

CHAPTER 15

Maximize Your Personal Powers

“Gather in your resources, rally all your faculties, marshal all your energies, focus all your capacities upon mastery of at least one field of endeavor.”

John Haggai

The raw material of personal performance and productivity is contained in your physical, mental and emotional energies.

When you are fully rested, you can get two times, three times and five times as much done as when you are tired or burned out.

Your body is like a machine that uses food, water and rest to generate energy that you then use to accomplish important tasks in your life and work.

One of the most important requirements for being happy and productive is for you to guard and nurture your energy levels at all times.

Overworking Can Mean Underproducing

The fact is that your productivity begins to *decline* after eight or nine hours of work. For this reason, working long hours into the night, although it is sometimes necessary, means that you are usually producing less and less in more and more time.

The more tired you become, the worse will be the quality of your work and the more mistakes you will make. At a certain point, like a battery that is run down, you can reach "the wall" and simply be unable to continue.

Work at Your Own Pace

There are specific times during the day when you are at your best. You need to identify these times and discipline yourself to use them on your most important and challenging tasks.

Most people are at their best in the mornings, after a good night's sleep. Some people are better in the afternoons. A few people are most creative and productive in the evenings or late at night.

A major reason for procrastination is fatigue, or attempting to start on a task when you are tired out. You have no energy or enthusiasm. Like a cold engine in the morning, you can't seem to get yourself started.

Whenever you feel overtired and overwhelmed with too much to do and too little time, stop yourself and just say, "All I can do is all I can do."

Sometimes the very best use of your time is to go home early and go to bed and sleep for ten hours straight. This can completely recharge you and enable you to get two or three times as much done the following day, and of a far higher quality, than if you had continued working long into the night.

Get Enough Sleep

According to many researchers, the average American is not getting enough sleep relative to the amount of work he or she is doing. Millions of Americans are working in a state of *mental fog* as the result of working too much and sleeping too little.

One of the smartest things you can do is to turn off the television and get to bed by ten o'clock each night during the week. Sometimes, one extra hour of sleep per night can change your entire life.

Here is a rule for you. Take at least one full day off every week. During this day, either Saturday or Sunday, you must absolutely refuse to read, clear correspondence, catch up on things from the office or do anything else that taxes your brain. Instead, you go to a movie, exercise, spend time with your family, go for a walk or any activity that allows your brain to completely recharge itself. It is true that "a change is as good as a rest."

Take regular vacations each year, both long weekends and one and two-week breaks to rest and rejuvenate. You are always the most productive after a restful weekend or a vacation.

Going to bed early five nights a week, sleeping in on the weekends and taking one full day off each week will ensure that you have far more energy. This added energy will enable you to overcome procrastination and get started on your major tasks faster and with greater resolve than you ever could if you were tired out.

Guard Your Physical Health

In addition to lots of rest, and to keep your energy levels at their highest, be careful about what you eat. Start the day with a high protein, low fat and low carbohydrate breakfast. Eat salads with fish or chicken at lunch. Avoid sugar, salt, white flour products or deserts. Avoid soft drinks and candy bars or pastries. Feed yourself as you would feed a world class athlete before a competition, because in many respects, that's what you are before starting work each day.

Aim to exercise about 200 minutes each week, the agreed-upon standard for excellent levels of fitness. This is equal to 30 minutes per day, and can be achieved by going for a walk before or after work, or walking short stretches during the day. You can swim, use exercise equipment or play different sports, but build exercise into your daily routine, just as if it was a business appointment.

By eating lean and healthy, exercising regularly and getting lots of rest, you'll get more and better work done, easier and with greater satisfaction than ever before.

The better you feel when you start work, the less you procrastinate and the more eager you are to get the job done and get on with other tasks. High energy levels are indispensable to higher levels of productivity, more happiness and greater success in everything you do.

Eat That Frog!

1. Analyze your current energy levels and compare them with your daily health habits. Resolve today to improve your levels of health and energy by asking the following questions:
 - 1) What am I doing physically that I should do **more** of?
 - 2) What am I doing that I should do **less** of?
 - 3) What am I not doing that I should **start doing** if I want to perform at my best?
 - 4) What am I doing today that affects my health that I should **stop doing** altogether?
2. Select one activity or behavior that you can change immediately to improve your overall levels of health and energy. Practice that one action over and over until it becomes a habit. Then select a second way to improve and begin on that.

Whatever your answers are to these questions, take action today.