Dynamics of Full Engagement

Chapter One. Fully Engaged: Energy, Not Time is our Most Precious Resource

- Managing energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance. Everything people do – from interacting with colleagues and making important decisions to spending time with their families – requires energy. Without the right quantity, quality, focus and force of energy, we are compromised in any activity we undertake. The premise of this book is that performance, health and happiness are grounded in the skillful management of energy.
- Great leaders are stewards of organizational energy. They begin by effectively managing their own energy. As leaders, they must mobilize, focus, invest, channel, renew and expand the energy of others.
- Full engagement is the energy state that best serves performance. To be fully engaged, we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused, and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest.
- You must become a Corporate Athlete. The challenge of great performance is to manage your energy more effectively in all dimensions to achieve your goals. Four key energy management principles drive this process:

- Principle 1: Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. Physical energy capacity is measured in terms of quantity (high to low) and emotional capacity in quality (negative to positive).
- Principle 2: Because energy diminishes both with overuse and under use, we must balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal. The richest, happiest and most productive lives are characterized by the ability to fully engage in the challenge at hand, but also to disengage periodically and seek renewal.
- Principle 3: To build capacity we must push beyond our normal limits training in the same systematic way that elite athletes do. We build emotional, mental and spiritual capacity in precisely the same way that we build physical capacity. We grow at all levels by expending energy beyond our ordinary limits and then recovering. Any form of stress that prompts discomfort has the potential to expand our capacity – physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually – so long as it is followed by adequate recovery.
- Principle 4: Positive energy rituals – highly specific routines for managing energy – are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance. A positive ritual is a behavior that becomes automatic over time, fueled by some deeply held value. The power of rituals is that they insure that we use as little conscious energy as possible where it is not absolutely necessary, freeing us to strategically focus the energy available to us in creative, enriching ways. Creating positive rituals is the most powerful means the authors have found to effectively manage energy in the service of full engagement.
- Making change that lasts requires a three step process:
 - Define Purpose – surface and articulate the most important values to define a vision both personally and professionally. Connecting to a deep set of values and creating a compelling vision fuels a uniquely high- octane source of energy for change, it also serves as a compass for navigating the storms that inevitable arise in our lives.
 - Face the Truth – it is impossible to chart a course for change until you are able to look honestly at who you are today. The first question to ask is “How are you spending your energy today?” Facing the truth begins with gathering credible data.
 - Take Action to close the gap between who you are and who you want to be – between how you manage your energy now and how you want to manage your energy to achieve whatever mission you are on. This step involves building a personal development plan grounded in positive energy rituals. Building rituals requires defining very precise behaviors and performing them at very specific times – motivated by deeply held values.

Chapter Two. The Disengaged Life of Roger B.

This chapter is a case study about a 42 year old sales manager of a software company. This chapter is a close look at what is going on beneath the surface of the life of one of the authors’ clients.

Chapter Three. The Pulse of High Performance: Balancing Stress and Recovery

- Energy is simply the capacity to do work. Our most fundamental need as human beings is to spend and recover energy. The authors call this oscillation.

- The opposite of oscillation is linearity: too much energy expenditure without recovery or too much recovery without sufficient energy expenditure.
- Balancing stress and recovery is critical to high performance both individually and organizationally.
- We must sustain health oscillatory rhythms at four levels of what they term the “performance pyramid”: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.
- We build emotional, mental and spiritual capacity in precisely the same way we build physical capacity. We must systematically expose ourselves to stress beyond our normal limits, followed by adequate recovery. Emotional depth and resilience depend on active engagement with others and with our own feelings. Mental acuity diminishes in the absence of ongoing intellectual challenge. Spiritual energy capacity depends on regularly revisiting our deepest values and holding ourselves accountable in our behavior. Full engagement requires cultivating a dynamic balance between the expenditure of energy (stress) and the renewal of energy (recovery) in all dimensions. The authors call this rhythmic wave oscillation, and it represents the fundamental pulse of life.
- Expanding capacity requires a willingness to endure short-term discomfort in the service of long-term reward. The key to expanding capacity is both to push beyond one’s ordinary limits and to regularly seek recovery, which is when growth actually occurs.

Chapter Four. Physical Energy: Fueling the Fire

- Physical energy is the fundamental source of fuel in life, even if our work is almost completely sedentary. It not only lies at the heart of alertness and vitality but also affects our ability to manage our emotions, sustain concentration, think creatively, and even maintain our commitment to whatever mission we are on.
- Physical energy is derived from the interaction between oxygen and glucose.
- The two most important regulators of physical energy are breathing and eating. The size of our energy reservoir depends on the patterns of our breathing, the foods that we eat and when we eat them, the quantity and quality of our sleep, the degree to which we get intermittent recovery during the day and the level of our fitness.
- The breath is a powerful tool for self regulation – a means to summon energy and to relax deeply. Extending the exhalation prompts a powerful wave of recovery. Breathing in to a count of three and out to a count of six, lowers arousal and quiets not just the body but also the mind and the emotions.
- Eating five to six low-calorie, highly nutritious meals a day ensures a steady resupply of glucose and essential nutrients. Sustained performance depends not just on eating at regular intervals but also eating only as much as you need to drive your energy for the next two to three hours. Snacks between meals should typically be between 100 and 150 calories and should focus on low-glycemic foods such as nuts and sunflower seeds, fruits, or half of a typical-size 200 calorie energy bar.
- Drinking sixty-four ounces of water daily is a key factor in the effective management of physical energy. Inadequate hydration compromises concentration and coordination.
- Most human beings require seven to eight hours of sleep per night to function optimally. In addition to its energy renewing function, sleep is also a period during which substantial growth

and repair occur – most of it at the deepest level of sleep, when slow-wave delta brainwaves are dominant.

- Going to bed early and waking up early help to optimize performance.
- Interval training is more effective than steady-state exercise in building physical capacity and in teaching people how to recover more efficiently.
- To sustain full engagement, we must take a recovery break every 90 to 120 minutes. Just as we cycle through levels of sleep at night, so our potential for engagement varies during our waking hours. Brief periods of rest are crucial to sustaining energy over long hours.

Chapter Five. Emotional Energy: Transforming Threat Into Challenge

- Emotional intelligence, from the authors' perspective, is simply the capacity to manage emotions skillfully in the service of high positive energy and full engagement. In order to perform at our best, we must access pleasant and positive emotions; the experience of enjoyment, challenge, adventure and opportunity.
- The key muscles fueling positive energy are self-confidence, self-control, interpersonal effectiveness and empathy. Access to the emotional muscles that best serve performance depends on creating a balance between exercising them regularly and intermittently seeking recovery. Physical and emotional energy are inextricably connected.
- Negative emotions serve survival but they are very costly and energy inefficient in the context of performance. For leaders and managers, negative emotions are doubly insidious, because they are also infectious.
- The ability to summon positive emotions during periods of intense stress and to communicate consistently positive energy lies at the heart of effective leadership.
- Access to the emotional muscles that serve performance depends on creating a balance between exercising them regularly and intermittently seeking recovery.
- The delicate dance of a healthy friendship can be a powerful source both of positive energy and of renewal. The pulse of a strong relationship involves a rhythmic movement between giving and taking, talking and listening, valuing the other person and feeling commensurately valued in return.
- Any activity that is enjoyable, fulfilling and affirming serves as a source of emotional renewal and recovery.
- Emotional muscles such as patience, empathy and confidence can be strengthened in the same way that we strengthen a bicep or a triceps: pushing past our current limits followed by recovery.

Chapter Six. Mental Energy: Appropriate Focus and Realistic Optimism

- Just as physical energy is the fundamental fuel for emotional competencies, so it is the fuel for mental skills. Mental capacity is what we use to organize our lives and focus our attention. Nothing so interferes with performance and engagement as the inability to concentrate on the task at hand. To perform at our best we must be able to sustain concentration, and to move flexibly between broad and narrow, as well as internal and external focus.
- The mental energy that best serves full engagement is realistic optimism – seeing the world as it is, but always working positively towards a desired outcome or solution.

- The key supportive mental muscles include mental preparation, visualization, positive self-talk, effective time management and creativity.
- Changing channels mentally permits different parts of the brain to be activated and facilitates creativity.
- Physical exercise stimulates cognitive capacity. It does so by driving more blood and oxygen to the brain.
- Thinking uses up a lot of energy. The consequences of insufficient mental recovery range from increased mistakes of judgment and execution to lower creativity and a failure to take reasonable account of risks. The key to mental recovery is to give the conscious, thinking mind intermittent rest,
- Maximum mental capacity is derived from a balance between expending and recovering mental energy.
- The highest form of creativity depends on a rhythmic movement between engagement and disengagement, thinking and letting go, activity and rest.
- When we lack the mental muscles we need to perform at our best, we must systematically build capacity by pushing past our comfort zone and then recovering.
- Continuing to challenge the brain serves as a protection against age-related mental decline.

Chapter Seven. Spiritual Energy: He Who has a Why to Live

- Spiritual energy provides the force for action in all dimensions of our lives. It fuels passion, perseverance and commitment.
- Spiritual energy is derived from a connection to deeply held values and a purpose beyond our self-interest. At the practical level, anything that ignites the human spirit serves to drive full engagement and to maximize performance in whatever mission we are on.
- Character – the courage and conviction to live by our deepest values- is the key muscle that serves spiritual energy.
- The key supportive spiritual muscles are passion, commitment, integrity and honesty.
- Spiritual energy expenditure and energy renewal are deeply interconnected.
- Spiritual energy is sustained by balancing a commitment to a purpose beyond ourselves with adequate self-care. The capacity to live by our deepest values depends on regularly renewing our spirit – seeking ways to rest and rejuvenate and to reconnect with the values that we find most inspiring and meaningful.
- Some activities generate considerable spiritual renewal without demanding significant energy expenditure. These include walking in nature, reading an inspirational book, listening to music, or hearing a great speaker.
- Spiritual practices, by contrast, can be renewing and demanding at the same time. These include meditation, yoga, and prayer.
- Expanding spiritual capacity involves pushing past our comfort zone in precisely the same way that expanding physical capacity does.
- The energy of the human spirit can override even severe limitations of physical energy.

Part Two: The Training System

Chapter Eight. Defining Purpose: the Rules of Engagement

- The most compelling source of purpose is spiritual, the energy derived from connecting to deeply held values and a purpose beyond one's self-interest. Purpose creates a destination. We become fully engaged only when we care deeply, when we feel that what we are doing really matters. The search for meaning is among the most powerful and enduring themes in every culture since the origin of recorded history.
- The "hero's journey" is grounded in mobilizing, nurturing and regularly renewing our most precious resource, energy, in the service of what matter most.
- Purpose fuels focus, direction, passion and perseverance.
- When we lack a strong purpose we are easily buffeted by life's inevitable storms.
- Purpose becomes a more powerful and enduring source of energy when its source moves from negative to positive, external to internal and self to others.
- A negative source of purpose is defensive and deficit-based. Purpose fueled by the feeling of deficit also narrows our attention and limits our possibilities.
- Intrinsic motivation grows out of the desire to engage in an activity because we value it for the inherent satisfaction it provides.
- Values fuel the energy on which purpose is built. They hold us to a different standard for managing our energy. A value is ultimately just a roadmap for action. Values we fail to reflect in our behavior are ultimately empty.
- A value in action is a virtue. Alignment occurs when we transform our values into virtues. Simply identifying our primary values is not sufficient. The next step is to define more precisely how we intend to embody the values in our daily lives, regardless of external pressures.
- A vision statement, grounded in values that are meaningful and compelling, creates a blueprint for how to invest our energy. Regularly revisited, it serves as a source of sustaining direction and a fuel for action. On the one hand, in order to provide inspiration it needs to be lofty, ambitious and even a bit overreaching. On the other hand, in order to have teeth it needs to be realistic, specific and personal.

Chapter Nine. Face the Truth: How are You Managing Your Energy Now?

- Facing the truth about the gap between who we want to be and who we really are is never easy. Each of us has an infinite capacity for self-deception.
- Facing the truth frees up energy and is the second stage, after defining purpose, in becoming fully engaged.
- Avoiding the truth consumes great effort and energy.
- At the most basic level, we deceive ourselves in order to protect our self-esteem. We each have our own well-funded defense department. We do things like numb out, rationalize against the truth and intellectualize as a means of acknowledging the truth cognitively without experiencing its impact emotionally.
- Some truths are too unbearable to be absorbed all at once. Emotions such as grief are best metabolized in waves.
- Truth without compassion is cruelty, to others and to ourselves.
- What we fail to acknowledge about ourselves we often continue to act out unconsciously.
- A common form of self-deception is assuming that our view represents the truth, when it is really just a lens through which we choose to view the world. It is really just an interpretation.

- Facing the truth requires that we retain an ongoing openness to the possibility that we may not be seeing ourselves, or others, accurately.
- Facing the truth requires making yourself the object of inquiry – conducting an audit of your life and holding yourself accountable for the energy consequences of your behaviors.
- It is both a danger and a delusion when we become too identified with a singular view of ourselves. We are all a blend of light and shadow, virtues and vices.
- Accepting our limitations reduces our defensiveness and increases the amount of positive energy available to us.
- The Serenity Prayer is a perfect primer on ideal energy management: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference”. We spend vast amounts of energy worrying about people and situations over which we have no control. Far better to concentrate our energy on that which we can influence.

Chapter Ten. Taking Action: The Power of Positive Rituals

- Rituals serve as tools through which we effectively manage energy in the service of whatever mission we are on.
- Rituals create a means by which to translate our values and priorities into action in all dimensions of our life.
- All great performers rely on positive rituals to manage their energy and regulate their behavior.
- The limitations of conscious will and discipline are rooted in the fact that every demand on our self-control draws on the same limited resources.
- We can offset our limited will and discipline by building rituals that become as automatic as quickly as possible, fueled by our deepest values.
- The most important role of rituals is to insure effective balance between energy expenditure and energy renewal in the service of full engagement.
- The most exacting challenge and the greater the pressure, the more rigorous our rituals need to be. The bigger the storm, the more inclined we are to revert to our survival habits, and the more important positive rituals become.
- Precision and specificity are critical dimensions of building rituals during the thirty-to sixty –day acquisition period. The specificity and precision of rituals also makes it more likely that we will be able to produce them under pressure. It also helps to assure that our rituals themselves remain fueled by our deepest values. By building a ritual to regularly revisit our vision we can insure a strong, continuing connection to the source of energy such a statement provides.
- Far from precluding spontaneity, rituals provide a level of comfort, continuity and security that frees us to improvise and to take risks.
- Rituals create a stable framework in which creative breakthroughs often occur. They can also open up time for recovery and renewal, when relationships can be deepened and spiritual reflection become possible.
- Trying NOT to do something rapidly depletes our limited stores of will and discipline.
- To make lasting changes, we must build serial rituals, focusing on one significant change at a time.

- Two behaviors dramatically increase the likelihood of successfully locking in new rituals during the typical thirty- to sixty-day acquisition period. The authors call these behaviors Basic Training.
 - Chart the Course – to launch each day’s ritual-acquisition mission by revisiting our vision, clarifying not just what we intend to accomplish, but how we want to conduct ourselves along the way.
 - Chart the Progress – The second key to building rituals that lead to sustaining change is holding yourself accountable at the end of each day. Accountability is a means of regularly facing the truth about the gap between your intention and your actual behavior. Defining a desired outcome and holding yourself accountable each day gives focus and direction to the rituals that you build. Accountability is both a protection against our infinite capacity for self-deception and a source of information about what stands in our way.

Chapter Eleven. The Re-engaged Life of Roger B

This chapter revisits the case study of Roger B. and the changes he made to his life as a result of this program.

Reviewer's recommendation: This book offers a way to integrate the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of your life. It is filled with compelling insight, real-life stories and practical suggestions. At the end of the book there is a resource section which summarizes the Corporate Athlete Full Engagement Training System. This section also includes a step by step method of creating a personal development plan.

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About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD

Many CEO's find themselves asking “What now?” to sensitive situations that only an experienced former CEO can understand. Frumi is brought in to solve problems and often remains to work with you,

as your confidante and secret weapon. She has an uncanny knack of getting to the heart of your corporate climate and maximizing your team's performance, profitability and sustainability.

To schedule a free ***Break From the Pack to Success*** consultation email ceoconfidante@frumi.com or call 949-729-1577