



Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time

by Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy

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The science of stamina has advanced to the point where *individuals, teams, and whole organizations can*, with some straightforward interventions, **significantly** *increase their capacity to get things done.*

by Tony Schwartz



Steve Wanner is a highly respected 37-year old partner at *Ernst & Young*, married with four young children.

EY

Building a better
working world

a year ago...

found it **DIFFICULT** to fully engage with his family in the evenings, which left him feeling **guilty** and **dissatisfied**.

when he arrives at home in the evening, he's **more relaxed** and **better able to connect** with his wife and children.

Putting in longer hours inevitably takes a toll on us **physically**, **mentally**, and **emotionally**. That leads to:

- *declining levels of engagement,*
- *increasing levels of distraction,*
- *high turnover rates,*
- *soaring medical costs among employees.*

The core problem with working longer hours is that *time is a finite resource*. ***Energy is a different story.***



Energy can be systematically expanded and regularly renewed by establishing specific

RITUALS—BEHAVIORS that are intentionally practiced and precisely scheduled, with the goal of making them unconscious and automatic as quickly as possible.

The Body: Physical Energy



It is scarcely news that inadequate nutrition, exercise, sleep, and rest diminish people's basic energy levels, as well as their ability to manage their emotions and focus their attention.

an energy audit

Participants get eight to ten of those 16 questions "wrong," meaning they're doing things such as:

1. skipping breakfast,
2. failing to express appreciation to others,
3. struggling to focus on one thing at a time,
4. spending too little time on activities that give them a sense of purpose.

regular breaks at specific intervals throughout the workday

- ☐ getting up to talk to a colleague about something other than work,
- ☐ listening to music on an iPod,
- ☐ walking up and down stairs in an office building.

Intermittent breaks for renewal result in higher and more sustainable performance. *The length of renewal is less important than the quality.* *It is possible to get a great deal of recovery in a short time* — as little as several minutes — if it involves a ritual that allows you to disengage from work and truly change channels.



The Emotions: Quality of Energy

When people are able to take more control of their emotions, they can **IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR ENERGY**, regardless of the external pressures they're facing.

Without intermittent recovery, we're not physiologically capable of sustaining highly positive emotions for long periods.

One simple but powerful ritual for defusing negative emotions is what we call **“buying time”**. *Deep abdominal breathing* is one way to do that. Exhaling slowly for five or six seconds induces relaxation and recovery, and turns off the fight-or-flight response.



People can cultivate positive energy by learning to change the stories they tell themselves about the events in their lives. We teach them to tell the most hopeful stories possible.

The most effective way people can change a story is to view it through any of three new lenses, which are all alternatives to seeing the world from the victim perspective.

1. With *the reverse lens*, for example, people ask themselves, “What would the other person in this conflict say and in what ways might that be true?”
2. With *the long lens* they ask, “How will I most likely view this situation in six months?”
3. With *the wide lens* they ask themselves, “Regardless of the outcome of this issue, how can I grow and learn from it?”

Each of these lenses can help people intentionally cultivate more positive emotions.

The Mind: Focus of Energy

Many executives view multitasking as a necessity in the face of all the demands they juggle, but it actually undermines productivity. Distractions are costly: *A temporary shift in attention from one task to another* — stopping to answer an e mail or take a phone call, for instance — *increases the amount of time necessary to finish the primary task by as much as 25%,* a phenomenon known as **“switching time.”**



Once people see how much they struggle to concentrate, they can create rituals to reduce the relentless interruptions that technology has introduced in their lives.

Dan Cluna, a vice president at Wachovia, designed two rituals to better focus his attention.

- The first one is to leave his desk and go into a conference room, away from phones and e-mail, whenever he has a task that requires concentration. He now finishes reports in a third of the time they used to require.
- Cluna built his second ritual around meetings at branches with the financial specialists who report to him. Previously, he would answer his phone whenever it rang during these meetings. As a consequence, the meetings he scheduled for an hour often stretched to two, and he rarely gave anyone his full attention. Now Cluna lets his phone go to voice mail, so that he can focus completely on the person in front of him. He now answers the accumulated voice-mail messages when he has downtime between meetings.

The Human Spirit: Energy of Meaning and Purpose

People tap into the energy of the human spirit when their **everyday work and activities are consistent with what they value most** and with what gives them a sense of meaning and purpose.

If the work they're doing really matters to them, they typically

- ☐ feel more positive energy,
- ☐ focus better,
- ☐ demonstrate greater perseverance.



To access the energy of the human spirit, people need to clarify priorities and establish accompanying rituals in three categories:

1. doing what they do best and enjoy most at work;
2. consciously allocating time and energy to the areas of their lives — work, family, health, service to others—they deem most important;
3. and living their core values in their daily behaviors.

HOW COMPANIES CAN HELP

To support energy renewal rituals in your firm:

- ☐ Build “renewal rooms” where people can go to relax and refuel.
- ☐ Subsidize gym memberships.
- ☐ Encourage managers to gather employees for midday workouts.
- ☐ Suggest that people stop checking e-mails during meetings.

*for your
attention!*

many
Thanks!

