

# 3 ways for leaders to manage their energy to experience joy more often at work

 Repa Patel [Executive Checklist](#) [March 31, 2021](#)



What do you think of when I ask you to be more productive? Most people would say I need to “do more”. The reality is that none of us will ever be able to complete all the tasks on our to-do list.

Time management and work-life balance are not the answer. Time is impossible to manage, and work-life balance is a myth. Many organisations have implemented work-life balance programs and remote working only to find that levels of anxiety and depression have increased.

Multitasking was a popular tool in the 1990s as a way to boost productivity. We often multitask in the mistaken belief we are increasing our productivity and delivering more. The reality is much further from the truth than you may think. Multitasking reduces productivity by 40% and leads to more errors.

Time is a finite concept. You can never create more time. Energy is a resource that you can nurture, build and consciously direct to achieve your most important tasks and do your best work. You don't control or create time. You do have control over building, harnessing and directing your energy. In a world where everything is constantly changing and leaders have little control over outcomes, managing your energy is like a water well or a resource that you both tap into and replenish to maintain reserves.

**To prime your potential, you need to consciously engage with and direct your energy.**

## 3 Types of Energy

In the life science of yoga, the body is considered to be composed of five energetic layers, with the physical layer being the most obvious (as it's visible). All these layers impact one another. There is a deep reciprocal connection between your physical energy (the body), your mental energy (the mind) and your emotional energy (your heart). As a leader you must learn how to build, nurture and integrate these energies towards achieving your highest potential.

## 1. Direct Your Physical Energy: The END

Managing your physical energy at work relies heavily on your physical fitness, diet and sleep. Many resources, services and professionals (better qualified in this area than I) can guide you to increase your physical energy.

However, there is a practical tip you can use at work to enhance your physical energy while working. I call it the END exercise.

- Reflect on the time of the work day that you have the most energy. For me it's at the very start of the day but it's different for each person.
- List your priorities for today
- Next to the priorities mark each task as follows:
  - E** – if you find this task energising or enjoyable
  - N** – if you find this task neutral
  - D** – if you find this task draining
- Complete the most engaging tasks when your energy is the lowest
- Complete the most draining tasks when you have the most physical energy
- Observe what happens to your energy

## 2. Manage Your Mind

In a constantly changing environment, with many competing demands on your time, attention is the currency. What you choose to focus on, why and when are absolutely critical to your success and that of your team and business.

The most powerful tool to develop your ability to consciously choose your focus and direct your mental energy is meditation. Meditation helps you be fully present in this moment and be calm in the chaos. I think about it as bicep curls for your mind. Sceptical? Research proves that meditation changes your brain.

## 3. Elevate Your Emotional Energy

Building emotional resilience to navigate the storms of life and business requires self-compassion. Dr Kristen Neff, Associate Professor Human Development and Culture, University of Texas is an expert in self-compassion and her work has proven the benefits of self-compassion.

Compassion is a way of relating to yourself and involves no comparisons, judgements or evaluations. I believe there are three critical elements of self-compassion:

- i) Mindfulness** – consciously seeing and feeling what is truly happening and accepting your experience, “warts and all”, without wishing it were different
- ii) Loving-kindness** – holding yourself with tender care, the way you would support a close friend who was experiencing emotional or physical pain
- iii) Action** – taking the steps to change, which are grounded in self-care and growing towards your vision of leadership, rather than a critical or comparison-based approach