



HIGH PERFORMANCE HABITS

by Brendon Burchard

INTRODUCTION

- “Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” – Aristotle
- This book is about how people become extraordinary, and why others block themselves from that possibility. It will show clearly and unmistakably why some excel, others fail, and far too many never even try.
- This isn’t to say you will be superhuman or need to be. You have flaws; we all do. Yet at the end of this book, you’ll say to yourself, “I finally know exactly how to be consistently at my best. I’m confident in my ability to figure things out, and fully capable of overcoming adversity on the path of success, for the rest of my life.”
- Consistency of excellence is often the problem.
- What you need is a reliable set of practices for unleashing your greatest abilities. Study high performers and you will see that they have systems built into their days that drive their success. Systems are what separate the pro from the novice, and science from armchair philosophy. Without systems, you cannot test hypotheses, track progress, or repeatedly deliver exceptional results. In personal and professional development, these systems and procedures are, ultimately, habits. But which ones work?
- Looking for answers to three fundamental questions:
 - #1: Why do some teams and individuals succeed more quickly than others and sustain that success over the long term?
 - #2: Of those that pull it off, why are some miserable and others happy on their journey?
 - #3: What motivates people to reach for higher levels of success in the first place and what kind of habits, training, and support help them improve faster?
- Not all habits are created equal.
- For high performers, achievement is often not the problem. Alignment is the problem. How does all the success align with your values?
- Certainty is the enemy of growth and high performance.
 - Too many people want certainty amid the chaos of this world. But certainty is the fool’s dream and, thus, the charlatan’s selling point. Certainty



ultimately blinds you, sets false or fixed limits, and creates “automatic” habits that become predictable bad-thinking and openings for your competitors to surpass you. The person who is certain is most closed to learning, most vulnerable to dogma, and most likely to be blindsided and overtaken by innovators. You’ll learn that high performers outgrow their youthful need for certainty and replace it with curiosity and genuine self-confidence.

- High performance, as I define it and as the data confirms, is not about getting ahead at all costs. It’s about forming habits that help you both excel in and enrich the full spectrum of your life.
- Go to HighPerformanceIndicator.com for a free assessment.

BEYOND NATURAL: THE QUEST FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE

- The old school model that sounds good but didn’t work.
 - Ask the client what they wanted.
 - Find which “limiting beliefs” got in the way.
 - Interview about the past to find events that may be affecting current behavior.
 - Use assessment tools to determine personality and patterns.
 - Sift through performance reviews.
 - Do a 360 review.
 - Evaluate their output.
- Interviewed a bunch of high performers and found six habits that were consistent among all of them.
- The Six Habits
 - Personal
 - Seek clarity
 - Generate energy
 - Raise necessity
 - Social
 - Increase productivity
 - Develop influence
 - Demonstrate courage
- No matter what your personality, strengths, etc. are, you need these habits to bring them all together.
- All the habits seem to be connected. If you get clarity, it raises energy and productivity.



SECTION ONE: PERSONAL HABITS

HIGH PERFORMANCE HABIT #1: SEEK CLARITY

- Seeking clarity is not what achievers do. When they're struggling, especially when they are unsure what they want, they tend to march on like good soldiers. They don't want to mess things up. They're afraid to make sudden changes because the reality is that things are good. They don't want to walk away from everything they've worked so hard for. They don't want to go backward or lose momentum or be overtaken by their coworkers or competitors. They know in their gut that there is another level, a different quality of life. But they feel deep uncertainty over changing what is already working. Improving a bad thing is easy for the achiever. But messing with a good thing? That's terrifying. Uncertain what they really want, achievers often choose just to keep at it. But at some point, if they don't get very clear about who they are and what they want at this stage of their life, things start to unravel.
- Our research shows that compared with their peers, high performers have more clarity on who they are, what they want, how to get it, and what they find meaningful and fulfilling.
- We've found that if you can increase someone's clarity, you increase their overall high performance score. Whether you have a high degree of clarity in life or not, don't fret, because you can learn to develop it. Clarity is not a personality trait that some are blessed to "have" and others are not. Just as a power plant doesn't "have" energy—it transforms energy—you don't "have" any specific reality. You generate your reality. In this same line of thinking, you don't "have" clarity; you generate it.
- **Next level clarity is about the future.**
- In almost every basic question of who they were or what they wanted, the highest performers had a great ability to focus on the future and divine how they would achieve excellence.
- **Practice One: Envision the Future Four**
 - **#1: Self**
 - High performers not only know themselves, they are more focused on "sculpting themselves." Not just introspection, but intention.
 - They have spent more time thinking about this than others.
 - So what makes the difference is that high performers imagine a positive version of themselves in the future, and then they actively engage in trying to be that. This part about actively engaging is important. They aren't waiting to demonstrate a characteristic next week or next month. They are living into their best self now.
 - You get the point, so let's encapsulate this advice with some simple things you can do: Be more intentional about who you want to



become. Have vision beyond your current circumstances. Imagine your best future self, and start acting like that person today.

- Think about your week, and all that you did. Now think about it in terms of the best version of yourself going through that same week...what is different?
- **#2: Social**
 - High performers also have clear intentions about how they want to treat other people. They have high situational awareness and social intelligence, which help them succeed and lead.
 - Before you went into your last meeting, did you think about how you wanted to interact with each person in the meeting? Before your last phone call, did you think about the tone you would choose to use with the other person? On your last night out with your partner or friends, did you set an intention for the energy you wanted to create? When you were dealing with that last conflict, did you think about your values and how you wanted to come across to the other person when you talked to them?
 - Think about those around you. Imagine in 20 years they are describing why they love and respect you. What are they saying? Next time you are with those people, use that as an opportunity to demonstrate those qualities.
- **#3: Skills**
 - Next, we found that high performers are very clear about the skill sets they need to develop now to win in the future. They don't draw a blank when you ask them, "What three skills are you currently working to develop so you'll be more successful next year?"
 - Here's the big distinction: High performers are also working on skills that focus on what I call their primary field of interest (PFI). They aren't scattershot learners.
 - Think about your PFI and write down three skills that make people successful in that area. Then write down how you will develop those skills. What about 5-10 years from now?
- **#4: Service**
 - Their attention in this area could best be described as a search for relevance, differentiation, and excellence. Relevance has to do with eliminating things that don't matter anymore. High performers don't live in the past, and they don't keep pet projects at the forefront. They ask, "What matters now, and how can I deliver it?" Differentiation allows high performers to look at their industry, their career, and even their relationships for what makes them unique. They want to stand out for who they are, and to add more value than others do. Excellence comes from an internal standard that asks, "How can I deliver beyond what's expected?"



- **Practice Two: Determine the Feeling You Are After**
 - “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” -- Howard Thurman
 - The second practice that will help you heighten and sustain clarity in your life is to ask yourself frequently, “What is the primary feeling I want to bring to this situation, and what is the primary feeling I want to get from this situation?”
 - The word feeling here is used to refer to a mental portrayal of an emotion. This is not a precise statement, but it’s helpful for our purposes here: Think of an emotion as mostly a reaction, and feeling is an interpretation.
 - Emotions come and go. They’re mostly immediate, instinctive, and physical. But feelings last, and they’re often a result of rumination, which you have control over. Anger can be the emotion that comes up, but bitterness—a lasting feeling—doesn’t have to be your lifelong sentence.
 - But I share this here because it’s so thoroughly obvious that high performers are generating the feelings they want more often than taking the emotions that land on them.
 - What are the emotions that you experience on a regular basis? What are the feelings? What are the feelings that you want to experience?
- **Practice Three: Define What’s Meaningful**
 - “Unhappiness is not knowing what we want and killing ourselves to get it.” -Don Herold
 - High performers can do almost anything they set their heart and mind to. But not every mountain is worth the climb. What differentiates high performers from others is having a critical eye in figuring out what is going to be meaningful to their life experience. High performers spend more of their time doing things that they find meaningful, and this makes them happy.
 - When researchers try to identify what is meaningful to people, they often focus on how important you say an activity is to you, how much time you spend at it, how committed you are, how attached to it you are, and whether you would do the work despite low compensation. They try to figure out whether you see the work as just a job, or an important career, or a calling. They often associate a clear sense of purpose with an overall sense of meaning in life.
 - High performers...
 - #1: Linked “enthusiasm” with meaning.
 - #2: Linked “connection” with meaning.
 - People who are socially isolated report that their life has lost meaning.
 - Less about “comfort” relationships and more about “challenge” relationships. Who challenges you to be the best version of yourself?



- #3: Linked “satisfaction” with meaning.
 - Passion + growth + contribution = personal satisfaction.
- #4: Linked “coherence” with meaning.
 - That their life makes sense.
 - Their work is significant.
- Ask yourself:
 - What activities bring you the most meaning?
 - What activities are you doing that bring you no meaning?
 - What activities would you add that bring you more meaning?
- Putting it all together
 - Clarity Chart: See form. (Focuses you in on what is important)

HIGH PERFORMANCE HABIT #2: GENERATE ENERGY

- “The world belongs to the energetic.” -Ralph Waldo Emerson
- It takes a lot of energy to succeed over the long haul.
- It means physical energy and mental alertness.
- Low energy is less happy, less momentum to take on challenges, lesser degree of influence.
- CEOs and senior executives often have the same energy equivalent of pro athletes.
- The good news is that you can increase your energy levels.
- #1: Release tension, set intention
 - “Human excellence is a state of mind.” Socrates
 - Must master “transitions”
 - Rest to activation.
 - Family time to work time.
 - Working alone is one thing for answering emails.
 - From work to the gym.
 - Do you ever carry negative energy from one activity to the next?
 - Do you ever feel depleted and rush into the next activity without a breather?
 - Between transitions...close your eyes and release the prior activity!
 - Then set intention for the next activity.
 - What are the things that cause you the most tension each day?
 - How can you remind yourself to release that tension throughout the day?
 - What would more energy in your life do for you?
- #2: Bring the Joy
 - “Most people are as happy as they make their minds up to be.” Abraham Lincoln
 - Huge part of what makes high performers successful.
 - Joy
 - Confidence



- Full Engagement
- What do high performers do?
 - Prime the emotions they want to experience.
 - Anticipate positive outcomes from their actions.
 - Imagine possible stressful situations and how their best self may handle them.
 - Seek to insert appreciation, surprise, wonder and challenge into their day.
 - Steer social interactions toward positive emotions and experiences
 - Reflect regularly on all that they are grateful for.
- Brandon Burchard
 - Sets phone alarm with label to remind him to do these things, such as “bring the joy”
 - Every time he walks through a door, he says to himself, “I will find the good in this room. I am entering this space as a happy man, ready to serve.”
 - When waiting in line, ask himself, “What level of presence and vibration do I feel right now, on a scale of 1 through 10?” If it is low, snap yourself back and pick yourself up.
 - When he is introduced to someone, they get a hug.
 - Whenever something positive happens around him, he says “what a gift!”
 - When feeling rushed and stressed, he would stop and ask “what is the positive thing I can focus on and the next right action of integrity I should take now?”
 - At the end of the day, write down three things that made you feel good that day.
- #3: Optimize health
 - This is a huge point that too many people miss: Exercise improves learning. Exercise also decreases stress, which is a killer of mental performance.²⁸ Stress actually lowers BDNF and overall cognitive function. Exercise is your best bet for throwing off much of that stress.
 - Be conscious of your eating. Are you eating for nourishment or for enjoyment? Just be aware.
 - When I work with executives, I draw a hard line: If the organization you spend your week serving doesn’t promote well-being, then either you start an internal initiative that gets well-being on the map or you start looking for a new place to work. That is, if you care about working with high performers and becoming one yourself.
 - Get 8 hours of sleep.
 - If you can, get a personal trainer. Invest in your health!



HIGH PERFORMANCE HABIT #3: RAISE NECESSITY

- “Only one who devotes himself to a cause with his whole strength and soul can be a true master. For this reason, mastery demands all of a person.” —Albert Einstein
- You don’t have to strive for excellence, but some people feel like they have to. Why? The answer is a phrase that explains one of the most powerful drivers of human motivation and excellence: performance necessity.
- Necessity is the emotional drive that makes great performance a must instead of a preference.
- Unlike weaker desires that make you want to do something, necessity demands that you take action. When you feel necessity, you don’t sit around wishing or hoping. You get things done.
- Necessity Basics
 - Four factors of performance necessity
 - #1: Identity
 - #2: Obsession
 - #3: Duty
 - #4: Urgency
 - The first two are internal, the last two are external.
- **Internal Forces**
 - Have you ever noticed that you feel guilty when you’re not living your values or being the best version of yourself? Perhaps you believe you’re an honest person but feel you lie too often. You set goals but don’t follow through. Conversely, have you noticed how good you feel when you’re being a good person and following through on what you say and desire? Those feelings of being frustrated or happy with your performance are what I mean by internal forces.
 - There are two specific internal forces that determine your ability to succeed over the long term:
 - #1: Personal standards of excellence
 - #2: Obsession with a topic
 - High performers hold themselves to a high standard.
 - Satisfaction is not the cause of a great performance, it’s the result.
 - Have to monitor progress.
 - Journaling, like weighing yourself each day, is a way to check in with yourself on your standards.
 - Excellence is important to their identity.
 - These standards however can backfire. Overly critical. Overly concerned with making mistakes.
 - The goal for all underperformers must be to set new standards, self-monitor more frequently, and learn to become comfortable with taking a hard, unflinching look at their own performance.



- “To have long-term success as a coach or in any position of leadership, you have to be obsessed in some way.” – Pat Riley
- When you are passionate about what you do, people understand. When you are obsessed, they think you’re mad. That’s the difference. It is this almost reckless obsession for mastering something that makes us feel the imperative to perform at higher levels. In any field of endeavor, those lacking obsession are often easy to spot: the half-interested browsers, the half-hearted lovers, the half-engaged leaders. They may lack intense interest, passion, or desire in general. But not necessarily. Sometimes, they have lots of interests, passions, and desires. But what they lack is that one thing, that abiding and unquenchable obsession. You know within minutes of meeting someone
- The moment you know that something has transcended being a passion and has become an obsession is when that something gets tied to your identity. It changes from a desire to feel a particular state of emotion—passion—to a quest to be a particular kind of person. It becomes part of you, something you value more deeply than other things. It becomes necessary for you.
- That’s why I encourage people to keep experimenting in life until they find something that sparks unusual interest. Then, if it aligns with your personal values and identity, jump in. Get curious. Let yourself geek out on something and go deep. Let that part of you that wants to obsess about and master something come alive again. When high personal standards meet high obsessions, then high necessity emerges. So, too, does high performance. And that’s just the internal game of necessity. The external forces are where things really get interesting.
- **External Forces**
 - An external force of necessity is any outside factor that drives you to perform well.
 - Some people call this “pressure.”
 - High performers don’t see it as pressure though because the demands they feel to succeed come from within.
 - High performers often feel the necessity to perform well out of a sense of duty to someone or something beyond themselves. Someone is counting on them, or they’re trying to fulfill a promise or responsibility.
 - **Social Duty, Obligation and Purpose**
 - “Duty makes us do things well, but love makes us do them beautifully.” – Phillips Brooks
 - If you add to that accountability—when people know that you are responsible for helping them—necessity becomes stronger yet. A tremendous amount of research shows that people tend to maintain motivation, give more effort, and achieve higher performance when they are held accountable for their outcomes, are evaluated more often, and have the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise or



gain respect from those they serve. In other words, if you owe it to someone to do well, and you feel that doing well will exhibit your expertise, then you'll feel greater necessity to perform at higher levels. For example, when we are evaluated more and held accountable to team performance, we work harder and better.

- It's hard for underperformers to see that obligations are not always a negative thing, which is why we found that underperformers complain more about their responsibilities at work than their high performing peers.
- **Real Deadlines**
 - "Without a sense of urgency, desire loses its value." – Jim Rohn
 - Why do athletes work out harder in the weeks immediately before walking into the ring or onto the field? Why do salespeople perform better at quarter's end? Why do stay-at-home parents report being better organized right before school starts? Because nothing motivates action like a hard deadline.
 - But high performance happens only when there are real deadlines.
 - A recent survey of 1,100 high performers revealed that their underperforming counterparts get pulled into fake emergencies or deadlines three and a half times more often than they do. High performers are more focused on doing what really matters when it matters.
 - The reality is that when you choose to care for others and make a big difference in the world, the number of deadlines coming at you will increase.
- **Keeping the fire**
 - Identity. Obsession. Duty. Deadlines. As you can imagine, any one of these forces can make us bring up our game. But when internal and external demands mix, you get more necessity, and an even stronger wind at your back. I'll repeat the part about this being a sensitive topic. Lots of people really dislike necessity—they hate feeling any sort of pressure. They don't want internal pressure because it can cause anxiety. And they don't want external pressure because it can cause anxiety and real failure. Still, the data is clear: High performers like necessity. In fact, they need it. When it's gone, their fire is gone.
 - Bottom line: We change and improve over time only when we must. When the internal and external forces on us are strong enough, we make it happen.
- **Three Practices to Fire Up a Greater Sense of Necessity**
 - #1: Know who needs your "A" game
 - Whenever you sit down at your desk. Ask yourself...who needs me in my "A" game right now?



- Identities of performers
 - Dabblers: Look at many things, try many things, but never jump in with full engagement or commitment.
 - Novices: Jump in deeper than dabblers, but they don't deal well with discouragement. They stop at obstacles because they don't have much of their identity in the fight.
 - Amateurs: More than interest. They have passion. Get through more obstacles than novices. They often need a lot of external validation to continue.
 - Players: Have passion and greater commitment and skill. They master one area of the game. They excel and find themselves happy as long as they get their turn and compensation. If the game changes or the rules change, they are quickly embittered. Need the rules and routines.
 - High Performers: Like players but with greater, all-around necessity, skill, and team spirit.
 - They play at a high level regardless of the recognition or rewards.
 - Intrinsically motivated.
- #2: Affirm the "why"
 - "The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too." – Goethe
 - High performers know their "why". They also let others know their "why".
 - When you are taking on a challenge, focus on the why. It can cut through nerves, cut through paralysis, and get you going.
 - Get high performers to focus on their "why."
- #3: Level up your squad
 - "Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life." – Amy Poehler
 - Who are the most positive and successful people in your support network?
 - Also...get around some new people who expect and value high performance.
 - Do people have to be perfect for you to hang out with them? No. Absolutely not. But you should be aware of what type of vibe they are bringing to your world.
- Build What You Need
 - Still, you don't need to spend extraordinary amounts of time or give tremendous mindshare to negative people. People on a path of



purpose don't have a lot of time for drama. So here's what I advise: Instead of "getting rid of" all the negative people in your life (especially if they are family, friends, loyal peers, or those who are just in need), spend more time (a) hanging with your positive and successful peers and (b) building a new positive peer group.

- How to get around great people?
 - #1: Add one more awesome friend
 - One positive person who brings out the best in you.
 - Ask them to bring some of their friends and spend more time with them.
 - #2: Volunteer
 - When you volunteer, you are around others that volunteer and it is a special group.
 - #3: Play sports
 - Makes you pay more attention to your own performance.
 - Self-evaluation of performance promotes increased performance.
 - #4: Seek mentorship
 - Have 1-2 lifelong mentors.
 - Older, wiser, highly respected people.
 - Call them once per month.
 - Also have a "domain mentor" every three years. Someone who has the knowledge to succeed in your field.
 - #5: Earn it.
 - Work hard, have high standards and you will attract other great people.
- No Other Choice
 - Those that succeed see it as if they have no other choice.
 - Failing is not an option and it creates focus and intensity.
 - There are many that should succeed, they have all the skill, yet they don't because they don't have this one ingredient.

SECTION TWO: SOCIAL HABITS

HIGH PERFORMANCE HABIT #4: INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY

- Type As dread a major question when talking about productivity... "Are you happy?"
- Sometimes they have this sense of "there must be a better way."
- The sense that as much as they can do, it is never enough.
- It is one of the worst feelings in the world. Working hard, being incredibly busy, but feeling like you are not making progress.



- High performers are more productive and yet also happier, less stressed, and more rewarded than their peers. How do they do it? They have many deliberate habits.
- **Productivity Basics**
 - “The day is always his who works with serenity and great aims.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson
 - Productivity starts with goals. Clear and challenging goals.
 - Energy is another major factor in productivity.
 - This is not just about sleep and nutrition, but also about positive emotions.
 - Got to maintain focus as well. Distractions and interruptions can be brutal.
- **The Work-Life Balance Debate**
 - “One of the most common ways for the modern person to maintain self-deception is to keep busy all the time.” – Daniel Putnam
 - There are those that don’t think “work-life balance” is achievable because:
 - 1) They have never made a fully conscious, consistent effort to define, seek, and measure that balance; or
 - 2) They simply define “work-life balance” using an impossible to achieve standard.
 - One mistake that people make is to consider “balance” in terms of evenly distributed hours. It is better to try and balance happiness or progress in your different areas.
 - Ten Categories
 - Health
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Intimate Relationship
 - Mission/Work
 - Finances
 - Adventure
 - Hobby
 - Spirituality
 - Emotion
 - When working with clients, he has them rate their happiness in each of these areas on a scale of 1-10 and write their goals in each of these areas every Sunday night.
 - You will always feel out of balance if you are doing work that you don’t find engaging or meaningful.
 - Burnout in one area of life easily scorches others.
- **Task a --GASP!--Break**
 - “There is virtue in work and there is virtue in rest. Use both and overlook neither.” – Alan Cohen
 - Take a break for lunch, get away from your desk.



- Brief breaks, every 90-120 minutes, is good. Do it every 45-60 minutes and that is better.
- a 2-5 minute break will help.
- Set a timer at 50 minutes. Get up and stretch.
- Practice One: Increase the Outputs that Matter
 - “Nothing is less productive than to make more efficient what should not be done at all.” – Peter Drucker
 - High performers have mastered the art of “prolific quality output” (PQO)
 - People spend about 28% of their work week answering emails and another 20% of their time simply looking for information.
 - What are the outputs that matter to you? Get intentional, get specific, and get focused.
 - More than 60 percent of your time should be spent towards this end.
- Practice Two: Chart Your Five Moves
 - “I believe half of the unhappiness in life comes from people being afraid to go straight at things.” – William Locke
 - To become a high performer requires thinking more before acting.
 - Imagine you only needed five major moves to accomplish whatever you wanted to accomplish in life.
 - The process
 - #1: Decide what you want
 - #2: Determine the Five Major Moves that will help you leap toward that goal.
 - #3: Do deep work on each of the major five moves, at least 60% of your workweek going to these efforts, until they are complete.
 - #4: Designate all else as a distraction, tasks to delegate, or things to do in blocks of time you’ve allocated in the remaining 40% of your time.
 - You can tell a lot about a person by looking at their calendar and seeing if they have blocks of time designated to their most important tasks.
- Practice Three: Get insanely good at key skills
 - “I believe that that true road to preeminent success in any line is to make yourself master in that line.” – Andrew Carnegie
 - What are the five major skills you need to develop over the next three years to grow into the person you hope to become?
 - Everything is trainable.
 - The steps to progressive mastery
 - #1: Determine the skill that you want to master
 - #2: Set specific stretch goals on your path to developing that skill
 - #3: Attach high levels of emotion and meaning to your journey and results
 - #4: Identify the factors critical to success and develop your strengths in those areas.



- #5: Develop visualizations that clearly imagine what success and failure look like.
 - #6: Schedule challenging practices developed by experts or through careful thought.
 - #7: Measure your progress and get outside feedback
 - #8: Socialize your learning efforts by practicing or competing with others.
 - #9: Continue setting higher level goals so that you keep improving
 - #10: Teach others what you are learning.
- Only One Ride
 - “Only put off tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone.” - Pablo Picasso
 - Stop producing outputs that don’t make your soul sing.

HIGH PERFORMANCE HABIT #5: DEVELOP INFLUENCE

- “Power is of two kinds: One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love.” – Mahatma Gandhi
- “You handle things. You collaborate with people.” – John Wooden
- But how do we get to the core of what influence really is? To measure influence, we ask people to score themselves on statements such as:
 - I’m good at earning people’s trust and building camaraderie.
 - I have the influence needed to achieve my goals.
 - I’m good at persuading people to do things.
- And we reverse score on questions like these:
 - I often say inappropriate things that hurt my relationships.
 - I struggle to get people to listen to me or do things I ask.
 - I don’t have a lot of empathy for other people.
- This is frustrating but common sense, too; we all know someone who gives and gives and gives but can’t rally others around them to help out. There is nuance to this. Influence is strongly correlated with feeling like you’re making a difference. So it’s not about feeling like you are giving more than others; it’s about feeling like your efforts are making an impact. In coaching sessions, it’s clear that those who feel like they give all the time but don’t make a difference or receive reciprocation can end up feeling unappreciated, unhappy, and, yes, lacking real influence in the world.
- **Influence Basics**
 - “We are not who we say we are, we’re not who we want to be. We are the sum of the influence and impact that we have in our lives, on others.” -Carl Sagan
 - To keep a broad perspective on this topic, at least for the next several pages, let’s define “having influence” as the ability to shape other people’s beliefs and behaviors as you desire. It means you can get people to believe in you or your ideas, buy from you, follow you, or take actions that you request of them.



- Ask (No, really, just ask)
 - Simply ask for what you want.
 - We don't do this because we drastically underestimate the willingness of others to engage and help.
 - We also don't ask because we think the other person will judge us too harshly.
 - I also share this research fact with them: If someone does say yes to helping you, they tend to like you even more after they've done something for you.
 - Don't just ask once and quit. The power of repetition is strong.
- Give and you shall receive
 - Give to others with no expectation of return.
 - Have a giving mindset.
- Be a champion of people.
 - Demonstrate sincere appreciation for those that you seek to influence.
 - Give thanks in meetings, write notes, texts, emails.
 - Also, be their champion.
 - Cheer on their good ideas.
 - Be excited for them when they do a good job.
- The Difference Makers
 - Think about those who influenced you. What was it?
 - Typically, three things:
 - #1: They shape how we think.
 - About themselves, others and the world.
 - #2: They challenge us in some way.
 - To develop their character, connections, their goals, their contributions.
 - #3: They serve as role models.
- Practice One: Teach People How to Think
 - "He who influences the thoughts of his times influences the times that follow." -Elbert Hubbard
 - What is the plan? How do you want them to think about themselves, about others, and about the world?
- Practice Two: Challenge People to Grow
 - High performers challenge the people around them to higher levels of performance.
 - Not about confrontation, but about issuing direct positively framed challenges.
 - Intent and tone matter. If you are trying to diminish someone, it will come through.
 - Challenge in three realms
 - #1: Character
 - Living up to universal values, honesty, integrity, responsibility, self control, patience, hard work, etc.



- Indirect: how would your best self approach this situation?
 - #2: Connection
 - How they treat and add value to other people.
 - #3: Contribution
 - To give back, to do better.
- Practice Three: Role Model the Way
 - 71% of high performers think about being a role model daily.
 - Ask yourself how you could be a better role model.
- A beautiful lack of trickery
 - Influence is not manipulation.

HIGH PERFORMANCE HABIT #6: DEMONSTRATE COURAGE

- Courage is taking a step towards real change in an unpredictable world.
 - Do you speak up even when it is hard?
 - Do you take action in spite of fear?
 - Do you express who you really are?
 - Do you do the right thing even when uncomfortable?
- When you face your fears, you feel less fear in these situations.
- Courage is contagious.
- What does being courageous mean to you? How can you start living that way today?
- Practice One: Honor the Struggle
 - It takes work to succeed.
 - It takes intention and the mastery of complex habits.
 - You will make it through.
- Practice Two: Share your truth and ambitions
 - “As far as I can judge, not much good can be done without disturbing something or somebody.” – Edward Blake
 - Don’t be alarmed by, “Who do you think you are? Are you sure that is a good idea? Are you crazy?” Those are things that you are going to hear when you are living boldly.
 - Don’t minimize yourself.
 - Don’t be fearful about expressing your true ambition, joy and powers because those around you feel bad about themselves.

Do not dare play small, my friend. Do not feel guilt because you have high aims. Those dreams were seeded in your soul for a reason, and it is your duty to honor them. Do not hold back in life just to comfort or placate those around you. Holding back is not humility; it's lying. If the people in your life do not know your true thoughts, feelings, needs, and dreams, do not blame them. It is your lack of voice or vulnerability or power, not their lack of understanding or ambition, that is building the barricade to your potential. Share more, and you'll have real relationships that can support you, energize you, lift you. Even if they don't support you or believe in you, at



least you lived your life. At least you put it all on the table. At least you honored the hopes of your heart and the calling of your soul. In your full expression lies your freedom. My friend, your next level of performance begins at your next level of truth.

- Be candid. No one wants to be in a relationship with a fake person.
- Those that are in your life for the right reason will listen to your truth.
- Practice Three: Find someone to fight for
 - We will often do more for others than for ourselves.
- Courage through complexity
 - Only by conditioning ourselves now will we truly serve with grace and courage when called. What in my personal life have I avoided doing, which might involve hardship but just might improve my family's lives forever? What could I do at work that would require stepping out on a limb but would also truly change things for the better and help people? What decision could I make that would demonstrate a moral commitment to something higher than myself? How could I bring myself to face a situation that usually makes me nervous or anxious? What change could I make that scares me but will help someone I love?
 - What good thing could I walk away from to advance my life? What have I wanted to say to those close to me, and when and how will I courageously declare that truth? Who needs me, and who will I fight for the rest of this year?

SECTION THREE: SUSTAINING SUCCESS

HIGH PERFORMANCE KILLERS: BEWARE OF THREE TRAPS

- When high performers fall off track, there are three major reasons.
- Trap #1: Superiority
 - When you start to feel that you always have all the answers, that failures are not your fault, that you are superior, these things start to diminish your effectiveness and perform at a high level.
 - Your high performance is usually from more hours or time spent on the thing that has some innate ability. Be humble.
 - The solution...you have to be aware and you have to be humble.
 - Humility is the foundational virtue that allows all other virtues to grow.
- Trap #2: Dissatisfaction
 - "Be satisfied with success in even the smallest matter, and think that even such a result is no trifle." – Marcus Aurelius
 - Those who are never satisfied are never at peace.
 - The never-settle, unhappy striver mentality is akin to what researchers call maladaptive perfectionism. This is the kind of perfectionism in which you have high standards—often a good thing—but are always beating yourself up for any imperfection (a bad thing). This can cause such high cognitive



anxiety over making mistakes that optimal performance is all but impossible. Obsessive concern over mistakes has been associated with several negative outcomes, including anxiety, low confidence, a failure orientation, and negative reactions to basic mistakes during competition.

- Being satisfied doesn't mean "settling."
- It simply means accepting and taking pleasure in what is.
- All these points are even more important if you are a leader. Allowing greater satisfaction as you strive isn't just about how much better you can feel. It's also about how others feel around you. No one wants to work with someone who is perennially dissatisfied with themselves or others. We've found that leaders who are always stuck in error-detection mode and forget to celebrate the small wins also consistently fail to acknowledge progress, praise the team, encourage reflection, and champion other people's ideas. In other words, they're not exactly a joy to be around.
- Trap #3: Neglect
 - "If things are not going well with you, begin your effort at correcting the situation by carefully examining the service you are rendering, and especially the spirit in which you are rendering it." – Roger Babson
 - Obsession and lack of balance are areas that can impact many other areas of your life.
 - That is why a weekly review of your key areas of your life is important. Helps prevent things being out of balance by being aware.
 - According to the high performers who failed to maintain their success, overreaching was a problem that stemmed from an insatiable desire for more, coupled with an unrealistic sense of what is possible in a short time frame, which led to overcommitment. In other words, it was an issue of going for too much, too fast, in too many domains.
 - Their lesson learned was clear: When you're good, you want to take on more. But beware the impulse. High performance isn't about more for the sake of more, just because you can. It's often about less—zeroing in on just those few things that matter and protecting your time and well-being so you can truly engage those around you, enjoy your craft, and confidently handle your responsibilities. Focus on just a few things and the people and priorities you really care about, and you won't fall prey to overreaching. Broaden your ambitions too widely, and your appetite soon outstrips your abilities. Hence the importance of reminding yourself that the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.
 - I can usually tell whether someone is about to fail, by asking a simple question: "Do you feel seriously overcommitted right now?" New achievers, I've found, almost always agree. Their initial success came from saying yes to almost everything that came across the plate, because they were still testing their capabilities, learning their strengths, trying to find the right thing, hoping to strike while the iron was hot. They feared they would miss out on something, and at some point, they overestimated



their ability to handle things. The other group who said yes to the question? High performers on the decline. Here's the difficult mindset shift you'll have to make once you hit high performance. It will feel in some ways like the antithesis of what you've been doing, like a dangerous and opposite approach, but it's vitally important: Slow down, be more strategic, and say no more often.

- How do you slow down?
 - #1: Take ownership of your day. Don't live a "reactive" lifestyle.
 - #2: Say "no" more often. Even to the good things that would stretch your day too far.
 - In your mind, say "no" to almost every new thing first, then force yourself to justify it before saying "yes"
 - "Yes" gets you into the game. Finding what you are good at; finding opportunity.
 - As success comes, start to say "no" more often.
- Don't forget what got you here.
 - "Sometimes we are so concerned about giving our children what we never had growing up, we neglect to give them what we did have growing up." – James Dobson
 - Ask yourself: What are the five main reasons I've succeeded so far in life? Put those things on your Sunday review list and ask yourself if you are still doing those things?
- Tough truths
 - The culprits that steal your success are not lack of values or intelligence. They are ultimately allocations of attention.

THE #1 THING

- Nothing correlates with high performance more than confidence. It is the secret ingredient that makes you rise to the challenge.
- When you are confident, you are more willing to say "no" and more sure of what to focus on, which makes you more efficient and less prone to distraction.
- **The 3 "Cs" of Confidence**
 - High performers do have more confidence than most people. But not by birthright or luck, it is more often because they thought about things that gave them more confidence than others, more often did things that gave them more confidence than others and also avoided things that drain confidence more than others did.
 - It came from purposeful thinking and action.
 - #1: Develop competence
 - While most people think of confidence as a general belief in oneself, the kind of confidence that is most tied to performance improvement comes from belief in one's abilities in a specific task.



- High performers are learners, and their belief that they can learn what is necessary to win in the future gives them as much confidence as their current skill sets.
- It is important to “enjoy the victory” and reflect on your wins, it boosts confidence.
- #2: Be congruent
 - Living in congruence with the best of who we are is one of the primary motivations of humankind.
 - Are you being honest with who you are?
 - Take control of who you want to be and start living according to that self-image.
 - Finally, I’ll share something that a majority of high performers shared with me: Confidence comes from being truthful with yourself and others. You have to avoid the little lies that can easily tear at the fabric of your character. If you lie about the small things, you will cause a catastrophe when faced with the big things. Your heart and soul want to know you’ve lived an honest life. If you break that trust, you risk feeling incongruent and ruining your performance. Stand in your truth and tell the truth, and you’ll feel congruent.
- #3: Enjoy connecting
 - “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.” —Dale Carnegie
 - High performers’ confidence, then, comes from a mindset that says, “I know I’ll do well with others because I’ll be genuinely interested in them because I want to learn.”
- **A formula and farewell for now**
 - “As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live.” —Johann von Goethe
 - As you reflect on these three confidence builders—competence, congruence, and connection—perhaps you’ve noticed an underlying theme. What drove the development for high performers in each of these areas was curiosity. It was curiosity that developed their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Curiosity drove their self-examination. You have to ask a lot of questions of yourself to see whether you’re living a congruent life.
 - $\text{Curiosity} \times (\text{Competence} + \text{Congruence} + \text{Connection}) = \text{Confidence}$
- Get curious about your performance again, and seek to improve it through practicing the HP6:
 - #1: Seek clarity on who you want to be, how you want to interact with others, and what will bring meaning into your life.



- #2: Generate energy so you can sustain focus, effort, and well-being. To stay on you're A-game, you'll need to care actively for your mental stamina, physical energy, and positive emotions.
 - #3: Raise the necessity of your level of performance. This means actively tapping into the reasons you must perform well, based on a mix of your internal standards (e.g., your identity, beliefs, values, or expectations for excellence) excellence) and external demands (e.g., social obligations, competition, public commitments).
 - #4: Increase productivity in your primary field of interest. Specifically, you'll need to focus on "prolific quality output" (PQO) in the area in which you want to be known and to drive impact. You'll also have to minimize distractions (or opportunities) that steal your attention from creating PQO.
 - #5: Develop influence with those around you so you can get them to believe in and support your efforts and ambitions. Without a positive support network, major achievements over the long haul are all but impossible.
 - #6: Demonstrate courage by expressing your ideas, taking bold action, and standing up for yourself and others even in the face of fear, uncertainty, or changing conditions.
- "Whatever you are, be a good one." – Abraham Lincoln