



MANAGE ENERGY NOT TIME

The Secret to Getting Much More Done

Written by John Jantsch



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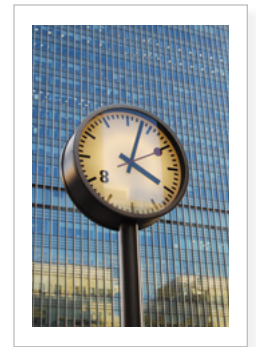
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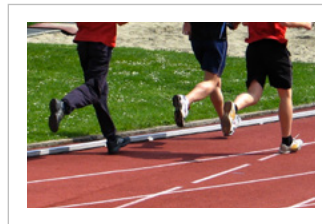
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Balance Energy

Today's working professionals have to carefully consider the time and the energy they'll need to focus on new skills like publishing, speaking and building a platform as well as sales planning, prospecting, and serving clients. This requires a new way of thinking about how time and energy is allocated, which takes a great deal of stamina.



Business is hard work. It often involves working long hours, traveling, and competing in high-stress situations. Some jobs include pounding the phones, tracking the numbers, and managing one's time. Many essential practices will draw from areas that have not always been considered typical business activities. You're being asked to do even more on top of everything else.



What if you thought of yourself less like a professional and more like a highly tuned athlete? As such, the training, nutrition, rest, and practice required to stay at the top of your game are important elements of your success.

You need to know how to take care of yourself so you can do your job and serve your clients or employer at the highest level with more energy and more creativity.



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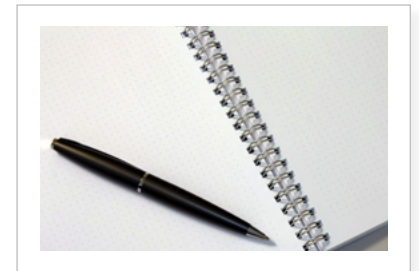
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Does It Serve You To Set Goals?

I'm not a big fan of setting goals. I know that goes against every tenant in every sales and self-help manifesto. Lots of people use goal setting as a tool to drive them to the next milestone and I'm pretty sure your organization and your manager has asked you think about goal achievement as a way to succeed.

But here's the deal: the secret to success, growth, and change is locked in habits and behaviors. As soon someone can change a habit or behavior that is holding them back, they can make effortless progress towards an end.

The first step to actual achievement of any goal is identifying habits that are holding you back and replacing them with habits that foster growth. Working harder isn't going to solve your problems or help you advance your career. Working smarter will.



The positive behavior replacements are a list of what people already know they should do. The problem with a "should" list is that it's essentially a "I have no intention of actually doing" list. Until these items show up on your "must do" list they will act as reminders of fear, regret, and self-doubt. Don't you think it's time to let that trio go?

I know this topic can sound a bit preachy, but that's not the intent. Success as a working professional on your own terms is one of the most incredible ways to live a rich and fulfilling life. It takes consistent intention, attention, and work to stay focused on building the best you in the process. Let's look at the important relationship between energy, mind, and body as it relates to business and work performance.



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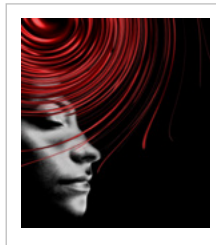
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First, let's talk about the role our relentless thoughts have on our outlook, habits, motivation, words, actions, and outcomes. We have given over control of our thoughts to our past experiences and future desires.

As you were reading this, what else were you thinking about? I'm sure you have other things on your mind, even as you read this. How many calls you have to make today? How foolish this notion sounds? Why you never got around to asking for that raise?



Our thoughts are in constant motion, whether we choose to witness them or not. Our mind is an absolute marvel of design, invention, and cognition, but it merely plays with what we feed it and tells us how to act based on that alone. There are better ways to feed your brain in service of your objectives.

If you want to change your outcomes, you must change your thoughts. That's easier said than done, though. So the first step is to begin to recognize your thoughts, even as they happen unconsciously. By developing or regaining the art of mindfulness you can take the first step towards change.

There is a wonderful little book by Deepak Chopra called [The 7 Spiritual Laws of Success](#) that I recommend to everyone I know. In one of the first chapters Chopra talks about non-judgment and how our constant judging everything that happens around us as either good or bad influences how we react without thinking. He proposes an exercise that has had a profound impact on me over the years and I suggest you give it a try.

Starting today, carve out a 15-minute period and consciously commit to foregoing any thought of judgment. Take a walk on a busy street while you monitor your thoughts and see how actively your mind wants to make judgments about everything you see. For some people, just keenly witnessing their thoughts for even fifteen minutes is incredibly mind-opening.



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The goal is to increase this mindfulness to longer periods of time and forgo judgment during an entire hour or chunk of the day.

This is how you begin to regain making choices about how you interpret, filter, and react to everything that occurs around you. Every single action or reaction we make is a choice, but we've relinquished our ability to choose because we no longer think, we simply act.

Think about the last time someone cut you off in traffic. I don't know about you, but I can think of many times when this simple act made my blood pressure rise, turned me aggressive and made me angry for an extended period almost as though I had no choice but to react in that way. When you think about that, isn't it amazing?

When we begin to regain our ability to stop judging and start thinking in ways that support who we really are we can move in the direction of fulfilling any dream we have.

So for this idea I have three acts I would like to urge you to take to liberate your thoughts starting today.

- 1) **Make it a habit to spend at least 15 minutes a day witnessing your thoughts and calming any and all desire to judge things that occur.**
- 2) **Start each day mentally combing over a list of the things you are most grateful for.**
- 3) **Read Deepak Chopra's 7 Spiritual Laws of Success.**



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Consider Breathing

Breathing is probably the most mindless of all human behaviors. Yet an intentional practice of mindful breathing is one of the most powerful tools you can employ, for your career and your personal life as well.

Depending up what we do throughout the day, most of us average between 20,000 and 30,000 breaths each day. Breathing is the thing we do the most, is vital to our existence and, yet, we do it without thought. Such is the miracle of the human body.

Just because we can do it without thought, doesn't mean we should. Your breath controls how you feel, think, absorb, react, move and speak. Why not learn how to use it as a tool to better control these things?



Many Eastern teachings, including meditation and yoga, are founded on the idea of using your breath to fire your mind-body connection. You can access the power of this tool, and use your breath to stay grounded in the present, with a few simple actions.

The benefits of intentional breathing techniques are no longer held only in the new age or holistic worlds. Traditional Western medical practitioners have also embraced the benefits of breathing exercises. Modern medicine is finally admitting that most chronic illness are stress related. Intentional breathing is the greatest stress buster never developed by a pharmaceutical company.

The next time you're feeling stressed over a situation, phone call, deadline, or meeting, close you eyes and consciously take three or four really deep breaths, with equally deep exhalations. Notice how much tension you release from places you didn't even feel.

You can use this simple mindful breathing technique as a way to de-clutter the head and return to why you're doing what you're doing. This is one of the most important productivity tools.



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I also recommend checking out a form of breathing commonly called Pranayama. Simply put, it involves taking slow, deep, full breaths for a number of counts, holding them for a number of counts and releasing them fully for a number of counts repeatedly for about ten minutes.

This is a process that you can do every morning. I can't tell you how energized and relaxed you're going to feel after completing it.

There's even technology available to help you destress. [Saagara](#) offers an app that guides you through the deep-breathing process without getting in the way.



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Manage Energy, Not Time

Time is the most precious human resource. It's really the only thing you can't make more of. So people concoct all manners of routine to try to help them manage time.

But time can't really be managed. We can't make more, we can't move it, we can't even restructure it – all we can do is monitor how much we get done as we move through it.

Managing your energy is a much more profitable pursuit than wrestling with time. We can manufacture energy, we can channel energy, and we can use a variety of tools to remain conscious about the various types of energy we need to draw upon daily to get more done with the time we're allotted.

As any professional has likely learned, it takes plenty of physical energy to perform at work day in and day out. You likely work long hours, build up and hold a tremendous amount of stress, and never fully come off the stage and out of the performance lights.

While most acknowledge the drain of physical energy, few truly consider the emotional energy consumption that occurs as well. On top of the energy to get up do the work, adding value and insight involves the need for energy that drives things like creativity, intention, purpose, intuition, and innovation.

When you neglect these forms of energy you lose touch with why you do what you do and work becomes a grind.

Over the years, I've developed a few habits or rituals that I adhere to daily in my efforts to manage the energy I need to run my business.

Whenever it feels like I'm getting a little stuck in business it almost always because I've grown a little sloppy in the area of energy management.

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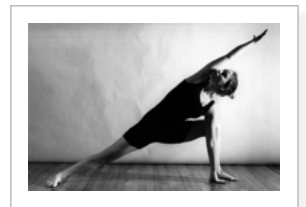
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Here's a list of some common energy tools and hacks.

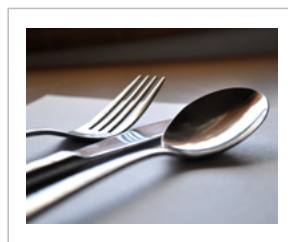
Meditation - Try spending about 20 minutes in a very simple breathing form of meditation first thing in the morning. This really wakes you up and allows you to get centered and focus on your intentions for the day and beyond.

Yoga - Even if you don't have time for a class, taking time for a 15-minute series of yoga poses will make you more prepared to take on the day. Try those that involve stretching and focus on the organs and glands.



Exercise - I believe that everyone should consider some form of exercise at least five times a week. You may spend as much as an hour or more in each session, but you will always get this time back in terms of energy and productivity. You can try running, biking, or strength training.

Food is fuel - I wonder what would happen if people really just thought of the food they ate as fuel, nothing more, nothing less. The food we eat drives how we feel and perform and that probably plays a role in your success, confidence, and appearance. Eating, then, is a part of success or failure when viewed in that context.



Watching what you eat has a huge impact on your energy and performance. I recommend hiring a nutritionist and getting some real advice on making changes in this area just like highly trained athletes. It may be some of the best money you can spend.

Planned interruption - Throughout my day, I set a timer to make sure I never go over about 45 minutes without getting up and moving around. Keep some simple exercise equipment in your office, in your car, or when you're on the road and take quick movement refreshers throughout the day.



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Schedule windows - Most people are most productive in creative work during two very distinct windows of time each day. There are valid physiological reasons for this (and if you want to study a bit up on Circadian rhythms and Chronobiology, be my guest). Think about the times when you are most creative and productive; plan your days accordingly to use those windows like a maniac.

Naps - There's an amazing amount of research that suggests the many benefits of taking a 15-minute "power nap" in the middle of each day. It's a great way to release the physical stress that builds up unconsciously during the day.



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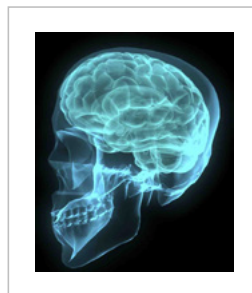
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Business is noisy. A typical day might involve dozens of conversations, meetings, decisions, tasks, and insights. It might feel like you're running and talking to people all day long. And while you're doing that, you're also absorbing a lot of mental noise; every thought, conscious or otherwise, roars through your head like the intersection of trains headed into the station.



We get pretty good at muffling the noise and become almost used to it, but it takes its toll no matter what we think.

One of the best ways to return our focus to the priorities of the day is to practice being quiet. This isn't as easy as it might sound. Try this right now: close your eyes and just sit for five minutes and see how noisy your brain is. Most people can't do this for more than 30 seconds without beginning to fidget.



We've trained our brain to be always on, which leads to constantly talking, considering what to do next, and reaching for our phones whenever we have a down minute to fill.

We need to retrain ourselves to be still or run the risk of losing touch with why we do what we do.

Here are some of the ways I've found to turn down the noise in my head.

Go analog - Set up an area in your office with crayons and paper and other crafty kind of materials. Every now and then unplug and go draw, cut and paste while taking your mind off your to do list.

Journal - Get a big notebook and get in the habit of free flow journaling. When I first started doing this, what spilled out of me



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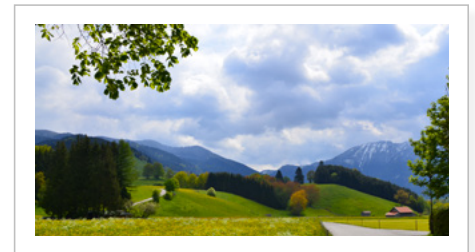
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was so goofy. But I didn't edit or judge what I wrote in any way. Eventually, this journal became an outlet for releasing thoughts that were somewhere rolling around in my head, blocking my intentions and focus.



Meditate - I've already mentioned this idea but it's worth repeating as many now agree about the benefits of a meditation practice. It's hard for people to do because they believe it is supposed to be this path to enlightenment. If you put that kind of pressure on anything, it won't be enjoyable. Think about meditation as five or ten minutes a day to simply witness your thoughts and experience first-hand how noisy it is up there.

Get outside - I am amazed at the healing power of nature. Every single one of us should get outside and lay on our backs in the grass and watch the white puffy clouds go by for about ten or fifteen minutes a day minimum. If you really want to experience the power of nature, take a daylong hike or pitch a tent in a forest near a stream. The bigness of it all is one of the most quieting tonics available.



Sit and listen - Try this one for a little different perspective. Close your eyes and sit and listen to all the sounds near by. Don't think anything, just listen to the world around you. Then slowly move your perception out farther and farther picking up sounds just outside, traffic maybe, and then a train off in the distance. See how far you can tune in. I don't know why but this little exercise seems to open up pathways in my thinking and quiet the noise that's right around me.

Retreat - One of the biggest, scariest and most awesome things you can do is lock yourself away for a weekend retreat with no computer, phone, TV, or need to make any conversation at all. You might not be able to take a full day away from your job, but what if you tried it for even half a day? On a retreat day, you could write out your intentions



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and plan for the upcoming year or you just take an opportunity to slow down and think about the things that really matter, the things you know you're meant to do, the things you're grateful for or the intentions you have for your career and your life.

It's a shame that being quiet is so hard. Part of this is just the world we live in and part is self-inflicted. The good news is we still have the ability to dial it up and down as a choice in the infinite number of choices we get to make.



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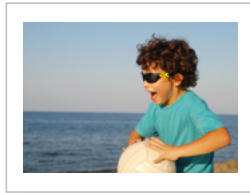
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The concept of work just doesn't seem that fun anymore. Sadly millions upon millions of people go into work, even work of their own creation, and get the life sucked right out of them.



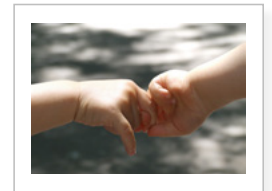
What if work was more like play? Remember when you were a kid and you and your friends could get lost for entire days in the invention and implementation of play?

Certainly it helps if you love what you've chosen to do for a living, but like so many things in life, play is as much an attitude as a state. Every business and every employee can benefit by purposefully adding elements of play to daily routines and organizational process. So, you might have to take this one up with your manager or team!

Productivity at work isn't about how much time you spend doing the work, it's about how well you spend the time you invest. Most people are more productive when they feel good and charged up, two things that play always delivers.

From a practical business standpoint there is much to like about play.

Play is a great way to connect - People are drawn to playfulness. It can be a defining personality trait of a brand or simply a way that you approach the things you need to do. Playful presentations, emails, and follow-up help people feel good about this thing we call work. (It's also a great way to differentiate yourself.) Fun is one of the greatest connectors in the human toolbox and study after study has proven the positive mental and physical health benefits offered by play. Who dictated that business and work was meant to be so darn serious anyway?



Play is super food for creativity - Creativity is the life-blood of so much of what I'm asking you to consider. Most of the work we end up doing leads to clogged creativity over time. What if you got the sales team together once a day and had a white board drawing contest?



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Or cranked up Pandora and played name that artist. Watch how the creativity begins to re-flow when you do something different.

Play builds teamwork - The basic framework of most games depends upon teammates working together within a set of rules to achieve a common objective. Now that sounds like a healthy sales environment to me. Take that up a notch and get your support team outdoors, into nature working together, playing a game and watch how quickly they resolve differences and work together.



Play reduces stress - Work can be downright stressful at times and play provides an outlet to reduce the physical and mental damages caused by stress. Play doesn't have to mean a full-blown pickup basketball game in the warehouse either. Play can be a walk around the park with a frisky pup.

Play doesn't seem like work - When you are engaged in a game you enter what psychiatrist and writer Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes as a flow state. This is the state that many gamers suggest takes over and allows them play for days on end. I'm not suggesting that you install an Xbox at the office, but you can add game-like elements to just about every function. That's why properly designed sales and customer contests have such impact.

Play is an attitude that can run through every element of what makes a company what it stands for. Playfulness has its own brand of attraction and every organization could benefit by creating a position responsible for keeping play alive inside and out.



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I have spent a great deal of time over the last decade or two trying to understand and sort out the role of purpose as it relates to work. And you know what? – it’s a lot easier to consider in retrospect than to try to grasp by looking towards some far off horizon.

In this quest, you should consider what brings you joy the most, where your passion lies, and even what legacy you want to leave behind. But until you acknowledge the fact that what you are doing right now must be your life’s purpose, you’ll always feel cheated somehow.



Now, this isn’t one of those “live in the moment” ideas. What I’m saying is that I discovered my purpose in work when I finally realized that it’s the experience of what I’m doing and living my work with passion that defines my purpose. Giving in to that idea is how purpose finds you.

The struggle to find that perfect thing you were meant to be is what causes untold amounts of pressure while the very thing you were meant to do is experience what you’re actually doing more fully.

When you realize that one distinction, you can start to change the world around you by building new beliefs. Everything we do in work and in life is dictated by our beliefs and changing this one belief is how you change your existing reality.

I had the chance to discuss this idea with [Tom Asacker](#), author of several critically acclaimed books including *The Business of Belief: How the World’s Best Marketers, Designers, Salespeople, Coaches, Fundraisers, Educators, Entrepreneurs and Other Leaders Get Us to Believe*.

Asacker writes about how our beliefs dictate, right or wrong, every action we take. To me, our beliefs also rule how we think about purpose and passion. Many people don’t find purpose in their work because they don’t think they can or should—or that purpose must



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represent something much grander than what they are about today.

To me, the missing piece in the struggle to bring purpose to any job lies in the words of Buckminster Fuller. “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

So, in order to work more fully on purpose you must make your existing model of work obsolete.

Sounds like a lot of fun doesn't it?





About The Author

John Jantsch is a marketing consultant, speaker and best selling author of Duct Tape Marketing, Duct Tape Selling, The Commitment Engine and The Referral Engine.

He is the creator of the [Duct Tape Marketing System](#) and [Duct Tape Marketing Consulting Network](#) that trains and licenses small business marketing consultants around the world.

His blog was chosen as a Forbes favorite for marketing and small business and his podcast, a top ten marketing show on iTunes, was called a “must listen” by Fast Company magazine.

Huffington Post calls him one of the [top 100 “Must Follow”](#) on Twitter and Forbes named Duct Tape Marketing on of the [100 Best Websites for Entrepreneurs](#).

To find out more about John and Duct Tape Marketing visit <http://www.ducttapemarketing.com/>.



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