recharge

5 Simple Shifts
to Energize Your Life

HEIDI HANNA

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DEDICATION

For my soul sister, Judy

I carry your energy with me as a light;
may I continue to shine
in ways that make you proud.

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INTRODUCTION

I hate being tired. I mean, really hate it.

Clearly beyond the carefree years of lying in bed until noon, and way past the decades of fun exhaustion from a night gone wild, I have "evolved" to the disturbing restlessness of being physically tired but mentally too wired to shut it all down. All while the voices in my head yell at me:

"Seize the day!"

"Live like you're dying!"

"No pain, no gain!"

"Just do it!"

"Snap a towel around it!" (This came from my dad, the baseball coach. Still not quite sure what it means.)

So I did it. I got up, put on the running clothes I set out the night before to minimize activation energy (the energy required just to get started), grabbed my headphones, checked my run in on Facebook for extra accountability, took my first few steps...and gasped for air.

Darn humidity. Kept going...foot hurts. Again. Third day in a row. Ignored the pain. Still can't breathe. Feeling dizzy. That'll go away though. It always does eventually.

And then I stopped. I laughed at myself once again (I do this more often than I can count) realizing that just yesterday I was writing the final chapter of this book; Judy's story. It's a reflection on the last few conversations with my dear friend before her unexpected passing.

Hearing the exhaustion in her voice, knowing that her system was running out of steam and trying everything I could to try to get her away for a recharge break. My last text from her said she was finally ready to put it on her calendar, just two days before she was gone.

It's not funny, but I had to laugh at myself for doing exactly what it was I've been working so hard (again, a bit ironic) to teach others not to do. Don't push past the pain! Don't wear yourself out! Don't run out of steam!

But the voices in my head keep telling me otherwise.

This is why I feel so passionate about what I'm trying to do for myself and for my friends, family and clients.

We share the same story that says, "We can rest when we're in the grave", and "We'll take time for ourselves later." But what if we don't get there?

What if we leave our work uncompleted because we couldn't finish the race due to exhaustion?

Not a day goes by that I don't hear from someone I care about that they're experiencing serious symptoms of burnout. From dizziness, fatigue, insomnia, anxiety and depression to extremes such as debilitating panic attacks and heart problems.

Symptoms of imbalance are so typical these days we now consider them normal, brushing off another headache or another restless night of sleep as just part of life. We aren't listening to the right voices. We need to listen loudly to the messages our own brains and bodies are trying to tell us as they scream that the way we're working isn't working anymore.

Never underestimate the power of exhaustion.

IT'S TIME FOR A RECHARGE REVOLUTION!

We're all aware of the i-zombies that now inhabit our world. It saddens me and makes me feel alone as I travel the globe always bumping into (literally) the same situation, no matter where I land. People are much more connected to their technological leashes than they are to the person sitting right next to them.

We've all seen the new trend in family dining: sit at the table with each other, putting your time in, and talk to people who aren't there. Go on "vacation" only to work from a different location. We are the over-connected disconnected generation, and it's only getting worse unless we do something about it. Now!

Can we agree that we all need to take responsibility for the energy we bring to the world? That we owe it to the people we care about to fully show up when we're with them, and take better care of ourselves so that we can be the best version of ourselves for everything and everyone that matters? If we can't convince ourselves to recharge our energy for our own sake, can we do it for those who depend on us? Who love us?

I didn't get a chance to say it quite this clearly to someone I loved, and now I am 100% committed to making sure that I don't keep my mouth shut on this topic ever again.

I will not minimize it; I will not wait until you're ready to hear it. I am speaking to myself as much as I am speaking to you, perhaps more. For the only way I can truly help you is to first help myself.

I am committed to recharge. Will you join me?

If you take one thing away from this book, I want you to know that your energy is not a limitless resource, and that taking care of yourself is not selfish - it's one of the greatest things you can do for the people you love so you can give them your best. By being good to you, you're being good to them.

Be here or be there but be somewhere. Studies show that we only spend about 10% of our energy or attention in the present moment. Nearly 50% of the time we're worrying about the future and about 40% of the time we're still thinking about the past. These mental flip-flops not only decrease our productivity while wasting precious energy, they boost stress hormones that literally destroy the fabric of our being.

You're going to hear me say this time and time again: common sense is not the same as common practice. Taking it easy is hard because when we're low on energy and need it most our brains get stuck in overdrive —a hyper-arousal triggered by chronic stress and energy deprivation.

Never underestimate the power of exhaustion! It is the result of an energy shortage that signifies the greatest possible threat to the brain and body.

If you are sick and tired of feeling sick and tired, or if you're just ready to take your game to the next level, join me in this simple process to gently shift your energy in a more optimal direction for sustainable health, happiness and performance.

Let's get ready to recharge!!!

chapter

1

RUNNING ON EMPTY

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.

DR. SEUSS

We are in the midst of a human energy crisis!

Everything in our environment tells us there is not enough to go around – never enough time, money, or energy to get it all done. Which means we are flooded with stress hormones from the time we drag ourselves out of bed in the morning to the time we toss and turn our way through restless slumber at night. Upon arising, most people instantly reconnect with sources of speed and negative news from email, phone calls, texts, tv or radio, receiving constant feedback that there is an evil concrete jungle ready to pounce on us at any moment.

It's no wonder that stress has reached epidemic levels. Although stress doesn't actually create illness or disease, it speeds up the development of anything that might be off in our system: from cancerous cells, heart disease and diabetes to depression, anxiety and rapid cognitive decline. Too often assumed to be part of the natural aging process, these conditions are in reality life deterioration on steroids.

Our brains are constantly being saturated by stress hormones that are so inflammatory and toxic, they reinforce the perception that we are in an emergency situation. We create a vicious cycle, where our minds perceive the world around us as negative, our bodies reflect the emotion of deficit, fear and deprivation. We can quickly become addicted to our own faulty stories of what's going on in the world.

And just what happens to an energy-deprived brain? Constant time spent on high-alert depletes our resources, which not only makes us feel tired but also limits the brain's ability to provide feel-good endorphins like serotonin that promote relaxation. As a result, we easily shift towards depression, anxiety and chronic fatigue.

Heightened arousal also promotes attention deficit, as we're constantly doing mental gymnastics to try to stay on top of everything, while accomplishing nothing. Our brain quickly becomes our "frenemy", trying to protect us but moving us in a direction that is not sustainable without severe costs to our health and wellbeing.

The concept of the monkey brain is one I've always enjoyed not only because I love monkeys, but also because I can relate to this state of mind. Constantly jumping around from one idea to the next, overactive in the areas responsible for emotion (both good and bad) and underactive in the more "human" parts of the brain responsible for focus and attention.

I have learned to use specific cues in my environment, which we'll discuss more in the following chapters, to remind me to shift out of my monkey brain and act more like a human as much as possible. That way when I feel like monkeying around, I can do so intentionally.

So why is it so easy to slip into this less advanced state of mind? New insights into the brain clearly show that we are hardwired to prioritize survival above all else.

monkey brain:

---

constantly jumping around from one idea to the next;

overactive in the areas responsible for emotion;

underactive in the more "human" parts of the brain responsible for focus and attention

According to neuroscientist Evian Gordon, CEO of Brain Resource, recent research provides a clear model of how the brain operates: first, to establish safety and then to incorporate conscious and non-conscious cues from our environment to make choices.

Over time these choices build neural networks in the brain that support the repeated use of habits of thought and behavior that lead us in the direction of our core purpose, or our authentic self. Thanks to advances in neuroscience and technology, we can actually see these choices in action through brain scans and we can evaluate their effectiveness by using various brain and body assessments.

With safety as our primary goal, any time the brain feels threatened it will focus all resources on taking care of our most basic survival needs. If you want to know what this looks like, just imagine yourself stranded on a deserted island with no food. What's most important to you in that moment is not to be patient, loving and kind but to kill something and eat it. It's no wonder then, that when we go too long without eating, sit too long in meetings without a break, or feel we're not getting what we need from a colleague or partner we can snap before we even realize what happened. The brain is constantly analyzing our available resources to make sure we have what we need to deal with the threats in our environment, and our thoughts and behaviors reflect this perception.

It's important to keep in mind that the brain's environment consists not only of what's happening on the outside, but also our internal sense of balance. When people think about stress, for example, they tend to focus on what's happening around them but fail to consider how their lifestyle choices impact the internal environment; strengthening or weakening their ability to deal with external stress. This is a critical shift in how we target our stress management efforts, looking from an inside-out perspective of building resilience. Ultimately it is the brain's primary responsibility to manage the interaction between stress and recovery in a way that keeps us safe and able to sustain the resources (energy) needed to survive.

balance

The energy
of the mind
is the essence
of life.

ARISTOTLE

1.1
BRAIN-BASED ENERGY MANAGEMENT

As I've discussed in previous books, the brain is the master conductor of our energy system. Like the CFO of an organization, it is the brain's job to make sure we have the energy we need to deal with both current and potential demands. It's one of the ways the human brain is differentiated from other animals: not only are we aware of the fuel we need in the moment, but we can also use previous experiences, pattern recognition and both internal and external cues to signal a future energy shortage.

This is why the human mind-body dynamic is so fascinating: we can use the mind to change the body and the body to change the mind. Which all sounds like a wonderful thing, unless we are subconsciously sabotaging our own efforts or accidentally leading ourselves in the opposite direction of our most important goals.

For example, say you were to go on a diet (and if you're like most people I know you're either on one or off one, so you've had some experience). You really want to eat healthier; maybe lose some weight. Perhaps you've had a bad medical check up that mandates changes to your eating habits, or you're preparing for a big event and want to look your best.

Regardless, you feel committed. In the morning, it all comes easily. You have a healthy, portion-appropriate breakfast as you run out the door to work and as usual are hit with unexpected meetings and appointments, feeling like there is never enough time in the day to get it all done.

You rush through lunch, maybe eating something but not sure you'd even notice as you sit next to your desk pounding away at the workload that never seems to slow down. As you stumble through the door in the evening, exhausted from the day, you no longer care about the diet that was so important to you that morning. You deserve a good meal, and you didn't eat that much anyways. Besides, people should love you for you, right? What does it matter if you carry a few extra pounds? You're doing better than most people out there.

Sound familiar?

The fact is, when your brain is feeling deprived of critical resources, whether it be time, money, energy, food, sleep, etc., your short-term goals really don't matter anymore. What does matter is that you protect yourself, and from an energy perspective there is not much that satisfies a hungry brain and body more than high calorie, high fat, overly processed, comfort promoting food.

enough

What seems contradictory is that the things our brain most craves in times of an energy shortage are often the things that are most hazardous to our health, ultimately destroying our ability to meet our most basic energy needs. Caffeine and other stimulants to give us a quick surge, alcohol to temporarily numb us out, and even more stress, which gives us a rush of adrenaline, cortisol and other hormones designed to help us charge beyond danger.

While these things in moderation are fine, when our brain begins to crave short-term solutions to a long-term problem, good things quickly turn bad.

In my book, *Stressaholic,* I go into more detail about how stress and stimulation become neurochemically addictive to the brain and cause us to find it nearly impossible to relax. Awareness of the problem is an important first step to breaking addiction to any habit of behavior or thought. Then, if we want to make a course correction, it's critical that we develop a plan to change our ways of thinking and being so we can achieve a better result.

Although I laid out a solid plan for breaking stress addiction by building in adequate rest, repairing damage, rebuilding energy, rethinking stress and then redesigning rituals and habits, I found time and time again that people have forgotten how to do the most important part of the entire process – rest and recharge.

I wrote this book to create a simple framework for recovery and restoration. To help energy-challenged people identify small shifts that would move their energy in a positive direction while creating a simple plan to facilitate brain change at a chemical and cellular level to make these new habits sustainable.

My goal is not to put more on your to-do list, but to encourage you to make personal recovery a priority that helps you to get more done in less time.

1.2
WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Everyone is looking for a quick fix, a miracle pill or exercise in a bottle. We read books, blogs, and social media posts promising to give us an easy solution, but the reality is change takes work. Especially change that's good for us. When something is clearly wrong it's easier to make it a priority, but when we seem to be doing fine or are "functional" as my doctor once put it, there is always something else ready to move to the top of our to-do list.

You know yourself better than anyone else, if you're paying attention. What do you really need right now? How are your brain or body trying to get your attention when you slip out of balance? More often than not, the signs that show up first are those that we have long called normal because they're common, but this is quite different from the way we should be functioning.

It's not normal to experience headaches, fatigue, and chronic worry. Or to feel constantly rushed, breathless, or restless. When someone asks how you're doing, responding "busy", "stressed", or "tired" is the new normal, but it shouldn't be acceptable. Imagine these seemingly small signs as your internal fuel indicator. If your gaslight were blinking you wouldn't cover it up with a Band-Aid or hit it with a hammer, would you?

How do you know when you're out of balance?

Take a few minutes now to connect with your symptoms of depletion. What happens first when you start to run out of steam? Common symptoms of early burnout include headaches, anxiety, obsessive thoughts, negativity bias, sensitivity, irritability, foggy thinking, trouble sleeping, fatigue, appetite disturbances, irritable bowel, digestive problems, weight gain, moodiness, and depression.

My signs of imbalance:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

If you give yourself time and space to think through how your energy imbalances show up, you might discover that before these more typical reactions begin there are even smaller signs that appear. It helped me to realize that I get a mild headache in the very front of my forehead and my motion sickness gets worse when I'm running on empty. It makes sense that when our system is struggling to regenerate energy, even simple things like allergies or sensitivity to motion can become more severe.

When we brush them off as "normal" we essentially ignore what our body is trying to communicate to us, and so the message gets louder and louder until we finally pay attention. My hope for you is that you become more mindful of these gentle signs so you can quickly nip them in the bud, saving your brain and body from excess wear and tear.

1

RECHARGE PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

CATCH THE MONKEY

BECOME MORE AWARE OF YOUR SYMPTOMS OF IMBALANCE AND YOUR MONKEY MIND TO QUICKLY REALIGN YOUR ENERGY SYSTEMS. FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION, HONE IN ON PRIORITIES, AND BE MINDFUL IN EACH MOMENT.

PAUSE, REFLECT, RESET

chapter

2

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

Common sense
is not
common practice.

The human system is designed to oscillate – from heartbeats to brainwaves to blood sugar. In fact, everything about our world has ups and downs: the sun and moon trade places, tides ebb and flow, seasons change. What goes up must come down. And, perhaps most importantly, the higher you go (energy expenditure), the lower you must also go (energy recovery) to sustain this natural rhythm of balance and harmony.

It seems like simple common sense, yet if there's one thing I know for sure it's that common sense is not common practice. Like balancing a budget, we can't spend what we don't have. So why do we continue to try to override this universal law?

This was a difficult lesson for me, having struggled with depression and anxiety from a young age. As I worked through my own healing process, I would become instantly triggered and freak out when I felt down or stressed. Although I knew I was making significant improvements, I beat myself up for not being able to heal faster or show more consistent progress.

Fortunately my parents helped me take a closer look at patterns that were emerging that seemed to reflect a clear relationship between my hectic travel schedule and my emotions: I would experience such high-highs while on stage or with clients, and then crash once I returned home.

I blamed it on the stress of travel, my genetically based depression, or the intense loneliness I faced when I wasn't constantly focused on work. But after careful reflection I realized that while each of these certainly contributed to my energy imbalance, it was actually pure exhaustion that was at the core of my greatest challenges. I would hear my dad's well-intentioned voice once again coaching me to "snap a towel around it", or my own internal coaching telling me to go work out, make some friends, or volunteer to show my gratitude for all I have been blessed with.

But when I couldn't crawl out of bed it wasn't a lack of gratitude or appreciation that was at fault. In fact, those only made me feel worse because my sense of gratefulness was so strong that the dark depression just didn't fit my mental framework of how life was supposed to be. We often think of depression as feeling sorry for yourself, and sad about the circumstances of your life, which couldn't be further from the truth for me. I was simply exhausted.

It was at that moment I realized that there is a high likelihood that many other people struggling with brain imbalances often misdiagnosed as mental illnesses may also be suffering from an energy shortage, exhaustion or burnout. Perhaps by learning better energy management and focusing on what fuels the brain in a holistic way, we might actually be able to provide relief for the millions of people battling these common but devastating challenges.

relax

(Author note: this is NOT to downplay the critical role of treatment for mental illnesses, but rather to also give credence to the effect exhaustion can have on health.)

Drained and literally running on empty, I was forced to learn that the only way for me to continue to go out and do things that stretched me far beyond my comfort zone (speaking, flying, and the like) was to prioritize my own self-care and recharge my battery on a regular basis.

your energy is your most valuable resource. what's your investment strategy?

This is a tough lesson to learn, especially for people who pride themselves on putting other's needs first. Unfortunately, the consequences of ignoring this critical truth can be devastating to health, happiness, career, performance, relationships, and even life itself, as I share in a personal story at the end of this book.

We have to accept that our energy is a precious and limited resource that requires consistent recharging or else we will run out. Gentle reminders such as the physical and mental cues we'll discuss in the following chapters can nudge us back on track when life starts to pull us off course. Ultimately, we have to commit to a new story that fully appreciates that only by taking care of ourselves can we truly serve those around us.

—News flash: life is never slowing down to make this easier for us—

Just because you know you need to take better care of yourself doesn't mean anything is going to change unless you commit to doing things differently. In fact, our current constantly connected society will do anything it can to make sure your energy patterns match the chaotic nature of what we've now deemed normal.

Even with heaps of scientific research proving the ineffectiveness of multitasking, everything about our digital world encourages doing more things at once in order to save time. Studies have shown that trying to do multiple tasks not only dumbs you down, it also wastes time – taking up to 20 minutes to refocus on a task after a distraction. And although we tend to blame others for interrupting us, it's usually our own mental chatter that pulls us off course.

We have trained our brains to prefer this chaotic mode of mental gymnastics throughout the day, often feeling uncomfortable when we actually have time to slow down and be single-task focused. If you don't believe me, try it right now. Put this book down, close your eyes and try to just relax for a few minutes. How long does it take you to start thinking about things you could or should be doing right now? That to-do list that keeps growing, the emails that no doubt keep piling up in your inbox, calls you need to return, gas for the car, or groceries for dinner. Without training, our minds can easily run away from us!

reset

2.1
COGNITIVE FITNESS

Most people are familiar with the importance of physical fitness, yet fail to consider fitness as it relates to other aspects of their health and wellbeing. When we think about the different sources of energy we rely on throughout the day, it becomes clear that non-stop strenuous effort is not the best approach to keeping our strength and coordination intact. For example, when we are challenged emotionally we can rise to the occasion and cope in a way that is aligned with our values, assuming we're not taking on more than we can handle. Choosing the wrong line at the grocery store checkout isn't a big deal unless it's at the end of an already taxing day. Fully showing up for family or friends in the evening is easy when we're feeling energized and able to disconnect from work. But when we come through the door with our attention still in the office, on our laptop or an earlier phone call, the energy we're able to bring is not our best.

The human system requires regular periods of rest and recovery at all levels of biological and psychological dynamics in order for our muscles to develop and function optimally. This regular shifting between exercise and rest called oscillation is especially important when it comes to our mental energy, both as something to understand and to regularly practice.

Just like with physical fitness, cognitive fitness requires the strategic training of three separate but interconnected dimensions: strength, flexibility, and endurance. To keep your brain fit you will want to engage in cognitive exercises that challenge you in new ways, such as focusing exercises to build strength (meditation, visualization, learning), creative and reflective activities to enhance flexibility (music, relaxation, hobbies) and spiritual or purpose-based exercises to nourish sustainability and endurance (prayer, journaling, meaningful connections).

My book, *The Sharp Solution* details a comprehensive brain-training program that will help you build cognitive fitness. For now, it's most important to be aware that the brain essentially has a series of muscles that need to be trained intentionally and provided with adequate recovery time and essential nutrients needed to help it rebuild and repair for optimal growth. By putting together your Recharge program, you'll be providing the necessary foundation needed by the brain to be able to benefit from the training you do in the future. These strategies and techniques will also develop your cognitive resilience "muscles" so that you can better handle the stress in your life, and actually use it to your advantage.

2.2
REDEFINING STRESS

In today's stress-filled society, we have come to understand the magnitude of stress related problems with regards to our health and performance. The American Institute of Stress estimates that 75-90% of medical visits are stress related, and the World Health Organization states that unmanaged stress costs the US economy more than $300 billion each year. While stress has not been shown to cause illness or disease, the cascade of stress hormones released in response to stress speeds up the advancement of terminal illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

Yet one of the biggest problems with stress is not the potential consequences it may cause, but our inability to define it clearly enough to create a realistic and sustainable solution.

stress, like love, is nearly impossible to define and its power lies in the eyes of its beholder

Consider this notion regarding our current definition: Stress, in addition to being itself, is both the cause of itself and the result of itself. In its purest definition, stress is simply a stimulus for change.

Positive opportunities such as taking a family vacation, getting married or even winning the lottery all come with their share of stress and stimulation. And while it's easy to blame stress on what's going on around us, a significant part of our relationship with stress is based on the hidden internal stress we deal with each day — eating too much of the wrong foods or too few of the right ones, living a sedentary lifestyle or overtraining at the gym, being a perfectionist or lacking motivation to get up in the morning.

stress in and of itself is not bad, but the reaction to a stimulus for change

In fact, stress can be one of our biggest allies because it helps us focus and engage in times of increased demand. In moderate amounts, stress can push us out of our comfort zone just enough to cause an adaptive process that makes us stronger as a result, as we see with physical or cognitive exercise. The critical factor is making sure we have adequate recovery resources in order to adapt to the necessary change required for growth.

Any change requires energy, whether it's positive or negative in intention or outcome.

When energy demand is greater than current capacity, the resulting deficit is perceived by the brain as a potential threat to survival, triggering a cascade of adaptive responses that are protective by design but destructive when utilized haphazardly. Research has clearly linked prolonged stress (without adequate recovery) with all disturbances in human energy, demonstrated in ways that are physical (illness, disease, fatigue), emotional (irritability, anger, aggression), mental (cloudy thinking, lack of creativity, memory problems) and spiritual (burnout, isolation, loss of purpose or motivation).

Although we know that stress can be problematic and that most stress solutions are common sense, putting these practices to work for us continues to be difficult. We may know the simple solution for what ails us, but because changing our habits of thought and behavior requires spending more energy than operating on automatic pilot, when we're running on empty our brain steers us intentionally down easy street (old habits) despite our best intentions.

If stress occurs anytime we have an energy deficit, regardless of its cause, then the solution to our stress problem is to strategically apply energy management techniques that enable us to stay adequately fueled throughout the day. Our energy is not a limitless resource, but fortunately we can replenish it through consistent recovery strategies.

Life has a natural rhythm of ups and downs —

flat-lines are deadly.

One of the primary challenges with energy management is that we don't often pay attention to our status throughout the day, and our perception can be skewed by stress hormones and artificial energy sources such as caffeine that make us feel as if we can keep going for hours without stopping to refill the tank. The simple energy audit exercise we will go through in the following chapter will provide a tool you can return to on a regular basis to identify areas where a shift needs to happen.

We may receive gentle messages from our physical, mental or emotional systems telling us we're running out of energy through symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, lack of focus, impatience, frustration or anxiety. Yet so many people experience these warning signs on a regular basis that they quickly become perceived as normal, with the system experiencing internal wear and tear over longer periods of time until the signal is finally too loud to ignore.

Heart attacks, diabetes, cancer, autoimmune disease, digestive problems, insomnia, chronic headaches and weight gain are just a sample of consequences that occur as a result of long-term energy imbalances, all of which cause unnecessary stress to the system. But the cause of the stress wasn't initially the illness or disease but rather the original energy imbalance that was ignored over time.

We minimize our signals of imbalance for many reasons; more often than not because we're doing what we believe is the right thing to do – serving our children, our co-workers, our direct reports, our bosses, our spouses, our communities and so on.

We regularly sacrifice our own needs for the sake of others, justifying it by either convincing ourselves that it's short term (until the kids grow up, the project is finished, we have enough financing to hire some help, etc.) or telling ourselves the story that it's best to sacrifice our needs for the sake of the greater good. However, how much help can we really be to others when we have no energy left to give?

what's your sign?

As the flight attendant always says, you must put your oxygen mask on first before helping others. It's not selfish to make sure you have oxygen – you can't help anyone if you can't breathe!

Our relationship with stress is determined by our energy capacity, our ability to recover and recharge our energy throughout the day, and our perception of our experience. Studies have shown that when we are in a state of energy deprivation, the brain shifts into a "survival" mode of processing that focuses primarily on those operations most critical to our safety.

By providing the brain and body with adequate energy through strategic nutrition, movement, relaxation, sleep and social connections we keep our system running strong and are able to move in the direction of our most important goals. With an energized operating system we can then work on our perceptions of the world around us to focus on the things that keep us in a state of optimal health, happiness, and performance. Here we can train our brain to see challenges as opportunities for growth, rather than threats to our survival.

So, if we recognize the need for better energy management and appreciate the fact that life will tend to pull us away from this healthier rhythm without a solid strategy, we can now begin to identify small adjustments that can be made to get us back on track.

gentle course corrections rewire patterns of thought and behavior

It's critical that the changes we attempt are small in order to keep the amount of activation energy needed to begin as small as possible, bypassing the brain's built-in threat sensor. By incorporating gentle course corrections, we can rewire our patterns of thought and behavior in a way that's sustainable, and motivates even greater improvements over time.

Please keep in mind that challenges along the journey offer wonderful opportunities to pause, reflect and reset our intentions to make sure we continue to stay aligned with what matters most to us.

Rather than allowing yourself to get frustrated when progress stalls, or God forbid goes backward, anticipate setbacks and embrace them knowing your resolve.

resilience strengthens with the new wisdom you bring from difficult experiences

As we transition to the next chapter, we're going to take these fundamental concepts of strategic energy management and make them personal. Understanding that what you've read so far is pretty much just common sense, let's create small shifts that will allow you to make this common sense common practice in your life! As a result, you'll build upon your current energy capacity, create a more optimal energy system, and bring a greater quality of energy to the world around you. If all of us are able to shift our own energy towards the positive, we can begin to create a more energy-efficient environment in which to thrive together.

2

RECHARGE PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

BE INTENTIONAL

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR LIMITS. INVEST IN ENERGY RECOVERY STRATEGIES AND FOCUS ON HOLISTIC WAYS TO CHANNEL STRESS INTO REALISTIC, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS.

STRESS LIES IN THE EYES OF ITS BEHOLDER

chapter

3

PERSONAL ENERGY PLANNING

I’d rather be
extraordinary
at less
than ordinary
at more.

So, let's talk about you. Do you have rhythm? No, I don't mean on the dance floor. Think about a typical day in your life. Are there ups and downs when it comes to how you spend and recover energy? Or do you wake up and go and go and go and go until you just can't go anymore?

Do you take strategic recharge breaks throughout the day, making sure to balance the energy you put out with the energy you invest back in yourself? Or do you spend aimlessly, with no sense of an operating budget, borrowing energy from stress hormones regardless of the ultimate cost?

When you get home from the office, or finish up working with the kids, do you have energy left to do hobbies you enjoy, spend quality time with the people who matter most, or just curl up with a good book without falling asleep?

Or do you find yourself tired and wired at the end of the day, physically exhausted but unable to shut off your racing mind long enough to fall asleep and stay asleep?

There are a lot of ways to look at how your current lifestyle is or isn't working for you. On the Synergy website, **www.heidihanna.com,** you'll find a simple assessment that will walk you through the different dimensions of energy to more specifically focus your training strategy. But we're going to make it even simpler than that for now.

Most likely you already know what you should be doing. In over a decade of working with clients across the globe, I've never met a single person who didn't already have at least one thing they knew they should be doing differently to take better care of themselves. But it can be overwhelming to think about adding more to our already unbearable to-do list.

When we realize there are dozens of things we actually could or should be doing differently we can easily find ourselves in analysis paralysis, concerned too much with determining the perfect first step and not actually making any forward progress.

So I'm going to help you prioritize. I'd like for you to take a blank piece of paper and draw a horizontal line through the middle of the page.

On the far left side, under the line I want you to write "am" and on the far right side under the line write "pm" to represent the time you wake up and the time you go to bed. It should look something like this:

am pm

Remember, this is a typical day for you. Be honest with yourself. Go ahead and jot down somewhere near the far left and right sides the time you get up and the time you go to sleep. This sets us up for our first step.

3.1
FIVE POINT ENERGY AUDIT

STEP ONE Bedtime Prep-Time

Looking at the time you typically go to bed and the time you usually wake up, are you giving yourself at least 7 – 8 hours to sleep? Are you getting quality sleep? Are you going to bed without needing alcohol or a sleeping pill to wind down, staying asleep throughout the night, and waking up feeling rested? I know that's alot to ask for, but if our rhythms are on track, this is exactly what should be happening.

If our sleep is out of whack, it throws our entire day off, which is why I always start at the end of the day before looking at what happens during the day. Signs you aren't getting enough quality sleep may include feeling lethargic, dozing off in meetings, having an increased appetite, being more irritable than usual, or experiencing depression or anxiety.

Sleep deprivation is serious business, and incredibly hazardous to your health. Studies show that a lack of sleep decreases reaction time in half; impairing your ability to drive even more than if you were legally drunk. And if that's not scary enough, when we fail to get the sleep needed to repair and rebuild vital physiological functions, inflammation is increased, cancer risk jumps up 60 percent and the risk of heart disease rises by 45 percent.

But don't lose sleep worrying about it; there are simple solutions to help you rest more easily. Take a breath and relax. If your sleep rhythm is chaotic, start here first. We'll talk more about what to do regarding sleep strategies very soon. For now, just make a note of it.

STEP TWO Morning Jumpstart

The next data point we want to evaluate is what happens first thing in the morning. How do you spend the first 30 – 60 minutes after waking up? Are you doing something that puts your brain into a positive state of mind? Or do you rush into the rat race of life, downing caffeine, checking emails, watching the news, and pleading with the kids to get out of bed? Are you thinking of things that you're looking forward to in your day? Or do you instantly fill your mind with the overwhelming task list that's been piling up overnight?

Do you get outside for some physical activity that you enjoy? Or do you drag yourself through a torturous workout, or beat yourself up once again for hitting the snooze instead?

Think about it: we pay so much attention to how we prepare ourselves for meetings, appointments, how we present ourselves in what we wear or how we put our face on in the morning. Does it make any sense at all that we wouldn't spend at least a comparable amount of time getting our brain into an optimal state?

The brain has 5 times more negative circuits than positive, keeping us on high alert for situations around us that might be perceived as a threat.

When we wake up and immediately allow negative news and drama to fill our mental space, we lock our brains into a survival mode state that carries with us throughout the day. My personal mantra when it comes to my morning routine is that I need to think about who I want to be before I even consider what I want to do. By preparing the brain to do good work, and by recognizing what's positive in the world around us, we enable ourselves to have a more optimal state of mind that has been shown time and time again in positive psychology research to enhance performance across all measures.

consider your morning and evening rituals as bookends to your day

If you don't have a consistent morning ritual that shifts your brain into a positive state first thing in the morning, this is a priority for you. Here is where it can be tricky. If you're not getting adequate sleep, that might be preventing you from having the energy you need in the morning to even shift to a better brain state. This is why we start with sleep first, and then look at ways to improve morning rituals. From here, we then evaluate ways to add more rhythm to our day.

With a good night sleep and the brain in a positive state, we set the stage for sustainable energy but it doesn't stop there.

Consider your morning and evening rituals as bookends to your day; critical to making sure the good stuff in the middle can happen. Now, how do we sustain that optimal energy when we go out and face a challenging world that often feels like it wants to drain the life right out of us?

STEP THREE Strategic Nutrition

With our intentions focused on where we want our mental energy to go, we need a plan for how to sustain that energy throughout the day. There are three essential elements that the brain and body require in order to recharge our energy: glucose, oxygen and rest. What surprises many people is that I don't spend a great deal of time up front teaching people exactly what to eat. There are several reasons for this. Nutrition is one of my passions, but I've learned that how we eat is oftentimes more important than what we eat. For example, the quickest way to trigger the stress response in the brain is to deprive it of energy.

One of our most primitive signals of potential doom has long been a food shortage or famine. Although most of us have inexpensive food readily available, the brain still assumes that if we go too long without eating it's because food has run out, not because we're too busy to eat.

Even if busyness is at fault, the chronic stress pattern we create as a result of our chaotic schedule may be just as harmful. We'll get to that in a moment. For now, let's focus on how we can best fuel the brain and body through strategic nutrition.

Most people know by now that the human system requires glucose 24/7 to provide energy to our cells, and that we can get this fuel from both external and internal supplies.

Obviously, food and beverages that contain calories have energy for us to use via carbohydrates, proteins and fats, and we also store these same macronutrients in our body in liver glycogen, muscle protein and fat stores. Along with circulating blood sugar, these are the basic ways we keep our system operating throughout the day.

aim to eat small portions every 3-4 hours

Looking simplistically at the science of nutrition, we can maintain an available supply of energy in the blood stream for a maximum of 4 hours, give or take, depending on the quantity and quality of food we eat. Therefore, to avoid energy spikes and crashes, we should aim to eat a portion that keeps us satisfied but not full every 3-4 hours, with smaller snacks to bridge the gaps between meals.

Eating within about an hour of waking up can also be beneficial to energy management in order to jumpstart metabolism and break the fast. I'm going to mention here briefly, only because it always comes up, that intermittent fasting or spiritually based fasting practices may provide some benefit to the individual, but are not recommended as an energy management strategy. Since that's our focus here, that's where we'll stay for now.

Once your energy is where you need it to be, you can certainly play around with customization in order to find a meal plan that works best for all of your goals.

consume natural foods to help prevent energy spikes and crashes

Because nutrition is such a highly individual endeavor, with so many variations depending on genetic factors and lifestyle circumstances, I find it best to focus first on what we know for sure and then adapt with the help of a qualified professional.

A couple of other things that will help you use nutrition in your favor with regards to energy management are to eat balanced (combining carbohydrate, protein and healthy fat) and to aim for the majority of your food to be natural and high in nutritional value.

Having meals that are balanced will keep your blood sugar more stable, while providing a great sense of satiety. Eating foods that are primarily natural and therefore high in nutritional value (think veggies, fruits, nuts, seeds, coconut, avocado, and the like) will ensure that you're not just consuming empty calories that spike your energy and then leave you with a drastic crash. It's also important that the brain and body get the essential nutrients they need to do their jobs well, otherwise we can find ourselves feeling sluggish, experiencing cravings and consuming more food than we actually need.

Looking at your energy map for a typical day, jot down the time you currently eat meals and snacks. Are you eating within an hour of waking up? Do you have a meal or snack every 3 – 4 hours? When you eat, is there a combination of carbohydrate, protein and fat at each meal and snack? Is the majority of your diet coming from foods that your grandparents' grandparents would recognize as food (real, whole, natural)? If you answered no to any of these questions, then nutrition should be a priority for you.

And while we're talking about priorities, if you've already found yourself batting 3 for 3 and needing a lot of work, don't feel overwhelmed. The reason we're walking through these steps in this particular order is to help you figure out where to start.

Once we get through the last two items, we'll pause and create a plan. Hang in there.

STEP FOUR Strategic Movement

Fitness professionals like to call sitting the new smoking because research studies have demonstrated that sitting for long periods of time (greater than 4 hours) can be just as hazardous to your health. Yikes!

Perhaps more surprising is the fact that this is the case even when people do purposeful exercise. What this tells us is that it's not necessarily a measure of fitness that's most important but a lack of sitting still. Being sedentary not only keeps you from getting the physical activity you need, it also compromises the circulation of precious glucose and oxygen to the brain.

This brings me back to one of the key messages of this book: the human system is designed to oscillate. Everything that has life has some sort of natural rhythm or pulse. When it comes to our physiology, we often refer to these patterns of daily cycling as ultradian rhythms. This energetic dance throughout the day facilitates the patterns required to keep us alive and well.

In addition to those we discussed earlier such as heart rate and blood sugar, we also have hormones releasing in waves, temperature regulation, appetite enhancement and suppression, and even simple processes such as blinking. When we sit still for long periods of time, we actually send signals to the brain that slow down or even inhibit some of the regulatory processes that keep us alert and ready for action.

Not that long ago studies evaluated the amount of time one could sit and work before their performance was diminished, and it was estimated to be about 90 minutes. However, as our stress levels and workloads continue to go up, I believe that we need to re-evaluate these guidelines. With what we know about the toxicity of stress and the fact that stress hormones trigger an amygdala hijack in the brain that quickly hinders our cognitive performance, it seems only logical that the more stress we have the more movement breaks we need. What goes up must come down, and we'd be better off intentionally bringing ourselves down to a state of relaxation consistently than having our brain or body shut us down due to burnout or exhaustion!

For this reason, I always recommend people take breaks at least every hour and ideally do some sort of stretching or gentle movement, if only for a few minutes. Breaking away from work for 5 – 10 minutes and optimizing your recharge time with more vigorous activity like climbing stairs or going for a brisk walk outside can enhance energy and performance even more. Even though you're investing energy while you workout, it's a different type of energy than what you spend working at a desk all day. The ideal performance pattern includes shifts from one physical or cognitive mode to another, back and forth throughout the day. Sit and think creatively, then get up and move to reflect or just give yourself a mental break to zone out and focus on your bodily sensations.

Workout intensely, bringing your heart rate up to levels where you exert yourself and then rest and enjoy the creativity that blossoms as your stress hormones decrease, opening up the communication channels in the brain.

the ideal performance pattern includes shifts from one physical or cognitive mode to another, back and forth throughout the day

Take a look at your energy map for the day. Write down times during the day where you typically take breaks to move, or any time you're performing intentional exercise. Are you moving your body at least every hour? Are you changing your position from time to time, such as moving from sitting to standing while you work at a countertop or standing desk? Do you purposefully take calls with a headset so you can walk around while you talk? If you find yourself regularly stuck to your desk during the day, then strategic movement is going to be a priority for you.

STEP FIVE Strategic Breaks

If you're on track so far congratulations! If you still have a perfect record of misses, don't fret. Learning to recharge consistently is something we all need to work on, which is why I'm writing this book and keeping the process so simple.

As far as I know, I have not yet met a single person who doesn't have one of these five areas they could be paying closer attention to. Which is why having a super-simple technique to use time and time again in order to get back on track is so important.

I'd say that even for my most dedicated and health conscious clients this last one often proves to be a challenge. There is just so much to do and so little time. The fact is there will never be enough time to get all the things done that we think we should. We have also been mentally programmed to believe that if we're not constantly being productive we are somehow being lazy.

The whole notion of "you only live once" is fabulous for lighting a fire under us, but if we never allow our system to rest we will burn out too quickly and ultimately miss out on a lot of YOLO moments.

Not long ago, in order to save myself from daily heartache and minimize my stress load I wrote myself a note and left it right in front of my computer that said, "You will not get it all done today. Deal with it. :-)"

For some reason, that simple reminder as I started each day helped me remember that busyness was something I could choose to participate in or intentionally decide not to give power over me.

Being constantly busy keeps our brain stuck in survival mode; never able to escape the notion that we're failing at something and a threat could be right around the corner ready to take away our job, our security, or our safety.

When we go through the day with a feeling of being constantly rushed, the brain never gets a chance to calm down. Stress hormones rule the show, and as a result our performance suffers along with our health and happiness. If you need more convincing that unmanaged stress is a serious problem, please check out my book *Stressaholic* for more information. If you're willing to take my word for it, at least for now, trust me when I say that your brain requires consistent downtime to rest, repair and rebuild brainpower.

Remember, it's the brainpower we have in any given moment that determines how much energy we have to spend on tasks, positive habits, and optimistic emotions. As I mentioned in the previous section, studies have shown that the ultimate performance cycle lasts no longer than 90 minutes, so I recommend taking a mental break at least every hour to be on the safe side. Besides, who wants to be normal anyway? If we're aiming for optimal performance, we need to also aim for optimal recovery!

For our last step in this process, take a look at your energy map one more time. Thinking through your day, are you taking strategic breaks to allow your brain and body to shift modes temporarily?

rhythm

Are you consistently building in time for creativity, gratitude and positive reflection? Or do you find more often than not that you're stuck in logical, analytical, task mode hour after hour, pushing off break time until you finish "one more thing"?

it's the brainpower we have in any given moment that determines how much energy we have to spend on tasks, positive habits, and optimistic emotions

I'm sure you guessed it already, but if you're not taking strategic breaks throughout the day this needs to be a priority for you. Your health, happiness and performance absolutely depend on it. Although you may get by temporarily going non-stop, you can only fuel your energy on stress hormones for so long before you start to burn out and break down. Since we're talking about minimal time spent and maximum return on investment from an energy perspective, why not give it a chance?

3.2
CREATING YOUR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE PULSE

In order to establish consistent opportunities for recovery, it can be helpful to become more aware of life's natural rhythm. We are often given moments to pause and reflect, time to become more intentional about where we are spending our attention, but because we're so used to going non-stop we tend to fill those gaps with busyness. Just watch people standing in line at the grocery store, waiting for a table at a restaurant or even sitting in their car at a stoplight.

Very seldom will you see people just pausing. More often than not people will "kill time" by doing something, whether it's texting, making a phone call, posting on social media or the like.

However annoying it may feel to be forced to slow down, these delays actually provide a perfect opportunity to practice what I call the power of the pause. Time to take a breath, relax tension, think about something positive, shift your energy, reset and recharge.

Where can you build in strategic pauses to catch your breath, relax for a moment, fuel your brain with something positive and proceed with intention? The reality is that life enables us to do this regularly if we have the capacity to pay attention.

By shifting from reactive surviving mode to reflective and responsive thriving mode we have the opportunity to bring our best energy to the moments that matter, and conserve energy in those that don't.

Before you say yes to another commitment, before responding to an email, before greeting family at the end of the day, before answering a phone call, before driving and while you drive. Pause.

Because we're so busy rushing around on automatic pilot, we often need to create some sort of cue in our environment to serve as a reminder. Cues are simply objects that we give meaning to that we can call upon to refocus our mental energy in the right direction. They allow us to get off the static treadmill and out of the rat race. Examples of cues might be pictures (nature), symbols (a circle), music (inspire or relax), smells (aromatherapy), colors (white reminds me of peace and balance), or even characters (monkeys are fun).

I have a wristband I wear every day with my own reminder that "I'd rather be extraordinary at less than ordinary at more." Each morning when I put it on and every time I notice it throughout the day I mindfully pay attention to how I'm investing my energy in the present moment. Take a minute to come up with at least one cue that you can use that will help remind you of your intention for better energy management as you move forward on your recharge journey.

Obviously, the most important thing in all of this is to figure out what will work for you and start practicing. Remember, any change – even positive change – is seen as a potential threat to the brain because it requires more energy expenditure than the status quo. Therefore, it's important to start with the new habits that you believe will have the greatest impact on you and are realistic for you to incorporate regardless of your current circumstances and potential challenges.

The number one mistake people make when trying to create new habits is taking on too much at once. Filled with newfound motivation, we rush out to buy groceries, join a gym, plan a vacation, whatever it may be and within a few days the whole routine just seems too exhausting to keep up with. Keep in mind that our intention here is to recharge our energy, not keep spending it haphazardly. This means we want to choose small, simple steps that we can realistically add to our already busy routine in order to restore energy over time. So ask yourself, what is the smallest thing you could commit to doing for the next week that will help you recharge more consistently? And how are you going to make sure that you're able to keep to your commitments? What one-time steps do you need to take to set yourself up for success?

Who can you call upon to help keep you accountable? How will you celebrate your accomplishments before you determine your next goal?

To help you with this process, the next section includes lists of some simple recharge strategies that I've found helpful for myself, as well as friends, family and clients. No doubt there are others, and as you put together your own list I hope you will share them with us so we can continue to build our resource list.

When we're low on energy, just coming up with recharge strategies can be tough so it's important to build your tool box now, keep it handy, and then revisit it from time to time to mix it up a bit.

Consistency is key to laying down the fabric that weaves together pathways in the brain.

We'll start by looking at specific strategies that help shift our energy around the five data points we looked at in our energy audit: bedtime prep time and morning rituals, followed by strategic nutrition, movement and breaks. I've selected the techniques that I believe will give you the greatest return on investment, along with a few other tips to keep in mind as you establish healthier habits.

Then, I have put together a couple more lists of general recharge practices: first, rituals that quickly help boost your energy in a short period of time and then rituals that require a bit more time up front but may end up giving you even more value in the long run. You'll want to experiment with as many of these techniques as you find interesting and can make time for, always staying focused on those you're actually willing to do.

This is not about wanting it more, or having more willpower or self-discipline. None of us can do that! It's about changing the way your brain operates so it moves you in the direction of your most important goals instead of pulling you back towards automatic pilot.

SHIFT ONE Unplug

Keep in mind that it's not just what you do at night that impacts your sleep, but also your ability to oscillate energy effectively so that you find a better groove of ups and downs throughout the day. Eating better, moving more, and taking more frequent mental breaks will all enhance your ability to fall and stay asleep. Here are a few other key strategies that will help you shift your sleep in a more positive direction:

1. Avoid stimulating technology *(such as email, text, television, e-reader)* at least an hour before bed. If you want to read, enjoy a book the old-fashioned way —on paper.
2. Use calming music, a sound machine or guided meditation to provide a focal point for your mind that keeps you away from obsessing about your to-do list for the next day.
3. Practice relaxation strategies such as deep breathing, simple meditation or progressive relaxation to help the body and mind calm down.
4. Keep a notepad next to your bed so you can quickly jot down any lingering thoughts running through your mind at night, and avoid obsessing or jumping back on the computer.

5. Create a calming environment for sleep. Use aromatherapy, drink warm tea, take a bath, do some gentle stretching. Whatever you use for your bedtime prep-time rituals, try to establish a consistent routine so that your brain will become primed for sleep anytime you do that particular activity.

6. Avoid foods that may trigger a sensitivity or digestive strain before bed. Common culprits include sweets, heavy proteins or fatty foods.

7. Minimize or eliminate alcohol consumption within 2 hours of bedtime. Although it may help you relax, the rebound effect will keep you from getting quality sleep.

A couple of my favorite apps that provide guided meditation for sleep include **SleepStream** and **HeadSpace**.

SHIFT TWO Plug In

It's helpful to think about who you want to be and aim your focus in this direction before you start to consider what you want to do. Set aside an adequate amount of time to prepare your brain for the day ahead. Even 3-5 minutes of positive reflection can help reduce stress hormones and optimize feel-good endorphins in the brain. This is a great time to incorporate energy enhancers such as those listed below:

1. Feed your brain with positive thoughts by reflecting on and writing down three things you feel grateful for each morning before you start your day. Reflecting on what's good in life immediately increases energy and builds resilience.

2. Perform some gentle movement or stretching, or use this time to get a good workout in before the excuses start to pile up as to why you don't have time. Physical activity first thing in the morning helps stimulate feel-good endorphins, enhances cognitive performance, and decreases stress.

3. Practice a mindfulness activity that allows you to become more aware of your internal dialogue and refocus your attention in the direction of your goals. Even simple tasks like making coffee, taking a shower, or doing some gentle stretching can become opportunities to pay more attention to the little things you appreciate.

4. Spend a few minutes writing down your purpose or motivation for the day. Place cues in your environment that remind you of what's most important to you. Examples might include photographs, quotes, cards, candles, or inspirational books.

5. Utilize quiet time first thing in the morning for some meditation practice. Consider different types of meditation such as using a mantra, music, or guided audio to help you focus your mental energy.

6. Laugh. Finding things funny is an exercise in cognitive flexibility, and it also increases our ability to be creative, resilient, and at ease. Sharing some healthy humor with friends is another great way to create a recharge ripple effect while enhancing your social support.

7. Share appreciation. Not only will you benefit from thinking about someone you feel grateful for, but just think of how energized they will feel when they receive your words of praise to start their day! While saying thanks in person is always best, if that's not possible sending an email, text, or handwritten note will do the job.

Websites that can help you find funny stuff include my non-profit site, **www.beyond-funny.com,** along with **YouTube, FunnyOrDie,** or stand up comedy clips.

SHIFT THREE Nourish

The food you eat will always impact your energy, shifting it in either a positive or negative direction. A few simple strategies can help you stabilize blood sugar, allowing a consistent flow of glucose to the brain without the spikes and crashes that lead to stress and symptoms of imbalance. Critical nutrition techniques include:

1. Minimize the consumption of stimulating and inflammatory foods such as caffeine, sugar and alcohol. Beware of common irritants such as wheat, corn, soy, dairy, artificial sweeteners and peanuts, as they often cause additional inflammation due to food sensitivities.

2. Eat approximately every 3 – 4 hours to stabilize blood sugar. Try to plan ahead so you have healthy snack options with you at all times; in your purse, bag, briefcase, car, or office.

3. Aim to have something to eat within about an hour of waking. This helps to stimulate metabolism and keeps your brain from perceiving an energy shortage.

4. Consume a balance of nutrients at meals and snacks. Eating a combination of complex carbohydrate, lean protein, and healthy fat will help you avoid energy spikes and crashes from blood sugar imbalances.

5. Choose real, natural foods for approximately 90% of your dietary intake. Pick food that your grandparents' grandparents would recognize as food and doesn't need a label to tell you it's healthy.

6. Drink water consistently throughout the day. Even minor dehydration can decrease energy production and cognitive performance dramatically. Drinking more water also helps to ensure you get up and move more regularly.

7. Have a few go-to options for dining out, including fast food. Sometimes your choices are limited, but there are always decent options to consider if you know what to look for. Plan ahead so you're not trying to utilize willpower when you're overly hungry or in a hurry.

Some helpful nutrition tools include food trackers and logs that provide additional awareness and accountability. Examples include **Jawbone, FitBit,** and **MyFitnessPal.**

SHIFT FOUR Move

Remember, sitting is often referred to as the "new smoking" because of the negative impact a sedentary lifestyle has on health. Although it can be tough to self-motivate when you're tired, getting going can be one of the greatest ways to generate more energy production. When it comes to strategic movement throughout the day, here are a few tips to remember:

1. The human system craves movement, but when we sit too long we shift into conservation mode. Set a reminder every 45 – 50 minutes to get up and move.
2. Incorporate mindful stretching, walking or yoga consistently throughout the day. Whenever possible, try to get outside for some fresh air. If that's not an option, position yourself by a window for natural light exposure.
3. Schedule breaks with friends, family or colleagues where you can go for a walk together and catch up. Not only will you be helping them boost their energy, you'll be much more likely to stick with your commitment to yourself.
4. Try holding standing meetings at your office. No only will you double the metabolism of those involved and help stimulate healthy circulation, the meeting will tend to be much quicker and to the point.

5. Perform 20 – 30 minutes of high-intensity aerobic exercise *(interval training)* at least three times a week. You can do cardiovascular training every single day, but be careful not to get bored with your routine.

6. Do full-body strength training exercise at least twice a week, and be sure to allow time for adequate stretching.

7. When it comes to intentional exercise, mix up the type of exercise *(activity or type of equipment used)*, duration *(length of time)*, and intensity in order to maximize your return on investment.

A fitness tracker can help you keep track of movement throughout the day, and also provide awareness and accountability. Creating challenges with friends or teammates can also increase commitment and compliance to your movement goals.

SHIFT FIVE Reset

Any of your recharge strategies can be used to facilitate a brain break, as long as you take control of your mental energy and steer it in a relaxing, recharging, or restorative direction. Based on how you're feeling, time of day, and circumstances, you might want to consider whether something passive, active or receptive would provide you the greatest return on investment. Some beneficial and reliable mental shift techniques include:

1. Deep breathing practice
2. Biofeedback *(GPS for the Soul app)*
3. Heart rate variability training
   (InnerBalance or MyCalmBeat app)
4. Relaxation training
   (learning to tense and relax muscles)
5. Stretching
6. Gentle exercise
   (yoga poses, body weight circuit, climb stairs)
7. Mindfulness meditation
8. Gratitude awareness
   (consider or write down 3 things you're grateful for)
9. Journal
10. Aromatherapy
    (burn candles or oils, or use essential oils on pressure points)
11. Read something enjoyable
12. Healthy humor
    (funny photos, videos, stand-up comedy, etc.)

13. Massage, spa services
14. Recreational activities
15. Playing sports *(team or individual)*
16. Music
    (create a recharge playlist that lifts or relaxes your energy)
17. Art *(creation or appreciation)*
18. Spend time in nature
19. Decrease information overload
20. Turn off technology when not in use
21. Determine specific times to check email, social media, etc.
22. Put phone in "airplane mode" throughout the day
23. Plan mental sprints to allow for targeted single-focus time
24. Eliminate multitasking when not absolutely necessary
25. Practice focusing meditation
    (mantra, music, guided, progressive relaxation, etc.)
26. Utilize visualization to help prepare for challenging tasks
27. Create a practice of finding things funny by sharing silliness *(report funniest thing of the day to friend/partner)*
28. Minimize exposure to energy vampires
29. Strengthen important social connections
30. Spend quality time with pets

3.3
LET'S GET READY TO RECHARGE

One of the reasons I love this exercise so much is that it both simplifies and customizes the process for you individually. Although we are all very similar, when it comes to our optimal energy rhythms and rituals we are all quite unique. There is no "one size fits all" approach to health and performance, although many people try to make it sound as if there is.

Too often we hear success stories of someone who found the miracle solution, and then countless numbers of people buy their book, sign up for their e-course, or attend their workshop full of motivation and hope, only to discover that once again it didn't work for them. What saddens me most about this vicious cycle is that the individual feels like a failure because they have been convinced that it should have worked and it didn't.

You know your body much better than I do, so for me to preach to you about what you should do would be a waste of our time together. The reality is, you already know what you should be doing. And hopefully this energy audit helped you see that more clearly.

Now the key is to prioritize the simple steps that can move you in the right direction, and come up with a plan to help you stay on track.

I will also provide some guidance on what recovery strategies have been shown to be most effective to help broaden your scope when it comes to potential tools and techniques.

As you look back over your daily rhythm, remember that the order in which we identified potential areas for improvement was intentional. Start first with sleep, as it sets you up for success the next day. If you're not getting adequate sleep, then implementing sleep strategies will likely give you the greatest return on investment.

Having said that, if you feel strongly that you want to start in a different order than what I've recommended, or if you feel confident you can focus on all five areas simultaneously, by all means please do! As I've said before, you know yourself much better than I do. Just know that at any time if progress slows or your efforts generate too much stress, it might be worth simplifying your strategies even further.

My goal here is to provide you with a simple recommended road map and a toolbox of ideas that might be helpful along the way. In fact, I'd love to hear your ideas as well, so as you start to see progress or face challenges, please email me at **heidi@synergyprograms.com** and share your story. My plan is to make this an evolving book that will become more helpful as we collect stories from people like you who are improving upon this process over time.

A few final thoughts before we discuss your plan. It's easy to get stuck in between gathering information and applying that knowledge, especially in the midst of a busy schedule. I am reminded of this over and over as I find myself trying to walk the talk when it comes to my own recharge process. I'd like to share a few more considerations with you that have proved to be quite helpful in my journey.

First – get clear on your signs of imbalance. How do you know when you're at the beginning of your own human energy crisis? What are the symptoms that scream out at you for your attention? And what are the more quiet, nagging concerns that could show you more quickly that you're heading in a dangerous direction? Make a short list labeled "signs" somewhere on your energy audit page so you can keep them handy, and continue to write things down as you notice them.

Second – start to identify techniques that help you recover your energy, that are realistic for you to add to your already busy routine, and that don't require much energy to get started. Remember, any new behavior requires energy to initiate, so it's critical that you choose a few things that are so simple and enjoyable that they can easily fit into your schedule on a regular basis. If any particular strategies have worked for you in the past, go ahead and jot them down in a column labeled "strategies" somewhere on your energy audit page. You'll add to this as you discover more techniques that you want to experiment with.

By getting specific we decrease what's known as activation energy – the energy required just to get started. When you're already running on empty, motivating yourself to do something, even if it's positive for you, may seem like too big a task. Ironically, something that should be beneficial triggers the stress response in the brain because it's perceived to be another item on the already too long to-do list!

We will talk more about types of recovery, both active and passive, in the next chapter. Creating a go-to list and keeping it handy can be quite helpful, especially when you're feeling low on energy. If you'd like a printable energy audit worksheet you can download one for free at **www.heidihanna.com/toolkit.**

Once recharge rituals are established, the final task is to put them into your daily routine and prioritize them as just as important (if not more so) as any other client meeting or family obligation. Remember, you must put your oxygen mask on first in order to help others if the plane loses altitude. On the same note, there are times where you must learn to say no to things you might feel you need to do, or even want to do, in order to make sure you have the energy you require for the most important moments in your life.

It is incredibly difficult to say no, but please remember that by saying no to certain things that are less important you're saying YES to being the best you can at the things that matter most.

Everything is energy and that’s all there is to it. Match the frequency of the reality you want and you cannot help but get that reality.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

3

RECHARGE PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

BALANCE YOUR BUDGET

STRATEGICALLY MANAGE YOUR ENERGY WITH MORNING AND EVENING RITUALS. CHOOSE SMALL, OBTAINABLE GOALS, AND REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR INNER DIALOGUE FROM RUNNING AWAY FROM YOU.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE EXTRAORDINARY

chapter

4

RECOVERY RITUALS

Energy and persistence conquer all things.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

I never planned on writing a book, let alone several. But each time I would be out speaking about these important topics, I'd discover how many questions people still had about things that seemed to be common sense. One of the most obvious concerns was people's lack of knowledge regarding their own energy recovery. It seemed like such a simple concept – what goes up must come down, stress and recovery, balancing our energy budget.

But when it came to putting a plan together, I looked out on a sea of blank faces. I noticed a shift a few years ago. Rather than asking about the latest fad diet or workout trend, nearly every Q&A session began with someone asking, "What do you mean by recovery?" To which I usually replied, "you know, the things you do just for fun." "Things that restore your energy, and leave you feeling replenished and ready to tackle the day again."

Silence. Blank stares. Confusion. After enough of these experiences, I decided it was time to write just one more book (followed by a recharge retreat, of course).

So, what is recovery? The medical definition of recovery is the act of regaining or returning toward a normal or healthy state. In other circumstances, recovery may mean the return of something that has been lost or stolen. In this case, I think both are appropriate. Recovering our personal energy involves creating the time and space for whatever we need in the moment to restore optimal functioning across multiple dimensions: physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and socially.

When we have a debilitating injury, it's clear that we need to prioritize healing in order to return to our previous state of wellbeing. But when we are running on empty, we can often push through the pain and suffering we feel, numb out on substances that temporarily bring us up or down depending on our needs, without recognizing the damage that's being done.

While recovery is essential for all of us, what provides recovery is as unique as our dynamic personalities. What's most important is that you take the time to determine what works best for you.

I realize that for many of you thinking about how to recharge your own battery has fallen so far off your priority list that coming up with recharge strategies might seem like trying to speak a foreign language. Therefore, I've put together a list of some of my personal favorites, some of those I've seen most impactful for my clients, and even surveyed colleagues, friends and family for their input as well.

Before we look at the magnitude of possible recovery rituals you can consider adding to your daily routine, I want to clarify three categories of recovery that might help you differentiate the options based on your current energy status: passive recovery, active recovery, and receptive recovery.

4.1
THREE TYPES OF RECOVERY

When you're running low on energy, just thinking about ways to get recovery can seem exhausting. Then, when you think about the typical ways we aim to take better care of ourselves when we venture out on a "health" program, it can leave us feeling paralyzed (I know, I've been there.)

decrease activation energy:

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the energy required just to get started

This is why I thought it would be important to describe three different types of recovery, because depending on your current state it might be important to select one that gives you a quick return with little investment, a larger return with greater investment, or maximum return with consistent training. I'll keep it simple.

Passive Recovery

There are recovery techniques that allow you to absorb energy from other sources without expending much, if any, effort. These are activities where someone or something is doing the work and you're just allowing the energy to flow in your direction.

While it may seem like this requires absolutely no effort on your part, you can maximize your return by actually training yourself to be a better receiver. We'll talk about this in more detail when I discuss receptive recovery. But for now, when you're in passive recovery mode just absorb what's coming to you and with practice work on embracing the energy in a bigger way.

maximize your return on investment by fully embracing the recovery experience in the moment

For example, getting a massage is one of my all-time favorite recovery strategies. In fact, I consider my massage practice a career saver, if not a lifesaver, because it helped me cope with debilitating panic attacks. Now, I use massage regularly to maintain my mental and physical health. But just like any other practice, if I let too much time pass between sessions I notice myself holding onto stress and getting amped up on the wrong type of energy. (Note to self – schedule massage this week.) What I noticed early on, however, was that I can easily lie on the massage table and obsess about work, feel guilty about spending time and money on myself, or tense up feeling self-conscious about one thing or another OR I can relax my mind and allow creativity to flow, feel proud that I'm investing in myself and the energy I have to give the to the world when I return, and maximize the return on my investment by fully embracing the experience.

I quickly learned that this lesson didn't only apply to the massage table, but to life in general.

How many times do we allow ourselves to finally do something nice just for us and then guilt ourselves right out of any enjoyment? How often are we spending time and money trying to take care of ourselves, while we're still spending all our energy on work?

And I'm not just talking about special pampering moments like spa services, golf outings or vacations. How about lunch breaks that aren't really breaks? Movies or TV shows where our eyes just gloss over? Or time with friends or family when we're not really present?

master your monkey mind

We can use passive recovery techniques as an opportunity to practice being fully present in the moment as we open ourselves up to receive energy, challenging the negative self-talk that automatically gives us a million reasons why we shouldn't be taking time for ourselves. This is a perfect time to become aware of faulty messages that keep pushing us back into the rat race, exhausted and unable to bring our best energy to the moment and then rewrite them, creating a more supportive message that over time helps us build a better story for ourselves, and those we love.

Practice "catching the monkey" – your own monkey mind that's addicted to jumping around in the drama of what else you could or should be doing in the moment and missing out on the energy that's there for you to receive. Examples of passive recovery include: massage, spa services, watching tv or movies you enjoy (relaxing, humorous, not stressful), listening to music, burning aromatherapy oil or candles, acupuncture, energy healing, meditation using guided audio, sound or light therapy, progressive muscle relaxation or simply resting.

Active Recovery

Often times when we consider taking better care of ourselves we immediately think of things that first require energy to get started. This is often referred to as activation energy. When you're feeling exhausted, the thought of even going for a walk might seem like too much to take on.

It's during these times that passive recovery techniques might be your best strategy because you can get a quick return with little investment. However, for restoring energy over the long haul, it's best to start to build up to practices that not only give you a hit of immediate energy, but also help increase your energy generating capacity over time.

These techniques also build resilience; the ability to not only bounce back from stress but also grow stronger from the experience.

When we challenge ourselves in new ways, we give the brain and body the stimulation required to facilitate the adaptation process that enables us to grow. Simple examples include things like exercise, getting a flu shot, or learning a new language. Without some stimulation, or energy investment, we simply maintain the limited resources we currently have.

While this is better than nothing, it's not going to help us improve. The reality of the human system is that after a certain point (around the age of 30) if we're not getting stronger, we're getting weaker. We are constantly in a state of change, and it would serve us best if we use that change to our advantage by investing in strategies that give us the greatest return on investment.

The most obvious type of active recovery is physical activity. When we push the body outside its comfort zone, we stimulate adaptation.

We can do this aerobically (cardiovascular activity that challenges the heart and lungs) and anaerobically (strength training exercises that break down muscle fibers and strengthen tissue as they build back up again). Often left out of the equation for physical fitness training are two other important capacities: balance and flexibility. You can maximize your return on investment by exercising your body in ways that incorporate all of the key elements of fitness, such as playing sports and doing cross training exercises.

Many of the newer fitness trends not only encourage full-body training but also add an element of cognitive enhancement. These mind-body exercises typically use an interval format for providing stress and recovery in a way that allows you to push to higher and higher levels. Interval training has been shown to give the best return on investment from both a time and energy perspective, and several current training programs allow you to use quick bursts of exercise for tremendous results. (See the **Official 7 Minute Workout app** for one example.)

Based on our need to challenge ourselves in unique ways cognitively, and the limited amount of time we have to spend outside of the home or workplace, I expect that we will see more and more programs being developed that incorporate physical and cognitive fitness training at the same time. One of my favorite classes at Canyon Ranch in Tucson is the stride and strength class that includes a speed and incline treadmill workout and a circuit training strength routine.

consider ways that you can expend a little bit of energy in order to receive a greater return

I've taught many such programs in my corporate trainings, but when you take a class with Rich at the Ranch, you'll notice something different.

He keeps the program interesting and fun by incorporating trivia questions that go along with the music he plays in the background. I was so highly entertained and motivated listening to Rich teach his class, that I kept going on my own interval training routine just to challenge myself on the game (even though I wasn't actually in the class).

If you're new to exercising, I'd recommend you check out guided programs that incorporate both cardiovascular training and strength training, along with balance and coordination. A few examples include boot camp classes, cross-fit, P90x and video-based classes you can do at home.

If you're not sure where to start, you can work with a personal trainer or other fitness professional to help you design a customized program that includes all of these elements and a bit of fun. If you need a recommendation, you can also email us at **info@heidihanna.com** and we'll hook you up with someone to get you started.

Remember, active recovery is not just physical but also mental, emotional, spiritual and social. The idea here is to consider ways that you can expend a little bit of energy in order to receive a greater return.

Any creative endeavors will help enhance your cognitive energy; practices such as reading, journaling, or learning how to play an instrument.

You can do cross training between different energy dimensions by adding elements of emotion (such as humor, play, joy), spirit (purpose, vision, mission), and social connection (invite friends, join a club, start a group).

The more you engage your whole self in the process, the greater the return you will get on your investment. I'll provide a few more examples at the end of this chapter, but for now if you have any that come to mind quickly, jot them down. You'll want to create a toolbox of strategies that you can easily access when you need a recharge, since those are the times that are most difficult to come up with ideas.

Receptive Recovery

It may seem like I'm repeating myself here, but I think it's important to realize the magnitude of the role the brain plays in our ability to actually receive recovery.

When I was doing research for this book, I spent a lot of time practicing my own recovery strategies (a good job to have!). I also started teaching a recharge retreat that has become one of my favorite programs to facilitate because it enables me to take people out of their current chaotic patterns and gently shift them towards a more healthy rhythm. I remember so clearly many early attempts to rest and get recovery while I was on a whirlwind speaking tour. Sitting in the hot tub at a luxurious hotel, trying desperately to relax but finding myself just getting more and more stressed out trying to force downtime.

What I realized was that working had become my automatic pilot, and then when I had a few moments that could have been restful, I just raced back to getting things done.

As I became more honest with myself, I recognized that more often than not I was doing busy work that wasn't even important, and oftentimes creating more work for myself as a result. I was working hard, but definitely not smart. And I was exhausted, tired and wired, and unable to calm myself down. It was at that moment that I realized taking it easy is hard without practice.

Not everyone is wired this way; in fact I have many friends who seem to breeze through even the most challenging situations with a slow, steady pace. But I think our stress addiction problem is becoming more and more serious as we have more and more access to constant connection and endless information.

taking it easy is hard

As I forced myself to disconnect, I explored new ways of learning to receive energy from the world around me. In a week-long silent meditation retreat, I discovered that silence is my greatest teacher. Boredom, as uncomfortable as it was at first, ultimately set me free from my need to be constantly on.

Spending time in nature at Canyon Ranch, learning about the traditions of the native people who had lived in that sacred space so many years ago, brought my mind and body back to a more natural rhythm.

Although I didn't know why until later, being on the ground for extended periods of time helped to shift my internal patterns back to a balanced state.

silence is our best teacher

But we can't bail on reality and live in constant silence, nor do we want to. The ideal isn't to retreat permanently from the stress of our busy lives (although some people do make this choice), but rather to find ways to bring recovery into our world more consistently. As I've mentioned before, stress is good for us. It's what enables us to grow and become stronger. But without adequate recovery, unrelenting stress will just break us down more and more over time, until we're too exhausted to try to build ourselves back up again.

When we intentionally pause and create time and space for strategic recovery, we can learn to appreciate all of the simple ways to recharge throughout the day. As we become more connected and grounded to life beyond technology and busyness, we quickly see that these opportunities are all around us if we just open up our awareness and invite the energy in.

One of the simplest ways to create a receptive recovery practice is to learn how to breathe in gratitude. It's pretty amazing to think of how marvelous the human system is, that it facilitates automatic processes that keep us alive – from breathing, to heartbeats and brainwaves.

Because we're so busy, we seldom pause to appreciate the fact that every breath is a gift. Every moment we're safe and protected from harm is reason to celebrate. When we acknowledge our current security, we send an important message to the brain that reminds us that all is well. With this sense of gratitude, we stimulate the release of positive endorphins in the brain that cause us to feel relaxed, decrease toxic stress hormones, and enhance circulation.

you take 20,000 breaths every day, how many are you grateful for?

As the brain and body reduce tension, inflammation levels go down, and neurons communicate more effectively with one another allowing us to think more quickly, logically and creatively.

By allowing ourselves a few moments to really feel gratitude – moving deeper than just the initial thought to embracing the full mind-body experience of the sensation of appreciation – we bring our entire system into a more healthy, optimal rhythm that is both restorative and expansive.

We take an average of 20,000 breaths every single day. But how many of them are we able to appreciate? Breath is perhaps one of the most basic biological functions, yet one of our greatest opportunities to learn how to recharge our energy. If you take one thing from this book, I would encourage you to begin some type of breath practice every single day.

As you begin to create more mindfulness routines, you can bookend your day with purposeful breath work: in the morning, focus on your breath as you think about what you're grateful for or looking forward to in the day ahead.

If you have a hard time coming up with anything (we all have those days!) just be grateful for the fact that you have your breath. That you are safe in this moment. That you have what you need, right here and now.

A breathing mantra I have used for a long time to help me during times of anxiety is to breathe in and say to myself, "I have enough" – focusing on having oxygen in this moment, and then breathing out as I say to myself, "I am enough" – letting go of expectations, attachments, and perfectionistic tendencies that keep me stuck in fear of not being enough.

We'll discuss the power of using mantras like these in the next section, as well as some additional examples you might find helpful as you continue to develop your own recharge routines.

There are many other techniques that you can use to practice receptive recovery, and many are similar to the passive and active strategies we discussed earlier. The difference with receptive recovery is that you're intentionally focusing your mind on the process of opening up and accepting what's there for you to receive. Because we spend so much time in stress mode, we typically block our ability to receive because we're too busy protecting ourselves from what might cause additional stress.

When we shift the brain into a relaxed state (taking a few gentle breaths) and then add a dose of positivity or optimism (thinking of something we're grateful for), we can then use enhancements to take our recharge practice to the next level.

Techniques that nourish the senses are great ways to increase your return on investment with receptive recovery. Examples might include aromatherapy (oils or candles), touch therapy (massage, bodywork), heat therapy (therapeutic heating lamps or body wraps), acupuncture or other energy healing. Hobbies you enjoy such as cooking, photography or crafts are enhanced when we first get into a mental state of receiving. Even spending time with friends and family can be a completely different experience when we take the time to put our brains into a state of positive reflection and a focus on love rather than just going through the motions.

4.2
RECHARGE RITUALS

In the previous chapter, we discussed ways to use simple shifts to boost your energy throughout the day. These 5 critical shifts will help you prepare your brain and body to be in their optimal state, and provide a fundamental energy management routine. I would highly recommend you focus on this particular process of bookending your day with morning and evening rituals, nourishing your body with nutrition and movement and taking mental breaks consistently before you try to take on any additional practices. Establishing that optimal energy rhythm is going to have a synergistic effect, meaning that the more you add to that core practice the greater the improvements in sustainable energy, health, happiness and performance.

As you see the return on your investment you will naturally want to discover more ways to optimize your results, now that you have the energy to think more clearly and actually spend energy on creating more positive habits. Once you are ready, you may find the following recharge rituals to be helpful at enhancing your recharge routine. While I don't want to overwhelm your brain with more possible items to add to your to-do list, I do want to provide you with some simple guidance as to how to incorporate techniques that have been scientifically validated for their ability to recharge your personal energy.

Please keep in mind that this is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The benefit you receive from your practice will be greatly impacted by the value you place on the techniques you decide to use. For example, if you don't like getting a massage, forcing yourself to endure massage is most likely just going to stress you out. Dragging yourself to a yoga studio and going through the motions is much less likely to enhance your practice, even though it's a very effective and well-researched technique that many people find helpful, if you're miserable the whole time.

I provide these ideas simply to help you understand the basic principals of why these strategies may be worth trying, even if initially you're not sure you'll like them, so that you can explore options and fine tune your own program. I have found that many people have misconceptions about some of these techniques that, unfortunately, keep them from giving them a chance, so it is my hope that you'll keep an open mind and modify the rituals as needed to make them work for you.

It has been my experience over the past few years that certain core recharge techniques can enhance any practice. These include mantras (which I often refer to as focus phrases), movement, music, aromatherapy and nature. While there are certainly a lot more options for energy enhancements, I have found that these five provide fairly consistent benefit and are simple to use in most circumstances.

A mantra is an instrument of the mind, used to guide our energy in a desired direction. Mantras may consist of a word, phrase or sound repeated in order to enhance the meditation experience. While traditional mantras often contained some sort of spiritual meaning or held value for their ability to cause an energetic vibrational shift, not all mantras are designed with this intention. There are some mantras that are used to simply shift the mind into a state of nothingness, stillness, or quiet – a difficult thing to do considering how busy our minds typically are in any given moment. By bringing focus back to the mantra we practice a type of resistance training, resisting both internal and external distractions. For this reason, and to de-mystify the experience for people who may prefer something less spiritually based, I often refer to these mental tools as a focus phrase: a word or series of words that we use in order to intentionally focus our mental energy in a particular direction that best serves our purpose in the moment.

I have enough,
I am enough

Movement is yet another tool that can be added to any recharge practice to enhance the experience. By gently moving the body, we facilitate more optimal circulation of the glucose and oxygen required for energy production. Just by standing, we double our metabolism and by walking around we can boost it five-fold.

On the other hand, when we sit for long periods of time we know that we unintentionally shift into conservation mode, decreasing our ability to be at our best. Movement is something we can do throughout the day to gently shift our energy in a more positive direction, but it can also be added to other recharge practices such as meditation, visualization, or spending time in nature in order to quickly increase the return on investment.

Studies have shown that music has an incredible ability to bypass certain areas of our perception to immediately access and gently nudge our mental energy in subconscious ways. Music induces emotional states by facilitating a shift in neurochemicals that boost mood, which can be not only helpful to our ability to be positive and creative, but may also enhance the healing, restorative processes in the brain and body.

Certain rhythms and tones have been shown to initiate a dramatic change in brain wave patters that becomes more coherent over time. When spoken words or lyrics are added to music, we may be more open to receiving the information and, therefore, quicker to hardwire new patterns of thought and behavior.

Like movement, music can be used alone to facilitate these positive changes or added to another type of recharge practice in order to enhance the experience and boost results. Similar to our sense of sound, our sense of smell can certainly trigger emotional responses that are grounded in our subconscious mind.

Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.

PLATO

I think we've all experienced smelling the familiar cologne of a former romantic partner, and how it quickly takes us back to stored memories and emotions we thought we'd left behind. Or smelling food that triggers memories. It always makes me laugh to think of certain food vendors who actually have their scents vented out to the sidewalk in order to trigger our subconscious cravings for things like buttered popcorn or warm chocolate chip cookies.

We can use this same brainpower intentionally to evoke mental and emotional states that move us in the direction of our goals. Examples include fragrances like citrus, peppermint or cinnamon to enhance focus and concentration. Jasmine, nutmeg, or licorice to stimulate sensuality. Or lavender, chamomile and vanilla to help us relax or fall asleep. (Check out **auracacia.com** or **snowlotus.com** for more details on aromatherapy specifics.) Many companies now have blends of oils that work synergistically for optimal effect. I personally use aromatherapy in many situations, including while writing, traveling, or before speaking in order to subconsciously shift my energy in a more positive direction.

The final essential recharge strategy is finding ways to incorporate nature into our lives more consistently. Although it may seem like this is dependent on our circumstances, there are many ways to bring in elements of nature.

Living in a high-rise and spending the majority of my time in planes and hotels, this particular technique is one I'm keenly focused on right now and noticing incredible returns on simple investments. While it probably seems like cheating to my mom, who happens to be a master gardener, for someone who wasn't born with a green thumb even adding fake nature can start to lift my spirits. Fake flower arrangements or photos of nature can still provide gentle subconscious reminders of how harmonious our natural world is, and how much beauty exists for us when we do make time to spend outside. Fragrances of nature may also help provide subtle cues, as can nature sounds and flickering candles. For maximum benefit, bringing life into our environment is always going to provide the added value of energy. And making time to spend in nature, even just for a few moments, can be one of the most powerful ways to gently shift our energetic vibration into balance.

Once again, we can combine techniques by incorporating as many energy enhancers as we can, which also begins to pair them in our memory. For example, if I do a moving meditation in nature and use an aromatherapy blend that is calming and relaxing I can recreate that same experience when I'm indoors by pairing the movement and scent, enhancing it even further by adding nature sounds as I visualize being outside. To me this is brain training in its finest form: being able to use the power of our mind to energetically shift the state of our mind and body so that we can recharge our energy regardless of circumstances.

In our busy, often chaotic, overly connected and yet disconnected world recharging in any situation is critical to our personal energy management.

As I mentioned before, these are not the only techniques you'll want to practice. What's most important is that you find strategies you can use consistently over time, regardless of circumstances, so you can proactively build your energy reserve throughout the day and restore it as needed. The following sections provide a few more techniques that you might find helpful.

Energy Boosters

One of the great things about these recharge rituals is that you can use all of them no matter how much time you have to spend. Even 30 seconds can help; so don't ever skip a recharge just because you don't think you have time.

Your energy boosters are those techniques that will give you a quick return on investment, and as you have more time to invest you can use these same strategies as energy builders that will improve your capacity to recharge over time.

Just to keep it simple, I consider boosters to be those practices that require no more than 30 seconds, keeping in mind that the more time you spend, the greater the return. Aim for 3 – 5 minutes for your short energy recharge sessions whenever possible.

If you need help getting started, check out our website **www.heidihanna.com/toolkit** for some great examples of music, guided audio, video clips, healthy humor, and more.

aromatherapy

crystal healing

deep breathing

drink a cup of tea or coffee

eat dark chocolate
savor it

gratitude journaling

go outside for fresh air

hugging
20+ seconds releases oxytocin

humor/laughter
funny video, comic strip, photo, audio clip

writing
even a few minutes can help

mantra meditation

massage

mindful movement

music

progressive relaxation

random act of kindness

read a short passage in a book

share appreciation
thank you card, positive email

visualization

walk around/take stairs

Builder Recharge Rituals

Rituals that require a bit more time are those I consider builders because they get deeper into the brain and body to actually correct imbalances, repair damage, and rewire mental maps.

All of the booster techniques can simply be turned into builders by allowing more time to practice, however there are others that require more time to get started and for that reason I've included them here.

Helpful Tools

To help you get started, I've provided a few guided audios, videos and other training tools available for free on our website **www.heidihanna.com/toolkit.** Click on the recharge tab for instant access to simple strategies that will help you boost your brainpower.

acupuncture

artwork

counseling/coaching

crafts

cooking

cuddling

exercise –
walking, running, hiking, biking, swimming, etc.
bonus building for going outside!

gardening

healing touch therapy

heart rate variability training

hobbies

interval training workout

nap

photography

playing a musical instrument

playing games

playing sports

playing with kids

reading

strength training workout

spend time in nature

watch positive television

write/journal

4.3
RECHARGE ROUTINES

Once you've identified your key recharge rituals, choose one to start with. Remember, it's critical to only shift a little bit at a time because your brain will see change as a potential threat if it perceives there might be an energy shortage.

As you start to build up your energy supply you'll create consistent habits that are easier to maintain, and then you can build upon your recharge rituals. For example, I designed a couple of key multi-step routines that I practice every day as a way to first prepare my brain and then reset my energy.

Remember to beware of the monkey mind, which is wound up on fear-based thinking and stuck in survival mode. Signs that you might be shifting into your monkey mind include sugar cravings, irritability, lack of focus, anxiety and depression. Insomnia, restlessness and aggressive behavior are indicators that the monkey mind has taken over, and it's time to start acting more like a human again!

How do you do this? Try out this high-five energy jumpstart or do a quick recharge to remind your human brain that you have the energy you need to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Heidi's "High 5" Energy Jumpstart

When it comes to setting myself up for success, I start with one of my most important personal investments: getting my heart-brain system into alignment. Rather than thinking about the entire process and stressing out first thing in the morning, I only think about step one – movement.

With practice I've trained myself to keep my attention only on that first step until I get there, and once my circulation starts revving up and I get a boost of feel-good endorphins in my brain and body, I'm able to gently shift to the second step – mindfulness.

From here, I become aware of my self-talk and try to remain as non-judgmental as possible. Being mindful is something I strive to continue throughout the day, as it enables me to be more in control of my thoughts instead of letting them run aimlessly. After a few minutes of awareness, I start to consider what's most important to me. Those beneficial brain chemicals swirling through my system help me have a more positive outlook on the day, and release some of my tension and anxiety.

Once I've determined my motivation for the day, or my purpose, I then simplify what matters most to me in just a simple word or phrase that becomes my meditation mantra for step four. I try to gather all of my mental energy and focus it like a laser in just one word or phrase for a few minutes.

When my mind starts to wander, as it typically does, I just gently bring it back to the mantra. I compare this to doing weight-training exercises for the body – gravity pulls us away and we use our strength to contract our muscles and move in the desired direction, beating resistance.

The mind is constantly pulled by an energetic gravity to think about things that are in the past or future, so we do resistance training for our brain by gently bringing our thoughts back to our desired target over and over again for a focused period of time.

finding something funny is cross-training for the brain

Finally, I allow myself a moment of mirth, or humor. In my research, and experience, I have found that nothing beats a nice dose of healthy humor to boost brainpower. Finding something funny, whether you laugh or not, is another type of cognitive exercise.

We invest energy temporarily in determining why something is funny, and then when we get the joke or irony of the cartoon, picture or video our neurons light up with brain boosting, cortisol blasting hormones and endorphins.

Heidi's

HIGH 5

MOVEMENT

gentle stretching, walking or running

MINDFULNESS

become aware of self-talk

MOTIVATION

think about what's most important today

MEDITATION

focus on a word or phrase that captures purpose

MIRTH

find something funny and share it with a friend

expand

The Brain Recharge Process

One of my favorite recharge tools is also one of the most simple. I call it a brain recharge because it gently shifts the brain into a more optimal state of coherence by incorporating the body, mind and spirit in a way that enhances energy production, restoration and flow. You can do this process with your eyes open or closed, which is helpful because many times when you need an energy shift you can't stop and close your eyes to do so (driving, in meetings, or in conversation with another person).

brain recharge:

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breathe...feel...focus

If you need to use the technique to quickly shift your state of mind, you can keep your eyes open and simply follow the three-step process. However, when you have more time and are in a position to do so, you can close your eyes and use this technique to deepen relaxation, enhance mental flexibility, reduce stress, and improve brainpower.

The first step is to simply focus the mind on the breath. Without forcing deep breathing, you will notice that with awareness your breath pattern naturally becomes more relaxed as you shift your attention away from your busy mind and onto the gentle waves of oscillation.

Notice how it feels in your body to breathe as you sense your chest expand and contract, perhaps your belly rises and falls. Just keep your attention on your inhales and exhales for a few moments as you shift from mind to body. Next, you're going to see if you can physically feel what happens when you elicit a positive thought, calling to mind something you feel grateful for or are looking forward to. You can imagine seeing the face of a loved one or giving them a hug, consider a project you're working on that you're excited about, or picture a place you're looking forward to visiting that you find relaxing and enjoyable.

Finally, as you stay aware of your breath and maintain this positive state of mind and body, aim your focus in a direction that is aligned with your most important goal at the moment. For example, if you're getting frustrated while driving your car in traffic, shift to practicing patience and kindness to others who share the road. If you're walking into a meeting, focus on bringing positive energy with you so you can stay open-minded and creative.

If you're engaged in a conversation with someone, radiate loving kindness or appreciation for the fact you're sharing time with them right now in the moment. By gently shifting the brain and body into a more harmonious and coherent state through breath regulation, relaxation and optimism, you prepare your brain to do its best work, leading you in the direction of your most important goals.

To charge your phone, you need to plug it in. But to recharge your brain, you need to unplug it.

DR. DANIEL L. KIRSCH

At the same time, you plug up energy leaks you might not have been aware of such as frustration, anger, and irritability, building capacity by filling your system with energizing thoughts and emotions.

Remember, this Brain Recharge Process can be done with eyes open or closed, when you have 30 minutes or 30 seconds, to gently shift your energy into a more optimal state in the moment and over time. All you have to do is breathe, feel, and focus. Your new "BFF" in supporting your ideal performance pulse throughout the day.

4

RECHARGE PRINCIPLES

REMEMBER

LET GO AND LET IN

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN AND BODY TO RECEIVE THE ENERGY THAT IS THERE FOR YOU. DISCONNECT IN ORDER TO LET LOVE, JOY, AND ENERGY IN. ACCEPT THAT YOU WILL NOT ALWAYS FINISH EVERYTHING ON THE TO-DO LIST.

I HAVE ENOUGH, I AM ENOUGH

chapter

5

A RECHARGE REVOLUTION

Be here
or be there,
but be
somewhere.

How many times have you been on the phone with someone, and you can tell they're not paying attention? Maybe you even hear the click click click of the keyboard in the background confirming your suspicions. How about driving? Are you able to tell when someone is texting or talking on the phone? Have you noticed families out at dinner or a movie where no one is looking at each other because they're all glued to their distraction devices? When you're with someone, and they're not paying attention, what's the message it sends? Clearly something else is more important. Yet we continue to subtly insult each other all day long by giving partial attention to too many things rather than full attention to just one.

Multitasking - diluting our energy between multiple priorities - is the enemy of extraordinary engagement. And what's worse is that chronic multitasking can literally kill brain cells due to the stress response initiated by too many tasks at once.

In my work with teams and organizations, I've noticed that the definition of multitasking tends to be foggy. Companies continue to demand that employees "manage multiple complex priorities", which often leads to the assumption that multitasking is mandatory. However, multitasking in its truest form is actually doing more than one thing at a particular time. Multiple studies have shown that the human brain can only focus on one thing at a time, and that multitasking dumbs us down, essentially taking the IQ of a Harvard student down to that of an 8-year-old kid.

Handling multiple priorities is a necessity, both in business as well as in our personal lives. Yet it's important to keep in mind that when we try to get by with multitasking we are not fooling anyone and can actually be sending the harmful message that people are not important to us. Instead, if we spend a little time planning ahead, we can chunk our day into blocks of time where we are completely engaged in one thing, or one person, at a time.

Here are a few helpful tips:

1. Turn email off. Don't minimize it...turn it completely off for periods of time so the noise or visual of an incoming message doesn't distract you. Even without reading email, the mind shift that happens temporarily just noticing an incoming message can pull your focus off course.

2. Turn the cell phone/blackberry/iphone/smartphone off. Don't put it on vibrate...turn it off. Even the sound of a vibrating phone pulls your focus away and wastes precious time and energy. It also causes everyone else around you to drift off into distracted thought about what they might be missing out on. Airplane mode for cell phones works on the ground too!

3. Turn away from your computer or completely turn it off when on calls or having a conversation with someone face to face. Resist the temptation to just get one more thing done because people do notice, as you have no doubt noticed, and it sends a harmful message about the importance of the relationship.

simplify

Please take responsibility for the energy you bring into this space.

DR. JILL BOLTE TAYLOR

I like to imagine a world where we have mastered oscillation to the point where we can use technology to our advantage, setting healthy boundaries so that we are in charge of our devices and not the other way around. Because we have literally trained our brains to be constantly connected and easily distracted, it will take a bit of time and training to rewire our patterns of attention, but it can be done. As with any other change, it's important that you make small adjustments and incorporate gradual shifts so that the change isn't too extreme to actually take hold in your brain.

Examples would be setting particular times for being "on" and "off" your phone, disconnecting from technology during meals and family time, putting your phone on airplane mode anytime you're not actively using it and checking in only a few times during the day. A very small practice I began a few years ago was to take 10 deep breaths upon landing when I'm traveling on a plane. I had noticed that people are so eager to reconnect, that it was contagious. I started to rush back into "on" mode along with the other passengers, only to find I wasn't missing out on much. Out of curiosity, I began looking at what my neighbors were doing on their phones and 9 times out of 10 they were browsing the Internet or checking Facebook. Probably nothing urgent.

In order to create this shift away from constant busyness, I believe we need to create a new culture of appreciating and valuing energy over time.

If we are able to recognize the value of energy management, we can justify healthy oscillation over constantly being in work mode. If we stay with the status quo and keep our minds constantly occupied, we may not even realize the damage that's being done to our health, happiness, performance and relationships until we're past the point of being able to recharge our way back to an optimal state. On the other hand, if we make an effort to consistently show up and bring our full and best energy, we can create a ripple effect on the energy of those around us. This is one of the driving forces for me in the work that I do.

Rather than focusing on feeling alone when I noticed others mentally multitasking or only giving partial attention in the present moment, I see it as an opportunity to be an example of how much better our connection can be when we both fully show up. In a loving, and gentle way I call people out on their distractions, asking them to be here now as much as possible. I shorten meeting times so that we can be more focused and get more done, setting clear expectations. These simple strategies have the potential to provide significant returns when used globally throughout an organization or community. Just imagine how much more productive we could be, how much healthier we could stay, and how much more meaning we could bring to our lives if we all gave our best energy to each other. As Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor said in her brilliant book, *My Stroke of Insight,* we need to take responsibility for the energy "we bring to this space". If we all agree to do this together, I believe we will be unstoppable.

breathe

5.1
SECOND-HAND STRESS

Unfortunately, there are many people in the world who are running on empty, operating in survival mode, and ready to drain your battery any chance they get. From an energetic or vibrational level, it's actually uncomfortable to be around someone who's functioning at a different level than we are. Our natural tendency to want to stick with the status quo and maintain homeostasis (biological balance) means that we can be quite vulnerable to shifts in energy that either lift us up or bring us down.

Because of our negativity bias and sensitivity to threats in our environment, we pay greater attention to what might be harmful than what could potentially bring us something good. This makes stress dangerously contagious. I say this because without even noticing, we can actually pick up stress signals from people around us.

When we subconsciously recognize changes in energetic patterns such as an increase in heart beat, breathing, tension in vocal tone or even negative language via text or email , it sends a very clear signal that we too should be worried. This triggers what's called an "amygdala hijack" where the primitive part of our brain responds in a more knee-jerk reactive way (based on the limbic system, fight or flight mechanisms) rather than being mindful, responsive, or reflective.

When we experience stress, whether real or imagined, it requires a greater amount of energy to be used in order to fuel potential fight or flight situations.

This means we can become more fatigued as the day goes on, easily carrying our irritability or distracted thinking into the home where it can negatively impact interpersonal relationships with those we care about.

beware of second-hand stress

People who cause second-hand stress are usually unaware of the impact they're having on others. Most people don't realize how sensitive the brain is at picking up things like non-verbal cues, changes in voice tone or inflection, noise, physical tension, or choice of language.

If someone is aware that they might be causing second-hand stress, the best thing they could do is take a few deep breaths before communicating or interacting with others.

Second-hand stress can also be caused via email, so saving messages as drafts first and spending a few extra moments re-reading, not just for type but also tone, can be helpful, saving precious time and energy in the long run.

The best way to limit the effects of second-hand stress is to become self protective of your energy, building appropriate boundaries and establishing healthy habits that allow for personal recovery such as 5-minute breaks every hour, getting up to stretch or walk around for a few minutes, deep breathing exercises, mini-meditations, and adding more humor into your day.

Being able to see minor annoyances in the scope of the bigger picture can help mediate the intensity of stress, decreasing its effects. Practice seeing what's positive around you by writing down a few things your grateful for each morning so that the negatives don't have as much power to stress you out.

A few other quick tips for decreasing second-hand stress:

1. Schedule consistent 50-minute work hours and make sure to force yourself to take a break for 5-10 minutes away from it all.

2. Set up clear, concise agendas for meetings in order to help all parties stay focused on the task at hand. Establish specific time boundaries up front so that people know what to expect, and are able to bring their best attention for the shortest time frame possible to accomplish the task. Allow adequate breaks to recharge.

3. When a colleague asks to talk for a minute (and you know it's going to take longer) set expectations from the beginning by letting them know how much time you have. By communicating with the

right attitude ("I'd love to chat but I only have 2 minutes right now" or "I'd like to discuss this but it's a bad time, let's pick a time where I can give you my full attention") people won't feel shunned and you can still keep your focus where you need it in the moment. If you do decide to chat, set a timer to go off in the allotted time frame so you aren't constantly worried about the clock. This helps you to be more fully engaged in the moment, and will keep the conversation more on point.

4. Schedule "appointments" in your calendar away from the office to recharge your energy (go to a coffee shop, walk in the park, go to a bookstore and browse, get a massage). These recharge appointments should be just as important as any other client or team meetings you have during the day.

5. Limit email time to certain blocks during the day and take mailbox offline when returning emails so you're not fighting a losing battle (respond to 1 message, receive 5 more). Face away from your computer screen whenever possible. Close your door. Wear silencing headphones to block out background noise. Have a sign you put on your door or cubicle wall when you're in "focus mode" asking people to come back in 30 minutes.

Remember, stress can be a positive source of energy if we have the resilience to manage it effectively. Stress becomes hazardous when we're running low on resources such as time and energy, and our brain becomes overly sensitive to the negatives around us.

turn down the noise

By far, the best way to fight off second-hand stress is to build in consistent self-care practices that allow time for recovery and relaxation.

The simple shifts we discussed earlier such as moving more often, eating regularly, and taking consistent mental breaks can recharge your system so you're better able to handle the natural waves of stress that occur in your day.

Free yourself from the whim of your reactive impulses by training new brain habits.

DR. EVIAN GORDON

5.2
RADIATING ENERGY TO OTHERS

There are many ways to bring the concepts of energy management and brain health into your organization, whether that is a business, family or community. When trying to create a contagious positive movement, first pay attention to how you're showing up.

Make sure you're doing the best you can to live in a way that demonstrates your commitment to these principals, knowing that there is no need to be perfect.

We need to establish consistent communication around these concepts, starting with the importance of oscillation, the ideal rhythm of stress and recovery, and strategic recharge practices.

beats

---

boundaries, expectations, attitude and time

I often refer to the acronym BEATs to remind me of helpful elements to creating organizational change: set boundaries, establish expectations, communicate with a positive attitude, and allow adequate time for change to occur.

The following strategies are simple ways to establish healthier BEATs in your environment:

1. Email Rules and Etiquette
   Email-free hours, breaks, turn off the server, limit CC/BCC, monitor time spent on technology, work on email while offline so messages are not coming in faster than you can respond or distracting your focus on other things.

2. Interruptions and Distractions
   Create ways to signal "focus time" to coworkers or family members, establish rooms for collaboration, rooms for quiet reflection and rooms for recharge breaks. Respect boundaries.

3. Devices
   Turn all technology off in meetings. Remember more energy equals less time; when attention is focused stress hormones are decreased, and there is no mental multitasking.

4. Meetings
   Make them device free, shorten the time frame, take more breaks, clearly plan agendas and share them ahead so others can best prepare, and be consistent and efficient with start/stop times.

5. Space
   Provide dedicated space in your office and/or home for quiet reflection. Use environmental cues such as pictures of nature, aromatherapy, or soft furniture to encourage relaxation and creativity.

Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.

OPRAH WINFREY

5.3
EXPERT ADVICE

In collecting ideas for this book, I also wanted to reach out to include a sampling of techniques from other experts in the field who I have had the chance to work with over the years. As I mentioned before, my hope is for this book to be an evolving document where we can continue to add new strategies from individuals who are exploring new ways to recharge. If you have a recharge ritual to share, please email me at **info@heidihanna.com.** If we use your ritual in an updated version of the book, we'll be sure to send you a free copy!

calm

My Calm Beat

Dr. Evian Gordon, My Brain Solutions

See Dr. Evian's video on the Circuit Break Stress process at:

www.heidihanna.com/toolkit

MyCalmBeat works by increasing your heart rate variability through slow breathing. MyCalmBeat first calculates your personal best breathing rate where you are most calm, and then gives you tools to train by breathing at that rate.

Low heart rate variability has been connected to worry, negative feelings, pain, and stresses at work. High heart rate variability enables you to recover more easily from stress, manage your pain, and boost your positive feelings and sense of wellbeing.

High heart rate variability is also beneficial to our ability to focus and think clearly. The most effective way to increase your heart rate variability is to calculate the one best breathing rate for you at which your heart rate variability is maximized and to breathe at this rate regularly. This rate is also known as your 'resonant frequency'.

Your personal best breathing rate is unique to you and does not change. It reflects the physical properties of your cardiovascular system. We recommend training every day for about 10 minutes. But just like any exercise, the more you do it, the bigger the benefit.

Negative thought patterns change the brain in negative ways.

Consistent daily training will help you strengthen the calm responses in your body that help you manage stress. You can also use MyCalmBeat just before a stressful event or when you need to perform such as an important presentation. MyCalmBeat can also be beneficial when used before sleep to during periods of pain such as headaches.

There are three ways to use MyCalmBeat for your personal best breathing rate training:

1. Purchase a MyCalmBeat monitor to calculate your best breathing rate. Available at **www.mybrainsolutions.com.**
2. Download the MyCalmBeat training program for your smart phone. Available on **iTunes**.
3. Sign up for a MyBrainSolutions subscription for MyCalmBeat and access to the full suite of online brain-training solutions. Available at **www.mybrainsolutions.com.**

happy

The Happiness Advantage e-Boost
Shawn Achor, Good Think Inc.
Watch Shawn's highly rated TED talk:
www.heidihanna.com/toolkit

Harvard-trained researcher and New York Times bestselling author Shawn Achor says that sending one simple email a day, for 21 days, will immediately increase your happiness -- and may even extend your life. "Write a two-minute email, or tweet, or Facebook message, or text message praising or thanking one person you know," Achor says. "It's so simple. Two minutes, usually two or three sentences, sent to a different person for 21 days."

In experiments with such an approach, which Achor details in *Before Happiness*, test senders immediately felt happier. More importantly, after 21 days, the senders felt an incredibly deep social support. Studies show that social support is as predictive of how long we'll live as obesity, high blood pressure, and smoking.

"We fight so hard against the negative and we forget to tell people how powerful a two-minute positive e-mail could be," Achor says. Giving a compliment the old fashioned way works, too. "Phone calls or face to face are even better."

grateful

Cultivate Gratitude
Dr. Daniel Amen, Amen Clinics
See Dr. Amen's TEDx talk at:
www.heidihanna.com/toolkit

Cultivating the mental state of gratitude pays dividends in terms of well being. In fact, research suggests that being grateful for the wonderful things in your life may positively impact your brain, sleep and overall outlook.

A SPECT study performed by the Amen Clinics found that practicing gratitude causes real brain changes that enhance brain function and mood. Conversely, the study also showed how negative thoughts deactivate certain brain regions associated with motor and thought coordination. Negative thinking can cause you to be clumsier and less able to think your way out of problems!

People who practice gratitude on a daily basis get better sleep and have less anxiety and depression, according to a study from China. Yet another study from the U.S. showed that young adults who used a daily gratitude journal experienced more determination and better attention, enthusiasm, and energy compared to a group of young adults who did not use a gratitude journal. Learning how to spin negative thoughts into positive ones can take some practice, so here are two fantastic exercises that will help you get started:

1. Exercise ONE – Gratitude Journal
   In a notebook or journal, write down 5 things you are grateful for every day. Do this upon waking in the morning or 30 minutes before going to sleep at night. The act of writing will help to solidify the feeling of gratitude in your brain and can help you feel happier almost instantly!

2. Exercise TWO – The Glad Game
   No matter what situation you are in, try to find something to be glad about. This does not mean denying difficult feelings, but trains you to see all the colors of a situation. To practice, think back and recall a difficult or disappointing situation when you started to think negatively, but then found a "silver lining." Now, retell that story from your "glad" standpoint. What did you find to be glad about the situation, after all?

5

RECHARGE PRINCIPLES

REMEMBER

GIVE THE ENERGY YOU WANT TO RECEIVE

FOCUS ON ONE THING AT A TIME. CULTIVATE A POSITIVE OUTLOOK THAT WILL CREATE A RIPPLE EFFECT ON THE ENERGY OF EVERYONE AROUND YOU.

BRING YOUR BEST ENERGY TO EACH MOMENT

conclusion

JUDY'S STORY

Within minutes of being interviewed by Judy Martin for my first book, we recognized each other as soul sisters. We shared a passion for teaching work/life balance along with struggles to do some of the very same things we spoke about. We quickly became accountability partners, determined to walk the talk: taking care of ourselves so we could take care of others. My shift was much easier. I was self-employed, wrapping up a busy book tour and ready to teach myself how to slow down. I even wrote a book about it (no stress in that!), creating a platform where I knew the only way I could be effective was to live what I was teaching.

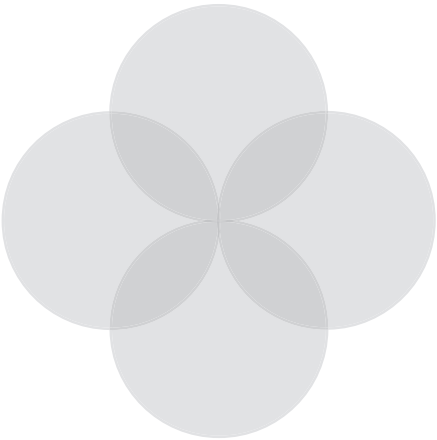
For Judy, this shift would take a bit more time. A busy reporter for a news station in New York, Judy always had too much on her plate, from my perspective. And I reminded her of this often. I worried about her. Recently we spoke of the incredible pain she was in from surgery and an anxiety-producing reaction to medication, in addition to other medical challenges and health scares. Her body was screaming at her to take a break, and she knew she needed to. And she promised she would. Soon.

We talked about plans visit a meditation retreat together in the next month or two. She asked me to join her in Bali or India for some meditation. As soon as she felt a bit better, we'd put it on the calendar. Together we'd spend time reflecting on our journeys up to this point and where we wanted to go next. Her vision was clear. She knew exactly what she wanted to do, and where her focus needed to be. It was all going to happen.

This was to be our greatest year yet. Time to create more balance, live in the flow, and finally soar. And we would support each other on this journey. Very soon.

A quiet January allowed me the time and space to reflect, and although at times it felt like torture to be still and listen, it was exactly what I needed. Letting go of the chaos finally exposed feelings I had been covering up with my busy work life. Feelings that had felt easier to numb out, but that I knew I needed to deal with. Judy and I spoke about these feelings. We understood each other. She encouraged me, and promised me she was going to do the same. It was right around the corner.

Her most recent posts on Facebook and Twitter stated, ***"Life is short. Take time to chill."***



I'm here to remind you that it's really short, and you must create time and space to chill immediately, don't wait.

Not a single day.

I was supposed to see Judy in New York two days after I found out she'd suddenly and unexpectedly passed away.

I couldn't wait to tell her about new opportunities that came up for me during my quiet time of reflection. Dreams that I have had for over a decade actually opening up right before my eyes in the most unique way. She would be joining me on this journey. We were going to do this work together. And we still will, but in a much different way. I carry Judy's spirit like an angel on my shoulder, constantly reminding me of how important this message is.

With my new book ***Stressaholic*** ready to release in a few weeks, Judy was first to ask me how I planned to launch it into the world. I told her I was taking a break, laying low, and waiting to see how things would unfold organically. Of course, despite her weakness from the surgery and overly busy schedule Judy insisted we do an interview to get the word out about the new book.

Having a conversation with Judy was just talking with a dear friend, so I agreed. I am so grateful to have this clip of our last conversation together as a reminder of our connection, our shared passion, and our ability to laugh about it all.

I think of Judy every single day, and the wake-up call I received that morning, January 31st 2014 when I learned she was gone. I honor her life and her work not only with my own professional mission to help others, but more importantly with my steadfast commitment to take care of my own energy as a priority so that I can serve others from the overflow of abundance in my life.

From this place I believe we all have the potential to create a movement, a recharge revolution, where we are healthier, happier, more peaceful and kind to one another, and able to reach higher than we'd ever dreamed. Fully present, giving our full and best energy to the moments that matter most.

YouTube interview: www.heidihanna.com/toolkit

IN MEMORY OF JUDY MARTIN

Slow down you crazy child
You're so ambitious for a juvenile
But then if you're so smart tell me,
Why are you still so afraid?

Where's the fire, what's the hurry about?
You better cool it off before you burn it out
You got so much to do and only
So many hours in a day (Ay)

But you know that when the truth is told
That you can get what you want
Or you can just get old
You're gonna kick off before you even get halfway through
When will you realize... Vienna waits for you?

Slow down you're doing fine
You can't be everything you want to be before your time
Although it's so romantic on the borderline tonight (tonight)

Too bad, but it's the life you lead
You're so ahead of yourself that you forgot what you need
Though you can see when you're wrong
You know you can't always see when you're right (you're right)

You got your passion, you got your pride
But don't you know that only fools are satisfied?
Dream on, but don't imagine they'll all come true
When will you realize... Vienna waits for you?

Slow down you crazy child
Take the phone off the hook and disappear for a while
It's alright, you can afford to lose a day
or two
When will you realize... Vienna waits for you?

And you know that when the truth is told
That you can get what you want or you can just get old
You're gonna kick off before you even get halfway through

Why don't you realize... Vienna waits for you?

When will you realize... Vienna waits for you?

VIENNA
WRITER(S) Billy Joel
COPYRIGHT Impulsive Music

RESOURCES

RECHARGE RESOURCES JUST FOR YOU!

VIDEO LINKS

My Calm Beat
Dr. Evian Gordon, Brain Resource
Video on the Circuit Break Stress process

The Happiness Advantage e-Boost
Shawn Achor, Good Think Inc.

Cultivate Gratitude
Dr. Daniel Amen, Amen Clinics

Judy's *Stressaholic* Interview with Heidi Hanna
Judy Martin, Work Life Nation

These links can be found at
www.heidihanna.com/toolkit

HEIDI'S LINKS

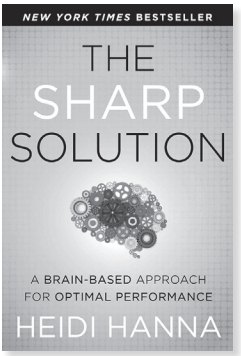
www.heidihanna.com

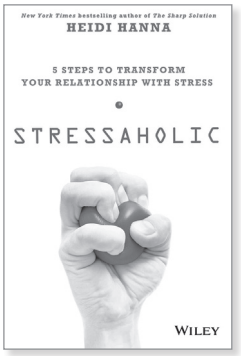
info@heidihanna.com

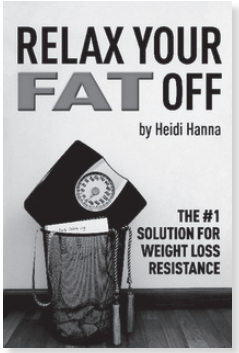
heidi@heidihanna.com

WANT MORE SYNERGY?

READ







REFLECT

- Brain-Based Coaching
- Metabolic Profiles
- Cognitive Fitness Assessments
- Nutrition Counseling
- Fitness Planning
- Corporate Programs

RETREAT

Join us at a world-class spa and resort for a Synergy Recharge Retreat. All-inclusive packages provide holistic nourishment for body, mind and spirit. Programs may also be held offsite for groups and organizations.

Tired, Wired and Running on Empty?

Energy is your most valuable resource, yet most people fail to manage it effectively. As a result, we now live in a state of constant and chronic stress, overwhelmed by the sense that there is never enough time to get it all done. In order to survive, we have become neurochemically dependent on sources of stress and stimulation just to get through another day. Too often we compromise our health, happiness and performance leaving us sick, tired and frustrated.

It's Time For A Recharge Revolution!

You don't have to accept a life of merely surviving. With simple tools to help you thrive, you can create a healthier integration among different aspects of your life, preparing you to be fully present and engaged.

"Our #1 responsibility is to manage our energy so we can fully show up when it matters most."

- HEIDI HANNA

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