

Working Smarter

Using Social and Neuro Science to be More Effective

The Whole U
The First 90: A New Year's Challenge to Make 2021 Count
Get Organized

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Helping organizations, teams and individuals become their best

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Introduction

Course Objectives

- Examine research from the fields of Social and Neuro Science about how we think, act and behave
- Apply that research to your own life and productivity
- Make some commitments to change your behavior

Heartfelt Wishes

- That you gain information that will help you make changes in your life to make it easier
- That these changes lead to you being more effective

Agenda

- VUCA World – In Over Our Heads
- Managing Energy
- Ultradian Rhythms
- Managing Focus
- Multitasking
- Your Brain at Work
- Willpower
- Commitments

The VUCA* World of Work

VUCA = Volatility, Variety, Unrest, Unknowns, Uncertainty, Complexity, Chaos, & Ambiguity

Computers – Rescue Time is a software program that monitors computer usage – per day averages from hundreds of thousands of users:

- Use 16 different programs in addition to a word-processing program
- Visit 40 different websites
- Interrupted every 5.2 minutes by an instant message

Smartphones – Study of 2,000 smartphone users as reported in the UK *Daily Mail*, in 2014, the average user:

- Picks up their phone more than 1,500 times a week
- Uses this device for three hours and sixteen minutes each day - or the equivalent of almost one full day a week
- Carry out a staggering 221 tasks every day
- Reaches for their phone at 7:31am each morning, to check personal emails and Facebook

Emails

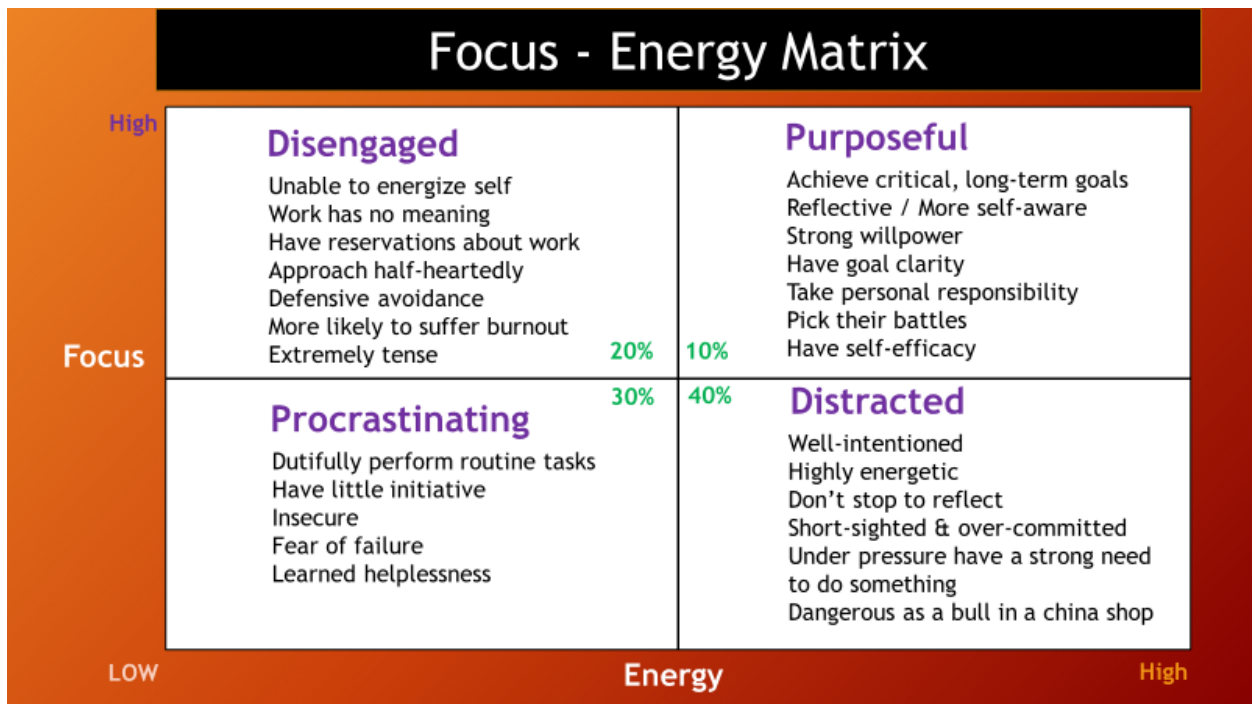
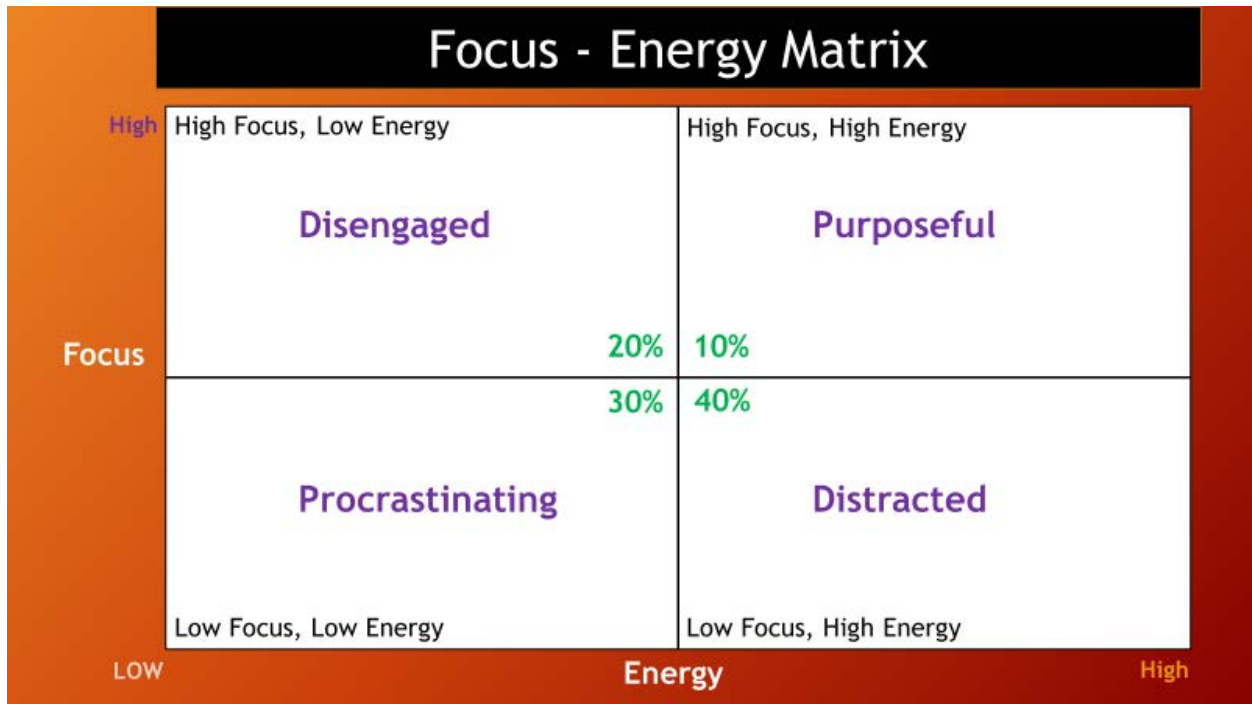
- 2010 survey by Harris Interactive, when the number of emails per day reaches 50 most people say they can't keep up
- In 2011, the Radicati Group, a market research firm, found that, on average, corporate employees sent and received 105 e-mails a day
- Increase in Internet Addiction Disorder, and apnoea and monophobia, fear of being out of email and mobile phone contact respectively

In Over Our Heads

Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, 1998

- Harvard developmental psychologist
- 5 stage developmental model
- Modern world requires a 4th order of consciousness, and
- The post-modern world requires a 5th
- Subject – object interview process
- Studied mostly middle-aged, wealthy, well-educated folks
- Less than half of those studied have achieved a 4th order
- Most people lack the ability to deal with the complexity of life
- We are in over our heads
- To have emotions rather than be had by our emotions
- To have a personality rather than be had by our personality

The Focus – Energy Matrix



Managing Your Energy

Here are some things you can do to manage your energy:

- Work in 90-120 minutes cycles – use ultradian rhythms
- Change pace between cycles
- Do a 5-minute walk
- Do a ‘green’ walk
- Don’t ‘power through’
- Don’t use extra caffeine
- Practice mindfulness / meditation
- Use a journal
- Belly-breathing
- Manage energy not time (*Power of Full Engagement*)
- Get 8 hours of sleep each night
- Eat nutritiously
- Exercise
- Maintain hydration
- Use your strengths to make a difference in the world

Managing Your Energy

From Tony Schwartz and the Energy Project

Time is finite, but energy is renewable

Physical Energy

Emotional Energy

Mental Energy

Spiritual Energy

Managing Your Energy

Think about what puts you in ‘flow’, when you are ‘in the zone’:

- Your productivity is effortless
- You are absorbed
- You lose track of time
- You do your best work

What factors are present that get you there? What are you doing? What skills are you using?

What activities do you seek to avoid? What makes you procrastinate? What skills are difficult or draining for you? What activities drain away your energy?

How could you change your workday for more flow and less drain? How can you balance the ebb and flow of energy? How can you give away or delegate the de-energizing things, or otherwise compensate?

Ultradian Rhythms

Most people have heard of Circadian Rhythms, the cycle of wakefulness and sleep that we experience in a 24-hour period. Ultradian Rhythms are natural body cycles within the larger Circadian Cycle. You experience an Ultradian Rhythm every 90 to 120 minutes – it varies from one person to another.

What are some ways you can use this information?

How long do you think your cycle is?

What are some ways you can take periodic breaks every 90-120 at work that are acceptable within your work culture?

Where can you take a 'green walk'?

Managing Your Focus

Here are some things you can do to manage your focus:

- Stop multitasking
- Limit distractions
- Use ‘trade-off conversations’
- Say “no” gracefully
- Practice ‘essentialism’
- Practice mindfulness
- Manage your work flow

The Myth of Multitasking

Stanford University

- Multitasking is less productive than doing a single thing at a time
- People who self-identified as high-performing multitaskers were actually less productive at multitasking than people who self-identified as single-taskers
- Multitaskers had a harder time organizing their thoughts and filtering out irrelevant information; slower at switching from one task to another

University of London

- Participants multitasking on cognitive tasks experienced decline in IQ scores that mirrored smoking marijuana or staying up all night
- Multitasking men average drop of 15 IQ points, matching those of an 8-year old child

University of Sussex

- Compared the amount of time people spent on multiple devices, for example texting while watching TV to MRI scans of the brain
- High multitaskers had less brain density in an area of the brain that controls empathy as well as cognitive and emotional control
- Lead researcher “the way we are interacting with the devices might be changing the way we think and these changes might be occurring at the level of brain structure”.

Talent Smarts (an emotional intelligence consulting firm)

- Has tested more than a million people and found that 90% of top performers have high EQs (a way of expressing emotional intelligence like IQ)
- The area of the brain referred in the University of Sussex study above also controls your EQ
- If multitasking is damaging that area, then it could also be lowering your EQ

Harvard University

- Multitasking leads to as much as a 40% drop in productivity (Bergman, 2010)

Final Thought – Multitasking can feel good it gives our brain a jolt of dopamine and we like lots of possibilities – just don’t confuse it with productivity

Examining Multitasking

List all the ways that you multitask?

How do you see multitasking impacting your life?

What are some things you could do to avoid multitasking?

Electronic Deficit Disorder (EDD)

- When we shift between tasks, we take 50% longer to complete the task (Harvard)
- When you have all of your focus on a task, and you switch to another task, like responding to a text, email or phone call, on average, it takes your brain 15 minutes to regain the level of focus on the original task (NY Times, Microsoft study)
- You have a finite amount of ability to completely concentrate in a day, approximately an hour and a half, use it wisely

Reflect on your day, when are your powers of concentration at their peak?

How can you change your workday to do the most complex or difficult tasks?

List all of the daily distractions that you have?

What are some things you can do to limit your distractions?

Willpower

“When psychologists isolate the personal qualities that predict “positive outcomes” in life, they consistently find two traits: intelligence and self-control.”

“Most major problems, personal and social, center on failure of self-control.”

Study of 200 German men and woman – we spend about a quarter of our day resisting desires – about four hours a day.

Baumeister – the surest way to a better life is improving your willpower

Willpower is a resource in the brain, fed by glucose

Using it depletes it

Decision fatigue works against it

Willpower is like a muscle, it can be strengthened through use

- Focus on *I want*, and *I will*, rather than *I won't*
- Eat 5 smaller meals daily
- Minimize temptations in your environment
- 4-6 breaths per minute
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Nutritious food

Applying Your New Learning

Please record two commitments that you are willing to make in order to work smarter and be more effective.

First Commitment

Second Commitment

Working Smarter Resources

Books and Articles

- Achor, Shawn. *Before Happiness: 5 Actionable Strategies to Create a Positive Path to Success*. New York: Crown Business, 2013.
- Allen, David. *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*. New York: Penguin Books, Revised edition, 2015.
- Baumeister, Roy F., and Tierney, John. *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*. New York: Penguin Books, 2012.
- Benson, Jim and Berry, Tonianne DeMaria Berry. *Personal Kanban: Mapping Work / Navigating Life*. Seattle: Modus Cooperandi Press, 2011.
- Bruch, Heike and Ghoshal, Sumantra. "Beware the Busy Manager". *Harvard Business Review*, February, 2002.
- Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House, 2006.
- Goleman, Daniel. *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence*. New York: Harper Collins, 2013.
- Gallagher, Winifred. *Rapt: Attention and the Focused Life*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2005.
- Loehr, Jim, and Schwartz, Tony. *The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal*. Washington: Free Press, 2005.
- Loh K.K., and Kanai R. "Higher Media Multi-Tasking Activity Is Associated with Smaller Gray-Matter Density in the Anterior Cingulate Cortex." *PLoS ONE* 9(9). 2014.
<<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0106698>>. Accessed 26 January 2015.
- Kegan, Robert. *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

McGonigal, Kelly. *The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why it Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It*. New York: Avery, 2013.

Resources (continued)

McKeown, Greg. *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*. New York: Currency, 2014

“Multitasking: Switching costs.” American Psychological Association. 20 March 2006. <<http://www.apa.org/research/action/multitask.aspx>>. Accessed 26 January 2015.

Ophir, Eyal, et al. “Cognitive control in media multitaskers.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* vol. 106 no. 37. 2009. <www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.0903620106>. Accessed 26 January 2015.

Rock, David. *Your Brain at Work: Strategies for Overcoming Distraction, Regaining Focus, and Working Smarter All Day Long*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Schulte, Brigid. *Overwhelmed: Work, Love and Play when No One Has the Time*. New York: Picador, 2015

Schwartz, Tony and McCarthy, Catherine. “Managing Your Energy, Not Your Time.” *Harvard Business Review*, October, 2007.

Websites

gettingthingsdone.com—David Allen’s GTD methodology

quantifiedself.com—forum for self-measurement tools, apps, etc.

mint.com—analysis of your spending

rescuetime.com—tracks how you use your computer

theenergyproject.com—Tony Schwartz’s website

talentsmart.com—Emotional Intelligence Consulting Firm

The Few Quiz (Focus/Energy⁴/Willpower Self-Assessment)

Please indicate whether the statements below are true (T) or not true (N) as they apply to you. Remember that self-assessments are only useful to the degree that we are self-honest.

- _____ 1. I focus on one thing at a time no matter what else is going on around me
- _____ 2. I avoid multitasking
- _____ 3. I shut out email, texts, IMs, Facebook, etc. during the work day to focus on tasks
- _____ 4. I carve out a small amount of time each day, just to think or reflect
- _____ 5. I do not type on my keyboard while talking on the phone
- _____ 6. I do not check or answer my phone or email while I am talking to other people
- _____ 7. I routinely get seven to eight hours of sleep each night
- _____ 8. I wake in the morning feeling refreshed
- _____ 9. I eat a healthy breakfast, including adequate protein, within an hour of getting up
- _____ 10. I make time to eat my lunch, away from my desk
- _____ 11. I do a heart healthy exercise 3 or more times a week
- _____ 12. I make a point of taking regular breaks away from my desk
- _____ 13. I am easily able to meet the pace and demands of my work
- _____ 14. I am happy with my work life balance
- _____ 15. My family is happy with my work life balance
- _____ 16. I am able to leave thoughts of work behind when I am at home
- _____ 17. I am usually even-keeled and composed at work when pace and demands are high
and the environment is stressful

The Few Quiz (continued)

- _____ 18. I get adequate leisure time to pursue my favorite activities
- _____ 19. I frequently express appreciation to others
- _____ 20. There are times during the day when I can quiet the internal dialogue of my mind
- _____ 21. I am able to focus each day on more long-range planning
- _____ 22. I do not communicate with work when I am on vacation
- _____ 23. I do not check or respond to work emails when I am on my own time
- _____ 24. My work gives my life meaning and purpose
- _____ 25. I am having a positive impact on others and the world
- _____ 26. My own personal values are congruent with my organization's goals, values, norms, behaviors and work culture
- _____ 27. I 'walk my talk' in all areas of my life
- _____ 28. I eat smaller meals and snacks five or six times daily
- _____ 29. I am easily able to resist temptation
- _____ 30. I avoid situations where I may give in to temptation
- _____ 31. My family and friends would say that I am not impulsive
- _____ 32. I tend to pause and think and avoid reacting, moving, or deciding too quickly
- _____ 33. I am able to resist giving in to the impulse to say or do things that I regret later
- _____ 34. My family and friends would say I have good willpower

Scoring The Few Quiz

Add the total number of true (T) answers for each section below

Focus _____ (questions 1-6)

Energy^{Physical} _____ (questions 7-12)

Energy^{Emotion} _____ (questions 13-19)

Energy^{Mental} _____ (questions 20-23)

Energy^{Purpose} _____ (questions 24-27)

Willpower _____ (questions 28-34)