

[Energy Audit](#) (3 min)

(I learned this exercise from Diana Chapman of the Conscious Leadership Group.)

It is essential to maximize your energy. You perform best when you are doing things that energize you. There is excellent brain science around this from Robert Sapolsky of Stanford. His work is so good that I recommend you access it directly by reading [Behave](#) or listening to his explanation in this [video](#) (1h13m).

Your goal should be to spend most of your time (75-80%) doing things that energize you. If you do, magic will occur.

Get two highlighters, pens, or pencils of different colors (red and green are ideal, but any will do). Print out the last two weeks of your calendar (**from the past**, not the future) when you were working, and that is representative of your everyday experience (i.e., if you did something unusual in the last two weeks like go on a big trip, then pick the two weeks prior). Add in activities you did in between meetings, before work, and after work. If you don't have a printer, do [this](#).

Go through each workday hour-by-hour and ask yourself, "Did that activity give me energy or drain my energy?" Highlight those that gave you energy in green and red those that did not provide you with energy. There are no neutrals; every hour must be marked one color or the other. If an hour does not give you energy, it is red. (If you want to take a shortcut, you can just mark the reds.)

When finished, write out a list of each of the reds.

Then group those activities into similar buckets. (i.e., 1-1 meetings, recruiting meetings, etc.)

For each type of activity that does not raise your energy, write down ways to:

- Outsource it,
- Eliminate it, or
- Make it exquisite (i.e., meetings that you believe you must attend).

Turn each of these into actions with due dates and put them in your Task Manager.

Keep doing this Energy Audit each month until you're spending 75% or more doing things that give you energy. If you do, you will achieve far more in less time because you will perform far better. You will be in your Zone of Genius.

There are some common actions that don't give people energy. To these, you need to say "no!" Here are some ways to do that: [No - how to say it](#)

Zone of Genius

What is the Zone of Genius? Well, there are four zones.

1. Zone of Incompetence.
2. Zone of Competence.
3. Zone of Excellence.
4. Zone of Genius.

Zone of Incompetence is what other people probably do better than you (i.e., fix your car), and therefore you should outsource if they don't give you joy.

Zone of Competence is what you do just fine, but others are as good as you (i.e., clean your bathroom), and therefore you should outsource if they don't give you joy.

Zone of Excellence is what you are excellent at (i.e., better than others) but don't love doing. This area is the danger zone. Many people will want you to keep doing these things (as they gain significant value from you doing them), but this is the area that you should also look to move away from. This is the hard one!

Zone of Genius is the things you are uniquely good at in the world and that you love to do (so much that time and space likely disappear when you do them). This zone is where you can add the most value to the world and yourself. This area is where you should be driving toward spending most, if not all, of your time.

Some people worry that if each of us operates solely in our Zone of Genius, no one will be available to do the un-fun stuff. This is a false fear. There are many personality types. For every activity that feels un-fun to you, there is someone out there who not only excels at it but loves it. (Yes, even the "horrible" tasks, like firing people.) The key in any organization is for people to be transparent about what their Zone of Genius is and then map all activities to the right people (through an [AORs](#) list).

Many of the CEOs that I coach have become big fans of this Energy Audit. Mathilde Collin of Front is such a fan that she wrote up [her own post](#) about it. You will notice very similar content. The difference is her personal examples.