

Reaching Peak Performance Is Being In Sync With Your Best



How a simple energy focused strategy leads to exceptional results

Today's life is full of challenges, and expectations are high when it comes to performance, not only in business but also in social life. More projects in less time, endless to do lists, an ever accelerating technology, being accessible 24/7 and perpetual distractions that pull you in all directions. The concept of work life balance has taken on a whole new dimension, and by the looks of it, we are not doing too well in managing it.

We force ourselves to work harder and faster to overcome these obstacles and at the same time struggle to live up to our aspiration to consistently perform at our peak. Over time, this approach will eventually lead to health issues, frustration and finally to resignation. However, there are highly successful people that seemingly juggle these same challenges without much effort. Do they have special skills or gifts?

They probably have..., but so do you. So what is the secret behind their strategy? The answer might be surprisingly obvious. The drive and energy of highly successful people comes from an awareness and recognition of their own personal strengths and using that knowledge to channel their energy in the right direction. But how exactly does that work?

THE ENERGY ISSUE

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“For the first time in history the demands on us and our time are greater than our capacity to service them. We are experiencing a global energy crisis in our bodies every single day.”

– Tony Schwartz
THE ENERGY PROJECT



"If we did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves".

-Thomas Edison

BEING THE BEST YOU CAN BE

"Performing optimally means a person is energised, positive, and mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually aligned."

Doing more, doing it better and reaching new heights begins with an understanding of what it is that supports exceptional outcomes.

Achieving great things does not come without work and continuous effort. However, as soon as you leverage your specific talents and strengths to achieve a goal, you will realise that it becomes much easier. Tapping into your own potential leaves you feeling confident, inspired and alive.

You are engaged and you are having "fun" doing what you are doing, which makes your work feel effortless. You are on your way to being in your "flow".

Michael Csikszentmihalyi, one of the leading researchers in Positive Psychology, has studied the notion of "flow" for decades. In his book "Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience", he describes the creative state and laser sharp focus of a person

that is completely taken up with and focused on an activity, and the feelings of happiness and satisfaction that accompany this state. Being in the "flow" or in the "zone" is often heard in connection with athletes and in sports, but anybody can learn to enter this state in which a person performs optimally.

Being a peak performer requires attention, reflection and a strategy that gets you there, but it's well worth the outcome:

- You become crystal clear about what it is you want to do and why you want to do it
- It drastically increases your engagement level
- Your confidence receives a huge boost
- You enthral others with your passion and excitement
- It gives everything you do much greater meaning
- You experience deep satisfaction and joy

Can you re wire your brain for Peak Performance?

As scientists discovered, the answer is yes. In his 2004 TED presentation, Neuroscientist and researcher Michael Merzenich described the brain's amazing capability for change and adaptability.



“Never mistake
activity for
achievement.”

-John Wooden

Because of the brain's plasticity we are able to improve our memory, enhance our skills and even change old patterns.

A successful technique in starting this process is NLP.

NLP stands for Neuro Linguistic Programming. Innately, like most other creatures, we learn by modelling. Where we are in life – or not – stems to a large degree from whom and what we watched and modelled. Simply put, NLP is a decoder of how we do what we do. It can help you translate your vision into actionable steps that will create a particular outcome, and assist anyone in acquiring the skills of exceptional people. NLP incorporates techniques and strategies that involve mind, spirit and body. Anywhere where there is peak performance, in sports, performing arts, education, business, wealth creation and personal development, this integrated approach is used to help people evolve and excel.

To get there requires solid objectives, resilience and most importantly, the framework and strategies

that will help you overcome distractions and regain focus. As David Rock, director of Neuro Leadership Institute and author of “Your Brain at Work” states, “It’s really easy to follow every train of thought and every email that comes along and get lost in every conversation. The most effective people are aware of their mental approach to every interaction.”

Create the environment to make it happen

A good basis to get started, to change old habits and clear the path that leads to the next level are the Four Cs of Peak Performance. They are the pillars that allow you to see the bigger picture, help you be intentional and provide the support to make change happen.

Clarity

How clear are you on what it is you want to achieve? Can you define it? How can you measure it? What tasks do you need to complete in order to achieve your goal? Try to capture all this information and summarise it in one sentence, similar to a compelling “**elevator speech**”. Clarity helps you determine and correct unrealistic expectations upfront, provides you with the vision you need to achieve a certain outcome and holds you accountable by measuring results.

Conditions

Ask yourself about the requirements, the available tools and the limitations what will impact your ability to perform optimally in the achievement of a particular goal. Look at both, internal and external factors. An example for an internal factor could be a negative belief, such as “I am not good enough to pull this off”. An external factor could be working in an environment with constant distractions that keep you from performing. Once you recognize the issues, seek solutions that will support your strengths and overcome your weaknesses.

Set goals that will challenge you but that are also realistic. Goal setting is important to achieve optimal performance, because it helps you understand what you want to achieve and the best way to get there.

Competence

What skills will you require to perform optimally? Are there areas you need to upskill in to expand your capabilities? Does it make sense to team up with someone who has specific expertise that will complement a better outcome? Do you need to learn and develop additional skills, or do you know where to search for more and better information? And last but not least Are you the right fit for the task at hand and does it play to your strengths? If not, how can you overcome that challenge?

Commitment

How committed are you to the successful achievement of that goal? What can you do to increase your commitment? Peak performance has everything to do with discipline. In fact, it's consistently making the kind of choices that best serve you. You can plan strategies, set objectives and have visions – if you are not committed in putting it all in motion and take action, they won't get you anywhere.

How committed are you to performing at your peak on a given project or strategy? How much time and energy will you **make** to achieve your goals? How can you ensure that your commitment isn't in conflict with

other areas of your life? Is what you are committing to aligned with your strengths and values?

Make sure you are very clear about your “why”. The importance and meaning you can attach to this answer will determine your level of commitment and drive to achieve your goal.

Working Smarter

Achieving maximum impact also means to take a close look at your energy management. As Tony Schwartz, author of “The Way We're Working Isn't Working”, points out “Time is finite, so we need to learn to manage our energy rather than our time.” Managing ones energy depends on a number of highly individual factors. Are you a morning person or does it take you till mid morning until you are completely present and energised? Do you thrive when you have to deal with numerous smaller challenges, or do you prefer large complex projects that require patience and resilience to work through?

These are examples of energy driven preferences that are different from person to person, but understanding and managing them is crucial to peak performance. But there are of course a few things you can do to support your efforts

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes but no plans.”

- Peter F. Drucker



Five tips on how to maximise and refill your batteries

Structure your day in personal energy blocks

Assign and work on important projects at a time when you are high on energy and leave less important ones for the times when you know your energy drops to lower levels.

Complete your most important project first

Tackling your most important (as opposed to the most urgent) project first thing in the morning gives you a feeling of accomplishment and frees your brain for the remainder of the day – you'll be content, motivated and more creative. This also ensures that you are being proactive with your time rather than just letting other people's urgency pull you reactively from one task to the next.

Maximise and refill your batteries

- 1 Structure your day in personal energy blocks.
- 2 Complete your most important project first.
- 3 Work in 90 minute blocks, following your body's Ultradian Rhythm.
- 4 De clutter your environment for an instant focus and motivation boost.
- 5 Focus on a single task, as multitasking can reduce productivity.

Work in 90 minute blocks Scientific research has shown that to perform at our best, we should follow the body's natural rhythm, our **Ultradian Rhythm**, which requires a break for renewed energy in 90 minute intervals. The renewal break is about shifting gears, not only physically, but also emotionally and mentally, and feeling refreshed and re focused.

Structure your day as a series of 90 minute sprints with short breaks in between, rather than treating it like a marathon that has you often crawling over the finish line. Studies have shown that structuring your day in blocks increases your average productivity from 65% to 80%. In addition to getting more done, you also have more energy available at the end of the workday for the things that really matter to you.

De clutter Physical, mental and digital clutter affects the brain and interferes with your ability to focus and to process information efficiently. Start with your physical working environment and see how much of an impact a clean and clear desk has on your mindset. It instantly makes you feel more focused and motivated. The same goes for mental clutter and the accumulation of to do lists in your head. Get them out of your mind. If a task takes less than two minutes to complete, deal with it immediately and forget about it. If it takes longer, write it down and assign a date and time to take care of it.

How does it feel to be a peak performer?

Terrific. Imagine
the joy and
fun of
suddenly
running
down hill,
effortlessly
and at an
incredible speed.



Instead of yellow pads and sticky notes, use some of the handy organisational tools that are available online, like for example Highrise, Evernote or Trello.

Research has shown that only 2% of the population can effectively multitask. That means 98% of us are actually spending more time in an effort to save time.

Multitasking hinders your productivity Contrary to popular belief, multitasking is not a great skill that needs to be developed to achieve even more, but it is a habit that can reduce productivity by up to 40 percent.

Research has shown that constantly switching from one task to another makes it difficult to tune out distractions and can even cause mental blocks that might slow down your progress.

These and other performance tips and tools can support you in achieving your goal to become a peak performer and still lead a balanced and fulfilled life. Anyone is able to get to their personal level of peak performance. It is a matter of consciously choosing to take the necessary steps and following through.

Discipline and peak performance go hand in hand.



Linda Murray is an Executive Coach, Speaker, Mentor, Facilitator and Trainer, who specialises in working with professional women, helping them to perform at their peak, while still having "a life".

Contact Linda today to reach your peak performance and accelerate your success.



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