One

Fully Engaged: Energy, Not Time, Is Our Most Precious Resource

We live in digital time. Our rhythms are rushed, rapid fire and relentless, our days carved up into bits and bytes. We celebrate breadth rather than depth, quick reaction more than considered reflection. We skim across the surface, alighting for brief moments at dozens of destinations but rarely remaining for long at any one. We race through our lives without pausing to consider who we really want to be or where we really want to go. We're wired up but we're melting down.

Most of us are just trying to do the best that we can. When demand exceeds our capacity, we begin to make expedient choices that get us through our days and nights, but take a toll over time. We survive on too little sleep, wolf down fast foods on the run, fuel up with coffee and cool down with alcohol and sleeping pills. Faced with relentless demands at work, we become short-tempered and easily distracted. We return home from long days at work feeling exhausted and often experience our families not as a source of joy and renewal, but as one more demand in an already overburdened life.

We walk around with day planners and to-do lists, Palm Pilots and BlackBerries, instant pagers and pop-up reminders on our computers—all designed to help us manage our time better. We take pride in our ability to multitask, and we wear our willingness to put in long hours as a badge of honor. The term *24/7* describes a world in which work never ends. We use words like obsessed, crazed and overwhelmed not to describe insanity, but instead to characterize our everyday lives. Feeling forever starved for time, we assume that we have no choice but to cram as much as possible into every day. But managing time efficiently is no

guarantee that we will bring sufficient energy to whatever it is we are doing.

Consider these scenarios:

- You attend a four-hour meeting in which not a single second is wasted—but during the final two hours your energy level drops off precipitously and you struggle to stay focused.
- You race through a meticulously scheduled twelve-hour day but by midday your energy has turned negative—impatient, edgy and irritable.
- You set aside time to be with your children when you get home at the end of the day, but you are so distracted by thoughts about work that you never really give them your full attention.
- You remember your spouse's birthday—your computer alerts you and so does your Palm Pilot—but by the evening, you are too tired to go out and celebrate.

Energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance.

This insight has revolutionized our thinking about what drives enduring high performance. It has also prompted dramatic transformations in the way our clients manage their lives, personally and professionally. Everything they do—from interacting with colleagues and making important decisions to spending time with their families—requires energy. Obvious as this seems, we often fail to take into account the importance of energy at work and in our personal lives. Without the right quantity, quality, focus and force of energy, we are compromised in any activity we undertake.

Every one of our thoughts, emotions and behaviors has an energy consequence, for better or for 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. The premise of this book—and of the training we do each year with thousands of clients—is simple enough:

Performance, health and happiness are grounded in the skillful management of energy.

There are undeniably bad bosses, toxic work environments, difficult relationships and real life crises. Nonetheless, we have far more control over our energy than we ordinarily realize. The number of hours in a day is fixed, but the quantity and quality of energy available to us is not. It is our most precious resource. The more we take responsibility for the energy we bring to the world, the more empowered and productive we become. The more we blame others or external circumstances, the more negative and compromised our energy is likely to be.

If you could wake up tomorrow with significantly more positive, focused energy to invest at work and with your family, how significantly would that change your life for the better? As a leader and a manager, how valuable would it be to bring more positive energy and passion to the workplace? If those you lead could call on more positive energy, how would it affect their relationships with one another, and the quality of service that they deliver to customers and clients?

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

To be fully engaged, we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest. Full engagement begins with feeling eager to get to work in the morning, equally happy to return home in the evening and capable of setting clear boundaries between the two. It means being able to immerse yourself in the mission you are on, whether that is grappling with a creative challenge at work, managing a group of people on a project, spending time with loved ones or simply having fun. Full engagement implies a fundamental shift in the way we live our lives.

Less than 30 percent of American workers are fully engaged at work, according to data collected by the Gallup Organization in early 2001.

Some 55 percent are "not engaged." Another 19 percent are "actively disengaged," meaning not just that they are unhappy at work, but that they regularly share those feelings with colleagues. The costs of a disengaged workforce run into the trillions of dollars. Worse yet, the longer employees stay with organizations, the less engaged they become. Gallup found that after six months on the job, only 38 percent of employees remain engaged. After three years, the figure drops to 22 percent. Think about your own life. How fully engaged are you at work? What about your colleagues or the people who work for you?

THE POWER OF FULL ENGAGEMENT

Old Paradigm	**New Paradigm**
Manage time	Manage energy
Avoid stress	Seek stress
Life is a marathon	Life is a series of sprints
Downtime is wasted time	Downtime is productive time
Rewards fuel performance Self-discipline rules	Purpose fuels performance Rituals rule
The power of positive thinking	The power of full engagement

During the past decade, we have grown increasingly disturbed by the myriad ways in which our clients squander and misuse their energy. These include everything from poor eating habits and failure to seek regular recovery and renewal to negativity and poor focus. The lessons we seek to impart in this book have proved to be profoundly useful in managing our own lives and in leading our own organization. When we follow the energy management principles and the change process that we share on these pages, we find that we are far more effective, both personally and professionally, in our own actions and in our relationships. When we fall short, we see the costs immediately, in our performance and in our impact on others. The same is true of tens of thousands of clients with whom we have worked. Learning to manage energy more efficiently and intelligently has a unique transformative power, both individually and organizationally.

A LIVING LABORATORY

We first learned about the importance of energy in the living laboratory of professional sports. For thirty years, our organization has worked with world-class athletes, defining precisely what it takes to perform consistently at the highest levels under intense competitive pressures. Our initial clients were tennis players. Over eighty of the world's best players have been through our laboratory, among them Pete Sampras, Jim Courier, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Tom and Tim Gullikson, Sergi Bruguera, Gabriela Sabatini and Monica Seles.

These players typically came to us when they were struggling, and our interventions have often produced dramatic turnarounds. After we worked with them, Sanchez-Vicario won the U.S. Open for the first time and became the top-ranked player in the world in both singles and doubles, and Sabatini won her first and only U.S. Open title. Bruguera went from number 79 in the world to the top ten and won two French Open titles. We went on to train a broad range of professional athletes, among them golfers Mark O'Meara and Ernie Els; hockey players Eric Lindros and Mike Richter; boxer Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini; basketball players Nick Anderson and Grant Hill; and speed skater Dan Jansen, who won his only Olympic gold medal following two intensive years of training with us.

What makes our intervention with athletes unique is that we spend no time focusing on their technical or tactical skills. Conventional wisdom holds that if you find talented people and equip them with the right skills for the challenge at hand, they will perform at their best. In our experience that often isn't so. Energy is the X factor that makes it possible to fully ignite talent and skill. We never addressed how Monica Seles hit her serves, or how Mark O'Meara drove the ball, or how Grant Hill shot his free throws. All of these athletes were extraordinarily gifted and accomplished when they came to us. We focused instead on helping them to manage their energy more effectively in the service of whatever mission they were on.

Athletes turned out to be a demanding experimental group. They aren't satisfied with inspirational messages or clever theories about performance. They seek measurable, enduring results. They care about batting averages, free-throw percentages, tournament victories and year-end rankings. They want to be able to sink the putt on the eighteenth

hole in the final round, hit the free throw when the game is on the line, catch the pass in a crowd with a minute to go on the clock. Anything else is just talk. If we couldn't deliver results for athletes, we didn't last very long in their lives. We learned to be accountable to the numbers.

As word spread about our success in sports, we received numerous requests to export our model into other high-performance venues. We began working with FBI hostage rescue teams, U.S. marshals, and critical-care workers in hospitals. Today, the bulk of our work is in business—with executives and entrepreneurs, managers and sales people, and more recently with teachers and clergy, lawyers and medical students. Our corporate clients include Fortune 500 companies such as Estée Lauder, Salomon Smith Barney, Pfizer, Merrill Lynch, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and the Hyatt Corporation.

Along the way, we discovered something completely unexpected: The performance demands that most people face in their everyday work environments dwarf those of any professional athletes we have ever trained.

How is that possible?

It's not as anomalous as it seems. Professional athletes typically spend about 90 percent of their time *training,* in order to be able to *perform* 10 percent of the time. Their entire lives are designed around expanding, sustaining and renewing the energy they need to compete for short, focused periods of time. At a practical level, they build very precise routines for managing energy in all spheres of their lives—eating and sleeping; working out and resting; summoning the appropriate emotions; mentally preparing and staying focused; and connecting regularly to the mission they have set for themselves. Although most of us spend little or no time systematically training in any of these dimensions, we are expected to perform at our best for eight, ten and even twelve hours a day.

Most professional athletes also enjoy an off-season of four to five months a year. After competing under extraordinary pressure for several months, a long off-season gives athletes the critical time that they need for rest and healing, renewal and growth. By contrast, your "off season" likely amounts to a few weeks of vacation a year. Even then, you probably aren't solely resting and recovering. More likely, you are spending at least

some of your vacation time answering email, checking your voice mail and ruminating about your work.

Finally, professional athletes have an average career span of five to seven years. If they have handled their finances reasonably well, they are often set for life. Few of them are under pressure to run out and get another job. By contrast, you can probably expect to work for forty to fifty years without any significant breaks.

Given these stark facts, what makes it possible to keep performing at your best without sacrificing your health, your happiness and your passion for life?

You must become Fully Engaged.

The challenge of great performance is to manage your energy more effectively in all dimensions to achieve your goals. Four key energy management principles drive this process. They lie at the heart of the change process that we will describe in the pages ahead, and they are critical for building the capacity to live a productive, fully engaged life.

PRINCIPLE 1:

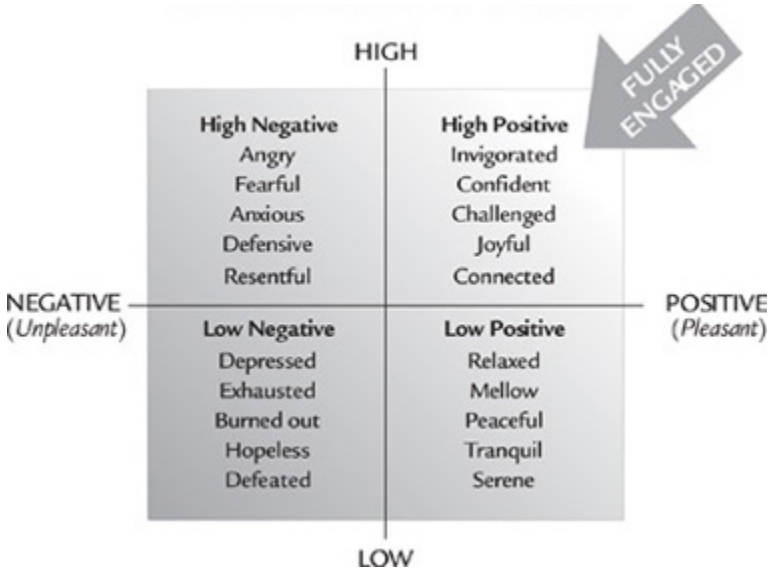
Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Human beings are complex energy systems, and full engagement is not simply one-dimensional. The energy that pulses through us is physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. All four dynamics are critical, none is sufficient by itself and each profoundly influences the others. To perform at our best, we must skillfully manage each of these interconnected dimensions of energy. Subtract any one from the equation and our capacity to fully ignite our talent and skill is diminished, much the way an engine sputters when one of its cylinders misfires.

Energy is the common denominator in all dimensions of our lives. Physical energy capacity is measured in terms of quantity (low to high) and emotional capacity in quality (negative to positive). These are our most *fundamental* sources of energy because without sufficient high-

octane fuel no mission can be accomplished. The accompanying chart depicts the dynamics of energy from low to high and from negative to positive. The more toxic and unpleasant the energy, the less effectively it serves performance; the more positive and pleasant the energy, the more efficient it is. Full engagement and maximum performance are possible only in the high positive quadrant.

THE DYNAMICS OF ENERGY



The importance of full engagement is most vivid in situations where the consequences of disengagement are profound. Imagine for a moment that you are facing open-heart surgery. Which energy quadrant do you want your surgeon to be in? How would you feel if he entered the operating room feeling angry, frustrated and anxious (high negative)? How about overworked, exhausted and depressed (low negative)? What if he was disengaged, laid back and slightly spacey (low positive)? Obviously, you want your surgeon energized, confident and upbeat (high positive).

Imagine that every time you yelled at someone in frustration or did sloppy work on a project or failed to focus your attention fully on the task at hand, you put someone's life at risk. Very quickly, you would become less negative, reckless and sloppy in the way you manage your energy. We hold ourselves accountable for the ways that we manage our

time, and for that matter our money. We must learn to hold ourselves at least equally accountable for how we manage our energy physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

PRINCIPLE 2:

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

THE MIND AND BODY ARE ONE

The primary markers of physical capacity are strength, endurance, flexibility and resilience. These are precisely the same markers of capacity emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Flexibility at the physical level, for example, means that the muscle has a broad range of motion. Stretching increases flexibility.

The same is true emotionally. Emotional flexibility reflects the capacity to move freely and appropriately along a wide spectrum of emotions rather than responding rigidly or defensively. Emotional resilience is the ability to bounce back from experiences of disappointment, frustration and even loss.

Mental endurance is a measure of the ability to sustain focus and concentration over time, while mental flexibility is marked by the capacity to move between the rational and the intuitive and to embrace multiple points of view.

Spiritual strength is reflected in the commitment to one's deepest values, regardless of circumstance and even when adhering to them involves personal sacrifice. Spiritual flexibility, by contrast, reflects the tolerance for values and beliefs that are different than one's own, so long as those values and beliefs don't bring harm to others.

In short, to be fully engaged requires strength, endurance, flexibility and resilience in all dimensions.

We rarely consider how much energy we are spending because we take it for granted that the energy available to us is limitless. In fact, increased demand progressively depletes our energy reserves—especially in the absence of any effort to reverse the progressive loss of capacity that occurs with age. By training in all dimensions we can dramatically slow our decline physically and mentally, and we can actually deepen our emotional and spiritual capacity until the very end of our lives.

By contrast, when we live highly *linear* lives—spending far more energy than we recover or recovering more than we spend—the eventual consequence is that we break down, burn out, atrophy, lose our passion, get sick and even die prematurely. Sadly, the need for recovery is often viewed as evidence of weakness rather than as an integral aspect of sustained performance. The result is that we give almost no attention to renewing and expanding our energy reserves, individually or organizationally.

To maintain a powerful pulse in our lives, we must learn how to rhythmically spend and renew energy.

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. Instead, many of us live our lives as if we are running in an endless marathon, pushing ourselves far beyond healthy levels of exertion. We become flat liners mentally and emotionally by relentlessly spending energy without sufficient recovery. We become flat liners physically and spiritually by not expending enough energy. Either way, we slowly but inexorably wear down.

Think for a moment about the look of many long-distance runners: gaunt, sallow, slightly sunken and emotionally flat. Now visualize a sprinter such as Marion Jones or Michael Johnson. Sprinters typically look powerful, bursting with energy and eager to push themselves to their limits. The explanation is simple. No matter how intense the demand they face, the finish line is clearly visible 100 or 200 meters down the track. We, too, must learn to live our own lives as a series of sprints—fully engaging for periods of time, and then fully disengaging and

seeking renewal before jumping back into the fray to face whatever challenges confront us.

PRINCIPLE 3:

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

Stress is not the enemy in our lives. Paradoxically, it is the key to growth. In order to build strength in a muscle we must systematically stress it, expending energy beyond normal levels. Doing so literally causes microscopic tears in the muscle fibers. At the end of a training session, functional capacity is diminished. But give the muscle twenty-four to forty-eight hours to recover and it grows stronger and better able to handle the next stimulus. While this training phenomenon has been applied largely to building physical strength, it is just as relevant to building "muscles" in every dimension of our lives—from empathy and patience to focus and creativity to integrity and commitment. What applies to the body applies equally to the other dimensions of our lives. This insight both simplifies and revolutionizes the way we approach the barriers that stand in our way.

We build emotional, mental and spiritual capacity in precisely the same way that we build physical capacity.

We grow at all levels by expending energy beyond our ordinary limits and then recovering. Expose a muscle to ordinary demand and it won't grow. With age it will actually lose strength. The limiting factor in building any "muscle" is that many of us back off at the slightest hint of discomfort. To meet increased demand in our lives, we must learn to systematically build and strengthen muscles wherever our capacity is insufficient. Any form of stress that prompts discomfort has the potential to expand our capacity—physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually—so long as it is followed by adequate recovery. As Nietzsche put it, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger." Because the demands on Corporate Athletes are greater and more enduring than

those on professional athletes, it is even more critical that they learn to train systematically.

PRINCIPLE 4:

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

Change is difficult. We are creatures of habit. Most of what we do is automatic and nonconscious. What we did yesterday is what we are likely to do today. The problem with most efforts at change is that conscious effort can't be sustained over the long haul. Will and discipline are far more limited resources than most of us realize. If you have to think about something each time you do it, the likelihood is that you won't keep doing it for very long. The status quo has a magnetic pull on us.

A positive ritual is a behavior that becomes automatic over time—fueled by some deeply held value.

We use the word "ritual" purposefully to emphasize the notion of a carefully defined, highly structured behavior. In contrast to will and discipline, which require pushing yourself to a particular behavior, a ritual pulls at you. Think of something as simple as brushing your teeth. It is not something that you ordinarily have to remind yourself to do. Brushing your teeth is something to which you feel consistently drawn, compelled by its clear health value. You do it largely on automatic pilot, without much conscious effort or intention. The power of rituals is that they insure that we use as little conscious energy as possible where it is not absolutely necessary, leaving us free to strategically focus the energy available to us in creative, enriching ways.

Look at any part of your life in which you are consistently effective and you will find that certain habits help make that possible. If you eat in a healthy way, it is probably because you have built routines around the food you buy and what you are willing to order at restaurants. If you are fit, it is probably because you have regular days and times for working

out. If you are successful in a sales job, you probably have a ritual of mental preparation for calls and ways that you talk to yourself to stay positive in the face of rejection. If you manage others effectively, you likely have a style of giving feedback that leaves people feeling challenged rather than threatened. If you are closely connected to your spouse and your children, you probably have rituals around spending time with them. If you sustain high positive energy despite an extremely demanding job, you almost certainly have predictable ways of insuring that you get intermittent recovery. Creating positive rituals is the most powerful means we have found to effectively manage energy in the service of full engagement.

THE CHANGE PROCESS

Making all of this happen is another story. How can we build and sustain the multidimensional energy that we need—particularly as the demands in our lives intensify and our capacity diminishes inexorably with age?

Making changes that endure, we have found, is a three-step process that we call *Purpose-Truth-Action*. All three are necessary and none is sufficient by itself.

The first step in our change process is to *Define Purpose*. In the face of our habitual behaviors and our instinct to preserve the status quo, we need inspiration to make changes in our lives. Our first challenge is to answer the question "How should I spend my energy in a way that is consistent with my deepest values?" The consequence of living our lives at warp speed is that we rarely take the time to reflect on what we value most deeply or to keep these priorities front and center. Most of us spend more time reacting to immediate crises and responding to the expectations of others than we do making considered choices guided by a clear sense of what matters most.

In the purpose stage, our goal is to help clients to surface and articulate the most important values in their lives and to define a vision for themselves, both personally and professionally. Connecting to a deep set of values and creating a compelling vision fuels a uniquely high-octane source of energy for change. It also serves as a compass for navigating the storms that inevitably arise in our lives.

It is impossible to chart a course of change until you are able to look honestly at who you are today. In the next stage of our process, *Face the Truth,* the first question we ask clients is "How are you spending your energy now?" Each of us finds ways to avoid the most unpleasant and discomfiting truths in our lives. We regularly underestimate the consequences of our energy management choices, failing to honestly acknowledge the foods we are eating; how much alcohol we are consuming; what quality of energy we are investing in our relationships with our bosses, colleagues, spouses and children; and how focused and passionate we really are at work. Too often, we view our lives through rose-colored glasses, painting ourselves as victims, or simply denying to ourselves that the choices we are making are having a consequential impact on the quantity, quality, force and focus of our energy.

Facing the truth begins with gathering credible data. When clients come to us, we take them through a variety of physical tests, carefully assess their diets, and give them a detailed questionnaire designed to measure precisely how they are managing their energy physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. We also have five of their closest colleagues fill out a similar questionnaire. All of this data give us a clear picture of their current energy capacity and the obstacles that stand in the way of full engagement.

To launch this process for yourself, we encourage you to take a first step. Log on to our PowerofFullEngagement.com website and take a brief version of our Full Engagement Inventory. The scores that you receive will provide baseline data about your primary performance barriers. For a more detailed analysis of how you are managing your energy emotionally, physically and spiritually, you can arrange to take our complete Full Engagement Inventory online. For either test, you will be asked to have five other people in your life—or as close to five as you can get—anonymously fill out a similar set of questions about you. Facing the truth requires gathering as much comprehensive and objective data as is possible.

The third step in your change process is to *Take Action* to close the gap between who you are and who you want to be—between how you manage your energy now and how you want to manage your energy to achieve whatever mission you are on. This step involves building a personal-

development plan grounded in positive energy rituals. Some of our existing habits serve us well, but others are more expedient. They help us get through the day, but take a long-term toll on our performance, health and happiness. Examples include relying on junk food for bursts of energy; smoking or drinking to manage anxiety; furiously multitasking to meet demands; setting aside more challenging, long-term projects in favor of what feels immediately pressing and easier to accomplish, and devoting little energy to personal relationships. The costs of these choices and many others only show up over time.

But just as negative habits and routines in our lives can be undermining and destructive, so positive ones can be uplifting and revitalizing. It is possible to build and sustain energy in all dimensions of our lives rather than watching passively as our capacities slowly diminish with age. Building rituals requires defining very precise behaviors and performing them at very specific times—motivated by deeply held values. As Aristotle said: "We are what we repeatedly do." Or as the Dalai Lama put it more recently: "There isn't anything that isn't made easier through constant familiarity and training. Through training we can change; we can transform ourselves."

The story of Roger B., one of our clients, vividly demonstrates how the casual choices that we make each day, often without thinking much about them, can slowly lead to compromised energy, diminished performance and a progressively disengaged life. In the chapters that follow, we lay out both a model and a systematic program by which to better mobilize, manage, focus and regularly renew your energy—and the energy of others. This training process ultimately proved to be transformative for Roger B. It has been highly effective for thousands of others and we hope it will be just as life changing for you.

BEAR IN MIND

- Managing energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance. Performance is grounded in the skillful management of energy.
- Great leaders are stewards of organizational energy. They begin by effectively managing their own energy. As leaders, they must

mobilize, focus, invest, channel, renew and expand the energy of others.

- Full engagement is the energy state that best serves performance.
- Principle 1: Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.
- Principle 2: Because energy diminishes both with overuse and with underuse, we must balance energy expenditure with 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 lasts requires a three-step process: *Define Purpose, Face the Truth* and *Take Action.*

Ten

Taking Action: The Power of Positive Rituals

Ivan Lendl was far from the most physically gifted tennis player of his era, but for five years he was the number-one-ranked player in the world. His edge was in the routines that he built. It is no surprise that Lendl practiced long hours on the court, or even that he did so at very precise times. What set him apart from other players on the tour was that he followed similar routines in every dimension of his life. He developed a rigorous fitness regimen off the court, which included sprints, middle-distance runs, long bicycle rides and strength training. He did regular ballet bar exercises to increase his balance and grace. He adhered to a low-fat, high complex-carbohydrate diet and ate at very specific times.

Lendl also practiced a series of daily mental-focus exercises to improve his concentration—and regularly introduced new ones to assure that they remained challenging. At tournaments, he gave clear instructions to friends and family not to burden him with issues that might distract him from his mission. Whatever he did, he was either fully engaged or strategically disengaged. He even meticulously scheduled his time for relaxation and recovery, which included recreational golf, daily afternoon naps and regularly scheduled massages. On the court, during matches, he relied on another set of rituals to keep himself centered and focused, including visualizing entire points before playing them and following the same multiple-step ritual each time he stepped up to the line to serve. As longtime rival John McEnroe later said: "Much as I may have disliked him, I have to give Lendl credit. Nobody in the sport has ever worked as hard as he did. . . . Ivan wasn't the most talented player, but his dedication—physical and mental, was incredible, second to none . . . and he did it all through rehearsal."

Tiger Woods is the modern version of Lendl, albeit with considerably more talent, but with the same fierce dedication to rituals for managing energy in all dimensions of his life—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. The payoff is clear. By his early twenties, Woods had become not only simply the best at what he does, but also the most consistently dominating golfer in the history of the game.

It is perfectly logical to assume that Lendl excelled in part because he had extraordinary will and discipline. That probably isn't so. A growing body of research suggests that as little as 5 percent of our behaviors are consciously self-directed. We are creatures of habit and as much as 95 percent of what we do occurs automatically or in reaction to a demand or an anxiety. What Lendl understood brilliantly and instinctively was the power of positive rituals—precise, consciously acquired behaviors that become *automatic* in our lives, fueled by a deep sense of purpose.

Positive energy rituals are powerful on three levels. They help us to insure that we effectively manage energy in the service of whatever mission we are on. They reduce the need to rely on our limited conscious will and discipline to take action. Finally, rituals are a powerful means by which to translate our values and priorities into action—to embody what matters most to us in our everyday behaviors.

EXPEDIENT ADAPTATION

Like so many of us, Roger B. had become a prisoner of his negative energy habits and routines. Many of these choices were expedient—strategies for quickly marshaling energy without regard to the long-term energy consequences. Skipping breakfast made it possible for Roger to get to the office earlier but took no account of the effect that this choice had on his energy capacity throughout the morning. Drinking caffeinated coffee and diet colas was Roger's way of artificially pumping up his energy in the face of inadequate sleep. Not exercising was a consequence of Roger's inability to push himself physically when he felt so drained by other demands. It was difficult for Roger to imagine that once he built some endurance, exercising might actually be a source of renewal—not just physically after long hours at his desk, but also mentally and emotionally.

Impatience and irritation were a means for Roger to vent his frustration—without regard for the toll that these negative emotions took on others and on his own energy reserves. Several drinks at night and the occasional cigarette were strategies Roger adopted to get immediate relief from stress—but they robbed him of energy in the short term and threatened his health in the long term. Keeping a certain distance from his wife and children was a means by which to avoid one more demand on his limited energy stores but at a cost to the emotional nourishment that comes from close relationships. Above all, Roger had adapted by disengaging—conserving energy by not investing too much of it in anything or allowing himself to think too deeply about the choices that he was making.

Roger's halfhearted attempts to change his behavior had been short-lived and ultimately unsuccessful. He was scarcely alone. Most of us are frustrated in our attempts to change, victims of the New Year's resolution syndrome in which we make firm commitments to new behaviors, only to quickly fall back into our familiar patterns. Rituals serve as anchors, insuring that even in the most difficult circumstances we will continue to use our energy in service of the values that we hold most dear. We are all exposed to storms throughout our lives—sickness and disease; the death of loved ones; betrayal and disappointments; financial setbacks and layoffs from jobs. These are the situations in which our character is truly tested and our choices about how to manage energy are critical.

The bigger the storm, the more inclined we are to revert to our survival habits, and the more important positive rituals become.

Great performers, whether they are athletes or fighter pilots, surgeons or Special Forces soldiers, FBI agents or CEOs, all rely on positive rituals to manage their energy and achieve their goals. The same is true, we have discovered, of anyone whose life is grounded in clearly defined values. "Every time we participate in a ritual, we are expressing our beliefs, either verbally or more implicitly," write Evan Imber-Black and Janine Roberts,

authors of *Rituals for Our Times*. "Families who sit down to dinner together every night are saying without words that they believe in the need for families to have shared time together. . . . Nightly bedtime rituals offer parents and children an opportunity to tell each other what they believe about all kinds of matters. The sheer act of doing the bedtime ritual expresses a belief in a certain kind of parent–child relationship where warmth and affection and safety are available."

It is easy to dismiss as rigid and even extreme the highly structured routines of an athlete like Ivan Lendl. But stop for a moment and think about the people you admire—or simply look at the areas of your life in which you are most effective and productive. If you are like most of our clients, you already have many rituals in place—often outside your conscious awareness. These may range from habits of hygiene, to planning for the day ahead, to routines with your family. Far from precluding spontaneity, rituals provide a level of comfort, continuity and security that frees us to improvise and to take risks. Think of a great athlete producing a seemingly impossible shot under fierce pressure; a highly trained surgeon making a critical counterintuitive decision at a life-or-death moment during a delicate operation; or an executive breaking an impasse in a difficult, formal negotiation by suddenly coming up with a novel structure for a deal. Rituals provide a stable framework in which creative breakthroughs often occur. They can also open up time for recovery and renewal, when relationships can be deepened and spiritual reflection becomes possible.

The limitations of conscious will and discipline are rooted in the fact that every demand on our self-control—from deciding what we eat to managing frustration, from building an exercise regimen to persisting at a difficult task—all draw on the same small easily depleted reservoir of energy.

In a series of imaginative experiments, several researchers have demonstrated how this plays out in everyday life. In one study, for example, subjects were deprived of food for several hours and then exposed to a plate of chocolate-chip cookies and other sweets. One group was given permission to indulge themselves. A second group was asked to refrain from eating sweets and to settle for radishes instead. The latter group succeeded in resisting the sweets, but then demonstrated

significantly less persistence than the first group in a follow-up test trying to solve insoluble puzzles. In a second experiment, dieters who were presented with tempting food were able to control themselves but became significantly more likely to break the diet when faced with subsequent temptations. In still a third experiment, one group of subjects was asked to hold their hands under ice water for a specified period of time. They performed significantly worse on a series of subsequent proofreading tasks than a group that had not been subjected to the ice-water challenge.

The sustaining power of rituals comes from the fact that they conserve energy. "We should not cultivate the habit of thinking of what we are doing," wrote philosopher A. N. Whitehead, back in 1911. "The precise opposite is the case. Civilization advances by extending the number of operations which we can perform without thinking about them." In contrast to will and discipline, which imply pushing ourselves to action, a well-defined ritual pulls us. We feel somehow worse if we don't do it. Think about brushing your teeth or taking a shower or kissing your spouse goodbye in the morning or attending your child's soccer games or calling your parents on a weekend. If we want to build into our lives new behaviors that last, we can't spend much energy to sustain them.

Since will and discipline are far more limited and precious resources than most of us realize, they must be called upon very selectively. Because even small acts of self-control use up this limited reservoir, consciously using this energy for one activity means it will be less available for the next one. The sobering truth is that we have the capacity for very few *conscious* acts of self-control in a day.

Much as it is possible to strengthen a bicep or a tricep by subjecting it to stress and then recovering, so it is possible to strategically build the muscle of self-control. The same training regimen applies. Exercise self-control or empathy or patience past normal limits, and then allow time for rest and these muscles become progressively stronger. More reliably, however, we can offset the limitations of conscious will and discipline by building positive rituals that become automatic—and relatively effortless—as quickly as possible.

THE RITUALS OF STRESS AND RECOVERY

The most important role of rituals is to insure an effective balance between energy expenditure and energy renewal in the service of full engagement. All great performers have rituals that optimize their ability to move rhythmically between stress and recovery. Jim's discovery of the between-point recovery rituals, used by nearly all top tennis players, is an especially vivid example. In just sixteen to twenty seconds, these highly precise rituals prompt a remarkably efficient form of recovery.

The same stress-recovery balance is critical in any venue that demands performance. The more precise and effective our recovery rituals, the more quickly we can restore our energy reserves. We have done a great deal of work with Wall Street traders, for example, who must sit in front of their computer terminals for long hours each day, and have very limited time for breaks. When we first suggested that they needed to build more recovery rituals into their days, they laughed at us.

"We barely have time to go to the bathroom," they told us. "How are we going to take time for recovery?" We reminded them how quickly and efficiently athletes are able to recover and pointed out that even structured sixty-to ninety-second breaks throughout the day could provide a great deal of renewal. With our encouragement, they began devising their own rituals. These ranged from sixty seconds of deep breathing to putting on a Walkman and listening to a favorite song; from making a quick call home to check in and connect with a spouse or a child to walking up and down four flights of stairs; from playing a video game on the computer screen to eating an energy bar. The more scheduled and systematic these rituals became, the more renewal they provided.

Peter D. is a writer who sought our advice at a time when he was facing a highly challenging book deadline that he wasn't sure he could meet. For years, Peter was used to putting in long continuous hours at his word processor. The problem, he told us, was that he found it hard to maintain his concentration, particularly as the day wore on. Our goal was to help him to shift from the mentality of a marathoner to that of a sprinter. We worked with Peter to develop rituals that alternated periods

of intense engagement with relatively short but highly structured periods of recovery.

Because Peter told us that he felt freshest early in the morning, we had him begin his workdays at 6:30 A.M. and write for ninety minutes before he did anything else. To minimize distraction, he agreed to turn off his phone and not to check his email during his writing hours. At 8:00 A.M., Peter stopped to have breakfast with his wife and three children. We also suggested that he shift from his previous routine of eating a bagel or a muffin and a glass of orange juice, to the more sustaining energy of a protein drink. Peter returned to work at 8:30 A.M. and wrote without interruption until 10:00. At that point, he took a twenty-minute recovery break—ten minutes of training with light weights followed by ten minutes of meditation. He also ate a piece of fruit or a handful of nuts before heading back to his desk.

Peter's third writing session went from 10:30 until 12:00 NOON, at which point he went jogging and then ate lunch. During those $4^{1}/_{2}$ hours of focused morning work, Peter was able to write nearly twice as much as had sitting at his desk for up to ten hours a day in previous years. In the afternoons, he turned his attention to reading and research for the book, and to other business. In the evenings, feeling good about his productivity but also reasonably rested, Peter still had the energy to focus on his family.

The more exacting the challenge, the more rigorous our rituals need to be. The preparation of soldiers for combat is a good example. The rituals of basic training are so exacting—especially in the Marines—that soft, fearful and slovenly teenagers can be transformed into lean, confident, mission-driven soldiers in just eight to twelve weeks. Recruits are compelled to build rituals in every dimension of their lives—how they walk and how they talk; what time they go to bed and wake up; when and what they eat; how they take care of their bodies and how they think and act under pressure. This code of conduct makes it possible for them to do the right thing at the right time even in the face of the most severe of all stresses—the threat of death.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Rituals also help us to create structure in our lives. More than ever, we are bombarded by competing options and choices, endless information and infinite demands. As one top executive at a leading financial firm told us: "The biggest problem in American business today is the feeling that nothing is ever finished. There is no satisfaction to be derived from a job well done because there is always another demand to be met. We're all running on an endless treadmill." Rituals create boundaries—clearly delineated opportunities to renew and refuel but also to take stock and to prepare for the next challenge.

Each time Ivan Lendl stepped up to the line to serve during a tennis match, he predictably wiped his brow with his wristband, knocked the head of his racquet against each of his heels, took sawdust from his pocket, bounced the ball four times and visualized where he intended to hit the ball. In the process, Lendl was recalibrating his energy: pushing away distraction, calming his physiology, focusing his attention, triggering reengagement and preparing his body to perform at its best. In effect, he was programming his internal computer. When the point began, the program ran automatically. Successful executives, managers and salespeople often have their own pre-performance rituals. In advance of an important meeting, these rituals might range from taking a walk in order to shift gears to abdominal breathing in order to relax; from rehearsing the key points to be covered to reciting a series of affirmations around desired outcomes.

In addition to creating continuity, rituals help to facilitate change. For thousands of years rituals have been used to take account of our accomplishments, give thanks for our blessings and facilitate the transition from one stage to another in our lives. We mark rites of passage with the bar mitzvah in Judiasm, the confirmation in Christianity and with celebrations around birthdays, anniversaries and graduations. Holiday rituals such as Thanksgiving and Christmas provide opportunities to give thanks, to take stock and to reconnect with loved ones. Weddings mark the movement from single to married life—simultaneously celebrating the promise of the future while acknowledging the momentousness of the transition. More broadly, rituals imbue certain key events in our lives with meaning.

Unfortunately, many of us have negative associations with rituals. In part, this may be because rather than freely being chosen, they were imposed upon us early in our lives. When a ritual begins to feel empty, stale and even oppressive, the likely explanation is that it has lost its connection to deeply held values. To keep rituals alive and vibrant requires a delicate balance. Without the structure and clarity they provide, we are forever vulnerable to the urgent demands in our lives, the seductions of the moment and the limits of our conscious will and discipline. On the other hand, if our rituals become too rigid, unvarying and linear, the eventual consequence is boredom, disengagement and even diminished passion and productivity.

Our dual challenge is to hold fast to our rituals when the pressures in our lives threaten to throw us off track, and to periodically revisit and change them so that they remain fresh. It is critical, for example, to create structured workouts as part of any weight-training regime. However, if you continue to challenge the same body parts in the same way, you will eventually stop gaining strength, become bored and frustrated, and likely quit. Healthy rituals straddle the territory between the comfort of the past and the challenge of the future. Used to best advantage, rituals provide a source of security and consistency without thwarting change or undermining flexibility.

KEY BEHAVIORS

There are several key elements in building effective energy-management rituals but none so important as specificity of timing and the precision of behavior during the thirty-to sixty-day acquisition period. Ted D. and his wife, Donna, went through our program together. Like many of our clients, they complained that because their lives were so busy, they had too little time for one another. As it happened, they also worked together, running a mail-order catalog business. Most of their conversations, on and off the job, focused either on business or on dealing with the demands of their three teenage children.

Ted and Donna decided to build a ritual around setting aside an hour and a half of uninterrupted time for one another on Saturday mornings. The first time that the designated day arrived, both of them had a couple

of other pressing items to take care of first. By the time they were ready to talk, an hour had passed. Just as they were about to start, one of their kids awakened and wanted a ride to an athletic event. Before they knew it, the pressing nature of the day overcame their commitment to spend time together.

When much the same thing happened the second week, Ted suggested that they set a specific start time—8:00 A.M.—and make it sacrosanct. They agreed not to answer the phone during their time together, and they asked their kids not to interrupt them. It worked immediately. Within a few weeks, however, a second issue emerged. Because Ted was more aggressive in talking about what was on his mind, he tended to take up the majority of their time together. To solve the problem, they agreed that Donna should go first, and that for the first forty-five minutes they would talk about whatever was on her mind. Then they switched roles and Ted took his turn. When we last spoke to them, it had been more than two years since they launched the ritual, and they had missed it perhaps half a dozen times. It had become deeply woven into the fabric of their lives, and both of them agreed that it had been a central factor in helping them to feel closely connected no matter how busy the rest of their lives become.

Doug L. is an executive who spent nearly a decade overseeing several thousand financial advisers at a large financial services company. From early on, he instinctively understood the role of rituals. To assure that he embodied the values he had defined as important and the goals he had set for himself, he developed a series of what he called "key behaviors." In his personal life these included a weekly date night with his wife and a commitment to attend all of his daughters' athletic events. One of the more unusual rituals, for an executive at his level, was that on Wednesdays at 1:00 P.M., he left his office to play tennis for an hour, and on Fridays at 1:00 P.M. he played basketball for ninety minutes at a nearby YMCA. His secretary put these two dates in his weekly calendar and protected them the way she would any other high-priority appointment. For Doug, these two activities were critical sources of renewal in the course of his very demanding days. If he had been more casual about trying to find the time to exercise in the middle of workdays, he told us,

it never would have happened. The same was true of the date night with his wife and the time he committed to his daughters.

PRECISION AND SPECIFICITY

A broad and persuasive array of studies confirms that specificity of timing and precision of behavior dramatically increase the likelihood of success. The explanation lies once again in the fact that our conscious capacity for self-control is limited and easily depleted. By determining when, where and how a behavior will occur, we no longer have to think much about getting it done. A series of experiments have confirmed this pattern. In one study, for example, participants were asked to write a report on how they intended to spend Christmas Eve, and to submit it within forty-eight hours. Half of the participants were told to specify exactly when and where they intended to write the report. The other half got no such deadline. Among those who had the precise deadline, 75 percent handed the reports in on time. Only one-third of the second group did so.

In another study, women were asked to perform a breast self-examination during the subsequent month. One group was asked to write down when and where they would do so, while the other was not. Both groups were then narrowed down to those women who had expressed a strong intention to complete the task. Nearly 100 percent of those who designated when and where they would do the exam completed it. Only 53 percent of the second group did so, despite equally strong intentions to conduct the exam.

In still a third study, the goal was to increase compliance in an fitness program that was being offered to a group of nonexercising college students. In a first attempt to motivate them, the subjects were given data about how exercise would significantly reduce their vulnerability to coronary heart disease. Participation in the program increased from 29 to 39 percent. When this information was followed by a request that students designate when and where they intended to exercise, compliance went to a remarkable 91 percent. Similar results were achieved in trying to help people adopt better eating habits. Participants proved far more likely to eat healthy, low calorie foods when they were

asked in advance to specify precisely what they intended to eat for each of their meals during the day, rather than using their energy to resist eating certain foods all day long.

In perhaps the most dramatic experiment of all, a group of drug addicts were studied during withdrawal—a time when the energy required to control the urge to take drugs severely compromises their ability to undertake nearly any other task. As part of the effort to help them find employment post-rehabilitation, one group was asked to commit to writing a short résumé before 5:00 P.M. on a particular day. Not a single one succeeded. A second group was asked to complete the same task, but also to say exactly when and where they would write the résumé. Eighty percent of that group succeeded.

The specificity and precision of rituals also makes it more likely that we will be able to produce them under pressure. Bill Walsh, the brilliant former coach of the San Francisco 49ers, put it simply in describing his approach to football: "At all times the focus must be on doing things properly. Every play. Every practice. Every meeting. Every situation. Every time." Walsh's point applies to any performance venue. Practice makes perfect only if the practice is perfect—or at least aims for perfection. If you cannot perform a particular task effectively when you are feeling relaxed and unpressured, it is unlikely that you will be able to do so when the pressure is high, or when you are in the midst of a crisis. Building precise rituals makes it possible to push away the distractions and fears that arise under pressure. "The less thinking people have to do under adverse circumstances, the better," explains Walsh. "When you're under pressure, the mind can play tricks on you. The more primed and focused you remain, the smoother you can deal with out-of-the-ordinary circumstances."

Precision and specificity also help to assure that our rituals themselves remain fueled by our deepest values. It is not enough simply to create a vision statement. Only by building a ritual to regularly revisit this vision can we insure a strong, continuing connection to the unique source of energy such a statement provides. Pediatric neurosurgeon Ben Carson is a good example. "I have found that having a morning ritual—meditation or some quiet reading time—can set the tone for the whole day," he explains. "Every morning, I spend a half hour reading the Bible,

especially the Book of Proverbs. There's so much wisdom there. During the day, if I encounter a frustrating situation. I think back to one of the verses that I read that morning. Take Proverbs 16:32, for example: 'He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit is better than he who takes a city.'"

Our clients have found their own rituals to maintain their connection to the energy of purpose. Some spend a few minutes when they wake up writing in a journal. Others meditate or pray or read something inspirational or simply spend a few minutes in reflection while they are showering. Still others have their vision statements on the home page of their computers, or make it a practice during breaks to reflect on their values. One client had his personal and professional vision laminated on two sides of an index card and slipped it under the visor above his seat in his car. On his way to work in the morning, he spent a few minutes reviewing his professional vision. On his way home at night, he flipped the card and spent the last few minutes of his commute reflecting on his personal vision. The key is not *how* we make the connection to our purpose. Rather it is assuring that we do so in a regular way.

DOING VS. NOT DOING

When intentions are framed negatively—"I won't overeat" or "I will not get angry"—they rapidly deplete our limited stores of will and discipline. *Not* doing something requires continuous self-control. This is especially true of deeply ingrained habits and responses to temptations, such as eating desserts or drinking alcohol in a social situation. Designing a positive behavior to prepare for a particular situation is sometimes called "priming." In the case of the temptation to overeat, for example, the priming ritual might be something like "When I am tempted by dessert, I will have a piece of fruit instead."

For years, George F., an executive at a small consulting company, struggled with an inclination to lose his temper whenever he felt frustrated or thwarted. It undermined his relationships at work, and because he considered kindness a primary value, it also made him feel bad about himself. As we looked more closely, it became clear that George was especially vulnerable to blowing up when he had worked

long hours without a break, or failed to eat at regular intervals. Countless times he had committed to controlling his impulses, but within a few days, he always found himself reverting to his familiar pattern.

Ensuring breaks and eating regularly represented a first intervention. Next, we suggested that George focus on the behavior he wanted to introduce into his life, rather than the one he hoped to resist. The first step was to get him to take several deep breaths as soon as he felt his anger rising and to resist saying anything in the moment. When he finally did speak, we suggested that George lower his voice. He had a tendency to speak louder as he became more aroused, which not only fueled his anger, but also pushed others away. Finally, we asked George to smile, even if it required a bit of acting at first. Considerable evidence suggests that smiling literally reduces arousal and short-circuits the "fight-or-flight" response. It is nearly impossible to smile and to feel angry at the same time.

Not surprisingly, George found this sequence of behaviors awkward and difficult at first. In several challenging situations, he simply forgot to do them at all. Within several weeks, however, the sequenced ritual had become nearly automatic in all but the most stressful circumstances. What George found most startling was that smiling in the face of frustration actually became a trigger to view the situation differently—more gently, less urgently and with a sense of humor.

INCREMENTAL CHANGE

If nothing succeeds like success, it is equally true that nothing fails like excess. Because change requires moving beyond our comfort zone, it is best initiated in small and manageable increments. Imagine that you decide, perhaps as a New Year's resolution, to *finally* get in shape and start paying more attention to your physical health. Flush with resolve and enthusiasm, you join a gym and make a commitment to jog and to work out with weights three times a week. In the same spirit, you vow to begin a diet, reducing your caloric intake by half and cutting out all sugars and simple carbohydrates. Finally, you commit to getting more sleep at night and to waking up an hour earlier each morning. You even

make very specific and precise plans about how to initiate your new program.

Within ten days, your diet has failed, you've only gotten to the gym twice and you haven't changed your sleeping habits at all. What happened? The answer is that you took on too much, too quickly. Overwhelmed by the demands on your limited will and discipline, you rapidly depleted your self-regulatory reservoir. The result is not just that you failed to stick to your plan, but that you also likely fed your belief that it is impossible to change lifelong habits.

Our method is to build rituals in increments—focusing on one significant change at a time, and setting reachable goals at each step of the process. If you have been completely sedentary and want to begin exercising, it doesn't make sense to start by trying to jog three miles a day five days a week. Your odds of success are far higher if you begin with a highly specific but carefully calibrated training plan. That might mean walking for fifteen minutes a day three times a week at first, with predetermined increases in time or pace built in for each subsequent week. Growth and change won't occur unless you push past your comfort zone, but pushing too hard increases the likelihood that you will give up. Far better to experience success at each step of a progressive process. Building confidence fuels the persistence to pursue more challenging changes. We call these "serial rituals."

BASIC TRAINING

In the Resources section, you will find the Full Engagement Personal Development Plan, which will take you step-by-step through the process for identifying your key values, developing a vision, creating rituals that address your primary performance barriers and holding yourself accountable each day to your commitments. Two behaviors, we have found, dramatically increase the likelihood of successfully locking in new rituals during the typical thirty-to sixty-day acquisition period. We call these behaviors Basic Training. They serve as the ground upon which successful rituals are most effectively built.

Chart the Course This practice can take many forms, but the aim is always the same: to launch each day's ritual-acquisition mission by revisiting our vision, clarifying not just what we intend to accomplish, but how we want to conduct ourselves along the way. Some of our clients find that they can do this in as little as five or ten minutes while others set aside a half hour or more. Some clients chart the course in the shower, while others sit in a quiet room at home or do it during a walk or a jog outdoors or even while commuting to work.

Charting the course may include different elements. Some clients find it most effective to connect to specific deeply held values such as generosity, empathy, honesty or confidence and to use them as fuel for instituting a particular behavior or achieving a specific goal. Others find it most powerful to actively imagine how they will handle potentially difficult challenges in the day ahead. Still others simply like to set aside a designated block of time when they get up to reflect on their vision for themselves. This may take the form of writing in a journal or meditation or prayer.

Sally F. worked at an inner-city public school. For all the idealism that drew her to teaching, she spent much of her day disciplining her students and trying to keep order in her classroom. She decided to institute a morning ritual to stimulate positive feelings about her work in order to offset frustration and increase her positive energy. After completing our training, she began launching each day by reconnecting with the importance of her four primary values: patience, respect for others, gratitude and humility.

On stressful days, it had always been difficult for Sally to resist succumbing to negative emotions. Living by a code of conduct about how to manage her energy—establishing rules of engagement—grounded Sally in her deepest values and helped her to keep discouragement at bay. When her energy flowed more from a positive sense of appreciation for the opportunity that teaching provided, Sally not only felt more patient and balanced but also found that she had a more uplifting and inspiring impact on her students.

Chart the Progress The second key to building rituals that lead to sustaining change is holding yourself accountable at the end of each day.

Accountability is a means of regularly facing the truth about the gap between your intention and your actual behavior. If you are trying to eat a healthier diet, it is critical to have rituals that define what and when you are going to eat, but also to measure at the end of each day how well you've followed your plan. If you have built a ritual around treating others with more respect, it is important to keep track of how effectively you are meeting that goal. The same is true for any endeavor to which you have committed yourself. Defining a desired outcome and holding yourself accountable each day gives focus and direction to the rituals that you build. For many of our clients, the best way to do this is to create a daily accountability log. This exercise can be as simple as a yes or no check on a sheet kept by the side of your bed. (See Resources for a sample Accountability Log.)

"It's great to know how to recharge your batteries, but it's even more important that you actually do it," Vinod Khosla, a partner at the venture capital firm Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield and Byers told *Fast Company*. "I track how many times I get home in time to have dinner with my family. My assistant reports the exact number to me each month. Your company measures its priorities. People also need to place metrics around *their* priorities. . . . My goal is to be home for dinner twenty-five nights a month. Having a target number is key. . . . Keeping track of your behavior each month means that you don't slip up, because you know immediately whether your schedule is matching up with your priorities."

Holding your own feet to the fire doesn't require judging or punishing yourself when you fall short. Negative motivation, as we have seen, is short-lived and energy draining. At its best, accountability is both a protection against our infinite capacity for self-deception and a source of information about what still stands in our way. If you are falling short in implementing a particular ritual or achieving the outcome that you are seeking, several explanations are possible. It may be that the ritual isn't grounded in a value or a vision that is truly compelling to you. It may be the goal that you set is simply too ambitious and needs to be implemented more slowly and progressively. It could also be that the ritual you put in place is faulty and needs to be restructured. Often, the failure to follow through on a new ritual masks the benefit that you derive from holding on to an existing behavior and an unacknowledged

resistance to changing it. Whatever the explanation, measuring your progress at the end of the day should be used not as a weapon against yourself, but as an instructive part of the change process. We can derive as much value from studying and understanding our failures as we can from celebrating and reinforcing our successes.

BEAR IN MIND

- Rituals serve as tools through which we effectively manage energy in the service of whatever mission we are on.
- Rituals create a means by which to translate our values and priorities into action in all dimensions of our life.
- All great performers rely on positive rituals to manage their energy and regulate their behavior.
- The limitations of conscious will and discipline are rooted in the fact that every demand on our self-control draws on the same limited resource.
- We can offset our limited will and discipline by building rituals that become automatic as quickly as possible, fueled by our deepest values.
- The most important role of rituals is to insure effective balance between energy expenditure and energy renewal in the service of full engagement.
- The more exacting the challenge and the greater the pressure, the more rigorous our rituals need to be.
- Precision and specificity are critical dimensions of building rituals during the thirty-to sixty-day acquisition period.
- Trying *not* to do something rapidly depletes our limited stores of will and discipline.
- To make lasting change, we must build serial rituals, focusing on one significant change at a time.