

Wellcoaches Class

The Power of Full Engagement

Summary of Book Reviews

Heidi Duskey

This is a wonderful, eminently-readable book filled with practical suggestions that anyone can use. Its premise is that our energy, not our time is “the fundamental currency of high performance”, and that skillful management of energy makes it possible for us to be fully engaged.

To accomplish this, Loehr and Schwartz present a step-by-step process to help us:

- (1) examine how we currently manage our energy
- (2) identify specific areas where we don't manage it well
- (3) gain clarity about why and, finally
- (4) how to create a plan to manage it with more skill.

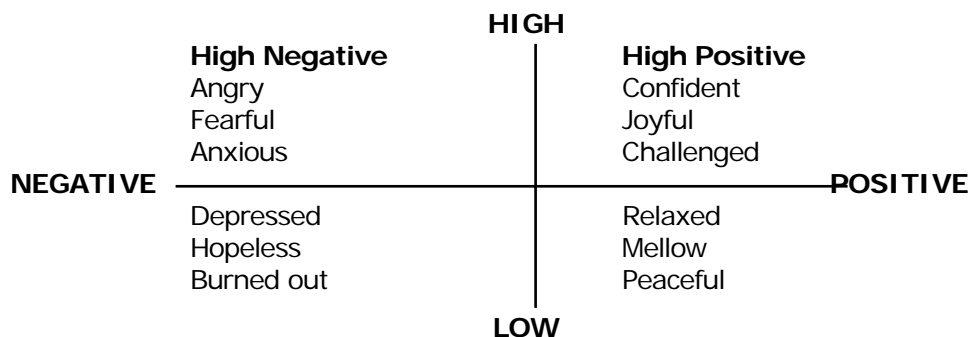
Interspersed throughout the book are examples of how their clients have implemented this process and applied the principles of full engagement to their lives. And, if you're interested in seeing how fully engaged you are, you can go online to their website (PowerofFullEngagement.com) and take a brief version of the Full Engagement Inventory yourself.

Lesson #1

“Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.” (page 9)

These 4 sources of energy are interconnected in much the same way as the cylinders of a car engine: if one cylinder misfires, the entire engine sputters. Physical and emotional energies are our most fundamental energies. Together they describe our affect, how we present ourselves to the world. Physical energy capacity is measured in terms of quantity (low to high) and emotional energy capacity in quality (negative to positive). Graphing these measurements, we can place various expressions of energy into one of 4 quadrants.

Below are some examples:



Full engagement is possible only when our energy is present in the high positive quadrant. To illustrate how these 2 sources of energy affect us and the people with whom we interact, Loehr and Schwartz create a scenario of a surgeon preparing for surgery and then ask: If you were this physician's patient, where would you want your surgeon's energies to be focused? Clearly, we would want the surgeon's energy to be in the high positive quadrant.

As important as the high positive energies are to full engagement, the energies of the low positive quadrant also deserve comment. They are the energies of the "strategically disengaged," the energies of renewal. How important is renewal? For me, this was lesson #2.

Lesson #2

"Because energy diminishes both with overuse and with underuse, we must balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal." (page 11)

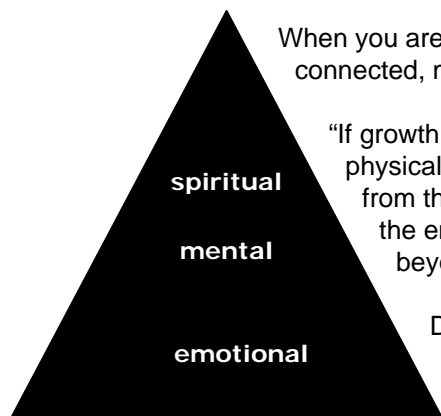
In order to be fully engaged, we must periodically disengage so that we can renew ourselves. In other words, we can't expect to be fully engaged 100% of the time and, in fact, we need to recover and replenish our energies.

As a competitive athlete, I know this to be true, and it was wonderful to see this concept validated in a different context. The science of exercise physiology and my own experience (I have learned this the hard way!) indicate that recovery and "active rest" periods are a requisite for athletic gains. Recovery is not only important, it's actually necessary for optimal performance. As human beings, we function in much the same way.

"Oscillation" is the term Loehr and Schwartz use to describe the rhythmic wave of full engagement and recovery. The opposite of oscillation is called "flat lining".

When we don't incorporate adequate renewal into our lives, we eventually lose the ability to become fully engaged. We simply don't have enough energy to spare and we become "flat liners" mentally and emotionally. Equally as debilitating is not expending enough energy, moving through life chronically disengaged. When this happens, we become flat liners physically and spiritually.

Lesson #3



When you are fully engaged, you are physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused, and spiritually aligned.

"If growth and development take place from the bottom up – from physical to emotional to mental to spiritual – change is powered from the top down. 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." (page 131)

Defining this purpose is the first step to full engagement. It is also one of the most important things we can help our clients do as coaches.

This is one of the reasons we ask our clients to begin their work with us by defining a wellness vision and identifying key motivators for that vision.

Helping our clients connect with the things that motivate them intrinsically gives them a powerful context for adapting behaviors that maximize their wellness.

Lesson #4

"Truth without compassion is cruelty – to others and to ourselves." (page 164)

(As an aside, I must say that reading this for the first time actually took my breath away. A version of it has become one of my morning affirmations.)

Sometimes we are untruthful with ourselves because we choose to be so. This denial is, in fact, a form of disengagement. In contrast to this is the freedom we experience when we are able to embrace the truth about ourselves. This freedom, in turn, supports optimism, happiness, and positive energy. When we are truthful and compassionate we acknowledge both our own self worth and that of others. We are open to all that life can give us.

Truth is in the eyes of the beholder; my truth may not be yours. We all look at life through many filters and a common form of self-deception is assuming that our view represents "the" truth, when it is just the lens through which we choose to view the world.

Lesson #5

"Positive energy rituals – highly specific routines for managing energy – are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance." (page 198)

Positive energy rituals are the strategies that allow us to remove the barriers to full engagement. While the concept of developing and using strategies wasn't new to me, I was intrigued with the idea that the sustaining power of rituals is due to the fact that they conserve energy by ultimately becoming automatic and relatively effortless. Positive energy rituals, therefore, are more than just positive behaviors. Over time, they become habits that we do without thought and effort. They become part of who we are, allowing us to expend energy where the need is greater.

This was a great book, chock full of wonderful and thought-provoking ideas and lessons. Each of the lessons I've listed here have found their way into my coaching, either by impacting who I'm being during the session or through the guidance I can provide to my client.

I highly recommend this book. Buy it! Read it! Use it!

Kevin Rail

My 5 main bullet points:

1. On page 117, there was this particularly powerful quote that I found. It was an excerpt originally toled by Nietzsche... "He who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how." It's about having definiteness of purpose. I love it.
2. Negative emotions manifest, cause energy drain, and cause toxicity in the body. This is why I always stress to people to try to always think positive. When you do, the complete opposite happens.
3. Alignment of values to virtues. On page 142, there is a good checklist of deeply held values. I found

myself staring at it for a number of minutes on a number of occasions since. It is right in line with the Wellcoaches shared values, but on a larger scale.

4. Projection - Recognizing greed and hatred and arrogance in others and failing to see it in ourselves.

5. The biggest lesson that I got from this book can be found on page 202. It is a pyramid/flow chart on sustaining high performance. I would like to get this blown up to the size of a poster and put it on my wall. I think it can be a very valuable guide for anyone and everyone to reference to on a daily basis.

Leigh Crews

I found *The Power of Full Engagement* an interesting read with lots of useful information. The authors create a values-based framework for managing energy that is succinct and logical. The framework has been useful for me as a tool for helping clients create their Wellness Vision and set SMART goals.

The following concepts from *The Power of Full Engagement* deal specifically with goal setting and ultimately, creating your Wellness Vision:

For a goal to be successful, it has to be linked to your value system. Across cultures, religions and time itself, people have admired and aspired to the same universal values—among them integrity, generosity, courage, humility, compassion, loyalty and perseverance.

A value is a roadmap for action. Values that we fail to reflect in our behavior are ultimately empty. To be meaningful, a value must influence the choices that we make in our everyday lives. The more we are committed to and guided by our values, the more powerful a source of energy they become.

A virtue is a value in action. For instance, we may hold responsibility as a value, but the virtue is behaving responsibly. Aligning our goals with our own deeply held values holds us to a different standard for follow through.

The authors provide a Deepest Values Checklist for the reader to use to help define their own deepest values. Since I assume that most clients will not have read the book, I have created a handout/worksheet based upon this checklist for clients to use as they begin the process of determining their Wellness Vision. At the bottom of the handout, I have provided extra space for them to turn their values into virtues in a specific way. This is the beginning of their Wellness Vision. The Wellness Vision becomes the blueprint for how they intend to invest their energy.

While I found the entire book to be useful, the following are my top five most valuable concepts as presented in *The Power of Full Engagement*:

Energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance. Everything we do requires energy. Every one of our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors has an energy consequence, for better or worse. The ultimate measure of our lives is not how much time we spend on the planet, but rather how much energy we invest in the time that we have. Performance, health and happiness are grounded in the skillful management of energy.

Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy:

Physical capacity is defined by quantity of energy.

Emotional capacity is defined by quality of energy.

Mental capacity is defined by focus of energy.

Spiritual capacity is defined by force of energy.

Negative habits block, distort, waste, diminish, deplete and contaminate stored energy. Remove these barriers by establishing strategic positive energy rituals that insure sufficient capacity in all dimensions.

Sustained high performance is best served by assuming the mentality of a sprinter rather than a marathoner.

Over the span of a career, performance is optimized by scheduling work in to 90 to 120-minute periods of intensive effort followed by shorter periods of recovery and renewal.

The Full Engagement training system begins spiritually with a connection to purpose. 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.

Coaches can benefit from the guidance in this book in order to manage their own energy resources as well as assisting clients to develop life changing wellness rituals.

Frank Claps

I have a client, a medical professional, who is at an age and station in life where retirement is a viable option. But he still feels passionate about his work and wants to continue. The thing is, for that passion to remain strong, he know he has to "get away" from time to time for long and short-term vacations. Without knowing it, he is a perfect example of what this book describes as the power of full engagement.

According to the authors, "the number of hours in a day is fixed, but the potential quantity and quality of energy available to use is not." P5. Therefore, "performance, health and happiness are grounded in the skillful management of energy." P5

The key, as my client has learned, is that "because energy capacity diminishes both with overuse and underuse, we must balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal" P11 and "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." P12.

Disengagement is probably more difficult than might be imagined. Modern technology has given us pagers, cell phones, and portable lap-tops that keep us perpetually tethered to the workplace. In addition, there are more home-based businesses and home offices than ever before. All this can make true disengagement challenging; something we must fully respect, commit to and plan for - to find and schedule those projects or activities that totally remove us from our professional commitments.

For me, it's playing with my grandchildren, officiating track meets, or simply sitting on my deck in the spring, summer and fall and listening to the sounds of nature. But full disengagement isn't possible unless we truly respect it and actually plan for it. Sometimes, we have to physically remove ourselves from the site of our work - especially with home offices.

One of the best ways to disengage is through rituals. The book suggests the importance of creating rituals to actively engage in disengagement, if you will. "The most important role of ritual is to insure an effective balance between energy expenditure and energy renewal in the service of full engagement. All great performers have rituals optimizing their ability to move rhythmically between stress and recovery." P170

Stated earlier, “Positive energy rituals are highly specific routines for managing energy. They are the keys to full engagement and sustained high performance.” P15

One of the examples the authors cited was golfer Jack Nicklaus, who created rituals that allow him “to move from peaks of concentration to valleys of relaxation and back again as necessary” during a round of golf. He is able to intensify his focus up to each shot, then, assuming no disaster, begin a relaxation process until the next. There also was the example in the book of the client who would stop by a park while driving home from work and sitting there until the *work Roger* was replaced by the *father-husband Roger*. That was his way to disengage from work and engage in being a father and husband.

But rituals are anything but automatic. They require planning, work and conscious practice. Ask any athlete who puts on a “game face.” These “faces” are the result of practice similar to that involving the respective skills of the sports.

The book details four separate energies – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The first three do require some disengagement activities, while in the last, engagement and disengagement can be simultaneous. The idea of spiritual energy is finding a focus outside of your personal needs.

Jan Barosh

I loved this book. The information is simple, practical, profound and most importantly works the way people naturally work.

Lesson 1 – Energy, not time is our most precious resource. Everyone has 24 hours each day and no one has more than 24 hours each day. Productivity is not about time management as much as it is about energy management.

Everywhere in nature there is a continuous pattern of oscillation or a continuous cycling between extremes. There is a peak and a valley in each ocean wave, high and low tides, dark and light in each day, the inhalation and exhalation of our breath, times of high and low energy in each day for humans and animals. When we honor this rhythmic “pulse of life”, we are healthy and productive just as our earth is healthy and productive when we honor it’s own natural rhythms.

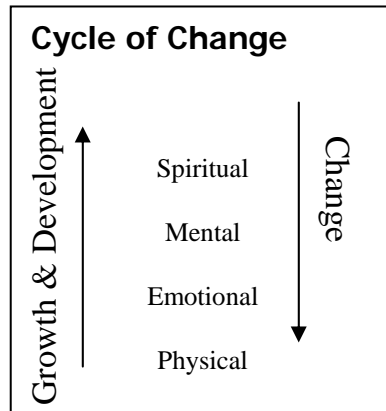
When stress and relaxation are balanced and flow in rhythm, we perform well. Too much or too little of either and we lose productivity, enjoyment of life and eventually our health.

Lesson 2 – Physical Energy, Emotional Energy, Mental Energy and Spiritual Energy are related and necessary to be fully engaged in life. Within each of these four realms are what the authors call “key muscles” which can be identified and exercised or strengthened, allowing us to achieve optimal performance.

Lesson 3 – The authors initially discovered the importance of energy by working with professional athletes. Instead of focusing on skills and technique, they helped the athletes manage their energy more effectively. In the process they discovered that the difference between higher and lower-ranked competitors was not how they went for the point (engagement). Rather it was what they did immediately following the point (recovery) that separated them. The top athletes instinctively used the time between points to maximize their recovery with highly efficient and focused recovery routines. Lower-ranked athletes did not exhibit any such routine. In essence the top athletes were using the principle of full engagement and recovery, thus helping themselves prepare for full engagement on the next point. Lower-ranked athletes did not have sufficient recovery to remain fully engaged for the next point.

Lesson 4 – The changing of habits is in itself a cycle. A certain level of personal development must occur in order for the change in the habit to take place. If we stack the four energies discussed in Lesson 2, growth and development happens from the bottom up, change happens from the top down.

'What is the meaning of life?' is the predominating question that has driven humans since the beginning of time. Our purpose in life is best answered for each of us when we have developed spiritually. At that point it becomes easier to make meaningful and lasting changes in our habits.



Lesson 5 – Positive rituals are used to change our habits. The authors gave numerous examples of client interventions. In each case they identified the client's performance barrier, their desired outcome and the targeted muscle to strengthen. Whether we call it rituals, structure or environment – all words commonly used in the coaching world – the important thing is to connect actions taken to our clients purpose or vision.

Part two of the book is a training system that puts these lessons to work. In a nutshell values are the fuel that drives purpose. A compelling vision determines how the energy of purpose is invested and keeps us on track. Energy is managed through stress and recovery. Rituals are tools that keep us in balance, strengthen our muscles in each energy area and translate our values and priorities into action. Together they expand our resources, allow us to meet challenges full-on, build recovery into our activities and keep us at optimal productivity while enjoying life to the fullest. Can we ask for more?

Sherry LeBlanc

The mind and the body are one...an engaging, lively and compelling book written in a creative manner by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz

The common –sense and grass roots guide for corporate executives and people in all walks of life.

This is a book I have recommended to my clients who are *deconditioned athletes* or *extreme executives* looking to bring competing areas of their life into alignment with purpose.

A few take away learning ...

Dr. Loehr offers a compelling explanation of the necessity of properly managing our energy on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels in order to live extraordinary lives. He explains simply that the higher the quality of our input on all of these levels, the higher the quality of our output; which means

the more meaningful and genuine our contributions will be to that which we value, such as family, relationships and career. [outer game] + [inner game] = success

Achieving sustained high performance requires that *leaders/clients/self* increase energy capacity in four dimensions. All four are critical, none is sufficient by itself, and each profoundly affects the others:

TRAIN PHYSICALLY – the healthier you are physically, the more engaged you will be and the better you will perform at work.

The physical dimension of energy is our fundamental source of fuel for performance, even if our work is 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 what matters most to us.

TRAIN EMOTIONALLY – To keep confidence, to control fear and anger, to be hopeful and optimistic, to get along with co-workers/teammates, to stay engaged emotionally

The emotional dimension of energy can transform threats into challenges when positive, or evoke anxiety, frustration and defensiveness when negative. Emotional intelligence is simply the capacity to manage emotions skillfully in the service of highly positive energy.

TRAIN MENTALLY – To maintain focus and concentration, solid mental preparation, critical thinking, positive thinking, visualization

Nothing interferes with performance as the inability to concentrate on the task at hand. To perform at our best, even under extreme pressure, we must be able to sustain concentration, and move flexibly between broad and narrow, as well as internal and external focus.

TRAIN SPIRITUALLY – To recruit team spirit, honesty, integrity, respect for others, extending beyond self-interest. To be more engaged in your work and to perform better under pressure, your life and energy investments need to be in alignment with your ultimate destination [purpose]

While the quantity of energy we have is largely a reflection of our physical capacity, our motivation to spend what we have is largely a spiritual issue. We define "spiritual" not in a religious sense, but as a connection to a deeply held set of values and to a purpose beyond our own self-interest.

“When we are completing any mission, whether it is in the medicine, the corporate world or every day life, we are trying to help ordinary people find a pathway to becoming extraordinary. We use the words powerful engagement to refer to a condition when an individual is able to recruit the highest, and the greatest quantity and quality, and the most precise focus, and the greatest force and intensity of energy”

Loehr says we have to determine the most pertinent areas on which to spend our energy and then determine the “what enables us to be fully engaged at the most critical moments of execution in any task...”

He insists there are concrete things we must do every day to restore our energy systems, including implementing proper nutrition, sleep, and exercise. He explains the importance of living our lives like an interval training metaphor, turning our systems full on and then completely off in order to achieve maximum potential.

Principle 1

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

Principle 2

Because energy capacity diminishes both with overuse and with under use, we must balance energy expenditure with the intermittent energy renewal

Principle 3

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

Principle 4

Positive energy rituals-highly specific routines for managing energy-are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance

MAKING CHANGE THAT LAST REQUIRES A THREE STEP PROCESS:

- Define purpose
- Face the truth
- Take action

Hire a coach!