

CHAPTER ONE

Cycling with Energy

Place two fingers on the side of your neck and get your pulse. Did you feel the rhythm of your beating heart? This is the rhythm of life.

This rhythm is within us and all around us—the ebb and flow of tides, the migration of the birds, the moon orbiting the Earth, and the Earth orbiting the Sun. There is a heartbeat to the Universe.

Thomas Edison had the pulse of the inventing world at the turn of the twentieth century. He was renowned for his incredible output (1,093 patents) and work ethic. It is believed that he would work for days without sleep—but that is a myth.

The truth is that Edison knew his internal rhythms—he was aware of his working cycle and used this to his advantage. Edison was a notorious nap taker. He would crawl up on his desk and use his favorite chemistry books as pillows. He allowed himself time to re-throttle. Edison knew he needed time to rejuvenate his body and his mind for the incredible work that lay ahead.

4

FULL THROTTLE

Some people lack the intuitive sense of internal rhythms that Edison had. They just run hard and fast instead, believing that if they do not, the competition will pass them by. Tim Howard, a sales executive, had this problem. He would schedule as many appointments as he could in a day. While Tim was moderately successful, he felt his biggest problem was his inability to connect with many of his clients.

As he and I worked together on this problem, we discovered that Tim was scheduling important clients when he was naturally cycling down in his energy—Tim was trying to go full-throttle when he should have been re-throttling in his energy levels. As a result, he was faking his energy during important client meetings, which made his actions look faked and forced. His clients read those subtle clues as a form of distrust, decreasing his chances of a successful interaction.

To turn Tim's business around, we created a plan that allowed him to become more aware of his energy cycles. The plan also helped Tim match his important activities to the appropriate times in his day. When this occurred, he exuded positive energy at the correct times, which helped him develop a greater connection to his clients.

Knowing when to go full-throttle and when to re-throttle will be a significant key to your longevity as well as success in the world of business. The following drills help to capitalize on your energy cycles using a three-step energy management plan.

FIRST STEP: DISCOVER YOUR CYCLES

Dr. Richard Carlson wrote many self-help books, including the best-selling *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*. He wrote only very early in the morning, when he was peaking in his creative energy. While he accomplished many tasks during the day as a psychologist, consultant, and speaker, Carlson

learned that the crack of dawn was his best time to fulfill his destiny as a writer.

To maximize productivity, you must first pay attention to the rising and falling of your energy cycles. Does your energy soar in the morning? Does it take a skid after lunch? Do you have a second wind in the evening? Awareness of your energy is the first step to harnessing it.

To accomplish this task, develop a scale that rates your energy. Allow the number zero on the scale to signify a period when you have very little energy. Mark 100 on the scale to indicate when you are completely revved up with great energy. Mark your scale in 10-point increments, describing each incremental step with a simple sentence such as "moderate energy" or "good energy."

Next, rate your energy levels in two-hour blocks for each day (See Table 1.1, Step 2). Do this for one week. For instance, you may find your energy peaks from 8:00 to 10:00 in the morning. You then take a bit of a slide in the mid-morning, and then peak after lunch only to discover another slide around 3 P.M. Or, you may find that you are revved up in the afternoon, but percolate with a bit of energy only in the morning hours.

While most individuals will have a few peaks and valleys throughout the day, everyone is unique. Knowing when your energy soars as well as when it droops is the first step in learning to harness it.

SECOND STEP: CREATE AN ENERGY LIST

Most successful individuals create a to-do list. They may create this list before they leave work, and these tasks relate to what will be accomplished the following day. Or, they may create their list as the day's first task.

Try something new: create an energy to-do list. Quantify each activity on the list in terms of three different levels of energy: high, moderate, and low. (See Table 1.1) As an

6

FULL THROTTLE

Table 1.1 Energy To-do List**STEP 1: DISCOVER YOUR CYCLES**

Rank 10–100 (in 10-point increments)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
8–10					
10–12					
12–2					
2–4					
4–6					

STEP 2: CREATE AN ENERGY LIST

High energy tasks:

Moderate energy tasks:

Low energy tasks:

STEP 3: MATCH YOUR TASKS

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
8–10					
10–12					
12–2					
2–4					
4–6					

example, meeting an important client for the first time can require a vast amount of energy. Meeting with a disgruntled client and resolving a key issue can be very draining as well. On the other hand, making cold calls, or writing a proposal require moderate energy; simple analysis and warm calls can be low-energy tasks.

THIRD STEP: MATCH YOUR TASKS

The third step of the plan is to schedule your tasks for the appropriate time of day. Based upon the previous two steps,

place the most demanding energy tasks in the times when you have the most energy. Position moderate energy tasks for when you begin to slide in your energy. Do low energy tasks when your energy levels have bottomed out.

Your peak energy periods are precious. Safeguard them for the demanding activities that will be most profitable to you. Save the tasks that require very little mental and emotional energy for the times when you begin to slide. You can still be highly effective if you accomplish simple tasks during your low-energy periods.

Knowing when to sprint and when to slow your pace will help you finish the day with a quantity of accomplishments.

READJUSTING YOUR PEAK PERIODS

An important question I receive at many seminars is whether you can readjust the timing of your peak periods. The answer is yes!

Antonio Ravette, a concert violinist, would get up early in the morning, around 6:30 A.M. But after the analysis we discussed earlier, we discovered that he peaked at 9 A.M. and again at 3 P.M. Antonio had recently been hired by the Nashville Symphony, which usually starts their performances at 7 P.M. at the Shimmerhorn Concert Hall. To remedy this issue, we had Antonio sleep until 9:30 A.M. That pushed his cycles to peak three hours later—to a time when he needed to be surging in his energy cycles.

If you need to readjust your cycles, perhaps sleeping a little later may do your energy some good.

<http://www.pbookshop.com>