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## BOOK REVIEW

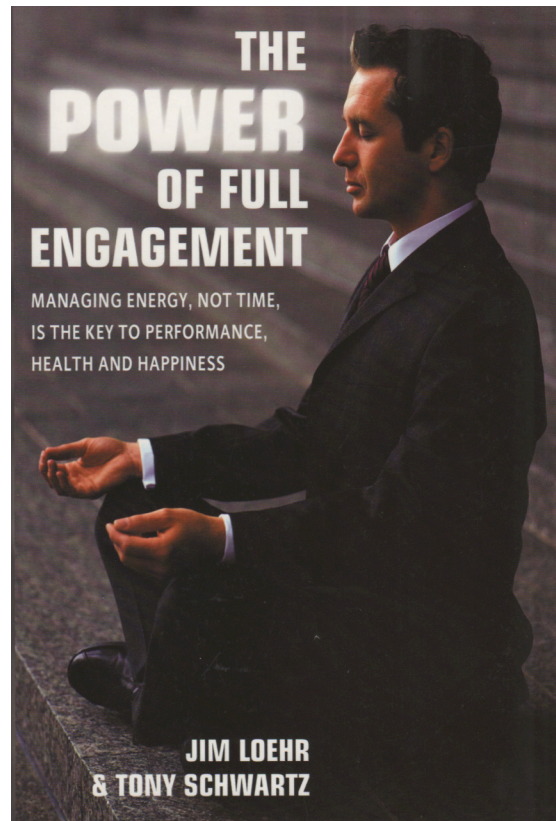
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**" The Power of Full Engagement:  
Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and  
Personal Renewal"  
by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz**

**Free Press; 2003  
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If your days are so busy that you find it nearly impossible to be fully engaged and effective in each endeavor, this book can help you manage your energy and turn things around.

The authors, Dr. Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz, are the co-creators of a training system called the Corporate Athlete®. Loehr brings to the system and the book his experience as a performance psychologist, athletic coach, and author of twelve previous books geared to athletes. Schwartz wrote *What Really Matters: Searching for Wisdom in America*, co-authored *Art of the Deal* with Donald Trump, and brings his background as

a journalist and corporate consultant. They are senior partners at LGE Performance Systems, and adapted their system for athletes to one that meets the needs of the corporate world – which wasn't much of a stretch!

Loehr and Schwartz talk about how great athletes spend on the order of 80 percent of their time patiently training and preparing for the intense use of energy needed during the 20 percent when they have to perform at their peak level. In contrast, many people spend more like 95 percent of their time working at a high energy level. Physiologically one cannot perform well using this formula, and the answer lies more in regulating your energy level than in constantly trying to manage your time. After all, time is fixed – everyone has the same amount of it with which to work. But energy oscillates, and learning to hone your energy level effectively can make a world of difference in your performance, no matter what it is you do. If you approach your work as you would an ultramarathon, you're not taking into account your natural energy rhythms.

Loehr studied the EKGs of tennis players. In between points, a not-so-good tennis player's heart rate remains high, and their energy level is stressed throughout the entire match. A good tennis player develops routines that allow their heart rate to drop by as much as twenty beats per minute between points – simple things like checking their racket, bouncing the ball, and taking a moment to visualize the next play. This resting between points reserves energy for when it's most needed.

Likewise, your work should be approached as a series of sprints rather than a marathon. The stress of a high-pressure deadline can be a good thing, allowing you to tap your talents for peak performance; but it must be balanced by a period of complete non-attachment to the high-pressure situation.

We've all experienced being more energetic on some days than we are on others, or being more energetic during certain times of the day than we are during others. This is natural, and we need renewal in between periods of high energy expenditure. Trying to maintain a high level of energy all the time results in burnout and not performing well in any aspect of your day.

*The Power of Full Engagement* is divided into two parts, with a great section of resources, charts, and forms to use in applying the suggestions. Part one explains the association between energy-management for athletes and for the rest of us, and walks you through the dynamics of balancing not only physical stress and recovery, but emotional, mental, and spiritual stress and recovery as well. The authors use "case studies" to illustrate their ideas that are very easy to relate to.

Let's say you're having a very hectic day, but you're scheduled for lunch with a colleague to exchange ideas about a community event that your kids are participating in. If you make a concerted effort to forget about what's going on at the office and have an enjoyable, relaxing, creative conversation about your kids, you'll notice that when you get back from lunch you're completely rejuvenated and ready to dig in again. That's the idea.

Part two provides a practical, scientific approach to performing at a higher level, both on and off the job, through the techniques of the Corporate Athlete system. The book touches on principles that come from Stephen R. Covey and other great personal-development gurus, such as relating your values and purpose to what it is you need to accomplish. But this is not a hyped-up motivational read; it offers a practical, logical approach that focuses on application rather than cheerleading. Attaining balance is the key to achieving the goal of this book – being able to fully engage through developing the skill of fully *disengaging*. The information is presented like a road map to this skill.

The step-by step system covers mobilizing four key sources of energy, balancing energy expenditure with genuine down-time, expanding your capacities like elite athletes do, and creating positive energy-management rituals. The book talks about personal rituals and how developing positive habits and rituals makes managing the energy you need for your best physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being much easier. It also talks about how the brain is the most energy-demanding muscle there is; using your brain power all day can be more exhausting than doing something physical all day. And yet physical health is necessary to support the mental powers you need to get through your day.

It explains how to access positive emotions and build self-control, confidence, and rewarding relationships. And it explains how treating your energy level in a new way – balancing your energy output *and* input – applies to all dimensions of your life. Taking responsibility for the energy you bring to the world translates into a more productive and empowered existence. After reading this book you will look at energy as a precious resource that should be conserved and nourished.

Approaching your demanding life as an equation based on regularly renewing your energy can make a big difference in how much you are able to accomplish, and ultimately in your level of life satisfaction. The message is that energy, not time, is the currency of effective performance.

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