

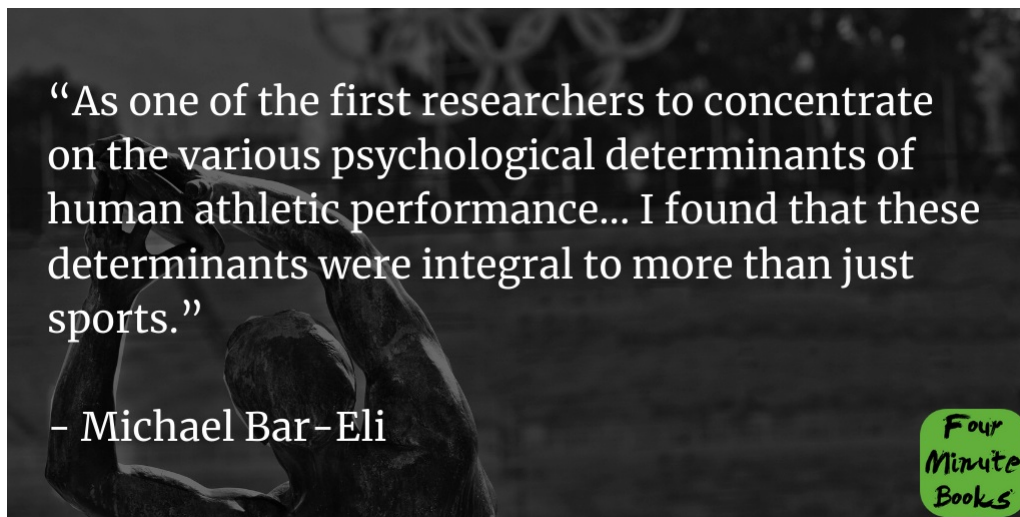
Boost! Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Boost!* is a guide for becoming more productive at work by using the preparation and performance techniques that world-class athletes use to win gold medals.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



We've all seen the world-class performances of Olympic athletes. How do they do it? What's so special about the way they practice that makes them the best at what they do?

The exciting news for you and me is that we don't need anything special to learn the principles of sports psychology. These simple tools are right here at our fingertips, and practicing them is the key to peak productivity.

This is what Michael Bar-Eli, the author of *Boost!: How the Psychology of Sports Can Enhance your Performance in Management and Work* is here to teach you. He's a long-time Olympic coach that will show you how top performers do it and how you can too, even in the workplace.

Here are the 3 most helpful lessons I've discovered from the world of sports:

1. Make your goals as specific as possible to maximize your likelihood of achieving them.
2. Try unconventional ways of doing regular things to innovate and reach a new level of efficiency.
3. You will perform better if you visualize the details of the process of success.

Ready to see how you might break the world record for productivity? Let's go!

Lesson 1: You are far more likely to achieve your goals when they are specific.

It's winter in 1971 and the author is in the Israeli military. He's struggling with completing a 3,000-meter run in under 12 minutes as part of basic training. During every practice Bar-Eli is the slowest, ending up at the back of his team. But his motivation quickly changes after a threat of punishment from one of his superiors.

Michael focuses on his new goal of keeping up with those at the front of the pack. When it comes time for the actual race, he accomplishes the requirement to finish in under 12 minutes.

Because he had set a specific goal, the author was able to do something that he was previously unable to accomplish. **One of the biggest reasons this works so well is because trying to “do your best” doesn't give you anything concrete to measure your progress against.**

When you define your goal well, you give yourself a standard to work toward. This makes it possible for you to track each step of your growth to make sure that you'll achieve your goal when you need to.

This works especially well for long-term goals. The best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time, they say, and the same is true for your ambitions. Being specific with short-term goals that will lead up to achieving your long-term ones is a sure way to make sure that you accomplish what you set out to do.

Lesson 2: Innovation is as simple as testing unconventional methods for doing everyday tasks.

The word innovation probably makes you think of business rather than sports. But it does have its place in competitive events. The history of it in athletics can teach us a lot about how to use it in other areas too.

Just three years prior to the author's experience with specific goals, another athlete was making history in the Olympics. **Richard Douglas Fosbury was a high jumper whose unorthodox method would make him famous and win him a gold medal.**

Prior to the back-arching Fosbury Flop as it's now known, high jumpers would leap frontward in the sport. Although everyone was skeptical about his new approach, they all ended up surprised when it worked so well and became so widely used.

What we can learn from this experience is to look for counterintuitive solutions to problems. To easily utilize this tool, use the four-step pattern:

1. Realize your problem
2. Find an unexpected solution
3. Make the idea better by repeatedly practicing it
4. Share your innovation with the world

Fosbury's **problem** that led to his uncanny solution was that he struggled with the common frontward straddle roll that high jumpers used to use. After trying different ways of doing the jump that worked for him, he discovered his **unexpected solution** by jumping over the bar backward.

Experimentation and **practice** throughout his time in high-school helped the young man refine his process to get it just right. And then when the time came for him to participate in the Olympics he got to **share** it with the world.

Lesson 3: **Visualization is a powerful technique that can help you get almost the same benefits as actually practicing.**

While you may have gotten in trouble for daydreaming in class as a kid, today the ability to have a vivid imagination is a critical skill. It can set apart the great athletes and top workplace performers from the mediocre ones.

Research indicates that every time you visualize yourself practicing, you'll grow almost as much as if you had actually been doing the actions.

The key component here is having a good imagination. The more clearly you picture yourself going through the motions, the better effect it will have on your abilities. In other words, if you do it right, simply sitting there and thinking can have dramatic effects on your performance!

First, find out what you want to accomplish and set your specific goal. Then sit down and meditate on the process. The more sensory components you can imagine, the better.

Picture the feelings you will have, what you'll be wearing, the sounds and smells, and more.

Run yourself through your performance in real-time considering every detail. Make sure that your visualization has the positive outcome you desire, but really focus on the steps to get there.

Pete Maravich, an NBA basketball player, is a good example of focusing on the process rather than the outcome. He would shoot three-pointers then look away after letting the ball go. This was perplexing to coaches, but Maravich knew that if he got the technique right the ball would get into the hoop every time.

Boost! Review

Boost! is right up my alley. I love books about performance and this one didn't disappoint! I've often heard about the similarities between productivity and peak performance levels in sports and work, but this succinctly put them all into one great book.

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Who would I recommend the Boost! summary to?

The 48-year-old leader who would like to become more efficient, the 33-year-old office worker who has a difficult time being productive and wants to fix that, and anyone that wants to know what psychology has to do with all kinds of performances.