

The Power of Full Engagement by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz

We live in a world that celebrates work and activity, ignores renewal and recovery, and fails to recognize that both are necessary for sustained high performance. As Wayne Muller puts it in his lovely book Sabbath; “The busier we are, the more important we seem to ourselves and, we imagine, to others. To be unavailable to our friends and family, to be unable to find time for the sunset (or even to know the sun has set at all), to whiz through our obligations without time for a mindful breath, this has become the model of a successful life.”

Stress Addiction: Working at a feverish pace without breaks may actually be addictive. Stress hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol fuel arousal and create a seductive rush – the so-called adrenaline high. When we operate at a high enough intensity for long enough, we progressively lose the capacity to shift to any other gear. Our natural inclination is to push harder when demand increases. Over time we resist precisely what would make us more effective; taking breaks and seeking restoration. In effect, we get stuck in overdrive, unable to turn off the engine.

Fully Engaged: *Energy, not time is our most precious resource or said another way; Energy, not time, is the most fundamental currency of high performance. To be fully engaged, we must be; physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused, and spiritually with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest.*

OLD PARADIGM

- Manage Time
- Avoid Stress
- Life is a Marathon
- Downtime is Wasted Time
- Rewards Fuel Performance
- Self-Discipline Rules
- The Power of Positive Thinking

NEW PARADIGM

- Manage Energy
- Seek Stress
- Life is a Series of Sprints
- Downtime is Productive Time
- Purpose Fuels Performance
- Rituals Rule
- The Power of Full Engagement

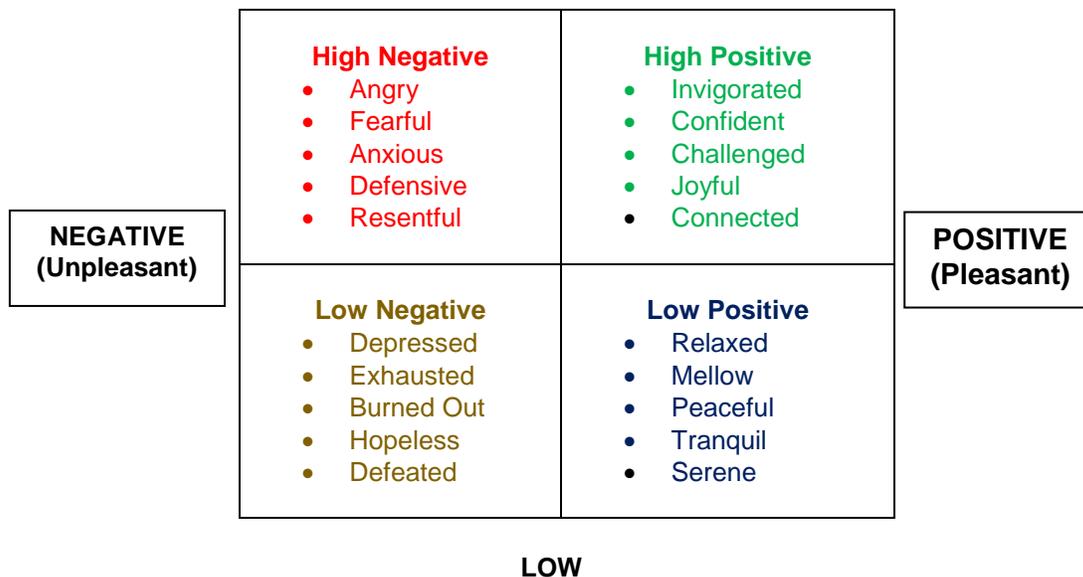
Gallup Organization found in 2001 that less than 30% of American workers are fully engaged; 55% are “not engaged” and another 19% are “actively disengaged” – meaning they share their feelings with their colleagues. Gallup also found that the longer employees stayed with the job, the less engaged they became. After six months on the job, only 38% were engaged and after 3 years only 22% were engaged. “The costs of a disengaged workforce run into the trillions of dollars.”

“Leaders are the stewards of organizational energy – in companies, organizations and even families. They inspire or demoralize others first by how effectively they manage their own energy and next by how well they mobilize, focus, invest, and renew the collective energy of those they lead. The skillful management of energy, individually and organizationally, makes possible what we call full engagement.”

Principle 1: Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

“We must learn to hold ourselves at least equally accountable for how we manage our energy physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.”

HIGH



Principle 2: Because energy capacity diminishes both with overuse and with underuse, we must balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal.

- Sadly, the need for recovery is often viewed as evidence of weakness rather than as an integral aspect of sustained performance.
- To maintain a powerful pulse in our lives, we must learn how to rhythmically spend and renew energy.
- We, too, must learn to live our lives as a series of sprints – fully engaging for periods of time, and then fully disengaging and seeking renewal before jumping back into the fray to face whatever challenges confront us.

Principle 3: To build capacity, we must push beyond our normal limits, training in the same systematic way that elite athletes do.

- Stress is not the enemy in our lives. Paradoxically, it is the key to growth. In order to build strength in a muscle, we must systematically stress it, expending energy beyond normal levels.
- We grow at all levels by expending energy beyond our ordinary limits and then recovering. The limiting factor in building any 'muscle' is that many of us back off at the slightest hint of discomfort.

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.