

More and More, Less and Less

The way we're working isn't working.

The defining ethic in the modern workplace is more, bigger, faster. More information than ever is available to us, and the speed of every transaction has increased exponentially, prompting a sense of permanent urgency and endless distraction. We have more customers and clients to please, more e-mails to answer, more phone calls to return, more tasks to juggle, more meetings to attend, more places to go, and more hours we feel we must work to avoid falling further behind.

The technologies that make instant communication possible anywhere, at any time, speed up decision making, create efficiencies, and fuel a truly global marketplace. But too much of a good thing eventually becomes a bad thing. Left unmanaged and unregulated, these same technologies have the potential to overwhelm us. The relentless urgency that characterizes most corporate cultures undermines creativity, quality, engagement, thoughtful deliberation, and, ultimately, performance.

No matter how much value we produce today—whether it's measured in dollars or sales or goods or widgets—it's never enough. We run faster, stretch out our arms further, and stay at work longer and later. We're so busy trying to keep up that we stop noticing we're in a Sisyphean race we can never win.

All this furious activity exacts a series of silent costs: less capacity for focused attention, less time for any given task, and less opportunity to think reflectively and long term. When we finally do get home at night, we have less energy for our families, less time to wind down and relax, and fewer hours to sleep. We return to work each morning feeling less rested, less than fully engaged, and less able to focus. It's a

vicious cycle that feeds on itself. Even for those who still manage to perform at high levels, there is a cost in overall satisfaction and fulfillment. The ethic of more, bigger, faster generates value that is narrow, shallow, and short term. More and more, paradoxically, leads to less and less.

The consulting firm Towers Perrin's most recent global workforce study bears this out. Conducted in 2007–2008, before the worldwide recession, it looked at some 90,000 employees in eighteen countries. Only 20 percent of them felt fully engaged, meaning that they go above and beyond what's required of them because they have a sense of purpose and passion about what they're doing. Forty percent were "enrolled," meaning capable but not fully committed, and 38 percent were disenchanted or disengaged.

All of that translated directly to the bottom line. The companies with the most engaged employees reported a 19 percent increase in operating income and a 28 percent growth in earnings per share. Those with the lowest levels of engagement had a 32 percent decline in operating income, and their earnings dropped more than 11 percent. In the companies with the most engaged employees, 90 percent of the employees had no plans to leave. In those with the least engaged, 50 percent were considering leaving. More than a hundred studies have demonstrated some correlation between employee engagement and business performance.

Think for a moment about your own experience at work.

How truly engaged are you? What's the cost to you of the way you're working? What's the impact on those you supervise and those you love?

What will the accumulated toll be in ten years if you're still making the same choices?

The way we're working isn't working in our own lives, for the people we lead and manage, and for the organizations in which we work. We're guided by a fatal assumption that the best way to get more done is to work longer and more continuously. But the more hours we work and the longer we go without real renewal, the more we begin to default, reflexively, into behaviors that reduce our own effectiveness—impatience, frustration, distraction, and disengagement—and take a pernicious toll on others.

The real issue is not the number of hours we sit behind a desk but

the energy we bring to the work we do and the value we generate as a result. A growing body of research suggests that we're most productive when we move between periods of high focus and intermittent rest. Instead, we live in a gray zone, constantly juggling activities but rarely fully engaging in any of them—or fully disengaging from any of them. The consequence is that we settle for a pale version of the possible.

How can such a counterproductive way of working persist?

The answer is grounded in a simple assumption, deeply embedded in organizational life and in our own belief systems. It's that human beings operate most productively in the same one-dimensional way computers do: continuously, at high speeds, for long periods of time, running multiple programs at the same time. Far too many of us have unwittingly bought into this myth, a kind of Stockholm syndrome, dutifully trying to mimic the machines we're meant to run, so they end up running us.

The limitation of even the highest-end computer is that it inexorably depreciates in value over time. Unlike computers, human beings have the potential to grow and develop, to increase our depth, complexity and capacity over time. To make that possible, we must manage ourselves far more skillfully than we do now.

Our most basic survival need is to spend and renew our energy. We're hardwired to make waves—to be alert during the day and to sleep at night, and to work at high intensity for limited periods of time—but we lead increasingly linear lives. By putting in long, continuous hours, we expend too much mental and emotional energy without sufficient intermittent renewal. It's not just rejuvenation we sacrifice along the way but also the unique benefits we can accrue during periods of rest and renewal, including creative breakthroughs, a broader perspective, the opportunity to think more reflectively and long term, and sufficient time to metabolize experiences. Conversely, by living mostly desk-bound sedentary lives, we expend too little physical energy and grow progressively weaker. Inactivity takes a toll not just on our bodies, but also on how we feel and how we think.

THE PERFORMANCE PULSE

In 1993, Anders Ericsson, long a leading researcher in expert performance and a professor at Florida State University, conducted an extraordinary study designed to explore the power of deliberate practice among violinists. Over the years, numerous writers, including Malcolm Gladwell in his best-selling *Outliers*, have cited Ericsson's study for its evidence that intrinsic talent may be overvalued. As Gladwell puts it, "People at the very top don't just work harder, or even much harder than everyone else. They work much, *much* harder."

But that conclusion doesn't begin to capture the complexity of what Ericsson discovered. Along with two colleagues, he divided thirty young violinists at the Music Academy of Berlin into three separate groups, based on ratings from their professors. The "best" group consisted of those destined to eventually become professional soloists. The "good" violinists were those expected to have careers playing as part of orchestras. The third group, recruited from the music education division of the academy, was headed for careers as music teachers. All of them had begun playing violin around the age of eight.

Vast amounts of data were collected on each of the subjects, most notably by having them keep a diary of all their activities, hour by hour, over the course of an entire week. They were also asked to rate each activity on three measures, using a scale of 1 to 10. The first one was how important the activity was to improving their performance on the violin. The second was how difficult they found it to do. The third was how intrinsically enjoyable they found the activity.

The top two groups, both destined for professional careers, turned out to practice an average of twenty-four hours a week. The future music teachers, by contrast, put in just over nine hours, or about a third the amount of time as the top two groups. This difference was undeniably dramatic and does suggest how much practice matters. But equally fascinating was the relationship Ericsson found between intense practice and intermittent rest.

All of the thirty violinists agreed that "practice alone" had the biggest impact on improving their performance. Nearly all of them also agreed that practice was the most difficult activity in their lives and

the least enjoyable. The top two groups, who practiced an average of 3.5 hours a day, typically did so in three separate sessions of no more than 90 minutes each, mostly in the mornings, when they were presumably most rested and least distracted. They took renewal breaks between each session. The lowest-rated group practiced an average of just 1.4 hours a day, with no fixed schedule, but often in the afternoons, suggesting that they were often procrastinating.

All three groups rated sleep as the second most important activity when it came to improving as violinists. On average, those in the top two groups slept 8.6 hours a day—nearly an hour longer than those in the music teacher group, who slept an average of 7.8 hours. By contrast, the average American gets just 6.5 hours of sleep a night. The top two groups also took considerably more daytime naps than did the lower-rated group—a total of nearly three hours a week compared to less than one hour a week for the music teachers.

Great performers, Ericsson's study suggests, work more intensely than most of us do but also recover more deeply. Solo practice undertaken with high concentration is especially exhausting. The best violinists figured out, intuitively, that they generated the highest value by working intensely, without interruption, for no more than ninety minutes at a time and no more than 4 hours a day. They also recognized that it was essential to take time, intermittently, to rest and refuel. In fields ranging from sports to chess, researchers have found that four hours a day is the maximum that the best performers practice. Ericsson himself concluded that this number might represent "a more general limit on the maximal amount of deliberate practice that can be sustained over extended time without exhaustion."

Because the number of hours we work is easy to measure, organizations often default to evaluating employees by the hours they put in at their desks, rather than by the focus they bring to their work or the value they produce. Many of us complain about long hours, but the reality is that it's less demanding to work at moderate intensity for extended periods of time than it is to work at the highest level of intensity for even shorter periods. If more of us were able to focus in the intense but time-limited ways that the best violinists do, the evidence suggests that great performance would be much more common than it is.

It's also true that if you're not actively working to get better at what

you do, there's a good chance you're getting worse, no matter what the quality of your initial training may have been. As Geoffrey Colvin points out in his provocative book *Talent Is Overrated*, simply doing an activity for a long time is no guarantee that you'll do it well, much less get better at it. "In field after field," Colvin writes, "when it came to centrally important skills—stockbrokers recommending stocks, parole officers predicting recidivism, college admissions officials judging applicants—people with lots of experience were no better at their jobs than those with very little experience."

In a significant number of cases, people actually get worse at their jobs over time. "More experienced doctors," Colvin reported, "reliably score lower on tests of medical knowledge than do less experienced doctors; general physicians also become less skilled over time at diagnosing heart sounds and X-rays. Auditors become less skilled at certain types of evaluations." In some cases, diminished performance is simply the result of a failure to keep up with advances in a given field. But it's also because most of us tend to become fixed in our habits and practices, even when they're suboptimal.

OUR FOUR PRIMARY NEEDS

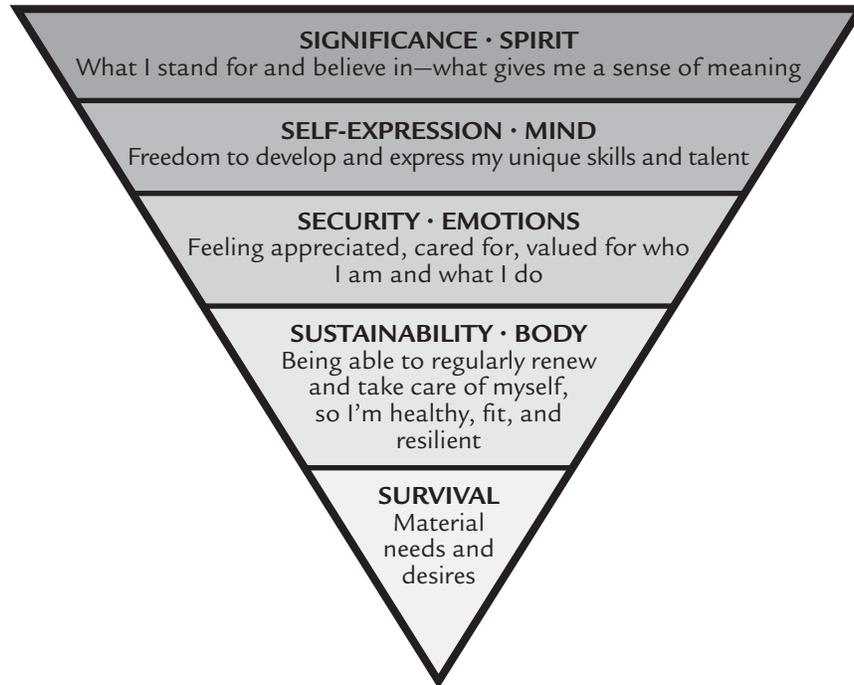
If sustainable great performance requires a rhythmic movement between activity and rest, it also depends on tapping multiple sources of energy. Plug a computer into a wall socket, and it's good to go. Human beings, on the other hand, need to meet four energy needs to operate at their best: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

By moving rhythmically between activity and renewal in each of these four dimensions, we fulfill our corresponding needs: sustainability, security, self-expression, and significance. In the process, we build our capacity to generate more and more value over time.

The problem is that few of us intentionally address each of our four key needs on a regular basis and organizations often ignore them altogether. When we fuel ourselves on a diet that lacks essential nutrients, it shouldn't be a surprise that we end up undernourished and unable to operate consistently at our best.

"Value" is a word that carries multiple levels of meaning. The ultimate measure of our effectiveness is the value we create. The ultimate

OUR CORE NEEDS



measure of our satisfaction is the value we feel. The ultimate measure of our character is the values we embody.

The primary value exchange between most employers and employees today is time for money. It's a thin, one-dimensional transaction. Each side tries to get as much of the other's resources as possible, but neither gets what it really wants. No amount of money employers pay for our time will ever be sufficient to meet all of our multidimensional needs. It's only when employers encourage and support us in meeting these needs that we can cultivate the energy, engagement, focus, creativity, and passion that fuel great performance.

For better and for worse, we've cocreated the world in which we work. Our complicity begins, ironically, with how we treat ourselves.

We tolerate extraordinary disconnects in our own lives, even in areas we plainly have the power to influence. We take too little responsibility for addressing our core needs, and we dissipate too much energy in blame, complaint, and finger-pointing.

We fail to take care of ourselves even though the consequence is that we end up undermining our health, happiness, and productivity.

We don't spend enough time—truly engaged time—with those we say we love most and who love us most, even though we feel guilty when we don't and we return to work more energized when we do.

We find ourselves getting frustrated, irritable, and anxious as the pressures rise, even though we instinctively recognize that negative emotions interfere with clear thinking and good decision making and demoralize those we lead and manage.

We allow ourselves to be distracted by e-mail and trivial tasks rather than focusing single-mindedly on our most high-leverage priorities and devoting sacrosanct time to thinking creatively, strategically, and long term.

We are so busy getting things done that we don't stop very often to consider what it is we really want or where to invest our time and energy to achieve those goals.

Of course, we can't meet our needs and build our capacity in a vacuum. Most organizations enable our dysfunctional behaviors and even encourage them through policies, practices, reward systems and cultural messages that serve to drain our energy and run down our value over time.

When the primary value exchange is time for money, people are fungible—units that can be replaced by other units. An increasing number of organizations pay lip service to the notion that “people are our greatest asset.” Call up the phrase on Google, and you'll find more than a million listings. But even among companies that make the claim, the vast majority off-load the care and feeding of employees to divisions known as “human resources,” which are rarely accorded an equal place at the executive table. As a consequence, the needs of employees are marginalized and treated as perquisites provided through programs that focus on topics such as “leadership development,” “work-life balance,” “wellness,” “flexibility,” and “engagement.”

In reality, these are largely code words for nonessential functions. They're funded when times are flush, but they're the first programs that are slashed when cost cutting begins. The vast majority of organizations fail to make the connection between the degree to which

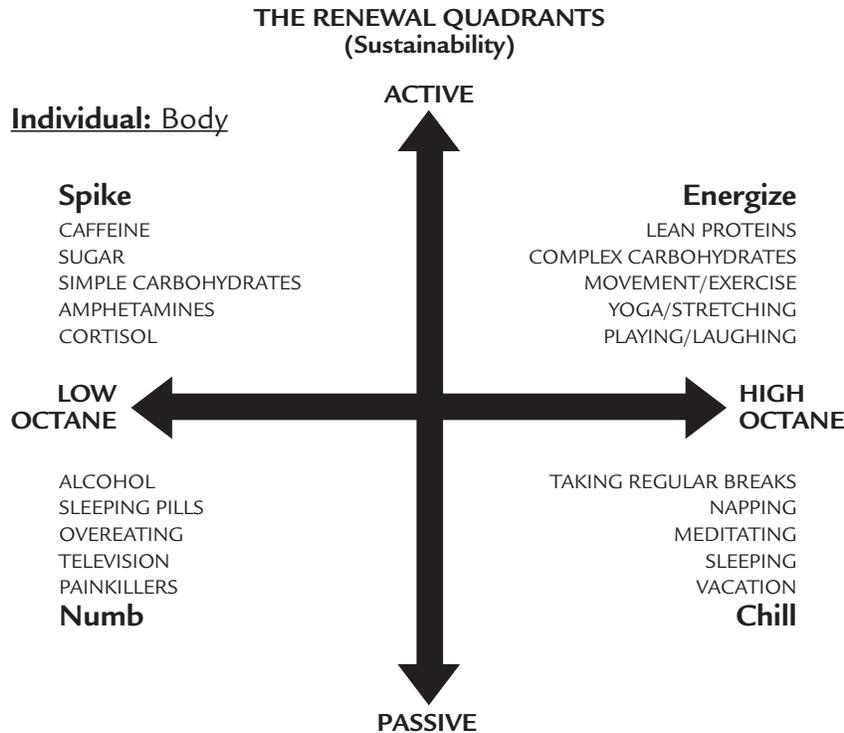
they meet their employees' needs and how effectively those employees perform.

The principles at the heart of this book grow out of a rich body of research across disciplines ranging from nutrition to cognition; strength training to training strengths; emotional self-regulation to the role of the right hemisphere of the brain; extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. These findings, generated by subject-matter experts, remain mostly isolated from one another. Our mission has been to bring the evidence together underneath one umbrella to better understand how our varied choices influence one another.

We've also learned a great deal by studying great performers in various professions. In the corporate world, we've worked with senior executives at companies including Sony, Toyota, Novartis, Google, Ford, Ernst & Young, Grey Advertising, and Royal Dutch Shell. We've also worked with cardiovascular surgeons and ICU nurses at the Cleveland Clinic, police officers at the Los Angeles Police Department and high school students in the Bronx. When we published an article about our work in *Harvard Business Review* in the fall of 2007, we received inquiries from companies and individuals in more than two dozen countries around the world including Singapore, Colombia, Russia, China, Korea, Germany, Austria, Italy, Thailand, Denmark, India, and Australia. Across disparate cultures and at all levels, people share both a visceral sense that the way they're working isn't working and an intense desire for more satisfying, productive, and sustainable ways to work and live.

Beyond survival, our needs begin at the physical level with *sustainability*. Four factors are key: nutrition, fitness, sleep, and rest. They're all forms of renewal, either active or passive. Our physical capacity is foundational, because every other source of energy depends on it.

At the individual level, our key challenge is to create a healthy rhythmic movement between activity and rest. The left-hand quadrants in the figure on the next page represent dysfunctional ways of generating and renewing energy. The optimal movement is between the upper-right and lower-right quadrants. Even then, too much of one at the expense of the other is suboptimal. Physically, most of us



tend to fall on the side of not moving enough (lower left). By contrast exercise (upper right) raises our heart rate and in so doing builds our physical capacity. It also provides a form of mental and emotional renewal, quieting the mind and calming the emotions. That's why exercise in the middle of a workday—especially after an intense period of work—can be such a powerful form of rejuvenation. On the other hand, too much exercise, too continuously, is called “overtraining” and can lead to breakdown and burnout.

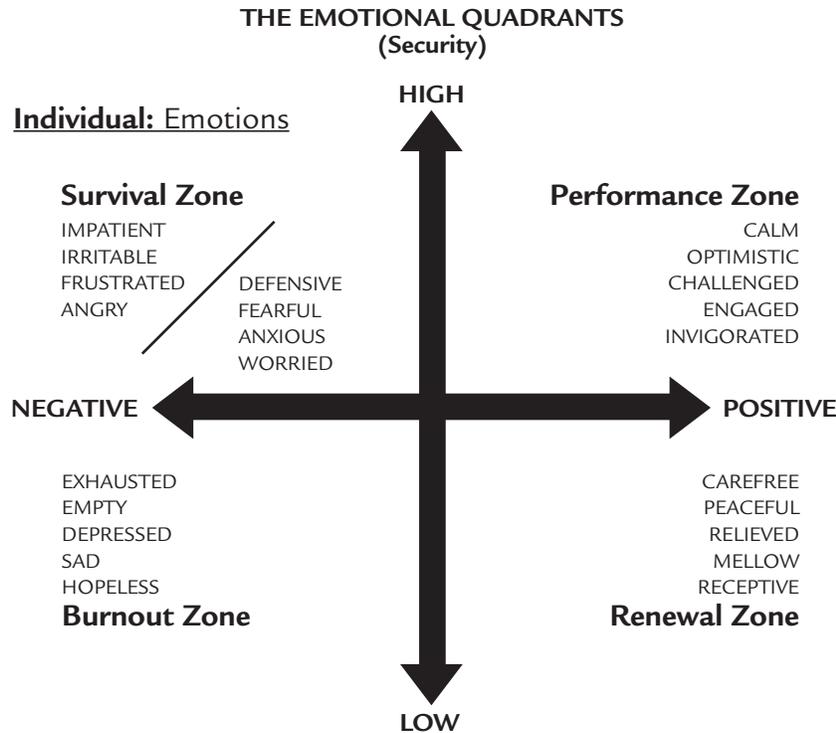
The best violinists in the Ericsson study renewed themselves physically not just by sleeping more hours than their less accomplished fellow students, but also by taking more afternoon naps. Eating more energy-rich foods, more frequently—at least every three hours—is a means of stabilizing blood sugar. Many of us attempt to run on too little food for too long and then overeat to compensate. Eating too little deprives us of a critical source of energy we need to operate at our best, and eating too much pushes us into a state of lethargy.

At the organizational level, we work with leaders to build policies, practices, and cultural expectations that support employees in a more rhythmic way of working. When we introduced our work to the top officers at the Los Angeles Police Department it rapidly became clear that sleep deprivation and exhaustion were defining issues for many members of Chief William Bratton's leadership team. Until we addressed this basic problem, nothing else we suggested was getting much traction.

At the conclusion of our work, Bratton and his team agreed on a series of nine policy changes that included limiting off-hours nighttime calls to commanding officers, in order to increase the quality and quantity of their sleep; changing the schedules for key meetings to ensure that they were held at times when the energy levels of participants were likely to be highest; and creating a series of new policies aimed at giving the commanding officers more opportunities to renew themselves during the workday. "What's happened is that our people come to work feeling more rested," Bratton told us a year after our intervention. "They were more able to focus, think clearly, and remain calm in the face of the crises that are part of our everyday work."

Our core need at the emotional level is for *security*, the sense of well-being that depends, in significant part, on the experience of being accepted and valued. How we feel profoundly influences how we perform. Feeling devalued pushes us into the Survival Zone—the upper left quadrant shown on the next page—which increases our fear, distracts our attention, drains our energy, and diminishes the value we're capable of creating. The optimal rhythmic movement in this dimension is between the positive energy we feel when we're operating at our best—the Performance Zone—and the Renewal Zone, where emotional recovery occurs. The more we renew ourselves emotionally, the better we feel about ourselves and the more resilient we are in the face of life's challenges and stresses.

Before we began working with heart surgeons and ICU nurses at the Cleveland Clinic, several of our Energy Project team members spent twenty-four hours shadowing three shifts of nurses on a cardiac intensive care unit. During that time, we asked each of the nurses we encountered to describe their primary dissatisfaction with their jobs. They were unanimous in their response: lack of appreciation from the surgeons.



“We’re the ones who keep their patients alive day in and day out, but the docs don’t talk to us or seek out our opinion,” one nurse told us, echoing many others. “They treat us like handmaidens. It’s demeaning and frustrating.” Later, we had the opportunity to ask the same question to more than a half-dozen surgeons on the same unit. They, too, were nearly unanimous in their response: lack of appreciation from hospital administrators.

Perhaps no human need is more neglected in the workplace than to feel valued. Noticing what’s wrong and what’s not working in our lives is a hardwired survival instinct. Expressing appreciation requires more conscious intention, but *feeling* appreciated is as important to us as food. The need to be valued begins at birth and never goes away. Failure to thrive is a syndrome in which newborns don’t gain sufficient weight to develop normally. One key cause, research suggests, is the absence of touch, stimulation, and care from the primary care-

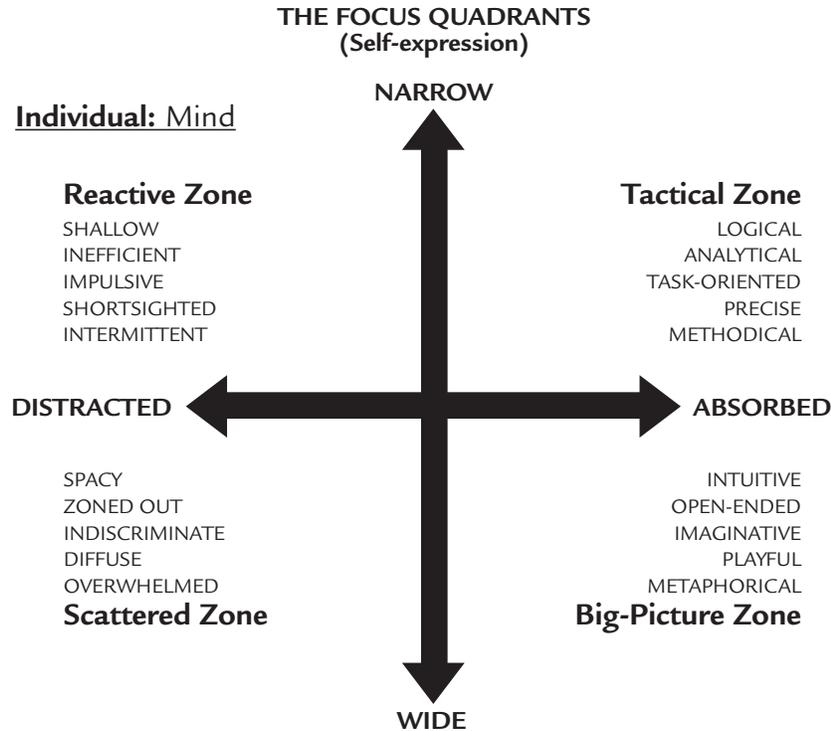
giver. Without love and attention, babies become depressed and withdrawn. Very quickly, they lose the motivation to eat and to interact with others. They also begin to develop cognitive deficits, become more prone to infections, and, in extreme cases, even die. They literally become flatliners.

Most of us obviously have better coping mechanisms, but the deep need for connection and warm regard persists through our lives and influences our performance to a remarkable degree. The single most important factor in whether or not employees choose to stay in a job, Gallup has found, is the quality of their relationship with their direct superiors. Gallup has uncovered twelve key factors that produce high engagement, productivity, and retention among employees. Fully half of them are connected to the issue of feeling valued—including receiving regular recognition or praise for doing good work, having a supervisor or someone at work who “cares about me as a person,” “having a best friend at work,” and having someone “who encourages my development.”

Happily, it turns out that we have far more influence over how we feel, regardless of what is going on around us, than we ordinarily exercise. Our first challenge is to become more aware of how we’re feeling at any given moment. The more we can observe our feelings, the more we can choose how to respond to them. The second challenge is learning to intentionally and regularly renew the positive emotions that best serve high performance.

Our hardwired response to perceived threat drains us of positive energy. The bigger our reservoir of value and well-being, the less emotionally vulnerable we are to the challenges we encounter every day. Resilience, the ability to recover quickly from an emotional setback, depends less on what occurs in any given circumstance than on the story we tell ourselves about what’s happened to us. Although we’re hardwired to be alert to danger and threat, we can also systematically train ourselves to be more aware of what’s worth appreciating in our lives and to actively seek out people and activities that make us feel better about ourselves. Consciously cultivating a more realistically optimistic perspective refuels our emotional reservoir.

Our core need at the mental level is *self-expression*, the freedom to put our unique skills and talents to effective use in the world. Self-



expression is fueled by our capacity to control the placement of our attention and to focus on one thing at a time. The optimal movement in this dimension is between deductive, analytic thinking, aimed at accomplishing a specific task—the Tactical Zone—and wider, more open focus which prompts creative and strategic thinking—the Big-Picture Zone.

We live in a world of infinite distractions and endless demands. Many of us juggle several tasks at a time and struggle to focus on any one of them for very long. Lack of absorbed focus takes a toll on the depth and quality of whatever we do, and it's also an inefficient way to work, extending the time it takes to finish any given task.

At the individual level, the work of self-expression begins with recognizing that our minds have minds of their own. To tame them, we must systematically build our capacity for focus. The more control we have of our attention, the freer we are to make purposeful choices

about where to put it and for how long. That's what the best violinists in Ericsson's study accomplished by setting aside uninterrupted periods of time in which to do their most challenging work. In the process, they not only developed their musical skills but also their capacity for absorbed focus. Eventually, they discovered that 90 minutes was the longest period of time for which they could sustain the highest level of attention.

From an early age, we're taught a form of tactical attention that we use to solve problems logically and deductively and to work step-by-step toward a desired outcome. To do so, we depend largely on the left hemisphere of our brain, where language resides. In order to think more creatively, imaginatively and strategically, we need to cultivate a more intuitive, metaphorical attention that calls preeminently on the right hemisphere of the brain. It's only by learning to move freely and flexibly between right and left hemisphere mode—the upper-right and lower-right quadrants—that we can access the whole brain and achieve the highest and richest level of thinking.

The parallel challenge for leaders and organizations is to create work environments that free and encourage people to focus in absorbed ways without constant interruptions. One obvious way is to encourage more frequent renewal. At Ernst & Young, we conducted two pilot programs in which groups of employees were given the opportunity to regularly renew themselves in the middle of their busiest tax season. In large firms like E&Y, young accountants are typically expected to work twelve- to fourteen-hour days in the highest-demand months between January and April, six and seven days a week. It's often debilitating and demoralizing.

We taught teams of E&Y accountants to work instead in more focused, efficient ways for ninety minutes at a time and then take breaks. We also encouraged them to renew intermittently throughout the day. Many of them began taking off an hour in the afternoons to work out at a nearby gym, an unthinkable option before we launched the pilot. When they returned to work at 4 or 5 P.M.—a time at which their productivity typically began to diminish dramatically—they consistently reported feeling reenergized and better able to focus. Because they were able to get more work accomplished in the later afternoon, they were often able to leave work earlier in the evening. The

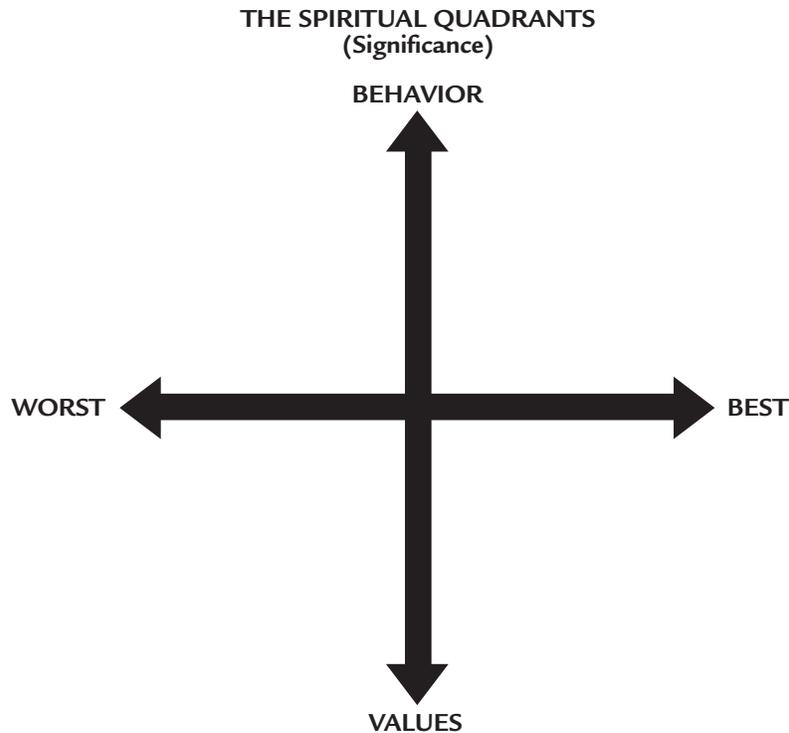
result was more time to relax at home and more time to sleep, which allowed them to return to work the next day more energized and better able to fully engage.

Encouraging employees to set aside sacrosanct time to think creatively, strategically, and long term is even more countercultural in most organizations, which are characteristically focused on immediate results and urgent deadlines. Google is a company that specifically encourages more creative thinking. Its engineers have long been permitted to invest up to 20 percent of their time in projects of their own choosing, based on whatever interests them. Even so, many feel such urgent pressure from their everyday responsibilities that they struggle to get around to their own projects.

The need for *significance* at work is a manifestation of our inborn hunger for meaning in our lives. We call this spiritual energy, and it is fueled by deeply held values and a clear sense of purpose that transcend our self-interest and which we embody in our everyday behaviors. The optimal movement in this dimension is between nurturing our awareness of what we stand for, in the lower-right quadrant on the next page, and expressing those values through our actions, in the upper-right quadrant. Values are aspirations, and they come to life only through our behaviors.

Meaning and significance may seem like luxuries, but they're a unique source of energy that ignites passion, focus, and perseverance. Tapping spiritual energy begins with defining what we stand for amid all the forces that press on us. At his sentencing for the crimes he committed, the Watergate coconspirator Jeb Stuart Magruder told the judge, "Somewhere between my ambition and my ideals, I lost my moral compass."

Deeply held values help us to avoid being whipsawed by whatever winds happen to be blowing around us. Values provide an internal source of direction for our behaviors. Unlike Magruder, most of us don't cross the line into breaking the law, but we're all confronted with opportunities to make expedient choices and to rationalize them after the fact. The antidote is taking the time to reflect not so much on what we want right now but what will make us feel best about ourselves over time—not just on our self-interest but also on how to add value to the greater good.



Unlike the other three quadrants, the spiritual quadrants contain no descriptive adjectives. That's because the qualities that fuel spiritual energy are more subjective than those in the other three quadrants. You'll choose these adjectives for yourself in chapter 18.

Purpose is the external expression of what we stand for. The majority of people we meet lack a strong sense of purpose in their jobs, beyond taking home a paycheck and building their careers. Many of us are so busy trying to serve clients and customers—to simply do our jobs—that we don't spend much time or energy thinking about what we really want or how our choices affect others.

While selfishness makes us smaller and takes a toll on others, the costs of *selflessness* can be equally depleting. That's especially true for nurses, teachers, social workers and others who work in the helping professions. Serving others can become so preoccupying that it occurs at expense to our own well-being and eventually to those

we're committed to serving. "Compassion fatigue" is characterized by symptoms such as depression, inability to focus, decreased effectiveness, burnout, and breakdown. For people who spend their lives giving to others, the challenge is to equally value their own needs—to renew themselves both for their own sake and so they can serve others more effectively.

The intrinsic mission of service organizations such as hospitals, nonprofits, and schools can powerfully fuel people's need for meaning and purpose. But what about the vast majority of companies that don't so obviously manufacture products or offer services that clearly contribute to the greater good? Leaders of such companies can still build cultures that give people the opportunity to live their values and to feel purposeful at work.

Take Zappos.com, which sells shoes and other clothing. Not long ago, I spent a day visiting the Zappos headquarters, which are located in a bland industrial park in a suburb of Las Vegas. The vast majority of its employees are customer service representatives paid between \$12 and \$18 an hour, but many find their jobs very satisfying. Zappos inspires employees not only by treating them exceptionally well and by giving them an opportunity to express themselves as individuals, but also by generating a shared mission around providing an extraordinary level of service to customers.

In most call centers, employees are evaluated partly by how quickly they can get onto and off of calls with customers. These employees typically work from a tight script. At Zappos, agents are encouraged to stay on the phone in order to genuinely connect with customers and to build a relationship that is more likely to endure. This approach not only serves customers well but also makes employees proud to work at Zappos. Employees find significance less from the products they sell than from the relationships they nurture.

MEETING PEOPLE'S CORE NEEDS

"How can we get more out of our people?" leaders regularly ask us. We suggest they pose a different question: "How can I more intentionally invest in meeting the multidimensional needs of my employees so they're freed, fueled, and inspired to bring the best of themselves to

work every day?” As this book gets published, the perilous state of the economy has exacerbated people’s fears everywhere. We live in a vastly more complex world that is changing at warp speed. The systems that worked in the past won’t in the future.

To build competitive advantage, organizations must help employees to cultivate qualities that have never before been critical—among them authenticity, empathy, self-awareness, constant creativity, an internal sense of purpose, and, perhaps above all, resilience in the face of relentless change. And whatever our employers do, we serve ourselves well to cultivate these same qualities in order to be more effective and more satisfied, both on the job and off.

CHAPTER ONE ACTION STEPS

- Reflect on the four key energy needs: sustainability (physical); security (emotional); self-expression (mental); and significance (spiritual). How well are you meeting these needs? Where do you feel you're falling short? What are the costs to you and to others in your life?
- Think of a typical day at work. How much of your day do you spend working without breaks for long periods of time? Schedule a midmorning and midafternoon break to experiment with refueling.
- Identify one of your employees whose work isn't as good as you think it could be. Which of the four core needs could you do a better job of helping that person to meet? If you're not certain, sit down and have a conversation with this person about what he or she needs more of from you. If you don't supervise anyone, think about these questions in regard to your best friend at work.