

## Are You Fully Charged?

### The 3 Keys to Energizing Your Work and Life

Tom Rath

### Exclusive Book Summary

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#### Summary

When you are fully charged, you will get more things done. Your body is healthier, your mind is quicker and sharper, and your relationships are better. It benefits your daily life and work when you are fully charged. In *Are You Fully Charged? The 3 Keys to Energizing Your work and Life*, Mr. Rath concluded three strategies, which are meaning, interactions and energy, to guide readers to have a fully charge both in life and work. Meaning is to do something good for another person. Interactions means to create moments far more positive than negative. "[M]aking choices that improve your mental and physical health" is the strategy of energy. After reading this book, I believe that readers will change the view for life and work, and they will know how to charge themselves fully. Tom Rath has suffered difficulties in his life, and his experiences and story make this book worth to read. His life story inspires me both in life and work. After read it, you will change your mind and think in a different view.





## Part I: MEANING

*"20% of people spent a lot of time doing meaningful work yesterday."*

### Create Meaning with Small Wins

Based on Tom's research and experience, creating meaning is not just for his existence but to that of every organization in society today. According to his research, if you spend time on doing meaningful works whole day, the complete job engagement increase by more than 250%. On the other hand, **Small wins** generate meaningful progress. For example, you may create some positive changes for your customers today and it will benefit them in the future.

There are two ways to create meaning. First one is "**abandon the pursuit of happiness**". The pursuit of meaning but not happiness makes life worthwhile. In the Declaration of Independence, "the pursuit of happiness is a shortsighted aim." A research showed that the more value you place on your own happiness, the more possibility you have to feel lonely.

Moreover, "**swim in the deep end of life**" is the second strategy. Happiness and meaningfulness are two distinct human conditions. Those who pursue happiness are called "takers" by psychologists. Sometimes, creating meaning requires putting your own needs after other persons', which may cause short-term decrease for your own happiness. However, you make contributions to improve the environment around you, from which you will benefit eventually. In addition,

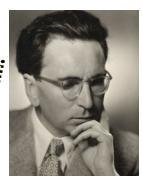
distinctly. In Barbara Fredrickson's study, 75% of participants who were happy but lacked meaning in their life fell into a stress-related pattern which is the same as that in adversity. In the long term, this pattern leads to chronic inflammation related to a host of illnesses like heart diseases. While those who had meaning in their lives showed a deactivation in this stress-related pattern.

### Pursue Life, Liberty, and Meaningfulness

Finding meaning is described as a personal journey. The study of meaningfulness has been influenced by Viktor Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning*, which is based on his experience in Nazi concentration camp. According to his research, "teenagers who had greatest brain response to meaningful actions had the greatest declines in depressive symptoms over time" (p. 18).

*"Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue."*

— Viktor Frankl



**"People leading meaningful lives get a lot of joy from giving to others."**

—Kathleen Vohs

- **Get a charge from within**
  - **Extrinsic motivation** - do things primarily to receive a reward.
  - **Intrinsic motivation** - deep internal motivation.

It is better to focus solely on intrinsic motivation, because external motivation could decrease

- Forge meaning in the moment
  - Meaning does not come to you - you create it.
  - Creating meaning is more practical - and relevant - to the people you care about most.

### Make Work a Purpose, Not Just a Place

The work you do each day is how you make difference in the world. Work should be more than a necessary means to an end.

- Work for More Than a Living

Human beings can do more collectively than they can in isolation.

- Go Beyond Engagement

- Individuals and organizations' relationship needs to change for the foundational concept to succeed.

**Reality:** What's good for an employee is in the organization's best interest.

- Your personal well-being is just as important as how engaged in you are in your job.
- A healthy relationship between an employee and an organization starts with a shared mission, meaning, or purpose.

### Find a Higher Calling Than Cash

Working primarily for money is little more than a modern-day form of bribery. Innumerable studies show that **nonfinancial incentives**, like recognition, attention, respect, and responsibility, could be **more effective than financial incentives**.

- Avoid Upward Comparison

"Earning a million pounds a year appears to be not enough to make you happy if you know your friends all earn 2 million a year."

Judging the success of your career accorded to the total money you earn would lead you astray sooner or later.

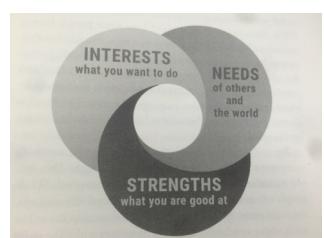
- Keep Money from Killing Meaning

- Simply thinking about money will put your personal well-being ahead of collective interests.
- participants were **3 times more** likely to work alone rather than work with others if monetary rewards reminded (a study in University of Minnesota).
- The more you focus your efforts on others, the easier it is to do good work without external rewards.

Get your motivation from doing things that contributes to a collective good.

### Ask What the World Needs

"You create meaning when your strengths and interests meet the needs of the world" (p. 38). Then, understanding what the world needs from you and how to apply your strengths and interests for the world are much more important.



- Double Down on Your Talents



- Instead of being anything you want to be, you should aim to be more of who you already are.
  - Starting with your natural talents, then investing time in practicing, building skills, and increasing knowledge.
  - If you want to be great at something in your lifetime, double down on your talents at every turn.
- **Act Now Before Today is Gone**
- You do not always have tomorrow to do what matters most.
  - If you fail to do meaningful work that makes a difference today, the day is gone forever.

### Don't Fall into the Default

It is normal to follow footsteps of someone you admire. It is not a bad thing. However, it gives you an additional responsibility - to make sure that you are following your own dreams.

➤ **Cast a Shadow Instead of Living in One**

One of the best way to find your interest and passion is by exploring new subjects. Sometimes, it might be found by your parents, friends and mentors, and it is easy to fall into a "default career path", which is more about other's expectation than your internal motivations. But the only shadow you should live is your own.

➤ **Craft Your Dream into Your Job**

- You should spend some time every day engaging in activities that energize and recharge you.

- One research led by the University of Michigan found that three areas, **time you dedicate in specific tasks** which give you energy, **the way your relationships** at work, and **your perception of what you do creating meaning for others**, are able to build some of your dreams into your job.

### Initiate to Shape the Future

striking up a conversation that leads to a new friendship, sharing an idea with someone at work that turns into a new product or offering - what you initiate today will matter later in life.

➤ **Put Purpose Before Busyness**

People learn to equate busyness with importance, which is built into social expectations. But the result of being busy is a poorly managed life. Instead, aim for a daily routine to do what you want, work on projects that make a difference, and spend time with someone you love. Find a better answer than being busy all the time.

➤ **Focus on Less to Do More**

"A human mind is a wandering mind, and a wandering mind is an unhappy mind."

-- Killingsworth & Gilbert

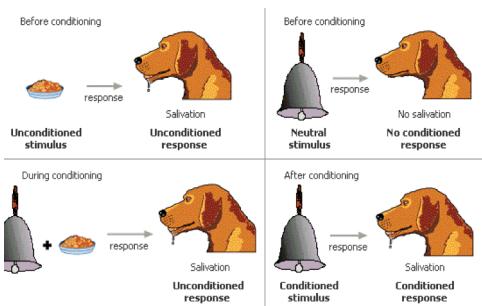


- Trying to do a little bit of everything leads to doing nothing of substance.
- Saying no to distractions can be challenging. But it is something you need to do to focus on the thing that matters most.



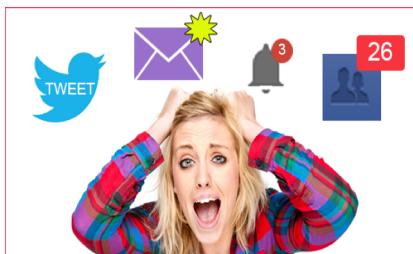
- If you could eliminate a few distractions that spend a great number of your time, then you can spend more time on things which energize and charge you positively.
- When a new opportunity shows up, think carefully before you make a decision.

#### ➤ Silence Pavlov's Bell



(also known as "classical conditioning")

- At work, the most distraction is the messages that is allowed by employees to interrupt them, which causes undue anxiety. To overcome these distractions, best way is to shut off the alerts.
- Take a moment to minimize interruption, and set specific time to catch up on news, emails, and social networking sites.



#### Focus for 45, Break for 15

In Finnish school, for every 45 minutes in the classroom, students are given 15-minute break. After the 15 minutes' break, they can focus more on learning.



Whether this 45/15 model works for adult, DeskTime can help to find out. When employees who are top 10 percent work 52 minutes, they can take a 17-minute break.

Then it found that these elites treat these working time like a sprint.

#### ➤ Use Purpose to Prevent Plaque

- Having high purpose can prevent mental deterioration and Alzheimer's disease later in life.
- Working with purpose also benefits your health and well-being.

#### ➤ Keep Your Mission in Mind

"Try to remind yourself why you do what you do every day. Bringing your mission to the forefront keeps you motivated. It could also make you a lot more productive."



## Part II: Interactions

*"16% of people had extremely positive interactions yesterday."*

#### Make Every Interaction Count

Dr. Nicholas Christakis had a unique view of the impact of dying and death on loved ones. Once, he studied a widowhood effect, and the result showed that it did not just affect on

and each interactions ripples outward in the network.

Life is a composite of millions of individual interactions. The person you meet may give your day a positive or negative change while there are many



life-altering events that you cannot change, no matter how hard you try.

#### ➤ Assume Good Intent

Each interaction comes to a choice. When you run into someone who is raged or hostility or who flat-out ignores you, the negative emotion could cancel out any positive exchanges that might have followed. However even when you face with obvious bad intent, it is still in your best interest to try to turn the situation into a positive one.

"When you assume negative intent, you're angry. If you take away that anger and assume positive intent, you will be amazed ... [You] don't get defensive, you don't scream. You are trying to understand and listen." — Indra Nooyi

#### ➤ Focus on the Frequency

All relationships are formed through a series of interactions. If you meet someone with negative emotion, you are less likely to seek him out in the future. On the contrary, you will have a healthier relationship. "What many people take for granted is that existing relationships require regular and frequent interactions to thrive" (p. 75).

As Christakis and Fowler noted, "The spread of happiness might depend more on frequent social contact than deep social connections" (p. 76).

#### Be 80 Percent Positive

Being blind positive is more likely same as being negative all the time. As a result, ratios of positive and negative is important. Many recent researches explain the importance of negative and positive emotions. When experience positive emotions, it will boost your body's production of oxytocin which is a feel-good hormone to increase your ability to communicate, collaborate and

emotions, you will at least 3 to 5 interactions to outweigh it.

#### ➤ Use Positive Words as Glue

- "positive bias in human expression" - the vast majority

**At least 80% of your conversations should be focused on what's going right.**

of words people use are more positive than negative.

- Positive words are the glue that holds relationships together.
- Balance overall conversation with far more positive than negative words.

#### ➤ At Least Pay Attention

- Negative comments are less harmful than ignoring someone.
- People commonly underestimate the value of simply paying attention to another person.

#### Strat Small and Be Clear

"Acts with small, concrete goals designed to improve the well-being of others are more likely to lead to happiness for the giver than are acts with large, abstract goals - despite people's intuitions to the contrary" (p. 86).

#### ➤ Use Questions to Spark Conversation

- Asking questions is an easier way to start a conversation.
- Asking questions is more effective when others are sceptical of your influence or credibility or when you are engaged in a debate.
- The more pen you are about yourself, including accepting





- embarrassing moments, the more likely others will trust you.
- There is no worry about the awkward moments.
- **Connect for Speed and Creativity**
- "Friendships speed things up because emotions spread faster than words" (p. 89).
  - At work, friendships help improve the level of trust, because it helps energize and they will communicate efficiently.
  - It will spend much time to build a trustworthy relationship at work. But once it is built, your work and well-being will be benefited.
- Take a Break for Relationships**
- In Bank of America, bank leaders find that if employees have great relationships in their group, their work efficiency will be higher.
- **Want What You Already Have**
- If you connect people who care about your development, you will grow.
  - According to the recent experiments, to have sustainable increases in well-being, the best way is to enjoy what you already have and to produce positive experiences with the people you care most.
- **Use Your Phone When You're Alone**
- "The iPhone Effect" in 2014 showed that how the smartphone ruins a conversation. The results illustrated that when the phone was visible, the quality of conversation was less satisfied.
  - A visible cellphone decreased attention and the ability to perform complex tasks. At most time, when people talk you, you are not listening for real.
  - Don't ruin your conversation. Use your phone when you alone, and when you are with your friends, family, or workmates, make it worth.
- Put Experiences First**
- Think about one trip, vacations or events you have attended, and when you recall that moment, you will know how much joy you have and enjoy. "The best experiences create memories and well-being that last for years to come" (p.99).
- 
- When you buy a new product, you will feel happy immediately after the purchase, but the excitement will fade quickly. However, spending on material goods which could help you learn and grow is one exception. You should notice that spending on experiences won't work if you are doing it to impress other people.
- **Buy Happiness (for Someone Else)**
- Michael Norton, who is a professor at Harvard Business School, studied that if people merely accumulate wealth, it does not matter most. The more important thing is how people spend their money.

- When you decide to buy a material product, ask yourself how it will benefit the other people and your relationship.

➤ **Plan Ahead for Well-being**

- When you plan an event, consider how to raise well-being of other people.
- When you plan an event, share as much detail as possible.
- When you plan a trip or an event, try to plan it several months in advance.

**Avoid Flying Solo**

The best moments happening in life is not that you are alone but you are accompanied by your friends and family.

➤ **Win While Others Succeed**

- "The fundamental premise of a relationship is that two people are better off together than they are divided." Even a simple conversation could make big difference.
- "Zero-sum" conception means two parties walk into a scenario where is fighting to win a fixed portion of a limited pie. In other words, if you win, someone else will lose.

➤ **Use Pro-Social Incentives**

When incentives come to mind, individual rewards will be one strategy. However, it is not effective recently, because people will consider more on their own benefits rather than other people's. Duke's Lalini Anik did three experiments which showed that "pro-social incentives help people achieve

more and be more satisfied while doing so" (p. 108).

➤ When you want to motivate people to do great work, give them an incentive that will serve another person or benefit entire team.

➤ Everyone is wired to get more of a boost from giving than from receiving.

**Build a Cumulative Advantage**

**Definition of cumulative advantage:**

"the careers of confident individuals took off at an exponential pace compared with those who had lower levels of self-confidence."

➤ **Help Someone See What Could Be**  
Don Clifton, Tom Rath's grandfather, inspired him deeply. At first, Tom has no confidence in communicating effectively in writing. But Don found his potential in a letter that Tom wrote to him. As a result, Tom Rath becomes a well-known writer. Don helped him to see what he could be.

➤ **Develop the Ultimate Strength**  
Tom thought that ultimate strength is finding and developing talent in others.

One of the **best way** to help others grow is through the **right type of praise and recognition**.

**NOTE:** insincere positive remarks could be **more toxic and harmful** than negative comments.

Words that give people a positive charge should be as specific as possible.

The more specific your language is during even brief interactions, the greater the influence.

## Part III: Energy

*“11% of people had a great deal of energy yesterday.”*



### Put Your Own Health First

Some of the people who is kind tend to be the least healthy, such as nurse. According to a research, 55% of nurses are overweight or obese. However, it is a huge mistake. "if you want to make a difference - not just today, but for many years to come - you need to **put your health and energy ahead of all else**" (p. 121).

➤ **Use Short-term Thinking for Better Health**

Based on Tom's experience, he knows that a profound threat to one's mortality is not a good motivator for people to make a better decision today. It will not do little good for people till it may change in daily behaviour.

There are **two ideas** given by Tom to help you get better health.

**1**

Making the connection between better decisions and daily energy levels benefit far more to change behavior than all prior threats about longer term health consequences.

**2**

If eating, moving, or sleeping go wrong, it will throw everything else off. Think about how these three areas influence each other every day.



### Eat Your Way to a Better Day

What kind of food you eat influence the energy levels throughout the day.

Sometimes it is difficult to know what food to eat, and what to avoid.

However, it is obvious that the quality of what you eat is much more important than the quantity. Build your schedule of right foods is not only sustainable, it is also enjoyable.

Start with the basics:

1. Avoid fried food.
2. Eliminate sugar ASAP.
3. Eat **meats** with **vegetables**.
4. Eat fruit rather than sweets.
5. Drink more water, tea and coffee than soda.



➤ **Make Every Bite Count**

- When you make the choice for foods which does more good than harm, then the result gives your body a positive change.
- Most meals contain bad and good ingredients. Remember do some mental accounting.
- The way to balance the calories you need and intake is to look at the ratio of carbohydrates to proteins. Maintain this better balance will boost your energy and improve your health.

➤ **Set Better Defaults**

- Dietary habits usually follow the path of least resistance.
- You are likely to eat the food which you can see around you. So put fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods at the eye level in your refrigerator.

➤ **Find Food That Charges Your Mood**

- The food you eat every not only influences your health, it also affects your mood.
- Making better dietary choices, can improve your daily health and your emotions.

**Learn to Walk Before You Run**

"Moving more throughout the day starts with simple changes. Walking and standing in meetings to keep focused and energized."

#### ➤ Keep Sitting from Sapping Your Energy

Sitting is a health treat for this generation. "On a global level, inactivity now kills more people than cigarettes do" (p.134).

➔ When you sit down, the **electrical activity** in your legs' muscle shut off quickly.

Walking raises energy levels by around 150%. You don't need to take a long walk when you don't have time., just view it as an opportunity to add a little activity in your day.

"Small bursts of activity will do as much for your mind as they will for your physical energy" (p. 135). Doing activities to make your brain more effective.

#### ➤ Measure to Move More

Measure your move could be the best way to increase your activity levels. You could accomplish your goal with an inexpensive pedometer rather than wearable health-tracking devices. In an experiment, participants noticed their overall activity levels increase by 27% when they measure their movement.

#### ➤ Get a 12-Hour Charge in 20 Minutes

- An experiment showed that when participants in a group were allowed to have a 20 minutes moderate-intensity workout, they have better mood in the following exercise than the control group.

- The more activity you get the morning, the less likely that 12-hour mood boost will go to waste.

#### Sleep Longer to Achieve More

Tom learned that "one less hour of sleep is not equal to an extra hour of achievement or enjoyment." However, when you miss an hour of sleep, it will decrease your well-being, productivity, health, and ability to think. To avoid those kind of bad things, you should make sure that you get enough sleep.

#### ➤ Don't Show Up for Work After a Six-Pack

If you sleep less, then you will achieve less. When you show up to your work without sufficient sleep, your performance will be different. For example, sleepless driving is as dangerous as driving drunk. As a study illustrated that a whole night **sleeping loss is equal to** a blood alcohol level of **0.19 %**, which is **double** legal limits for intoxication.

#### ➤ Get a Vaccine for the Common Cold

a research studied that the relationship between sleeping quality and the common cold. The result showed that participants who sleep fewer than seven hours at night are about **three times** as likely to catch a cold. This explain the importance of sufficient sleep.

For sleeping quality, or "sleep efficiency", it is also matters the possibility of having a cold.

#### ➤ Fight Light, Heat, and Noise

There are some other reasons to interrupt your sleep quality. As a result, what you do before you go to bed is **really important**.

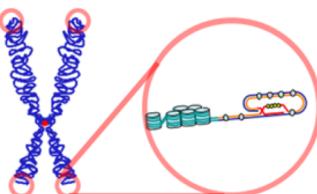
➤ using smartphone at late night is bad for your next day's work. It will lead to poor sleep, and it also creates fatigue and lower engagement in your workplace.

➤ "The light from electronic devices alone can suppress your melatonin levels by as much as 20[%], which is a direct threat to sleep quality." (p. 143)

➤ Creating a better and right environment in your bedroom will increase your sleep quality.

### Eat, Move, and Sleep to De-Stress

**Telomeres** - protective caps at the end of your chromosomes that affect how quickly cells age, protect your cells from stressors.



Eating, moving, and sleeping not only influence your physical and mental health, it also affects the stress level. Telomeres shorten as you age, and they also decrease length according to stress.

#### ➤ Keep Stress from Snowballing

When heavy snow falls on the sidewalk, we know we should start shovelling. If we wait too long, the snow would be deep and heavy to shovel. Stress has the similar pattern. As a result, "you should keep stress from piling up in the first place" (p. 147). We cannot avoid stress in our life, but we can plan how to overcome it in the first place.

#### ➤ Avoid Secondhand Stress

One Tom's experience is that when he is in his fast-paced mode, others misunderstand he is stressed. As a result, it makes others more stressful. So when you are with your friends, family, and workmates, consider whether you unintentionally transfer your stress to them. Make sure you could relax, or

### Respond with Resiliency

When you respond to a stressor, your body will treat it as a treat. On the other hand, if you respond it as a challenge, the response from your body is different, which will increase your energy and provide a positive charge. Researchers taught a group of employees the **three-step** process to manage their stress.

Be aware of the stress.

Look for the meaning behind the stress.

How they could channel the stress to add motivation and improve productivity.

what amazes Tom most is "**Human beings are remarkably resilient**" (p. 152).

#### ➤ Push "Pause" Before Responding

When you face a psychological stressor, remember to push the "pause" button in your mind. Step back before giving a rash response.

#### ➤ Grin to Beat it

Making yourself smile, no matter it is fake or forced, may help you get through stressor.



"The next time you're stuck in traffic or experiencing some other type of stress, you might try to hold your face in a smile in a smile moment. Not only will it help you grin and bear it psychologically, but it might actually help your heart health as well."

-- Sarah Pressman

## Epilogue

### Create a Positive Charge

When you add a positive charge to other person's day, it will increase the well-being of people who are in the network, and you will also grow with its help.

According to a research, people are better to help others solve the problems than help themselves to solve the similar problems.

#### Share Your Most Previous Resources

The act of giving is better than you spend time and money on yourself.

➤ Giving improves well-being in many ways.

➤ Giving appears to be a universal phenomenon which overcome the wealth no matter rich or poor in countries.

#### Do Good for a Life Well-Lived

You have limited days to make difference. However, this could be one motivation to force you to do good things for the world when you can. If you don't do it today, you will regret one day in the future. Don't hesitate to do good things today. Start with work to create meaning. Strengthen your interactions and make sure you have enough energy to be the one you want to be.

## References

Tom Rath. (2015). *Are You Fully Charged? The 3 Keys to Energizing Your Work and Life*. San Francisco, CA: Silicon Guild.