



# CALM EFFECTIVENESS

Excelling During Challenging Times

Personal Advancement Guide

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# About this Video Program and Personal Advancement Guide

The video program and this Personal Advancement Guide are based on:

**Tools**, not just theory.  
**Science**, not just success talk.  
**Measurable Results**, not just new ideas.

You may use this Personal Advancement Guide with or without a facilitator or leader in one of the following ways:

## **1. Self-Study with this Guide:**

We recommend that you work through this guide and its material in the order that follows this page. Before you watch the video, please read about Dr. Robert K. Cooper on page 3 and the Preface on page 4. Also, complete the activities on pages 6 and 7. Throughout this guide you will be asked to write down or work through a variety of insights. Your work is not intended for any other purpose than your own development. It is not for any use other than your own. We recommend that after you've completed this program you continue to refer to this material as well as your personal insights. Your notes will serve as motivation and measurement for your continued advancement.

## **2. Learning with a Group or Team – with each person having a copy of this guide:**

A detailed Leader's Guide and tips for organizing your training session are provided on pages 42 - 46 of this guide. We recommend that you work through this guide and its material in the order that follows. Each participant will have the opportunity to write down and work through his or her own personal insights. Encourage participants to refer to this material and their own discoveries from this program. Their notes will serve as motivation and measurement for their ongoing advancement. Information about additional participant guides or duplication rights are available at [www.vividedgeproductions.com](http://www.vividedgeproductions.com).

## **3. Learning with a Group or Team – without each person having a copy of this guide:**

A detailed Leader's Guide and tips for organizing your training session are provided on pages 42 - 46 of this guide. We recommend that you work through this guide and its material in the order that follows. Although we recommend that each participant have a Personal Advancement Guide, you may choose to review/paraphrase the material provided and have participants answer (*either through group discussion or by using a notebook*) many of the insightful questions and exercises provided throughout this guide.



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*Enjoy this program and good luck in your continued journey  
of finding more Calm Effectiveness in your life.*

## Robert K. Cooper, Ph.D.



Praised as “a national treasure” by Stanford Business School Professor Michael Ray and named “the ultimate business guru for the new millennium” by *USA Today*, for five years Robert Cooper has been the highest-rated faculty member in the Lessons in Leadership Distinguished Speaker Series sponsored by universities and business schools worldwide.

An acclaimed educator on how exceptional leaders and teams liberate untapped capacities and excel under pressure, Cooper is also recognized for his pioneering work on the practical application of emotional intelligence and the neuroscience of leadership.

He has lectured at the Stanford Executive Program, Management Centre Europe, and over twenty leading business schools. He serves as Adjunct Professor in the Ph.D. Program at the Union Institute and University in Cincinnati. In addition to graduate work at the University of Michigan and University of Iowa, he completed his undergraduate degree with honors at the University of Minnesota and earned his doctorate at the Union Institute and University Graduate College in health and psychology with an emphasis on leadership.

In a recent survey of managers and professionals from more than 90 organizations, his work was compared to twenty widely recognized leadership authorities. Cooper rated highest on every scale, including inherent value, usefulness, applicability, delivery, and overall results. In an independent rating by professionals and managers in the Senior Management Interchange, the value of his work was rated at 4.9 out of 5.0.

Cooper’s practical, scientifically-based advice has garnered accolades from all corners. In addition to praise from *USA Today* and a number of scientists, executives, and researchers worldwide, according to *The Detroit News*, “Robert Cooper’s books are among the best researched and most helpful of all those published in the past decade.” *Library Journal* has called his work “a valuable contribution to the literature.” His articles have been published in *Strategy & Leadership Journal*, and his books, including *The Performance Edge* and *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership & Organizations*, have sold over four million copies. His newest book, *The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership & Life*, has received 5-star reviews, has been on the *Wall Street Journal* Bestseller List, the *BusinessWeek* Bestseller List, and #3 on Amazon’s Top 100 List.

Cooper is chair of Advanced Excellence Systems, LLC, a leadership consulting firm in Ann Arbor, MI. For five years he served as Chair of the Board for Q-Metrics, a San Francisco-based firm specializing in the measurement and advancement of star performance and applied intelligence. Cooper has consulted with or presented leadership development and professional education programs for many organizations, including 3M, Verizon, Ford, Intel, Qualcomm, American Express, Disney, Capital One, Wells Fargo, Pepsico, Delta Air Lines, Ball Aerospace, Deloitte & Touche, Scientific Atlanta, Novartis, Johnson Controls, Morgan Stanley, AC Nielsen, Diageo, Checkpoint, Liz Claiborne, Hilton, Georgia-Pacific, Booz/Allen/Hamilton, Marriott, Sun Microsystems, Analog Devices, GlaxoSmithKline, AT&T, Fidelity Investments, PNC Bank, American Hospital Association, Methodist Hospitals of Dallas, Department of Veterans Affairs, Valassis, J.D. Edwards, Fireman’s Fund Insurance, Northwestern Mutual Life, The Limited, Allstate Insurance, and Coca-Cola.

He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. An All-American athlete, he is a recipient of the University of Michigan’s Honor Trophy Award for “outstanding achievement in scholarship, athletics, and leadership”. Beyond his corporate work, Cooper’s background includes a decade of study on stress dynamics, effective change, and instructor-level certifications from several leading preventive medicine institutions.



## Preface

No matter how long we work, no matter how little we sleep, no matter how hard we try, very few of us are achieving the results we have imagined or hoped for in our work or our lives. Science shows us there is a better way. It is known as calm effectiveness.

This program on **Calm Effectiveness** reflects how I see the hidden possibilities that are everywhere around us for growth and success during times of great change. All of us have, within our reach every single day, untold opportunities to thrive under pressure and stay on top of our priorities, instead of losing them along the way.

We are given a chance at every turn and at every moment of our lives and work to shape what we become. If only we can master **Calm Effectiveness**.

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## To Begin With . . .

Before you view the video, **Calm Effectiveness**, let's start with a simple exercise, or mechanism, called a **Check-In**. In a few moments, on the chart below you will be asked to rate yourself on your current level of energy and focus.

Before you decide, here is an example of how the scale works...

For **energy**: a 10 means you have so much energy you need a seat belt and a 0 means it's a miracle you are upright. For **focus**: a 10 means you have the best imaginable level of concentration and a 0 means your attentiveness is as low as it has ever been.

With this perspective in mind, go ahead and check in...



### Check-In

At this moment what is your self-rating for:

**Energy:**                    **0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10**

**Focus:**                    **0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10**

Of course you could alter the truth on this exercise. There's nothing objective about these numbers. But the moment you begin to check in, your internal self-observation process sharpens. Your curiosity — Where *am* I right now? — is naturally heightened. The process of checking in tends to automatically raise the level of energy and attentiveness you have.

You can also use this simple tool before each important activity — every meeting, interaction, problem-solving time, and so on. It's also a very effective mechanism to use with groups.

Now, let's explore your own frame of reference for **Calm Effectiveness** on the next page.

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## Your Own Frame of Reference

Science confirms that the most effective learning begins with a sense of personal context. This could be remembering a peak experience and relating it to a current challenge or priority in your life work. We can all draw upon examples to remind ourselves of what happens when **Calm Effectiveness** is made visible.

**Directions:** Take a moment to think about and write two brief descriptions that will help you remember some of the best experiences you know of staying calm when pressures rise. These remembrances will help you focus on building new experiences that are even better than these.

### Calm Effectiveness

Setting the Context for Excelling During Challenging Times

Briefly describe the **best leader under pressure you have ever known:**

Briefly describe one of the **greatest adversities that someone you know has ever overcome:**

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As you build new insights and skills during this **Calm Effectiveness** program, relate to these examples as you work to create even better results.



## After the Video



### **Calm Effectiveness Skillset**

Both on and off the job, the **Calm Effectiveness Skillset** can help you stay focused on the things that matter most — instead of getting overwhelmed by the things which matter least. We will address each insight covered in the video program, provide you some additional ideas and tools, and give you an opportunity to reflect and build upon your own experiences.

#### **Insight 1:**

Be Quick Without Rushing

#### **Insight 2:**

Know When to Pull Back to Get Ahead

#### **Insight 3:**

No One Has to Lose for You to Win

#### **Insight 4:**

Know When to Raise Your Vantage Point and Stay Really Calm

#### **Insight 5:**

Get a Life

#### **Insight 6:**

Know How to Let Go

**New results begin with you. Let's get started!**

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## Insight 1: Be Quick Without Rushing

*The world belongs to  
those with the most energy.*

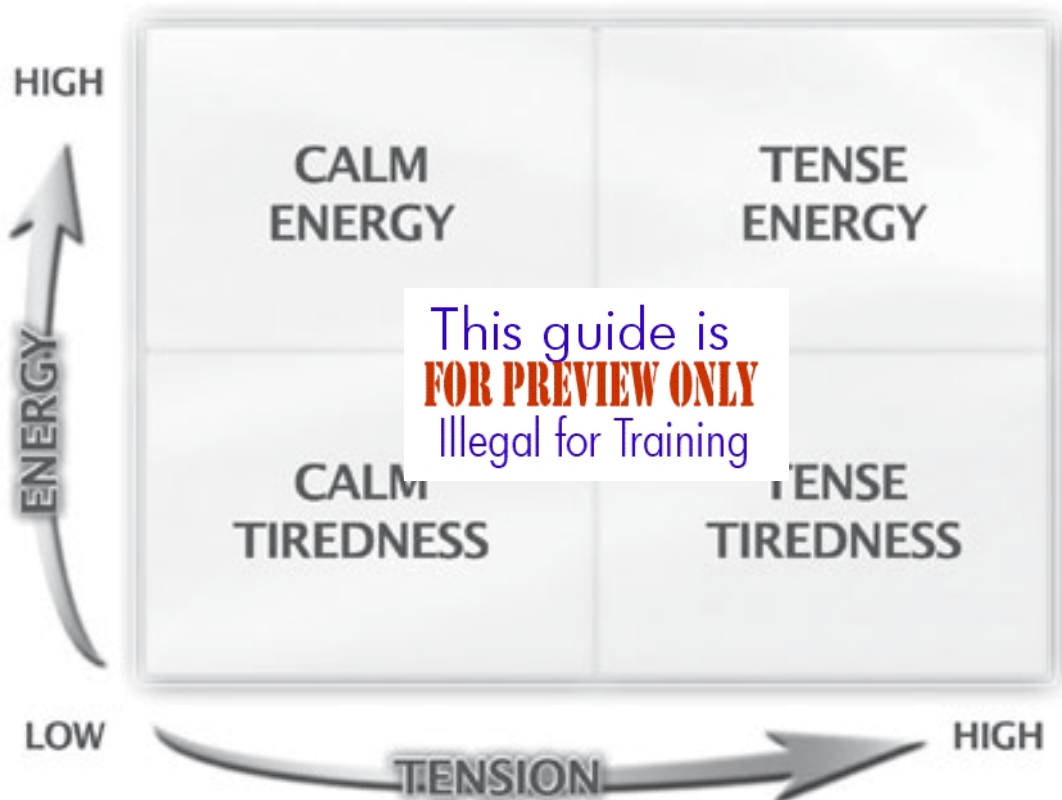
— Alexis de Tocqueville, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's Journal, 1862



Whenever pressures rise, the human brain has an inherent tendency to react to the rising stress by doing more of the same, only harder, longer, faster, and louder. Molehills become mountains. Stumbles become setbacks. Instead of flowing, we rush. And we lose our way.

According to researchers, whenever we keep our energy high, our tensions low, and streamline our efforts we have the greatest access to current capabilities *and* our untapped potential.<sup>i</sup>

As discussed in the video, there are two primary energy states, **tense energy** and **calm energy**.



### Tense Energy

Tense energy is a stress-driven state characterized by high muscle tension and an almost pleasant sense of productivity and power induced by emergency stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol that create the illusion of energy. It takes tension, rushing, anger, or caffeine to propel us forward through the day. With tense energy, molehills appear as mountains, and frustrations rise, thwarting our creativity and stamina.

Tense energy is fueled by a nearly constant sense of pressure and anxiety that compels you to push yourself toward one objective after another, never pausing to rest or reflect. The alternative state is...

### Calm Energy

Calm energy is characterized by low muscle tension, an alert, more constructive or optimistic presence of mind, peaceful and pleasurable body feelings, and a deep sense of physical stamina and well-being.<sup>ii</sup>

With calm energy, you make far more progress in causing the right things to happen throughout the day because you can focus on the things that are important to you without getting consumed by what isn't.

With high levels of calm energy, we are more likely to feel happy and optimistic.<sup>iii iv</sup> We see things more realistically and less dramatically. Molehills are molehills. Mountains are mountains.

When you develop the ability to enter and maintain a state of calm energy, you distance yourself from life's noise and distractions, its rushing and anger. You promote increased clearmindedness and sustained vitality. You **streamline**.

To increase calm energy and begin to accomplish more with less strain, begin with heightened self-observation. First, let's do an energy audit.



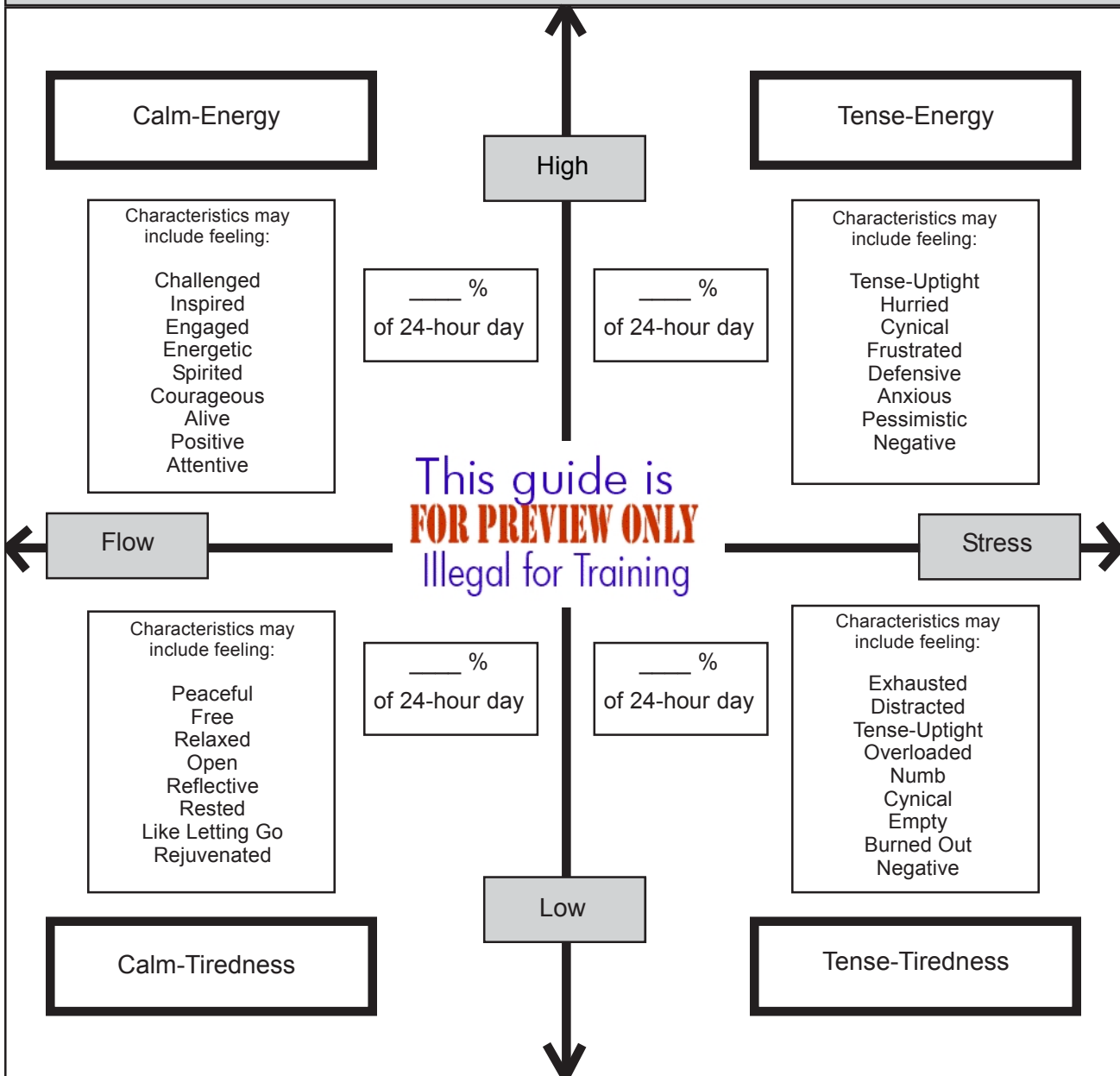
### Personal Insight Exercise

On the next page, clarify for yourself where you spend most of your daily energy on the 2 by 2 matrix.

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# Energy Audit

A Clarification of What Energy States You Spend the Most Time In



Ideally, you want to spend at least 90% of every 24-hour day in calm energy or calm tiredness, and not more than 10% in tense energy or tense tiredness.



## Personal Insight Exercise

Now that you have a better idea of how much time you spend in each quadrant, take a few moments to map your typical energy waves during a 24-hour period.

1. Imagine that you have no caffeine, tension, anger, urgency, or deadlines.
2. Use the chart on the next page to fill in the blanks for each two-hour time period. Put an “X” at the approximate energy level you naturally have at that hour.
3. Then connect the “Xs” to reveal your natural energy pattern. Refer to this pattern to help you manage each of your normal individual downturns in vigor and focus.

**Guidelines:** If you’re usually awake during the time noted, 0 is maximum tension, distraction, or tiredness, and 10 is maximum energy, alertness, and attentiveness. During times when you’re normally asleep, 0 is insomnia or awakening every few minutes to see if you’re still at work, and 10 is sleeping like a baby on a great night.

On the next page, map out your natural cycles of energy.

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# Mapping Your Natural Cycles of Energy

Identifying Inherent Vulnerabilities in Your Vigor and Attentiveness  
So You Can Take Action to Bring Out More of Your Best Every Hour of the Day

Star-performing individuals build and sustain exceptional energy and attentiveness by choice, not by chance. They begin with honest self-observation. Imagine a world with no caffeine, rushing, anger, or deadlines. In that world, what would be your natural high points and low points in a 24-hour period? Map them below by putting an "X" on each timeline from 4 am to midnight. Then connect the "X's."

With this knowledge, you can begin to pay special attention to the key points when your energy tends to fall - and raise it with practical tools like strategic pauses, energy breaks, and techniques to deepen sleep and rest.

Energy Alertness Enthusiasm Attentiveness Best Rest	↑ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 ↓		↑ ↓
Time of Day:		4 a.m. 6 8 10 12N 2 p.m. 4 6 8 10 12 2 a.m.	

To begin increasing your calm energy be more observant of your levels of energy, calmness, and tension during the day. Notice each downturn in your vitality or focus power, and whenever these occur, make a conscious effort to disengage from tension. You can still be moving quickly, but stop rushing yourself mentally or getting gripped by tension.

One of the most important things you can do to increase your calm energy and streamline your efforts is to:

### Start the Day Right — Without a Bang



### Personal Insight

Many of us start the day with many bad habits. Note which ones may be familiar to you and/or add your own:

- Set your alarm as late as possible
- Keep the lights dim
- Avoid morning exercise
- Leap out of bed in a rush to begin the day
- Feel tense and tired
- Load up on caffeine
- Feel a nagging concern about traffic or work deadlines
- Get caught up in rush-hour aggravation
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any of these or similar habits, you have started your day with plenty of tense energy instead of calm energy!

There's a better way...

Researchers can predict how much energy you will have in late afternoon and evening by how you get up in the morning and what you do, or don't do, in the first hour or so after arising. In a sense, your metabolism adjusts itself for the day, trying to anticipate how much energy, and what kinds of energy, will be needed.

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With four simple steps, you can start your day primed for increased calm energy:<sup>v</sup>

# 1 Awaken without a jarring alarm

Ease, don't leap, out of bed. Where possible, awaken to pleasing music, which tends to be much more invigorating and relaxing than the traditional alarm.<sup>vi</sup> Keep the volume low. Avoid jarring noises that shock your system. By easing out of sleep you retain more of the invigorating power of sleep. While still in bed, take a few moments to be still. Blink your eyes. Take several deep breaths. Open and close your hands. Loosen your shoulders and release any tension you notice in the neck, jaw, back, or arms. Remind yourself why you're getting out of bed, such as to provide for your loved ones, keep learning, and make more of a difference in the world, not just a living. When you get up, do it slowly, giving your muscles a chance to ease into action. These start-the-day actions are generating calm energy.



## Personal Insight

What is one small, specific change you can make to how you awaken tomorrow morning?

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# 2 Turn on the lights

On sunny mornings, do you step outside for a breath of fresh air and soak in the brightness? Many of us do this on vacations but not during the rest of the year. We should. The brain responds to many signals, but few are more powerful than light. According to the scientists, there is a neurological link between the retina of the eye and your brain, which plays an important role in focusing attention and energy production. In most cases, the more light, the more focus and overall energy.

Try it tomorrow. When you get out of bed, turn on 3 or 4 times the number of lights you usually turn on! Yes, do it — for at least the first 15 minutes you awake. The overhead light, the bathroom lights or all of the kitchen lights. Or if the sun is up, go outside and flood your eyes with daylight for a few minutes. Feel the difference in energy. For many people, the added light boosts mood and triggers an instantaneous alertness signal in the brain.



## Personal Insight

What is one small, specific way you can increase your exposure to light tomorrow morning?

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### 3 Get at least five minutes of relaxed physical activity

Even just a few minutes of moderate exercise increases calm energy and reduces tension.<sup>vii</sup> Before or after eating breakfast, go through a gentle warm-up and then do a few minutes of light physical activity such as a walk, slowly climbing and descending a few flights of stairs, or pedaling at a relaxed, moderate pace on a stationary bike or outdoor cycle. As little as a minute or two of light physical activity sends a signal to the brain to reduce tension and increase alertness and calm energy.<sup>viii</sup>



#### Personal Insight

What kind of light exercise can you do lightly tomorrow morning?

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### 4 Eat breakfast

More than any other food we eat all day, breakfast may matter the most.<sup>ix</sup> When you eat a small serving of a low-fat, high-fiber breakfast — you switch on, and turn up, your energy. When this food reaches the stomach, it triggers responses in the brain and senses, shifts in messenger chemicals that are essential to alertness and calm energy.<sup>x</sup> In fact, the right kind of low-fat breakfast helps set your energy level for the entire day.<sup>xi</sup>



#### Personal Insight

What kind of light, energy-boosting breakfast can you eat tomorrow?

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## Insight 2: Know When to Pull Back to Get Ahead



It's a paradox of modern life: To get ahead, we have to know when — and precisely how — to pull back.

Two of the best and simplest ways to do this are:

### **Strategic Pauses** and **Essential Breaks**

When you learn to take strategic pauses, you experience natural, powerful rises in your biological energy. This energy influences thoughts, feelings, attentiveness, and actions — giving you a clear boost. But if you skip the next break, your energy level will fall unavoidably.<sup>xii</sup>

Taking pauses is at odds with how most of us are accustomed to living and working. We get up earlier and earlier. We drive ourselves — and others — harder and longer than ever, all in the name of keeping

up or getting ahead. What we're missing is smart pacing.<sup>xiii</sup>

When we work for longer than twenty or thirty minutes straight on a single task, our problem-solving time increases by up to 500 percent<sup>xiv</sup> and we find ourselves short-tempered and lacking manners.<sup>xv</sup>

The difference between pauses and breaks is one of frequency and time required.

A **strategic pause** is ideally taken every half hour all day long and each pause takes no more than thirty seconds.

**Essential breaks** require as little as two to three minutes, two or more times a day — especially mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Both pauses and breaks have these elements in common:

# 1 **Breathe**

How you breathe has a lot to do with how much energy you can generate and sustain all day long. Oxygen interruption — brief, frequent halts in breathing or chronic under-breathing — is a common contributing factor to tension and tiredness. Conversely, every time you deepen your breathing, you increase calmness and vigor.<sup>xvi</sup> So, **breathe...**

## 2 Rebalance your posture

Begin by standing up — tall, loose, and at ease. As a matter of fact, do that right now. Uplift your posture. Every time you get up and move, you increase your energy and alertness.<sup>xvii</sup>

For those of us who spend long periods of the day sitting down, there is evidence that simply standing up every half hour or so increases alertness and energy by up to 30 percent.<sup>xviii</sup>

Poor posture — even a slight slumping of the shoulders — depletes lung capacity and blood and oxygen flow to the brain and senses by as much as 30 percent.<sup>xix</sup>

The goal is to keep your chin slightly in, head high. It's a very relaxed feeling of being taller. Imagine a beanbag on top of your head and gently lift your muscles to push it toward the ceiling. Next, loosen and realign your shoulders so that they are as relaxed and wide as they can be. This immediately increases oxygen flow to the brain and senses. Every time. A few seconds here. A half-minute there. You get an energy boost and, as a bonus, increased clearmindedness.<sup>xx</sup>

Make it a point if you have a sit-down job to get up often, to stand while you talk on the phone, for example. How about walking around for a minute or two every hour, or going up and down a flight of stairs, or heading out to the porch, deck, or yard for some fresh air?

## 3 Sip some ice water

One of the most overlooked reasons for lack of energy is a lack of water. Water provides the medium for nerve impulse conduction, the transmission of other biochemical processes, and the muscle contractions that stimulate metabolism and generate energy. Even a slight dehydration — not enough to make you thirsty — can measurably deplete energy.

By sipping extra water every 20 to 30 minutes during the day, you not only improve your overall health and resistance to illness but also provide a clear, repeated signal to your metabolism to keep your energy and alertness levels higher. This effect may be even more pronounced when the water is ice-cold, because when ice-cold water reaches the stomach it stimulates increased energy production throughout the body and raises alertness in the brain and senses.

## 4 Increase exposure to light

Increased exposure to light or brightness can also boost energy, sometimes dramatically. During each strategic pause or essential break, step to a window or glance at a bright indoor light. Many people report a lasting sense of calmness followed by a surge of energy after looking at a bright outdoor scene or glancing at indoor light (even at the intensity level of normal room lamps).<sup>xxi</sup>

## 5 Enjoy a moment of humor

Seriousness often interferes with energy and makes it more difficult to streamline your efforts.<sup>xxii</sup> By pushing nonstop and staying relatively glum and intense about work or life, we lose out in a number of ways. Every time you have a hearty laugh — energy increases, brain wave activity changes in positive ways, and hormone production rebalances.

Sometimes the best humor of all is the ability to laugh at yourself — taking yourself more lightly as the day goes forward. What did you see or hear recently that tickled your funny-bone? Any antics of children? A great — and non-hurtful — joke? What about a quick glance at a favorite cartoon?

## 6 Shift away

Eyestrain can be a significant cause of tension and fatigue — especially late in the day. Hour after hour, the tiny muscles in the human eye use more energy than any other muscle fibers in the body. Without a brief rest every half hour or so, they become tired and produce headaches, fatigue, and tension in the neck and shoulders.<sup>xxiii</sup>

If you've been doing close-up work, take a few moments to blink your eyes and look at more distant objects, such as a picture or poster on the wall, or the scene out a nearby window. If you've been scanning distant scenery, switch to focusing on something nearby. These easy actions help provide a brief and vital rest for the most active eye muscles, prompting a healthy exchange of fluids in the eyes and providing increased oxygen and other nutrients.

So these six steps are shared in every **strategic pause**:

1. Breathe
2. Rebalance your posture
3. Sip some ice water
4. Increase exposure to light
5. Enjoy a moment of humor
6. Shift away

In an **essential break**, there is one additional step at mid-morning and mid-afternoon:

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## Eat smart

Eating low-fat snacks between meals can actually increase your energy and metabolism. Here's why:

When you go for four or five hours at a stretch without eating, your blood-sugar levels drop and your energy wanes. Research suggests that spreading out your food intake helps increase levels of energy and alertness, lower blood cholesterol levels, reduce body fat, enhance food digestion, and lessen the risk of heart disease. <sup>xxiv</sup>

In contrast, one of the simplest ways to reduce mental distress and tension is by, first, avoiding over-stimulating yourself with caffeine (which can easily happen from consuming too much coffee, tea, and soft drinks).

Over the next few weeks, take notes on your state of energy and mood 10 to 15 minutes before meals and snacks. Do you feel alert and motivated? Calm and focused? Tense and irritable? A half-hour after eating, reassess. Create a list of the food choices that seem best for you and use it as a helpful tool in managing your day-to-day eating patterns.

Whatever specific steps you choose to include in your daily performance routines, strategic pauses and essential breaks remind us of some larger principles:

***To get ahead, you have to be able to pull back;  
to be more present, you have to be able to withdraw;  
and to accomplish more, you have to take more of the right breaks.***



## Personal Insight Exercise

On the following page, estimate and compare how many hours you spend pushing hard as opposed to recovering well on your typical day. This is where you focus on establishing a healthy balance between the times you push hard and the times you let go and rejuvenate your energies. If you mapped out a typical 24-hour day, how many hours would you spend doing what?

Once you complete this exercise, evaluate how your 24 hours balanced. Did you have at least 50% for recovering well and less than 50% for pushing hard? If not, spend some time thinking about how can you gain better balance.

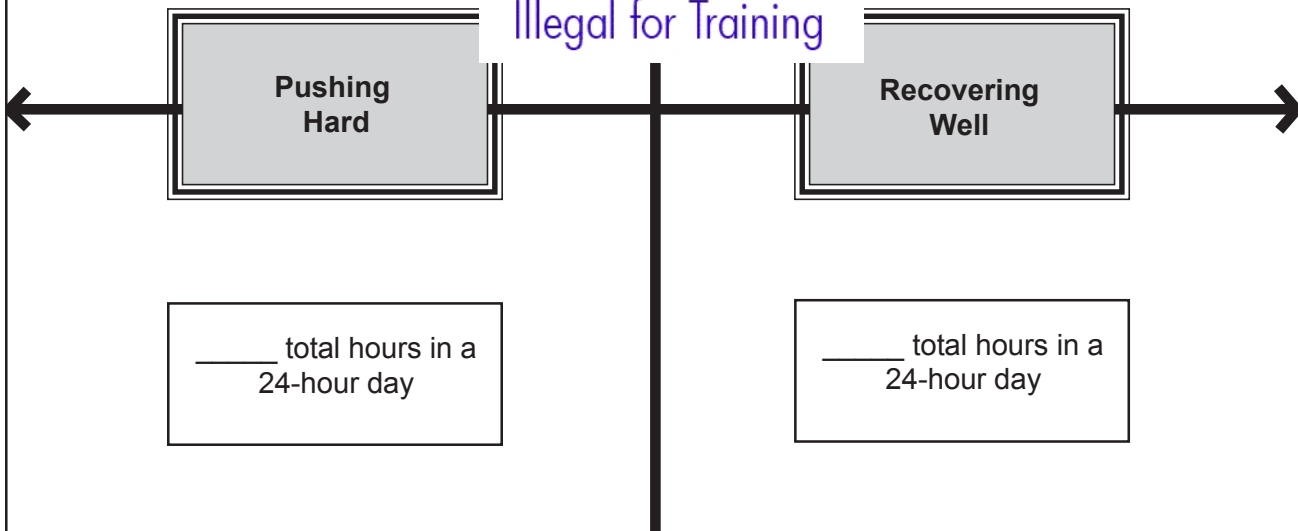
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## Stress-Recovery Balance

This insight page is for estimating and comparing how many hours you spend *pushing hard* vs. *recovering well* on a typical day. Research shows this balance is crucial to your ability to successfully handle adversity and change.

Working hard, concentrating intensely: ___ hours	Thinking informally and creatively: ___ hours
Resting tensely or poorly: ___ hours	Sleeping deeply and well: ___ hours
Dealing with interruptions/emergencies: ___ hours	Enjoying healthy meals/snacks: ___ hours
Complaining: ___ hours	Laughing: ___ hours
Chauffeuering for others/must-do errands ___ hours	Spending fun time with loved ones: ___ hours
Doing added/extra/unexpected work: ___ hours	Taking effective breaks and pauses: ___ hours
Exercising intensively: ___ hours	Enjoying, relaxed, fun activities: ___ hours
Focusing on short-term details: ___ hours	Focusing on the big picture or long view: ___ hours

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## Insight 3: No One Has to Lose for You to Win



An intense focus on competing can become one of the principal barriers to excelling in life or work.<sup>xxv</sup>

Here's what we know: competition in which one person must lose in order for another to win — tends to undermine the best in most of us. It makes us wary and distrustful of others, causes us to withhold and distort information, inspires us to negatively caricature others, makes us intolerant of uncertainty and change, and it so narrows our focus that constructive creativity is practically shut down.

Competition inhibits learning and creativity because people in conditions of competition focus solely on the task at hand, paying too much attention to what competitors are doing, comparing themselves to others but not to greater possibilities, and trying to win the favor of those who are judging the contest.<sup>xxvi</sup>

It doesn't have to be that way.

### Don't Compete, Excel

Star-performing individuals make breakthroughs happen in any walk of life or field of endeavor by focusing on excelling while everyone else is just competing.<sup>xxvii</sup>

To *compete* means to run in the same race, in much the same way as everyone else, constantly comparing yourself to others and knowing that, in traditional zero-sum competition, someone else must lose for you to win. The goal is to get across the finish line first by any "fair" means.



### Personal Insight

In what ways do you feel that you may have been or are being competitive, especially with the people you live with or work with?

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To **excel** means to reach beyond the best you have ever given because doing so matters to you personally, for its own sake. It means to run your own race — as an individual, team, or organization.



## Personal Insight

In what instances either in the past or present do you feel that you have excelled instead of competed? Think of times when you have accomplished something that mattered without someone else having to lose.

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To **excel** is to know your greatest strengths and passions, and to emphasize them while honestly admitting and managing your weaknesses. To **excel** requires anticipating and exceeding expectations by fluidly and ingeniously working at the upper edge of your capabilities — not once in a while but hour after hour, in the midst of stress, uncertainty, sudden changes, and high expectations.

Here are some strategies that may help bring out your best and the best in others:

**Every time you get competitive,  
lighten up — and focus on discovering new ways to excel.**

Whenever you find yourself zeroing in on another person's shortcomings (or, more correctly, on your assumptions as to their shortcomings), or feeling that someone else must lose for you to win, catch yourself. Stop. Remind yourself of how debilitating such competitiveness can be. If it helps you gain perspective, think of something humorous. Get back into the flow of what is most fun or challenging about what you're doing. Shift gears. Change your view. Surprise yourself.

Often competitiveness comes from not wanting to stretch or change yourself. The failures of others can make it appear that you are just fine or are advancing when, in truth, you're standing still.



## Personal Insight

Briefly describe a person or a situation that compels you to be competitive. Now, imagine a different way to approach this person or situation so you can apply more of your best without getting consumed by the competition.

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**Whenever you notice you're comparing yourself to others, change the view.**

Brief comparisons to others can sometimes be helpful as a point of reference or catalyst for advancement. But whenever we dwell on these comparisons, we become distracted from giving our own unique best effort to the task or challenge we're facing.

When you find yourself dwelling on comparisons, pause. Shift your focus to compare yourself to the best in yourself. When tempted to settle for what's common, ask, "I'm making an effort here, but *compared to what?* Am I reaching deeper inside myself for something new or different that might be possible? What could happen if I call upon more of my best?"

*Independent of others and in concert with others,  
your main task in life is to do what you can best do  
and become what you can potentially be.*

- Erich Fromm

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## Insight 4: Know When to Raise Your Vantage Point and Stay Really Calm

*You do not simply exist, but always decide what your life will be, and what you will become in the next moment.*

— Viktor Frankel



Calm grace under pressure isn't something we're born with, and attitude or willpower won't produce it, yet it is learnable at any age.<sup>xxviii</sup>

There are two tools that you can use that are the simplest and most effective ways to build calm effectiveness during tough times. They are:

### The **Instant Calming Sequence (ICS)** The **12-Second Rule**

These tools can help you stay calm under pressure, allowing you to use your inner resources more wisely, instead of letting tension or fear take over. Negative emotions — such as chronic anger, acute frustration, and feelings of helplessness or futility — can seriously interfere with your work or life, diverting energy and attention from the challenge or task before you.<sup>xxix</sup>

Both of these tools are easy to apply, requiring only split seconds to implement, anywhere, anytime you need them. They enable you to momentarily slow down and become more attuned to how you're facing pressure instead of just rushing ahead.

First, learn how to take charge of stressful situations with the . . .

### Instant Calming Sequence (ICS)

At the very first moment you feel a flash of anger, surge of fear, or any kind of increased negative stress, what happens? Sometimes the tension and emotion of a situation can “take you over” — you lose control and react in a way you wish later you wouldn't have. Instead, you can learn to trigger the **Instant Calming Sequence (ICS)**.

Briefly describe a time when you recently lost control during a stressful situation or moment of adversity. You will use this example a little later on.

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Did you find yourself feeling like it was a different person? In a way, it was. It's common to have a difficult situation control your reactions, and not the other way around.

When you use the ICS to insert calm alertness at the very start of each stressful or fearful scene, you create a kind of "gap in the action". This is a chance for you to rationally and calmly think through your best response.

The five steps of the **Instant Calming Sequence (ICS)** are:

1. Continue breathing
2. Have a neutral or positive face
3. Uplift your posture
4. Acknowledge reality
5. Mobilize your best

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## 1 Continue breathing

When we are tense or anxious, our breathing tends to become shallow and intermittent. If you unknowingly halt your breathing during the first moments of a stressful situation, as many people do, it propels you toward feelings of anxiety, panic, anger, frustration, and a general loss of control.<sup>xxx</sup>

### The Action:

When pressures rise, consciously keep your breathing going without interruption, smooth and steady.

## 2 Have a neutral or positive face

The muscles of the face not only react to our mood, they help set it. When your face or jaw — or both — are tense, within moments that tension spreads throughout the body. Remaining neutral or positive in your expressions will lead you toward more favorable emotions and more constructive actions.

### The Action:

Release any intensity in your eyes and, at the same time, maintain a neutral or a slightly positive facial expression. It can make a big difference during stressful situations.<sup>xxxi</sup>

## 3 Uplift your posture

It's vital to make certain your position is relaxed, upright, neutral, and tall. Test this yourself right now by assuming a tight, slumped posture, perhaps in front of a full-length mirror. Say something. Does it feel natural, or strained, weak, or grouchy? Now choose to unlock your position, both mentally and physically, with a balanced neutral stance and open peaceful hands. Begin talking again. Do you notice the difference? Whenever you react to stressful situations with a slouching posture you magnify feelings of helplessness and panic.<sup>xxxii</sup>

### The Action:

When stress rises, flash a mental "wave of relaxation" through your whole body, lift your shoulders, and stand up tall.

## 4 Acknowledge reality

This ICS step takes molehills masquerading as mountains and turns them back into molehills. Far too many of us get tangled up bemoaning every challenge we face. “Not *another* problem! Why does this *always* happen to me?”

By wishing the situation weren’t happening, regretting that you didn’t have more time to prepare, wishing you were somewhere else, or anguishing over life’s unfairness, you set off a biochemical wildfire of victimizing thoughts and feelings. You actually help yourself lose control and become loaded up with anxiety and frustration. A single mishandled moment of stress can disrupt an entire day. The ICS breaks that pattern.

**The Action:**

Say to yourself: “Whatever is happening is real”.

## 5 Mobilize your best

Rather than being primed to defend ourselves at all times, a much more productive approach is to assume that in nearly all challenges there is a hidden opportunity to grow or to practice what we value — if we mobilize our best.

**The Action:**

Remind yourself that this situation or challenge is a unique opportunity to grow or to practice what we value. Say to yourself: “I’m calling upon the best in myself right now to deal with this”.

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## A New Tool + Practice = Real-Life Results



How do you learn to use the ICS? You rehearse. And you choose to use it every day. Notice I didn't say *try* or *hope*. Choose means bringing the skill to life right now. Here's how:

First, think of the stressful situation or moment of adversity you made note of on page 26. Now vividly imagine — *in extra-slow motion* — that this particular tension-producing or pressure-filled situation is just beginning to happen.

Stall the stress signal right there.

Now picture yourself effortlessly, successfully going through the ICS:

1. Continue breathing
2. Stay neutral
3. Uplift your posture and imagine releasing all excess tension
4. Acknowledge the reality of the situation — we don't choose our challenges, they choose *us*... and this is what you're faced with now
5. Mobilize the best inside you — seek the most effective, and if possible *ingenious*, outcome



### Personal Insight

How did you see the outcome of the situation changing if you had used the **Instant Calming Sequence**?

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Now repeat the process, a little faster. Remember, the ICS is a natural, flowing sequence. You unleash it; you don't force it. Practice it a number of times a day, using different stress cues or hot buttons, increasing the vividness of the mental images and the speed of your ICS response.

Now let's talk about your hot buttons.



## Personal Insight

Identify several of the so-called “little things” that really irritate you.

When you, or others, are:

- Forgetful
- Late
- Sloppy
- Ignored when you make a special effort
- Bickering
- Gossiping

When you encounter:

- No parking spots
- Loud talking or activity while on the phone
- The lights being left on
- The toilet seat left up
- Dirty clothes or trash left on the floor
- Dirty dishes left in the sink
- Electrical appliances left on
- Chores not completed

Add your own to the list (*there are thousands of possible hot buttons!*)

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## Personal Insight Exercise

Now that you have identified several of your hot buttons, it's time to address them. This will go far toward freeing up the energy and focus required to discover and develop more of your capabilities. Fill in this simple chart and use it to help you manage small frustrations before they become too large.

In the left-hand column, list four or five of the small frustrations that knock you off balance. Then circle the three that affect you most strongly. Use that trio as your training ground for applying the ICS. Across from each of your three priorities, write a specific desired outcome.

Hot Button →	Calming Strategy (ICS) →	Desired Outcomes
Example. <i>Talking aggressively to other drivers during the morning commute and while children are in the car.</i>	<i>Staying calm.</i>	<i>Setting a better example. Starting the day in a better mood!</i>
Hot Button →	Calming Strategy (ICS) →	Desired Outcomes
Hot Button →	Calming Strategy (ICS) →	Desired Outcomes
Hot Button →	Calming Strategy (ICS) →	Desired Outcomes
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Hot Button →	Calming Strategy (ICS) →	Desired Outcomes

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### Keep Assessing Your Progress — So You Can Make More of It

Immediately following a response to a challenging situation, ask yourself:

- Have I just acted like the person I want to be?
- Did I remain cool and focused, responding based on my values and true priorities?
- If things fell apart, what was the moment when that breakdown began? How could I catch it earlier and better next time?

You could also ask those around you:

- Was my response calmer and more effective this time?
- What could I improve? Listen and learn. Modify your practice accordingly.

Be patient with yourself. The really tough challenges often require quite a bit of practice before you can smoothly *accelerate* through them. Remember that most of us have had years of training, strengthening the counterproductive reactions the **ICS** can replace. Fortunately, it's easier than you might have realized to keep building positive qualities into your life and work — and it's never too late.

The **ICS** gives you a chance to rationally and calmly think through your best response. This leads us to the next tool, the 12-Second Rule.

### 12-Second Rule

Research shows that whenever we react hastily:

- We increase the likelihood we're wrong
- We fail to use our fullest intelligence
- We miss opportunities
- We hurt our health (with anger and stress hormones)
- The stress hormone cortisol is released which interferes with new learning

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That's quite a list. If we realized the costs of reacting hastily, we wouldn't do it so often. In almost every situation, there's no need to race to an answer. A few extra moments of careful consideration make us more curious, thorough, calm, and ingenious.



The next time someone asks you a question or poses a challenge or problem to solve, use the **12-Second Rule**. The **12-Second Rule** is extremely simple. You give yourself at least 12 seconds before responding in any way. This is a skill used effectively by many of the best mentors, teachers, leaders, and star performers.

- Do not react non-verbally in a negative way. As a matter of fact, keep your face neutral as we discussed earlier.
- Do not respond with words or gestures. Keep your body relaxed and open to the challenges or possibilities at hand.

Use the 12 seconds (*or more if needed*) to think farther ahead.

- Think about what may be missing in this question or challenge.
- Tap into *all* your intelligence:
  - What does your gut say?
  - What does your heart say?
  - What does your head say?
- What experience do you have to tap into?
- How much will this situation matter tomorrow, next week, next year?

The **ICS** and **12-Second Rule** are two scientifically-based, extremely simple, and highly effective tools that can change the way you handle the everyday friction spots — delays, interruptions, disappointments, hurt feelings, financial worries, traffic jams, and deadlines, to name just a few.

How well you are able handle these kinds of tensions — is an important predictor not only of your personal effectiveness in meeting major challenges ahead but also of your overall psychological and physical health.<sup>xxxiii</sup>



## Personal Insight

Name at least three instances where you can commit to using the **12-Second Rule** in your typical interactions at work or in life.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Insight 5: Get a Life



*How many people are trapped in their everyday habits:  
part numb, part frightened, part indifferent?  
To have a better life we must keep choosing  
how we're living.  
— Einstein*

Have you ever thought something like:

“Just as soon as I catch up on my work, *then* I'll relax.”

“ . . . *then* I'll be there for you.”

“ . . . *then* I'll make it up to you.”

“ . . . *then* I'll show you how much I love you.”



### Personal Insight

Is there anything that *others notice* — your co-workers, employees, loved ones or friends — and *miss* the most about you in recent years? For example, some part of your personality or humor that made you fun to be around that has faded with the pace and pressure of recent times?

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What do *you notice*? What part of the best in yourself — energy, focus, humor, flexibility, enthusiasm, for example — do you often find yourself losing by the end of the work day?

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It's likely to be something small but significant, such as a sense of joy or zany humor or weird playfulness that you used to have before you got so busy. That's the part of you that people who care about you the most miss the most. It's a common and growing problem. If any of this rings true to you, it's time to get some of that spark back.

Here are six of the simple, proven ways to put more of your best self back into your life beyond work:

1. Synchronize your calendars
2. Check in with loved ones at key times
3. Change the way you walk through the door
4. Eat a snack before you eat dinner
5. Get up and move after the evening meal
6. Remember the funniest thing that happened today

## 1 Synchronize your calendars

When everyone in a household can glance at a shared calendar, it's easier to make future plans, accommodate the prior commitments of others, and plan ahead to spend time together. No matter what form of scheduling you now use — a day planner, electronic organizer, or other — test this approach.

Select a central spot for a traditional wall calendar. Have each household member take a few minutes to enter their personal plans over the next month or two. This is a simple way to help everyone in your home know that you are more aware — and respectful — of their time obligations. It also frees up more moments to savor being together.

## 2 Check in with loved ones at key times

Many family members don't see much of each other. When people spend lots of time away from each other, they may come to feel that others don't care enough about all that they're facing out there in the world. This may be rarely based on truth but rather on misperceptions caused by a lack of regular, heartfelt communication. One of the simplest ways I know to prevent this misunderstanding and deepen your connection with loved ones is to check in with them regularly. Perhaps using short phone calls, or e-mails, several times during the day.

## 3 Change the way you walk through the door

Early evening is the time when energy plummets and vulnerability to tension and tiredness is especially high. In many cases, this is also a family danger zone, because this is a prime time for dumping complaints on each other and triggering fatigue-driven arguments.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

**Consider an alternative:** Whenever a household member walks through the door coming home, change how you greet each other. Express your pleasure in seeing the others in a warm, caring way but have each person limit first comments to about 25 words or less.

After a warm greeting for your loved ones at the door, take a few minutes of “personal wind-down time” to change clothes and go through whatever brief, relatively quiet interlude helps put your day to rest and your life back in proper perspective: a hot shower, some energizing music, a relaxing set of exercises, a calm-down time for a beverage and favorite snack.

The key is to make sure that, even if it’s only for a few minutes, you make a clear shift away from work — so that when you do talk about the day and do things together you are more attentive, calm, and positive.

## 4 Eat a snack before you eat dinner

Here’s something you may find surprising: to rev up your evening metabolism and vitality, it’s essential to eat before you eat. Low blood sugar levels and simple hunger-related tensions contribute to fading energy, negative emotions, and late-day arguments.<sup>xxxv</sup>

It’s a good idea to choose a beverage such as hot tea, juice, or a healthy iced drink, and then enjoy a small, low-fat, high-fiber snack.

## 5 Get up and move after the evening meal

What you do or don’t do in the half hour following your evening meal sets the stage for how much vigor and fun you will have throughout the evening hours and how well you sleep that night. A few minutes of light physical activity at this time of the day elevates your energy level and metabolic rate just as it’s winding down.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Researchers report that walking after a meal may speed up energy-boosting and fat-burning by up to 50 percent.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Test how this works for you. Push back from the table after tonight’s meal and go for a brief walk. If, on your post-meal stroll, you include other family members or friends, you may also gain an ideal chance for some good old-fashioned talk and light-hearted fun — the kind that keeps you closer together rather than drifting apart.

## 6 Remember the funniest thing that happened today

Every single day, humor is a gift of energy. It puts things in perspective. It brings us closer together. It helps us face difficult times.

At dinner time or afterward with family or friends, encourage each person to describe the funniest thing that happened today. If you live alone, then you might do this on the phone with a friend or outside on the sidewalk with a neighbor. In one study of 50 married couples, psychologists found that humor accounted for 70 percent of the difference in happiness between couples that enjoyed life and those that didn’t.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Even just a few minutes here and there of playtime in the evening can really pay off. Instead of speeding up and losing sight, you can slow down and take a good look, shaking free of the mindset of exhaustion and reclaiming more of your life.<sup>xxxix</sup>



## Personal Insight

Describe the funniest thing that has happened to you so far today.

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Life without laughter would not be worth living. Here's something worth thinking about:  
How much pure fun have you had lately? Was it enough?

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Consider the following practical suggestions:

- 1 Do some things just “for the fun of it.”** In his book *The Laws*, Plato said the model of true playfulness was what he saw in the need of all young creatures to *leap*. To leap you must use the ground as a springboard and know how to land resiliently. True play has everything to do with awe or exuberance, and nothing to do with an aggressive drive to win. Healthy, rejuvenating play is usually best when it's independent of a particular goal. When you stop focusing on time and achievement and do things — leaping, for example — just for the fun of it, you open yourself to precisely the kind of play that has led to broadened horizons, fresh perspectives, unexpected joy, sudden discoveries, and advanced learning. Play may be the most important factor in the evolution of social behavior and the mental and spiritual life of humanity.<sup>x1</sup>
- 2 Ease off on the guilt of not getting everything done.** Overstuffed schedules are counterproductive. Frustrations spill over into our attitude. We hurry, overcommit, tire out, forget, fall behind, apologize, and then start the whole process again. Try breaking the loop. Let go of something every day. Start with guilt. Do what matters whenever you can. Ease off a bit on the other things.
- 3 Know what makes your loved ones laugh the hardest—and make it a point to keep doing these things.** It was Nietzsche, a man who wished he had more fun than he had, who said, “We should consider every day lost in which we have not danced at least once.” I see dancing as a metaphor for pure fun. If we don't grab it, it's gone.
- 4 Start a humor library.** Think about all the things that make you laugh out loud. Whether it's cartoons, letters from friends, posters, biographies, old or new comedy movies, joke encyclopedias, games, or humorous stories (in books or on audiotapes for listening while you work or drive), it's a good idea to expand your collection. Pay attention to whatever humor tickles your funny bone and make it a point to keep it close by.

## Insight 6: Know How to Let Go



As you've already learned, tension and being uptight are the primary saboteurs of calm effectiveness. To streamline your efforts and renew your energy it's also vital to get really good at turning off your "on" button.

Sometimes, it's a physical slowdown that's needed. The majority of us have grown accustomed to moving nonstop during the day. We feel busy all the time, don't we? But it pays to notice that not all motion is useful and not all movement is forward.

If you find yourself in this place, step off the fast track and relax your body for at least one full non-doing minute. Time yourself.

Hard, isn't it? It takes practice to get good at letting go and slowing down. Although your superego may admonish you to keep your nose to the grindstone so that a one-minute breather doesn't compromise your eventual fame, that's nonsense. Compared to people who push nonstop all day long, a single minute of slowing down each hour can produce significantly higher effectiveness and productivity.<sup>xii</sup>

But what if your mind never seems to stop racing, even when your body's at ease? If that's the case, start trying ways to send your mind on a brief holiday, even in the middle of the day. The benefits of finding this disengage switch can be huge. As research shows, creative intelligence significantly increases when you stop rushing and think *less*, not more.<sup>xiii</sup> In certain islands of the Caribbean, this is known as *liming* – the art of doing nothing, or anything healthy that you enjoy doing, guilt-free.<sup>xiiii</sup> Sometimes the only way to get ahead is to step back, at least for a little while, and that's the power of liming time.

***Liming* — the art of being fully alive and taking some time every day to do nothing — or anything healthy that you love to do — guilt-free.**

Let's look at some ways that you can get better at *liming*.



## Practice Vanishing

Few of us are really good at disappearing by plan. We may space out in front of the television or doze off unexpectedly, but we're poorly equipped to say, "I'm out of here" as we dive into the deep end of doing nothing and savor every moment of it.

Here's one place to give this a try: stand beside a big pile of unopened mail. Decide to get some breathing space instead of opening any of it. Feel the tension tug inside your gut to go ahead and at least flip through it? You are feeling one of the most powerful pulls of all — the *doing* instinct.

Next, spend some time watching a cat. Cats know almost everything there is about lounging and doing nothing. Emulate what you see. Sink way into the easy chair. No sudden moves. Stretch before you jump up. Notice small things a cat would see that you never noticed before.

### Step Away: Plan It, Say It, Do It

Whenever friends or loved ones kindly remind us to relax — to take a deep breath, have some fun, or unwind for a day — we almost always protest. Doing nothing takes time away from our goals, we reason. First we have to catch up, *then* we'll relax. That's another illusion: none of us is ever going to catch up no matter how hard we try.



### Personal Insight

Consider what you personally need to let go completely from tension and rushing — and how often and for how long each day you might benefit from a disappearing act.

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Looking at the past year, when was the last time you truly and fully "got away from it all"?  
When's the next getaway scheduled? If you don't have one scheduled, start planning it below.

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Now, back to today. How well can you just vanish — even briefly? As I have learned the hard way — and with considerable laughter from friends and family members — you cannot *effort* your way into doing nothing. You have to stop trying, and then it happens. It will be very valuable to practice variations on the three parts of what is called the "Getting Gone Minute".

## The “Getting Gone Minute”

### 1 Let go of time

Take off your watch and look at it. Decide when you want to return from getting gone. Trust your subconscious to nudge you when time is up. Now turn your watch face down. Release your focus about what’s just happened or what’s coming up later. With a bit of practice, this letting go process gets easier.

### 2 Come up for air

As you let go of the outside world, settle into the most comfortable position. Listen to your breathing. Feel your heart beating. Slow down. Tune in. Shed tension. Bypass worry. Remember who you are and what matters most to you in life, not just work.

### 3 Think of something funny

There are strong scientific reasons why people who are quick to laugh — especially at themselves — are generally healthier, more energetic, and better able to bounce back from stressful situations.<sup>xliv</sup>

Unlike other resources, your energy and perspective cannot be bought or sold, stocked up or saved. All you can do is keep replenishing them, and remembering why it matters to not only slow down here and there but to step away and let go of time and worry. Only then does life return to proper focus and, with it, the possibilities for renewed meaning and moments of joy.

## The Last Word . . .

The next frontier isn't just in front of us; it's also inside us. With **Calm Effectiveness**, you can stop letting the things that matter least get in the way of the things which matter the most.

Of all of the moments of history this is the one right now that is filled with the greatest promise.

Make the most of it.

With best wishes for the brightest future, starting today,



The time is now.

The leader is you.

If not now, when?

# Leader's Guide

## About The Calm Effectiveness Program

This program is intended for all employees in your organization. It is particularly useful to bring together diverse groups (managers, employees, co-workers, or leaders) of people who count on each other at work.

This program can be used for:

- Self-Improvement
- Team Building
- Stress Management
- Change Management
- Emotional Intelligence
- Confliction Resolution
- Leadership Development

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## Facilitation Suggestions

### 1-4 weeks ahead

- Watch the video.
- Consider your own reaction and make notes. These notes will be helpful for you to introduce the video itself.
- Determine the date and select participants for the learning session.
- Send an e-mail, memo or letter inviting participants at least one to two weeks in advance.
- Secure a location for the session where the video can be viewed and heard easily. It's generally best to create a relaxed, informal discussion environment. The location should have an adequate writing surface for taking notes and be accessible for participants with disabilities.
- Create an agenda for **Calm Effectiveness**. Use the suggested agenda provided or customize one to fit your time, needs and participants.

## 1-2 days ahead

- Test the VCR and monitor at your selected session location. Make sure both are properly connected and that you understand how to control volume, tracking and color.

## 1 hour before

Do you have...

- The videotape: **Calm Effectiveness**? Is it rewound?
- Agenda? Personal Advancement Guides for each participant, if using?
- Pencils and notepads for participants not using the Personal Advancement Guide?
- Optional: Ice water, fruits, or other low-fat snacks?

## Suggested Agenda

### Introduce the Program to Your Audience

*(Allow 10-16 minutes)*

- Welcome participants.
- Introduce yourself and participants to each other if needed.
- **Optional Meeting Opener:** The 5-minute video by Robert K. Cooper, *Priorities for Life: Excelling* may be an inspiring and useful way to open this learning session. For more information regarding this video, visit [www.vividedgeproductions.com](http://www.vividedgeproductions.com).
- Overview Robert K. Cooper's biography on page 3 and the Preface on Page 4.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each to read Robert K. Cooper's biography on page 3 and the Preface on page 4.*

### Opening Activities

*(Allow 10 minutes)*

- Overview and complete Check-In activity on page 6.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to turn to page 6 and complete the Check-In activity.*
- **Optional:** Consider asking participants to share their own energy and focus with the rest of the group.

### Your Own Frame of Reference

*(Allow 15 minutes)*

- Overview Your Own Frame of Reference on page 7.
- **Ask each participant to:**
  - Briefly describe the best leader under pressure you have ever known.
  - Briefly describe one of the greatest adversities that someone you know has overcome.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to turn to page 7 and complete the frame of reference activity.*
- **Optional:** Your group might find it insightful to share these descriptions. If time allows, ask participants who are comfortable to share their own descriptions with the group.

## Watch the Video

(22 minutes)

- Show the **Calm Effectiveness** video at this time.

## After the Video

(Allow 10 minutes)

- **Discussion:** Share general reactions.
- Review and discuss the **Calm Effectiveness Skillset** insights on page 9.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to review the **Calm Effectiveness Skillset** on page 9.*

## Insight 1: Be Quick Without Rushing

(Allow 20 minutes)

- Overview and discuss information provided on pages 10 - 11.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read pages 10 - 11 and complete the personal insight exercises on pages 11 - 14.*
- Overview and discuss information provided on page 15. Ask participants to discuss their own bad habits - adding to those listed on page 15.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each to read page 15 and complete the personal insight on page 15.*
- Overview and discuss information provided on pages 16 - 17. Consider stopping after each step and have a group discussion on how each person could make a small change to create more calm energy.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read pages 16 - 17 and complete personal insights associated with each.*

## Insight 2: Know When to Pull Back to Get Ahead

(Allow 20 - 30 minutes)

- Overview and discuss information provided on pages 18 - 21.
- Ask each participant to think about how much time in their day that they spend pushing hard as opposed to recovering well. Use examples provided on page 22. Have each participant assign a percentage of time to pushing hard vs. recovering well.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read pages 18 - 21 and complete the personal insight exercise on page 22.*
- **Discussion:** Talk about how each person might gain better balance pushing hard vs. recovering well.

### **Insight 3: No One Has to Lose For You to Win**

*(Allow 15 minutes)*

- Overview information provided on pages 23 - 25.
- Ask each participant to answer the questions provided on pages 23 and 24.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read pages 23 - 25 and complete the personal insights on pages 23 - 24.*
- **Optional Group Discussion:** Ask participants to share their own notes and ideas about being competitive versus excelling. Brainstorm ideas for how to move away from competing in the work environment to excelling.

### **Insight 4: Know When to Raise Your Vantage Point and Stay Really Calm**

*(Allow 20 minutes)*

- Overview and discuss information provided on page 26.
- Ask each participant to write down a time when he or she recently lost control during a stressful situation.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read page 26 and complete the personal insight exercise on page 26.*
- Overview and discuss Instant Calming Sequence (ICS) provided on pages 27 - 29.
- Ask participants to replay their own stressful experience using the ICS steps.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read page 27 - 29 and complete the personal insight exercise on page 29.*
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss personal hot buttons and make a list of some of the most common. Use ideas from page 30. Ask participants to pick four or five of his or her most common hot buttons. Imagine using ICS techniques and rewrite a specific desired outcome for each situation.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to complete the personal insight exercises on pages 30 - 31.*
- Overview and discuss information provided on pages 32 - 33. Ask each participant to write down three situations where he or she will use the 12-second rule in the future.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each to read pages 32 - 33 and complete the personal insight on the bottom of page 33.*

### **Insight 5: Get a Life**

*(Allow 20 minutes)*

- Overview and discuss information provided on page 34 and ask participants to answer the questions provided.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read page 34 and complete the questions provided on page 34.*
- Overview and discuss information provided on pages 35 - 36.

- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read pages 35 - 36 and complete the questions on page 37.*
- **Optional Group Discussion:** Ask each participant to share the funniest thing that has happened so far today or share the most recent time where he or she had pure fun.
- To wrap up, overview information provided on the bottom of page 37.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read the bottom of page 37.*

## **Insight 6: Know How to Let Go**

*(Allow 15 minutes)*

- Overview and discuss information provided on pages 38 - 39.
- **Optional Group Discussion:** Ask each participant to share how he or she most enjoys liming. Ask if participants feel they lime enough, and if not, how can they make improvements?
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read pages 38 - 39 and complete the personal insight exercise on page 39.*
- Overview and discuss information provided on page 40.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read page 40.*

## **The Last Word**

*(Allow 5 - 10 minutes)*

- Read The Last Word from Robert K. Cooper on page 41.
- **Discussion and Wrap Up:** Share general reactions.
- *If participants are using this guide, ask each person to read page 41.*

## Selected Endnotes

- i See: Loehr, J.E. *Stress for Success* (New York: Times Books, 1998); Kelley, R.E. *How to be a Star at Work* (New York: Times Books, 1997).
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- iii Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Finding Flow* (New York: Basic Books, 1997): 21.
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- v For further details, see: Cooper, R.K. *High Energy Living* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books, 2000).
- vi Hauri, P., and Linde, S., Mayo Clinic. *No More Sleepless Nights* (New York: Wiley, 1993).
- vii See, for example: Thayer, R.E., et al. "Mood and Behavior Following Moderate Exercise: A Test of Self-Regulation Theory." *Personality and Individual Differences* 14(1993): 97-104.
- viii See, for example: Moore-Ede, M. *The Twenty-Four Hour Society* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993); and Thayer, R.E. *The Origin of Everyday Moods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
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- x Zak, V., Carlin, C., and Vash, P.D. *Fat-to-Muscle Diet* (New York: Berkley, 1988): 30.
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- xiii Loehr, J.E. *Stress for Success* (New York: Times Books, 1998); and Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Creativity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996).
- xiv Norfolk, D., *Executive Stress* (New York: Warner, 1986); Moore-Ede. *Twenty-Four Hour Society*; and Grandjean, E. *Fitting the Task* (New York: Taylor and Francis, Fourth Edition, 1988).
- xv Peterson, K.S. "Why Is Everyone So Short-Tempered?" *USA Today Cover Story* (Jul. 18, 2000): A1-2.
- xvi Hendler, S.S. *The Oxygen Connection* (New York: Pocket Books, 1990); and Fried, R. *The Breath Connection* (New York: Plenum, 1991).
- xvii Moore-Ede, M. *The Twenty-Four Hour Society* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993): 55-56.
- xviii See, for example: Grandjean. *Fitting the Task*; and Cailliet and Gross. *The Rejuvenation Strategy*.
- xix Cailliet, R., and Gross, L. *The Rejuvenation Strategy* (New York: Doubleday, 1987): 52.
- xx Duncan, J. Quoted in *Prevention's Health Guidebook 1994* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books, 1994): 3.
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- xxvii My sources for this include extensive research at Q-Metrics and Essi Systems in San Francisco, and findings from *Selection Research International* and *People Management International*. See also: Kelly, R.E. *Be a Star at Work* (New York: Times Books, 1997).
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