The other 90 percent: unlock your vast untapped potential

When you unearth your truest, most talented self, you discover a wealth of opportunities. You'll learn how to increase your energy, combat pressure and stress, engage your heart and gut and motivate exceptional ingenuity and performance in yourself and in those around you. This class uses the book, The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper.

Lessons

1. What is the other 90 percent and who is keeping it from us?
   A brief look at why most of us are unknowingly—and needlessly—trapped by common mindsets and habitual barriers to our capacity, brainpower and energy.

2. Stand out from the crowd
   Unlocking hidden capacity depends on being an original, not a copy, and seeing others as unique individuals, too.

3. Don’t compete, excel
   In every field and discipline those who make the biggest difference are focusing on excelling, not competing, and using areas of human intelligence that most others don’t access.

4. Value differences and individualize recognition
   Trust and untapped capacity depend on actively valuing human differences—in talents, perspectives and efforts.

5. Build calm energy throughout the day
   Everyone feels rushed these days, but we’re trapped using tension and urgency as sources of fake energy instead of building the “calm energy” that star performers use.

6. Reclaim your life off the job
   As Emerson put it, "We're always getting ready to live but we never truly live." These days, we find ourselves doing too much and living too little.

7. Extend your time horizon
   The most successful men and women keep one eye on the future and never let go of their big dreams and defining talents.

8. Manage adversity and stress in a changing world
   Life and leadership can be seen as laboratories of development, and some of the greatest chances for each of us to learn and grow come when times are hardest and conditions are most uncertain.

What is the other 90 percent and who is keeping it from us?

A brief look at why most of us are unknowingly—and needlessly—trapped by common mindsets and habitual barriers to our capacity, brainpower and energy.

What do you get out of this?

I believe there are two primary problems with most self-help and leadership programs. First, the vast majority of self-improvement books and seminars don’t challenge conventional thinking in any meaningful way, nor do they bring about fresh insights or tangible new possibilities for leadership or life. Second, they tend to live and die with bland platitudes and vagaries instead of providing simple yet practical tools -- the kind of do-it-right-now techniques that close the gap between where you are and where you most want to be. My aim with this course is to go in exactly the opposite direction. After taking this course you will be able to immediately begin living more of your life to the fullest.
This lesson will introduce you to the 90 percent of human potential that few people ever use. You will learn about the barriers people build every day between themselves and their untapped potential. We will also discuss the four keystones which serve as the driving forces involved in unlocking hidden capacities for leadership and life.

What can you do?

I have met with leaders in all walks of life, and I have asked them questions they don't hear every day in their professional or personal lives. These questions are designed to stir up your thinking. They are designed to rattle your perspectives, to challenge your sense of possibilities, and, in some cases, to upend the status quo.

What's more, these uncommon questions will lead to uncommon answers, practical tools that you can put to the test right away, including what I call "scientific shortcuts" -- laser-sharp techniques aimed at helping you do less and accomplish more. For more than thirty years, I have focused on finding the smallest actions that make the biggest difference, and I will share a number of them with you in this course.

One of the things I have realized is that no matter how long we work, how little we sleep, or how hard we push, few of us are achieving the life we truly desire and imagine for ourselves. Does this ring true for you? I have found that many people today feel mentally overloaded by the rising demands of our changing world, blocked from greater possibilities, bombarded by stress, and weakened by uncertainty. If you have experienced even one of these uncomfortable feelings, this course will provide simple yet doable approaches to managing rising pressures and times of change.

Remember, by unearthing the truest, most talented self at your core, you can discover a wealth of opportunities above and beyond what you previously thought was possible in your work and in your life.

How much of your potential is still untapped?

Many of us have the feeling we're giving all we've got to work and life, probably in that order. If someone were to ask us, "How much more effort can you give?" we would likely say, "Not much" or "I'm already spending too little time sleeping" or "I'm all tapped out."

But there's another, very different way to look at your life. I always try to separate what's common from what's possible, and distinguish between motion and advancement. Every lesson in this course will build on these insights.

Dream the possible dream

For example, it's easy to look around and see many people feeling rushed, tense, uptight, and tired, and then to assume that, since it's so common, "That's just life." But we're wrong. That's not what's necessary, it's just what's common. In Lesson 5, I'll show you specific skills that produce what is known as "calm energy" -- a relaxed high-performance state with far less stress and strain. It isn't common but it is within your reach if you know how to access it.

Consider, as another example, how you constantly feel busy -- as if you are in perpetual motion, trying to catch up with the endless number of items on your to-do list. But during a quiet moment of reflection, you might be surprised to realize that you haven't actually gotten very far in terms of the people or
projects that matter most to your personal or professional advancement.

More than 0.01 percent

You might think about your overall mental and physical capacity in terms of advancement. My grandfather believed in the old saying that we use only about 10 percent of our potential brainpower and human capacity in the course of a lifetime. "What about the rest of it?" he wondered. That's why he started me on a search for what we called "the other 90 percent." It would have been a kick for him to learn that a few years ago the old wisdom got revised: Studies now indicate that we use not one-tenth but one ten-thousandth of our capabilities (that's .01 percent)!

Whenever my grandfather would observe me getting caught up in the surface of things, struggling along by habit or expending lots of time or effort trying to produce some small gain, he would ask, "What about the other 90 percent, Robert?" It was one of his ways of encouraging me to alter my view, look deeper, and break through whatever barriers might be holding me back.

Invisible barriers

Let's start thinking in a bit more detail about the invisible barriers that have likely been preventing you from reaching your full capacity in life and work. A number of these barriers are either self-imposed or unseen and inadvertently accepted. Once you are aware of these obstacles, you can begin thinking about ways to remove them and begin testing new possibilities.

An example of these costly hidden barriers is tied to a two-part assumption that:

1. Every individual is unique
2. Other people know who we truly are and what we value

I believe that number one is absolutely true but that we rarely live accordingly, and that number two is the way things should be but usually they aren't.

Get to know yourself

In light of the above assumption, let's start here: If you really knew me, you would know that _____.

I ask leaders to complete that sentence by stating one of the values or priorities that mean the most to them.

Take a few moments now to complete the sentence yourself. Think of who you are when no one else is looking, how deep your roots burrow and how high your aspirations ascend. Read your completed sentence aloud. Does it sound like a true reflection of who you are as a unique individual? If not, find other words that are closer. When you're finished, copy your sentence onto a three-by-five card. Feel free to keep deepening and revising your answer in the days and weeks ahead.

Does anyone really know you?

Next, think about the people closest to you, in your neighborhood or at work. Could they each complete this sentence for you in the same way you have written it? Do they truly know you that well? How about the people you count you to brush up on your knowledge and learn new skills, making you a more valuable asset in the workforce.
among your family and closest friends -- could they each fill in your answer? Are you certain? Conversely, could you finish the same sentence for each of them as a unique individual, so that if they read it, they'd say "That's exactly right"? If not, talk about it. Be curious. You're learning something deeper and more valuable about them, and them about you. The better you know someone (and the better that person knows you) the easier it is to trust that person. Gaining trust is like breaking down those barriers that hold you back.

Carry this small card with you. Glance at it while you brush your teeth. Post it on your desk or refrigerator. Do whatever you need to do to keep it uppermost in your mind, and when you think about others, and interact with them, learn specifically how they would answer such a simple but important question.

This barrier of human understanding is only one of those we impose upon ourselves. All of these barriers are related to the four keystones for unlocking your vast potential. We will touch briefly on those keystones next.

The four keystones

For a long time I have wondered about the driving forces, or primary factors, involved with unlocking hidden capacity in leadership and life. I have come to believe there are four factors that make the biggest difference: trust, energy, farsightedness, and nerve. I call these the keystones of "the other 90 percent."

Each of the four keystones leads to the next in a circle of potential.

Trust

Trust is first because when you deepen the trust you have with the people you count on, it frees you from having to cover your back. You can ask people to do things and they will come through for you, and you for them. This eliminates a major source of distraction and tension for many people. This is such an important keystone that I'm devoting three lessons to it:

- Lesson 2: "Stand Out from the Crowd"
- Lesson 3: "Don't Compete, Excel"
- Lesson 4: "Value Differences and Individualize Recognition"

Energy

Once you have deepened the level of trust you have with the people around you, you can devote some of your newly freed attention to raising your energy level and accomplishing more of your priorities. You will find you have more energy off the job as well. There are two lessons packed with surprising insights and ultra-practical tools for putting the zest back into your daily efforts and leaving you with energy to spare when all the work is done:

- Lesson 5: "Build Calm Energy Throughout the Day"
- Lesson 6: "Reclaim Your Life Off the Job"

Farsightedness
Farsightedness is based on research indicating that the most successful and happy people in every walk of life have developed skills to keep looking farther ahead than they have to. Lesson 7: "Extend Your Time Horizon" focuses on this subject.

Nerve

For the purposes of this course, nerve is "an approach to life characterized by courage, exploration, and spirit."

This keystone encourages you to rise above adversity and challenge the boundaries of possibility in your life. Practical tools are presented in the final lesson: "Manage Adversity and Stress in a Changing World."

For each of the four keystones, the lessons in this course provide a variety of simple, practical ways to excel in a pressure-filled world with greater grace, ingenuity, and empathy. It turns out that many of the choices that can dramatically change our lives are simple and practical -- you just have to know what they are and how to apply them every day.

Moving forward

We've covered a lot of ground dealing with hidden potential, invisible barriers, and keystones, but we have done it thus far with very broad strokes. You should check out the quiz to clarify your knowledge and the brief homework assignment will help you start seeing things in new ways. Be sure to also go to the Message Board to discuss where you are with your classmates. There should be a number of lively and valuable insights there.

Next lesson, we'll start zeroing in on the first keystone: Trust. We'll begin with some simple, compelling insights on how you can strengthen your values and stand out from the crowd.

Assignment #1

Try to remember situations in your own life when you felt that you failed to live up to your potential. It could have been in the first grade; it could have been in your first marriage.

Now think about your life today. What invisible barriers to human capacity can you find? Write the barriers down on a piece of paper as they come to you. On the opposite side of the paper on which you wrote down the barriers, brainstorm ideas for what you can do to break down those barriers. You will soon see how your solutions stack up to those in the course as you continue with the lessons.

If you want to learn more...

For more information about invisible barriers, read the introduction to The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper.

Quiz #1

Question 1: What are "scientific shortcuts"?
A) ○ Small actions
B) ○ Business leaders
C) ○ Specific techniques
Stand out from the crowd
Unlocking hidden capacity depends on being an original, not a copy, and seeing others as unique individuals, too.

Be an original
In the initial lesson, I explained in general why most of us are unknowingly limited in our capacity, brainpower, and energy by common mindsets and habitual barriers. In this lesson I'll explain how trust and commitment depend on knowing the distinguishing individual values and specific ways that we make unique contributions to life and work.

Your hidden potential depends on understanding what makes you distinctive, and then applying that to your everyday life and work. We live in a world filled with pressure -- from advertising and conventional thinking, to name two examples -- to be just like everyone else. More people are finding that it's harder than ever to be an original. Yet most mothers agree that in the millions of years humanity has existed on Earth there has never been another person exactly like you and there never will be again. This is your chance to be more fully alive and to make a difference. How can you strengthen your originality?

The dreaded amygdala

Looking back over the past week, how did you stand out from the crowd? This means, "What real difference did you make to the people around you or the world at large?" It could have been an earth-shattering discovery or an unnoticed common task that made you proud. It's the intensity that counts. Begin to ask others these kinds of questions. They help us value the seemingly minor yet often profound contributions of others.

There's something in the way, however. A powerful part of your brain, the
amygdala, wants to keep you stuck in your rut, and keep your hidden capacity locked safely away. (There's a good discussion of this topic in Chapter 1 of the The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper).

**Fight its power**

The amygdala is located within the limbic system, an ancient area of the mind that deals with your perceptions of the world and your reactions to it. The amygdala wages a battle against anything remotely chaotic in your brain and your actions. It constantly stresses that things need to remain in control.

This tendency toward safety and security is what keeps most of us from swimming the English Channel and climbing mountains, but it can go too far. For thousands of years, the amygdala has tried to keep us in our routines, which leads to a kind of stasis devoid of any possibility of risk, change, or growth. Your amygdala wants you to be what you have been because what you have been is "working just fine." As far as the amygdala is concerned, any hidden capacity is nothing more than trouble waiting to happen.

You have the power to fight these tendencies, to override the amygdala's power. If you don't, you are likely to spend the rest of your days on life's stationary bike, repeating what you have been in the past.

Think back over the past week: In what ways have you tried to be like someone else -- instead of being yourself -- or have felt yourself going along or giving in, even though you saw things differently or wanted something else? By being aware of the ways that you are different, you strengthen your chances to make a difference in the world. Through steering your own course, as we will see in the next lesson, you will provide a beacon for others to follow.

**Be a lighthouse, not a weathervane**

Now let's take another step in deepening the concept of originality in everyday life. If you stop to ponder the way most people seem to be living these days, it's easy to act as if you are a weathervane -- always changing your beliefs and words, trying to please everyone around you.

But if you think about the people you respect the most -- the ones with the deepest values, greatest courage, and most energy, for example -- I'll bet they act more like lighthouses than weathervanes.

**Discover your true self**

"Imagine a vertical axis running through the center of your heart, from your deepest roots to your highest aspirations," my Grandfather Downing once said to me. "That's your lighthouse. It anchors you in the world and frees you from having to change directions every time the weather shifts. Inside this lighthouse there is a lens and a light. The light represents who you are when nobody else is looking. That light was meant to keep shining, no matter how dark or stormy it gets outside."

The lighthouse represents a quality of trust that I call constancy. We talk a lot about consistency -- which is about what you do -- but constancy is about who you are, which matters even more. When our individual values don't fit with the life we're leading or the direction we're moving, we withhold our best and feel empty or stressed. Like those around us, we may soon be likened to a weathervane, going whichever way the wind blows.

**Value words**

Think of the most exceptional teacher you have ever had. What top two values describe this person? What effect did this person's values have on you and your values? Take a few minutes to go to the Message Board and list your top two value words. Look at the words that other students chose. How would we change our attitudes and actions if we knew the values of everyone around us?

**Dependability at a price you can afford**

HP's line of dependable PCs offer mainstream features and flexibility for a wide range of business needs.
Think about your own values. What two words would you use to describe someone else who you are? You can use a single word or even a simple phrase to describe each of your values. Jot them down for future reference.

Finding the words

If you are having trouble coming up with the words to describe yourself, then consider where you came from. Do you share the values your parents had and tried to instill in you? If your values are different, first describe your parents’ values, then explain how yours differ. Another method to consider is to think about your dreams. To what do you aspire? What words first come to your mind and heart? What words would you want others to use when describing you to a friend?

If you become frustrated, you may be inclined to list the same words you hear at your church or in your neighborhood meeting. You might favor current buzzwords used by politicians who always stress family values. That's fine. You have to begin somewhere. You'll soon see that by simply considering this exercise, you will begin a process of clarifying who you are and what you believe.

Now list the names of several people you count on in your life or work. Could each of them have listed your top values? Could you list their top values? Try it and then check the results. On the next page, you will see where others’ perception of you comes from.

Let your life speak

If you died today, how would people remember you and your life? It's a question that sages have long encouraged us to ponder because they have always known it had the power to change the way we live our lives. When we ask others -- including children -- who they think you truly are, their answer isn't primarily shaped by what you think or even what you say. Instead, other people gauge you almost entirely based on what they feel from you (we'll talk more about this in Lesson 4) and how you behave, especially under pressure.

Actions, not words

There is an old Quaker saying: "Let your life speak." When your words are supported by the weight of your actions, then you are letting your life speak. You don't need to make promises because you act on the promises you feel inside. There are four essentials for becoming someone whose life speaks more than words do.

Believe you can make a difference

People commonly say that everyone can make a difference, but how many of us truly believe that we can? When it comes to charitable works, or making a change in something for the better, most people feel that there is very little one person can do. This is yet another instance of the amygdala because maintaining the status quo is something everyone believes they can do. However, if you believe you can change something for the better, then it is more likely that you will try.

Promise what you will do
Once you believe you can make a difference, then you need to tell people what you are going to do. Many people are afraid of commitment because they believe others will think less of them if they fail to fulfill their promises. This couldn’t be farther from the truth. Other people respect those with the strength of their convictions behind their promises. You may not succeed at what you promise, but the important thing is to commit to what you can with the best of intentions.

Do what you promise

How many things did you promise today? Did you tell your child that you would read him or her a story after work and then forget? Did you promise your spouse that you would pick up a gallon of milk on the way home and show up at home without it? Eventually, the people around you will realize that you are good at making promises, but terrible at keeping them. This type of life speaks only lies. If, however, you constantly deliver on your promises, then other people will trust that you will do what you promise. They will respect you for it. We will talk more about trust in the next two lessons.

Take responsibility

Hold yourself responsible for your commitment and efforts, even when you can’t control the outcome. There will be times when you commit to something and cannot come through on your commitment. You want to limit these times in order not to lose people’s respect. What you really want to avoid, however, is placing blame on someone else for your failing. Circumstances beyond your control may have contributed to your failure, but the most important thing you can do is take responsibility for the outcome. People will respect you for your honesty and your leadership. When people know that the buck stops with you, then they are more likely to trust you with their bucks.

Moving forward

This lesson has tried to help you get more in touch with who you truly are. It has also helped you see the people around you for who they are. When you get to the truth about yourself and others, you learn whom you can trust and whom you cannot. The assignment will provide you with an exercise to assist in this, and the quiz will help you assure yourself that you have understood the concepts touched on here. Be sure to go to the Message Board and explain to your fellow students who you really are. Perhaps they will reveal themselves to you, and you will find people you can trust right here in this class.

In the next lesson, we’ll discuss how you can become the best that you can be. The key to unlocking your potential is excelling within yourself, not competing with others.

Assignment #2

Get together with a family member or a close friend and try this self-building exercise. Before you begin your conversation, ask your friend to write down on a 3”x5” notecard in 20 words or less a statement that best describes what he or she stands for or values the most. You then do the same thing. Then, after both of you have finished, ask your partner to write down on another card who you are in 20 words or less. Do the same thing for your partner.

Then compare the corresponding cards. How close did your partner come to the way in which you see yourself? How close did you come to the way in which your partner sees him or herself? Ask your partner what you could do differently to project the self you believe you are. This exercise can also help you refine the words or phrases you invented in the lesson.

If you want to learn more . . .
Quiz #2
Question 1:
True or false: The amygdala is a deadly disease of the central nervous system.
A) ☐ True
B) ☐ False

Question 2:
Most people are too much like weathervanes because they:
A) ☐ Pay too much attention to trivial things
B) ☐ Would prefer to live out in the country
C) ☐ Like to be safe and secure
D) ☐ Change with the wind

Question 3:
The idea of constancy refers to:
A) ☐ Being loyal to others
B) ☐ Mathematical equations
C) ☐ What you do
D) ☐ Who you are

Question 4:
True or false: It is better not to promise anything than to promise something and fail.
A) ☐ True
B) ☐ False

Don't compete, excel
In every field and discipline those who make the biggest difference are focusing on excelling, not competing, and using areas of human intelligence that most others don't access.

No one has to lose for you to win
I gave you some guidelines in Lesson 2 for getting in better touch with your essence and the essences of those around you. In this lesson I'll talk about how to notice when competitive thoughts are blocking your performance, and offer some methods for accessing and applying hidden areas of human intelligence.

There are many different goals in life. Some of them serve as status symbols of all we have accomplished: more money, fancier cars, a new house, a framed diploma, an expensive vacation. We feel we have earned these trappings of our success by being better than others. Other goals are less quantifiable: personal growth, contentment, new friendships, contribution to the community, or more energy. These goals are measured mainly against those we set for ourselves. More of our goals should correspond to this idea of excelling, rather than competing.

Losing for winning
When we feel the only way to reach our goals is to prevent others from reaching theirs, something is wrong within us. Sure, if we are ruthless enough, we are likely to get what we are after, but at what cost? Was the other person any less worthy of success than you were?
That empty feeling inside isn't hunger for your next meal. It is the darkening of your soul, and it doesn't have to be like this. In many families, communities, and organizations, all competition does is create conflicts and distractions that prevent everyone from excelling in their own unique way.

“Zero-sum” competition -- which refers to the idea that if one person wins then everyone else has to lose -- damages the humanity inside all of us. The natural human tendency is to trust and believe the best of people, but competition engenders suspicion. People who compete are always looking for an edge, even if that means distorting the truth.

When you compete, your entire focus shifts from you to your competitors, and to how you can keep them at bay. When you constantly compare yourself to others, you limit your own possibilities. What ever happened to becoming the best you can be, regardless of what anyone else is doing? A single competitive thought can hurt your performance and release negative stress hormones. Now matter how empty the competition makes people feel, they continue to perpetuate it because it is the only thing they know. You need to give yourself another option.

Seize this opportunity

Even if we can count ourselves among the lucky winners, we still may look around and ask, "Is this it? I thought it would feel different than this. Is this all I get for pushing other people's face in the mud as I stepped over them to get to the top? Is this why I left my family alone 15 hours per day? Why doesn't it feel fun or satisfying?"

Here's one place to start turning this around -- to create a new attitude where everyone wins when striving for what's possible. Whenever you find yourself focused on being better than someone else, catch yourself. Perhaps you can try looking your competitor in the eye and remembering who it is you are competing against. Don't you remember how bitter competition makes you feel? Change your focus. Remember the thrill of the challenge that started the competition in the first place. Ask yourself how you can take this opportunity to excel and pull everyone else up with you, rather than beating them down.

Use your brains, all three of them: part I

Many of us assume that human intelligence is based solely on the brain we all know about -- the one inside the cranium. It is not. Intelligence is distributed throughout the body.

Go with your gut

Example: Whenever you have an experience in life it does not go directly to brain one -- the brain in the head -- to be thought about. The first place it goes is to the neurological networks of the intestinal tract: the brain in the gut.

Every interaction you have creates an initial reaction in your gut well before it ever traverses your synapses to reach your brain. The feeling may come across as "butterflies in your stomach" or a "knot" of fear or excitement. Some people have been trained to process everything intellectually, so those people may not even notice their gut reactions.

That's a pity, because your gut is just trying to communicate with you. It is looking out for your well-being, just as your brain is, and it's making decisions and asking questions you may want to find out about. How important is this meeting or this challenge or this person? Is there an opportunity here? Is there a threat? Is my happiness or advancement at risk?

Known as the enteric nervous system, this "second brain" in your gut works on its own but also in conjunction with the brain in your head. Scientists who carefully examine the elaborate systems of nerve cells and neurochemicals found in the intestinal tract now tell us that there are more neurons there than in the entire spinal column -- at least 100 million of them. This gives your intestine the ability to help tell your body and mind what it may be best to do or not have ever given because doing so matters to you personally, for its own sake. It means to run your own race -- as an individual, team, or organization - - no matter what anyone else is doing.

Meet and greet your gut

Each time you face an important decision, you might pause to ask, "What does my gut say about this? My head?" Then combine the two responses to put your best foot forward. With practice, this will not slow your ability to make on-the-spot decisions; rather, it will deepen and improve such
Listening to your alternate brains

Many people view gut reactions as those that have not been well thought out or rationally examined. Does this make them any less reliable? No, because they are unclouded by clutter of information found in our heads. Rational decisions are often influenced by forces outside of your true self. Reaching the peak of your true potential depends on developing and applying an energizing, authentic level of intelligence and bringing it to everything you do. For this to happen, you must combine the perceptions and impressions of the gut, heart, and mind.

Think of a time when you considered all of the options and ended up listening to your gut. Did it turn out to be the best choice? It often does. Read on to learn how you can begin to call upon this hidden form of intelligence more often in the midst of your busy everyday life?

(This subject is explained in detail in Chapter 2 of The Other 90%: Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper.)

Use your brains, all three of them: part II

Now, on to the newly discovered brain in the heart.

Thinking with your heart

The sensory path to your brain has three steps, and the brain in your head doesn't even process your experiences until they have been through the first two steps -- from the gut to the heart, and yet another dimension of hidden intelligence. Neurocardiologists, scientists in an emerging field, have discovered that the brain in the heart contains more than 40,000 nerve cells called baroreceptors. This heart brain is as large as many key areas of the brain in your head. It also has highly sophisticated computational abilities.

With every beat, a new thought or idea is communicated from your heart to the rest of your body. Like your intestinal intuition, this cardio-communication deeply influences how you perceive your world and how you react to it. The heart pumps out speech after speech and every other part of your body is in constant contact with the heart's demands. These impulses race through the body many times faster than your blood, and it is up to your head brain to try to catch up to them and understand them. The heart also generates many neurochemicals that influence the way we act. One such chemical, atrial peptide, is a primary force in your motivation and commitment to your goals. As we discovered earlier, we need to believe in order to achieve. Well, the heart has more to do with our sense of believing than any other brain we have.

The heart's sense

The brain in your heart also keeps searching for new opportunities to grow or learn, and cross references its interpretations of what those around you are feeling with its own inner state of values and passions. When people tell you to go for your dreams, no matter how far fetched those dreams may seem, people usually say something like, "Follow your heart." There is now scientific evidence to support the idea that the heart has a dedicated sensory system perfectly calibrated to sniffing out innovative and creative opportunities.

But that's not all: the heart's electromagnetic field is by far the most powerful produced by the body. In fact, it is approximately 5,000 times more powerful than the field produced by the brain.

This is true of everyone to a certain degree. People ten feet away may sense exactly what you are feeling. They can even do it over the telephone, and it makes no difference what you are
saying. Words are fodder for the brain in your head. Your heart will believe the feeling underneath the words. This means that those people who are most in touch with their own feelings, and the feelings of others, may be the most attuned to what's really happening in life. It's imperative that you focus your attention on what you can do, and what you can contribute, not what you can't. This is one of the uncommon yet simple ways we can better draw upon the combined brilliance and potential of all three of our brains, not just one.

There is so much more to your gut and your heart than digestion and circulation. People are not machines, no matter how often personal or work relationships make us feel as though we are. It's no wonder that when people don't feel cared about and valued, it's so hard to put their hearts into their life or work. This is a subject we'll be exploring in more detail in the next lesson.

Moving forward

This lesson has opened the door to the vast hidden intelligence of the newly discovered brains in the gut and heart, and several simple ways that these vital aspects of your potential can be noticed and developed at any age. You'll want to check out the assignment and quiz to clarify your knowledge and start using some of the practical tools. The brief homework assignment will also help you start seeing things in new ways. Be sure to also go to the Message Board to try and work through the more difficult concepts in this lesson with fellow classmates. A number of lively and valuable insights may be arrived at.

Next lesson, we'll explore a number of simple, practical tools for building trust and individualizing the valuing and recognition you give and receive. That's another vital area to close the gap between where you are in your life or work, and where you could be.

Assignment #3

Get out a piece of lined paper and make a list. Brainstorm as many situations as you can think of in which it might have been more appropriate to think with your gut or your heart as opposed to your head. Then provide anecdotes for those situations that have happened to you. Post your anecdotes on the Message Board, and see if others have any like them.

If you want to learn more . . .

For more information about the ideas discussed in the lesson, read The Other 90%: Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper.

Quiz #3

Question 1: What is "zero-sum competition"?
A) ○ Competing for more money
B) ○ Determining the best at business
C) ○ All but one person has to lose.
D) ○ Competing for the joy of competition

Question 2: Which of the following does not have a brain?
A) ○ Neck
B) ○ Heart
C) ○ Head
D) ○ Gut

Question 3: True or false: The brain in your gut is known as the enteric nervous system.
True or false: The electromagnetic field in the heart is stronger than that in the brain.
A) True
B) False

Value differences and individualize recognition
Trust and untapped capacity depend on actively valuing human differences—in talents, perspectives and efforts.

Dare to trust
In Lesson 3, I provided guidance on developing the hidden intelligence of the newly discovered brains in the gut and heart. We shift in this lesson now to a collection of specific ways to build more trusting relationships, including deepened visibility, valuing, respecting, and recognition -- both on and off the job.

No matter how hard we try, we cannot make ourselves fully visible and valued in the world without help. By design, life and work require trusting relationships to bring out the best in ourselves and others. Unfortunately, experts now believe that up to half of all daily time is wasted or compromised due to mistrust.

The basis of trust
In order for trust between two people to exist, it must be preceded by two essential qualities that nurture it and help it to grow:

1. Understanding -- We must believe that the other person truly knows the person we are inside; they don't have to share our beliefs, but they need to clearly acknowledge them
2. Caring -- We must sense that the other person genuinely cares for us as a unique individual and that they will not make arbitrary decisions regarding us because they care about our true needs, interests, and concerns

Building trust
One simple way to begin building more trust is to take a second to acknowledge others eye-to-eye. Throughout our lives, we assess much of our value and meaning to others by the look in their eyes. Those looks are more powerful than words -- they speak to the brains in the heart and gut, not just the one in the head. All it takes is an instant to make kind, clear eye contact. In this instant, your own faculties may sense something of the hidden genius or greatness -- known or unknown -- in the other person.

This sense has nothing to do with what the other person has done or is doing. It is warranted simply by a person being present or showing up. Whenever you walk past others, especially at home, in your neighborhood, or at work, acknowledge them with a kind glance and a nod of your head. It is one of the simplest and most vital ways to create a feeling of being valued in our hectic everyday lives.

Another simple tool is to get better at noticing what truly matters to others. Write down the names of two individuals who are important to you, and then write down what you observe. What do they do that makes their eyes light up with excitement or pride? Doing this will sharpen your powers of observation.

Before long, you will be noticing things that you would have missed in the past. When you
notice something worthy of praise, be sure to take a moment and dole out such praise.

Don’t be defensive

Trusting relationships expand and extend our capabilities beyond anything you would ever have thought possible, so don’t wait for someone else to make the first move. Trust is the most reciprocal of feelings. If you show trust to another, that person is much more likely to show trust in return. As discussed in Lesson 3, promise what you will do and do it. Keep coming through. Continue to show yourself as someone who can be counted upon. Dare to trust and see the greatness in others.

(For more ideas on this subject plus some additional practical tools, read The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership & Life by Robert K. Cooper.)

Honor the greatness in yourself and others

Unlocking your hidden capacity depends on seeing more of the greatness in people, including yourself. Many of us have come to believe that a lack of respect is par for the course. People are too busy to recognize individual efforts. Receiving a raise or a bonus is supposed to be sufficient recognition for a job well done. A raise is just money, but praise is much more and goes far deeper.

When was the last time someone took the time to notice and compliment you on a great effort? What did this person say or do to genuinely acknowledge your accomplishments? Did they use the word thanks? What about the word appreciate?

Now think about moments when your efforts have been ignored. When you don’t get enough of that kind of respect or recognition today, or others seem to be taking you for granted, you must state your case as clearly as you can.

Making an effort

Let’s say you worked several long evenings or weekends on a special project. Your efforts really made the difference between the success and failure of the project. You get a form-letter thank-you from the person you expected to acknowledge your efforts.

Here’s one approach to consider: Make an appointment with the person from whom you want genuine, specific recognition. This may be your boss, but it may also be your spouse or sister or father; the same principles apply. In that meeting, do four things.

Acknowledge the effort

Even if you didn’t feel the recognition worthy of your contribution, let the person know that you appreciate the effort he or she made to recognize you.

Describe positive recognition

Tell the person about a time when you felt you got the respect and recognition you deserved. Don’t couch it in accusatory language. Just describe it in detail and explain how much better it made you feel about yourself and the work you do. Other people need our help on this. They’re not mind-readers, no matter how much we expect them to be or how hard they try. They need our insights to know how best to value and respect our efforts and get more of our best one-of-a-kind contribution.

Align direction

The personal touch

On Monday mornings, my Grandfather Downing would go into his small office carrying a handful of clippings about people he knew who happened to be mentioned in last week’s newspapers. He wrote a personal note to mail out to each of them. You would be surprised at how something so simple as a handwritten note can touch people so deeply.
Make it clear that you know the person wants to continue to receive your best effort and you want to continue to give it. How can you make that happen together?

Shape new behavior

Explain that all you are asking, in exchange for your best efforts, is recognition of the type you described just a few moments ago. I've never known a boss or spouse or peer to say, "No, I won't do that." Instead, they are likely to be responsive to this request. In a specific and significant way, you have become more visible in this person's eyes.

Do unto others

Just as you will come to expect proper recognition from others, so should you consider how you thank those who have contributed to your effort. There are two things you should keep in mind.

Personalize your comments

Be specific. Think of that form-letter thank-you we mentioned earlier. Even the spoken word can sound like a form letter. Use what you know of the individual to tailor your comments specifically to that person. Margaret Mead once said, "Always remember you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else."

Individualize the group

Whenever you thank all of the people in your family or on your team, single out each individual. It's easy to give praise to a group because you can see the end result of what the group accomplished. The question is who did what to make the project a success? Each individual knows that he or she contributed something that the others didn't. And you may have missed it. Learn at least one specific contribution for each member of the team and make a point of mentioning it in your acknowledgement to the group. Watch people's eyes.

Bury your crystal ball

This lesson is about a simple way to stop the guessing game that ultimately makes our lives miserable. No matter how many times you tell people not to, they still tend to make assumptions. Humans are creatures of habit, and this is what we have always done. Not only do we make assumptions about others, but we assume that they are making the correct assumptions about our needs and wants. Since assumptions are almost always wrong, they have to be fixed, and that complicates things and takes extra time. This creates gigantic stumbling blocks to unlocking human potential.

Expect the unexpected

How often has it happened that just when you thought you had someone pegged as one type of person, he or she completely surprises you? Usually, the strongest and longest-lasting relationships people have are those in which they listen for the truth rather than assuming they know it already.

According to researchers, one of the quickest and most powerful ways to learn something new is to analyze the person, situation, or challenge, and determine how it is unique. Our brains are wired to think relatively. The brain will try to fit this person, this situation, this challenge into a category of people, situations, or challenges it has seen before. This is the quickest and easiest thing to do.
The problem is that we are all looking for the easiest and quickest way to do something because we never have any time. If we can assume something about someone and then assume we are right, that is one less thing to deal with in our hectic schedules. Consider this: Perhaps our schedules are so hectic because we keep making incorrect assumptions and then have to spend more time fixing the resultant misunderstandings. In presuming to know the intentions and motives of others, we trap ourselves.

Start fresh

A deeper understanding comes from a blank slate. We assume nothing. Instead, we ask and observe. This is difficult because we are all confident in our ability to interpret the tiniest motion or comment. Try this the next time you want to assume something. Ask yourself if what you are thinking would make a strong presentation to your boss or family. Do you have any evidence that might encourage trust in your theory? If you don't, ask a couple of questions. Listen intently to the answers. Encourage others to do the same to you.

Let's look at an example. Suppose you catch a friend innocently looking through your wallet. Most people consider wallets and purses to be private. You might assume your friend is trying to steal from you. In actuality, the friend carries a wallet himself, and his looks just like yours -- an honest mistake. The brain tends to assume the worst in any situation. In this case, a confrontation would ensue and the relationship would likely be damaged.

The best antidote to assumptions I know is clarity. Avoid making assumptions based on the appearance of things. Ask a question. Admit what you're uncertain about or need to know. Perceive and demystify. Such efforts at clarity save relationships and promote trust.

Moving forward

This lesson has touched on some simple yet uncommon ways to build trust by changing how we perceive, value, recognize, and interact with others. The assignment will provide you with a way to practice some of these techniques in the world at large, and the quiz will help make sure you understand what it is you are practicing. After you have completed the assignment and quiz, visit the Message Board to discuss how the use of these techniques has affected your personal or professional relationships.

In the next lesson, we'll start zeroing in increasing your "calm energy" level -- the kind of relaxed alertness that star performers use. We'll begin with some simple, compelling insights on turning on the brain's "alertness switches."

Assignment #4

This assignment requires only a small time commitment. First of all, you need a notebook in which to record your observations. This assignment will require two occurrences on two different days. The first day, you need to walk down a relatively busy street, probably during lunch hour or after the work day has ended. Do not make eye contact or acknowledge anyone you see on the street. Make a note of any reactions you get from strangers.

The next day, do the same thing as before, only this time make clear, kind eye contact with each stranger you encounter and give a quick nod of your head. Don't say anything to acknowledge the stranger's presence, unless the stranger speaks to you. Write the reactions of the strangers on this second day on another page in your notebook. How were the strangers' reactions similar? How were they different? Go to the Message Board to describe the responses you received.

If you want to learn more . . .

For more information about the ideas discussed in the lesson, read The Other 90%: Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper.
Quiz #4

Question 1:
Which two qualities make up the basis of trust?

A) Perfection and brilliance
B) Intelligence and beauty
C) Understanding and caring
D) Compliance and control

Question 2:
Which of the following gestures can be “more powerful than words,” according to the information in the lesson?

A) A wave
B) A look
C) Yelling
D) Ignoring

Question 3:
True or false: According to the lesson, you should tell someone when you feel your efforts have gone unrecognized.

A) True
B) False

Question 4:
True or false: In new situations, the brain has a tendency to analyze information as if it is completely new and unexpected.

A) True
B) False

Build calm energy throughout the day

Everyone feels rushed these days, but we’re trapped using tension and urgency as sources of fake energy instead of building the “calm energy” that star performers use.

Be quick without rushing: calm energy

I told you about some easy ways to build trust by changing how we perceive, value, recognize, and interact with others in Lesson 4. In this lesson I’ll offer specific ways to replace tense energy with calm energy, as well as some hints on applying scientific insights about pauses, breaks, and other factors that influence attentiveness, effectiveness, ingenuity, and performance every minute of the day.

One of the keys to uncovering our hidden capacity for greatness is to perform every important task with the highest amount of energy and the least amount of effort possible. This is what is known as streamlining. For increased energy, we have two primary choices: tense energy and calm energy. Most people seem to choose, usually by default, tense energy, an energy state permeated by stress and characterized by high muscle tension and an almost pleasant sense of productivity and power brought on by emergency stress hormones.

Tense energy

For tense energy to work, we must constantly feel the weight of the world pressing down on our increasingly fragile shoulders. There is always something we aren’t doing but should be doing, and we’re going to get in trouble if whatever it is doesn’t get done.

Intense understanding

What is your position as you read these words? What area of your body is the most relaxed? The most tense? Tension is the enemy of calm energy. Feel a tightening in your body? Let it go. Change positions. Stretch. Go to the Message Board and note the number one spot you tend to pick up tension and how you are able to release it. Take note of any insights and relaxation ideas from other students.

Streamlining

With a handheld PC, you can remain in close contact with your coworkers and clients
While in this state, minor irritations and small stumbles are suddenly transformed into full-blown annoyances and gigantic chasms, which serve only to ratchet up the tension level. Underneath the stress-hormone-induced buzz, the billions of messenger chemicals that connect your senses and heart with your brain are being depleted.

Tense energy isn't very efficient. If you think of yourself as an engine, tense energy is like the gas-guzzling American cars of the late 1960s. At the end of the day you're running on empty. Sometimes you can't stop because there is more to do, and over time this can lead to premature aging and health disorders.

Calm energy

The alternative state, calm energy, is characterized by relaxed alertness and clarity of mind. You feel as though you could keep going all day, and part of this stems from the fact that you know you won't have to. You feel as though you have more physical stamina, presence of mind, and creative intelligence. You are in the "zone" of effectiveness and don't hear or feel all of life's messy distractions and distortions. You feel more vital, more alive.

The key to increasing calm energy is to be aware of moments when tension strikes. If you feel a dip in your energy level, try to release some tension and watch how your calm energy level is able to soar again, like a hot-air balloon no longer weighed down by excess ballast. You can still be moving quickly, but you stop rushing yourself mentally. Not only will you feel a greater sense of peace and calm, but your mind will operate at a higher level as well.

Begin at the beginning

One of the most useful places to make some simple changes is first thing in the morning. Think about how you start your day energy-wise. From the moment you get out of bed, your metabolism tries to gauge how much energy will be needed for the day. You need to learn to tell your metabolism that you want calm energy and how much of it you need. Just follow the steps below.

Don't be alarmed

Try pleasant music instead of a harsh alarm in the morning. Take a few moments to breathe and release any tension you notice in the neck, jaw, shoulders, back, or arms. Remember that you aren't getting out of bed to please your boss or the shareholders in your company. You are doing it for those you love and who depend on you. Maybe you are doing it to make your mark on the world, to make a difference. Regardless, those people want you to be relaxed. When you rise from the covers, do it slowly, giving your muscles a chance to ease into activity. These start-the-day actions are generating calm energy.

Lights before action

Do you ever fall asleep on the couch and wake up in the middle of the night wondering where you were, still groggy and fumbling for the light? Why do you fumble for the light? How long have you lived in your house? Can't you get from your couch to the bedroom in the dark? Sure you can. The light helps lift the fog. The brain responds to the influx of light, and turning on a few extra lights in the morning, or stepping outside for several moments of sunshine, boosts mood and calm energy.

Become a morning person

To become a morning person, you need to get up early. This is not always easy, but it is worth it. When you wake up early, you have more time to do things you enjoy, and you feel more energized throughout the day.

In conclusion, it is important to be aware of your energy levels and to take steps to increase your calm energy. Start by making simple changes in the morning, such as using pleasant music instead of a harsh alarm, taking a few moments to breathe and release tension, and getting up early. By doing these things, you can increase your calm energy and feel more vital, more alive.
Don't keep hitting the snooze button then get up at the last second and rush around. Take an activity you enjoy and do it first thing in the morning. It could be a brisk walk or a few jumping jacks. A little activity signals the brain to reduce tension and increase alertness and calm energy.

Break the fast

Millions of mothers can't be wrong. Don't make the mistake of skipping breakfast. Even if it's just a bowl of good cereal, eat a little food in the morning. It sets the stage for many hours of calm energy and better health.

Once you are out of bed, how you stand and sit can boost or damage your energy level, as we shall see on the next page.

The posture-performance link

It's amazing: Up to thirty percent of your brilliance and overall energy may depend on your shoulder position and posture.

Face the world straight on

When the proverbial weight of the world is on your shoulders, do they slump from the strain of holding it? When stress strikes, do you slouch and clench your neck, back, or arms? Many people do. Research suggests this can restrict breathing and reduce blood flow and oxygen to the brain and senses by up to one third. It also strains the spine, slows your reflexes, and does nothing to alleviate feelings of tension or distress.

Contrary to popular opinion, great posture isn't something you can force by just throwing your shoulders back. That leads to more tension from the effort. Good posture must be unlocked. And that's one key to your hidden capacity. As you relax and straighten higher and higher, more calm energy is released.

Hold your head high

This is a head-on society. You're supposed to face the world straight-on, but literally leading with your head can lead to horrible posture. No matter what people spend the day doing, shopping, typing, driving, cooking, etc., their heads are usually out in front and not properly balanced on their necks.

If your head isn't properly centered on your neck, not only does your neck feel tense, you feel more stress. To experience a centered position, take a moment right now to sit comfortably and breathe naturally. Imagine you are balancing a book on the top of your head. Gently push up against the book. You might also imagine a gentle sky hook is lifting your head upward. Can you feel the balance and improved posture?

Align your neck

One of the least known and most effective ways to reduce strain on the neck, shoulders, and back is to consistently engage the rectus capitus anterior at the base of your neck. When this little muscle is toned it helps keep your head balanced on your neck.

The "head nod" exercise will work to tone this muscle. Starting in a comfortable...
sitting or standing position, let your neck lengthen, as if gently pulled upward by that imaginary hook. Then nod your head slightly. Repeat this exercise a dozen times a day.

The next step is to understand the perfect alignment between your neck and head. Stretch out your neck, moving the top of your head upward, chin slightly in, shoulders broadening, lower back flattening. Lean your head to the right then to the left and back to the center. In which position does it feel centered? Move it forward and back this time, again searching for the centered point.

One way to turn this into a continuous habit is to think taller, to imagine you are almost bumping into the tops of doorways, but don't duck; embrace the bump. Don't push or strain your neck; simply bring your head back over your shoulders, with your chin slightly in. If you're doing it correctly, you will sense the difference, and you can always check a mirror to see it.

**Strategic pauses and essential breaks**

It's a paradox of unlocking your hidden capacity: To get ahead, we have to know when -- and precisely how -- to pull back. Think of these strategic pauses and essential breaks as chances to recharge your battery. This energy influences thoughts, feelings, attentiveness, and actions -- giving you a clear boost. In this way, your work will absorb a continuous influx of energy, making you more effective at whatever you do. However, if you skip the next break, your battery will falter, and your energy level will fall unavoidably.

Taking breaks won't take care of everything. People also need to get more sleep, but one overlooked problem is the tendency to push and push throughout the day without stopping to contemplate how best to continue your push. Optimum efficiency and capacity can only be maintained for a maximum of thirty minutes at a stretch. When we work longer than that, our problem-solving time increases by up to 500 percent and our patience decreases by at least that much.

**Don't push it**

To reduce the pushing, I suggest strategic pauses, which require 15 to 30 seconds, and essential breaks, which take several minutes at mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Each of these requires similar key elements.

**Catch and adjust your breath**

Shallow breathing increases stress and fatigue, further taxing your already-stretched-to-the-breaking-point body. Deep, relaxed breathing will increase your vitality and energy throughout the day.

**Deep focus**

If you have been sitting and staring at a computer screen all day, your eyes are taking a beating. Tear yourself away from the screen and gaze longingly out a window at a faraway object, or even across the room at an interesting piece of artwork. If you have just spent time gazing into the distance, then take a moment to look in your wallet at a picture of a loved one. These easy actions help provide a brief and vital rest for the most active eye muscles, prompting a healthy exchange of fluids in the eyes and providing increased oxygen and other nutrients.

**Loosen up**

An optimum day

Think about your best day ever, energy-wise. What was the pacing? How often did you change your focus, get up and move around, eat a few bites of great food, step back to re-set your vantage point, flow with unexpected challenges, or enjoy a moment of humor here and there? We each have the ability to bring more of that calm energy into our lives and work -- if we can break the habit of rushing non-stop.
Sitting still saps your energy. Most anything you do other than sitting will increase your energy level. Even if you just get up and take a casual stroll around the room -- a good thing to do as you are reading this -- it will be something to break up your day.

The hydration explanation

People need to drink water throughout the day because the water will activate energy in your body just as it powers a hydroelectric plant. Not only does drinking water ever thirty minutes or so increase energy, it also keeps you healthy. Ice-cold water performs this function even more effectively because it stimulates all three of your brains. In addition, there is always the idea that increased water intake helps to burn calories, and the burning of excess fat also increases energy production.

Tickle your funny bone

Most people take their work or their lives (and for some it amounts to the same thing) far too seriously. If your computer crashes and you have a report due in an hour, is that really a life-threatening situation? Of course not. Don't let life pass you by and leave you grumpy and unfulfilled. Take a moment to laugh. Non-hurtful humor is the best, especially when you can laugh at yourself. Every time you have a hearty laugh, a whole series of biochemical events occur. Energy increases, brain wave activity changes in positive ways, and hormone production re-balances. Take a moment now to visit the Message Board and tell your fellow students about a personal situation that tickled your funny bone.

Eat smart

For millions of Americans, the idea of eating in between meals has been equated with getting fat. Quite the opposite is true. Eating the right kind of snacks between meals can increase your metabolism and with it, your energy level. Eating smaller, nutritious meals and snacks helps to stabilize blood-sugar levels, which in turn optimizes memory, learning, and performance.

Moving forward

This lesson has touched on some simple yet uncommon ways to increase your energy all day long. You'll want to investigate the assignment to understand your own energy wave, and the quiz will help you better grasp some of the more difficult concepts from the lesson. On the Message Board, discuss your employer's policy about breaks during the work day. How many breaks do you typically take in a given work day? Does it seem like enough? How would you change that amount if you could, and what would you do during those breaks to increase your energy?

In the next lesson, we'll focus on reclaiming more of your life each evening and weekend -- in some unexpected ways.

Assignment #5

Take out a piece of blank graph paper. Plot your own energy level throughout the course of a couple of days. Explain the chart to a family member or friend and have that person gauge the accuracy of your ratings.

Use the Message Board to gain further clarification from your instructor or fellow students about the chart and how it works, and to discuss any interesting results that are revealed.
If you want to learn more . . .

For more information about the ideas discussed in the lesson, or for more tools to help you with this assignment, read *The Other 90%: Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life* by Robert K. Cooper.

**Quiz #5**

**Question 1:**
True or false: Energy is energy. Wherever it comes from, it's good.
A) True  
B) False

**Question 2:**
Which of these is a method of boosting calm energy in the morning?
A) Going to sleep very early  
B) Rushing to get everything started at once  
C) Going out to a quick breakfast  
D) Turning on lights in the house

**Question 3:**
How can you tell if your neck is properly aligned?
A) You lean to all four sides to check.  
B) You go to a doctor.  
C) You wear a hat.  
D) You throw your shoulders back.

**Question 4:**
Which of the following should be considered only during essential breaks, not also during strategic pauses?
A) Eating smart  
B) Loosening up  
C) Adjusting breathing  
D) Drinking water

**Reclaim your life off the job**

As Emerson put it, "We're always getting ready to live but we never truly live." These days, we find ourselves doing too much and living too little.

**Work-life transitions**

You saw in Lesson 5 how we're trapped using tension and urgency as sources of fake energy instead of building the calm energy that star performers use. In this lesson, we'll explore specific ways to put more of your best self back into your life beyond work -- and bring out more of the best in the people who matter most to you.

Your time at work probably has a different intensity level than your time at home. For most people, spending time with family and loved ones away from work tends to be less intense than the on-the-go lifestyle associated with the workplace.

The problem for many of us, however, is that we get home and we're still go-go-going as if we never left work. We cook dinner, kiss the kids, open the mail, through the plotting.
glance at the newspaper headlines, wolf down our food, then either make a date with the television or dive into our work-away-from-work activities -- nightly errands, parental or grandparental duties, catching up on paperwork, preparing reports, or paying bills.

These are all probably things that need to be done, but these things require energy. In order to revive your energy at the end of the day, you need a brief "time out" period to shake off stress and tension and start the evening with renewed vigor.

Winding down

Consider an alternative: During the period at the end of the work day and the start of home life, energy can be at its lowest point. You are most vulnerable to an onset of the tension you have been avoiding thus far through your reliance on calm energy. If you let tense energy or tense tiredness take over, all of your molehills become mountains, and all of your petty annoyances become crises.

Before you head for home at the end of the day (even if you work at home), schedule a decompression, or cool-down, period. This can include making selected phone calls to those people you believe will be supportive and positive. You can also spend your last minutes cleaning and organizing. While you do this, and on the ride home, free your mind from the pressures of the day.

Home, Jeeves

Try these suggestions for leaving all your troubles at work and bringing only positive energy through the door at home:

♦ Catch some extra afternoon light. While most people are turning off lights as they leave the office, you should turn on a couple of extra ones, at least for a few moments. Better yet, take a break and step out into the setting sunlight. Light offers an ancient and powerful way to lift your late-day energy and mood.

♦ Free up your shoulders, free up your energy. Return to the exercises we discussed in the previous lesson. Spend some time balancing your head and neck and easing the tension in your muscles and joints. Engage in some simple movements -- neck rotations, shoulder shrugs, and wrist circles. These increase blood flow and help to forget the pressures of the work day.

♦ Catch a glimpse of the big picture. Whenever possible, take the scenic route home. Finding a scene of natural beauty can lift your spirits and better prepare you for the beauty that is your home life. When you can, forgo the interstate and avoid the traffic snarl. Your route through the hills or by the river may take a little longer, but it will prove an antidote to fatigue, and it will promote a more positive mood, increased energy, and better health.

♦ Change the way you walk through the door. You need to work this one out in advance or else those crises we talked about earlier may intensify even further. Try out a new greeting upon seeing your loved ones for the first time at the end of the day. Too many of us are guilty of starting right in with complaints. Instead, tell each family member how thrilled you are to see them, but keep it short and sweet. Then, delay talking for a little while longer. Instead, disappear to change your clothes, wash your face, jump in the shower, do some stretching exercises, put on some music, or enjoy a beverage or snack. You might even step outside and go for a short walk.

After this brief separation, you should be ready to get more out of your home life. We will learn more about doing that on the next lesson page.
As soon as I catch up on my work, then I'll relax, we say. Then I'll be there for you. Then I'll make it up to you. Then I'll show you how much I love you. Another time, another place, a different environment, a better situation, a more golden opportunity. Just as soon as . . . As Emerson put it, "We're always getting ready to live but we never truly live."

These days, we find ourselves doing too much and living too little. Do those you are close to wonder what happened to the person who used to come home from work every day with a peppy step and a loving smile? Do they lament the loss of that person who was always quick with a joke to lighten the situation? You used to be lots of fun to be around when you had no money.

The good news is, in this case at least, you can have your cake and eat it too. You can have just as much energy at home as you do at work. Here's how.

Embrace the munchies

Conventional wisdom has always encouraged people not to snack very close to their regular evening meal. The thinking has always been that if you eat a snack, you won't be hungry for dinner. This kind of thinking was invented to discourage people from scarfing down an entire box of Pop-Tarts before dinner. In truth, eating before you eat can increase blood sugar levels and raise your energy level when it is most vulnerable.

The key is to eat in moderation and to eat healthy, low-fat snacks like vegetables, yogurt, or tomato soup. It has always been very classy to have an appetizer before the meal. Think of this snack as your appetizer.

A walk on the energetic side

The half-hour immediately following the evening meal is essential in determining your energy level for the remainder of the evening and the quality of your nighttime slumber. Your body feels satiated and so it begins to wind down after eating. However, a few minutes of light activity will remind your body that you aren't yet ready for bed. This will boost your metabolic rate and call on more energy.

Begin your exercise by pushing back from the dinner table. Then take a walk with someone you are close to. If you have a family, make it a family outing because everyone, even the young and vigorous, can use the extra energy. Walking with your significant other can lead to improved romance as you encourage closeness. Even without romantic entanglements, this stroll can lead to family bonding and shared interest.

The benefits extend on into the nighttime hours because research suggests that light physical activity in the evening can improve your deepest nighttime sleep. The deeper and more refreshing your sleep, the more completely your battery will be recharged for the next day's activities.

Sweat the right small stuff and go liming

It was primarily through parable and story that as a boy I first learned why it matters to sweat the right small stuff in life. The straw that broke the camel's back. A needle in a haystack. If you are constantly bothered by small frustrations that fester and ooze resentment, then too much of your energy is being wasted. These pet peeves rob us of our drive to incorporate change, to look for a better way. We are no longer interested in ingenuity; we just want to get Bill in accounting to stop smacking his darn chewing gum!

The lighter side

Every single day, humor is a gift of energy. It startles us out of our routines. It brings us closer together. On your walk following the evening meal, encourage each household member to describe the funniest thing that happened today. If you live alone, then you might do this on the phone with a friend or on the sidewalk with a neighbor. Even just a few minutes of evening play can really pay off.

Original liming

The idea of "liming" originated on the Caribbean Islands over 300 years ago. The first Europeans to arrive were sick or dying of diseases like scurvy, which resulted from a...
The peeve principle

Both on the job and at home, most of us feel well equipped to handle emergencies. We may even feel that this skill is the main thrust of what we do. We solve problems, defuse crises, and basically keep things moving along smoothly. What about the little things that cause us to seethe inexplicably? Those little things will drive our relationships to ruin:

1. Toilet seat left up
2. Clothes strewn about
3. Toothpaste uncapped
4. Late for dinner
5. Dishes unwashed
6. Forgetting to say thank you
7. Forgetting anniversaries and birthdays

These are the kinds of things that no one wants to bring up because they may seem so silly and trivial. However, the energy people expend stewing over them isn't trivial at all. Without this energy, you may never discover your hidden capacity and deepest capabilities.

Begin right now with a simple checklist of the things that leave you gritting your teeth or fuming -- and, conversely, laughing or smiling. Certain things bug us or boost us. The important thing is to figure out what they are and create an atmosphere of sharing with loved ones and co-workers.

Lemon or lime?

Once you've got a better focus on which little things matter and which don't, devote some attention to getting really good at doing nothing, guilt-free. What is more valuable, answering ten more e-mails at work or ten minutes of doing absolutely nothing? Chances are, you will get to the ten e-mails another time, but when are you going to take ten minutes to do nothing?

One life skill well worth knowing comes from Chapter 19 of The Other 90%. It's called liming. The island people believe that if you give your best to your work, then you are entitled to leave work where it belongs. For them, your time away from work is time well-spent "liming" with family and friends. Liming means getting gone -- doing, or not doing, what you love to, guilt-free.

Where do you want to go?

It takes a special mindset to disappear, and to do so without feeling any guilt. Sure, most of us can fall asleep in front of the television, but that just means we're exhausted. Liming has nothing to do with exhaustion; instead it has to do with using the energy we have in ways that are creative and fun. Have you ever left work on a Friday and said to your co-workers, "I'm gone. Time's a-wasting!?" You'll be amazed at how much more invigorating and satisfying life can become once you get good at liming.

After reading this, you'll probably get back to your daily routine. Before you do so, think about whether "getting gone" really matters. Unlike computers, copiers, desk chairs, and other resources, your energy and perspective cannot be bought or sold, stocked up or saved. You use them up every day, and you have to replenish them. The way to do that is to do nothing once in a while.

Moving forward

This lesson has touched on some simple yet uncommon ways to reclaim your
best energy and happiness beyond work. The quiz will relate these concepts more concretely, and the homework assignment will give you a chance to do something you may rarely do. Once you have completed the assignment, go to the Message Board and inform others in the class how it went. You may find it interesting to read what happened to your classmates as well.

In the next lesson, we'll explore the many benefits of building a long "time horizon" and aligning your daily efforts with your biggest goals and greatest strengths. Dive right in!

Assignment #6

Practice the liming you learned about in this lesson. Take at least part of a weekend day away from work. Surely you have one vacation day left (if not, plan it for a regular holiday). Announce that you are getting gone, and then plan to do something fun and fulfilling.

The best liming can often be accomplished in your own backyard. Lie down in the grass and look up at the clouds. If you stay out there long enough, look up at the stars as well. Walk around and enjoy whatever is going on in a natural environment. Soak it in. The key is to avoid guilt. You gave your all to your work while you were there. This time is for you.

When you get back, go to the Message Board and post a brief description of how it went. Did the guilt melt away, or was it still lingering in the back of your mind? Did anyone come up with alternate methods for dispensing with the guilt? Post those on the Message Board as well.

If you want to learn more . . .

For more information about the ideas discussed in the lesson, read The Other 90%: Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper. (For an introduction into farsightedness, the third of the four keystones that make up the foundation of The Other 90% (and a primary concept of Lesson 7), read Chapters 13-19.)

Quiz #6

Question 1:
True or false: It can help to take a walk or drive through nature to relieve stress and fatigue.
A) □ True
B) □ False

Question 2:
True or false: Snacking at a time too close to dinner makes you lose your appetite.
A) □ True
B) □ False

Question 3:
Which of these is not a benefit of an evening walk after dinner?
A) □ It lets you return business calls from your cell phone
B) □ Improved romantic relationships
C) □ Family bonding and shared experiences
D) □ Deeper and more satisfying nighttime rest

Question 4:
What does liming mean?
A) □ Taking a sick day
B) □ Asking for a raise
C) □ Getting gone
Extend your time horizon
The most successful men and women keep one eye on the future and never let go of their big dreams and defining talents.

Keep glancing farther ahead than you have to
In Lesson 6, I told you of some ways to reclaim your best energy and happiness beyond work. Extending your time horizon to help you become more innovative and better at managing change will be the topic of this lesson.

The problem with the concept of time is that most people view it as a curse. They struggle every day with now, just trying to get to the next hour, the next minute. This view is far too constrictive and narrow. Of course, there are those who live trapped in the past and contemplate what might have been if only they had done this differently way back when. Visionaries spend much of their time focused on that day in the distant future when things will all be different, and much, much better.

In order to live life to the fullest and reach our potential, we need a broader view of time that incorporates all of these perspectives to varying degrees.

Your time horizon
We must learn to devote most of our attention to the present while always holding it in light of the past's lessons and the future's possibilities. (A good discussion of this topic is available in The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership & Life.) In order to live life to its energetic fullest, you have to focus most directly on the here and now. However, those who ignore the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them, so learn from your past and keep an eye on the future -- five years or more down the line -- in order to get an idea of where you are headed.

Those individuals with this more complete time horizon are the leaders of our country, the decision-makers who thrive under pressure, and are more successful on their own terms. Unfortunately, studies suggest that those people who are trapped by narrow time horizons are unable to aspire to or embrace the change that proceeds fulfillment.

The past's lessons
Without history and memory there is little hope that any of us will reach our true potential. Therefore, at crucial (and not-so-crucial) junctures throughout the day, try to remember where you came from and the experiences that have shaped your life to this point.

Both blessings and adversity from the past will help you face the challenges and rewards of the present, as well as sharpen your perspective on where you are today. People who have had the roughest childhoods or whose ancestors had very difficult lives may have greater access to their hidden capacity. Think of the things your ancestors did to help secure the freedom within your grasp today. Reflecting upon the circle of birth, life, and death of generations of your family will bring up powerful emotions, and these emotions are the conductors of energy.

The future's possibilities
When you finish reading the word future, that moment of the future is already the past. This rather simplistic example serves to demonstrate why you shouldn't look ahead minute to minute or hour to hour, because your future will be upon you before you know it. You need a long-term view -- at least five years -- in order to create an axis upon which the time line of your growth potential will flow.

At the same time, don't be limited by how far into the future you can actually see. Ask yourself what the future holds. This is not making predictions, because predictions deal in how you will react to future events. In order to reach your fullest capabilities, you need to dictate and create your future, not simply react to it. All possibilities are open to you. How big can you dream?

"When my grandfather Cooper and I planted trees, he would stop every half-hour or so. Reaching into his pocket, he would take out a small compass he carried. I always knew what he would say next: 'Robert, let's stop and get our bearings.'" - Robert K. Cooper, The Other 90%.

Finding direction

Of course, in the case of Grandfather Cooper, the compass referred to a person's relative position on the earth. He meant to determine literally where he was in relation to the direction he wanted to go -- whether north, south, east, or west.

For the purposes of your life and your goals, however, the compass serves a metaphorical purpose. We all need to stop sometimes and get our emotional and spiritual bearings. Are we closer today to our goal than we were last week? If not, what can we do to correct our course? You might build some variation of these compass readings into your strategic pauses (discussed in Lesson 5). It is in this way that you keep closing the distance between where you are right now and where you most want to be. You will see strategies for chasing your dreams on the next lesson page.

Align your life with your biggest dreams

Big dreams are the catalysts of big successes. Those of us who have modest successes are often satisfied with what we have, and our modest dreams reflect that satisfaction.

Where did you come from? Did your ancestors cross an ocean with only the clothes on their backs, hoping to leave behind the victimization and persecution of their homeland? Many people probably told them they didn't stand a chance, but they had big dreams. The American Dream is the dream of those people who came to this country with nothing. It is the dream of freedom. People who strive for such a dream come very close to their fullest capabilities. Big dreams will help lead you to that state. They keep us engaged with life's possibilities so we don't sink from sight in the quicksand of old habits and ongoing fears or frustrations.

Whenever you don't think you can dream that big from the lowly confines of your office cubicle, think how lonely a new country can be when you don't know anyone, or even the language. Big dreams are synonymous with big goals, the kind of goals we need energy and spark in order to reach.

Better to be daring than doubting

However, there's a barrier to overcome. "Don't be so idealistic," conventional wisdom warns. Conventional wisdom is just another alias for the dreaded

Sky-travelers

Everyone has heard of Galileo, Newton, and Copernicus, but what do you know about Johannes Kepler? He grew up sickly and abused, but he had an irrepressible spirit. "Let us create vessels and sails adjusted to the heavenly air," he wrote to Galileo. "In the meantime we shall prepare for the brave sky-travelers maps of the celestial bodies." Kepler's work contributed greatly to the telescope and the science of optics.

The essential office equipment

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amygdala from Lesson 2. It is that little voice in our head that whispers, "It's not wise to be too daring. Besides, you'll only be disappointed. And what if you fail? No, shrink your dreams down to size. Make them so small they most assuredly will come true. Settle for that. It's enough."

If you accept this way of thinking, then you have largely failed even before you have begun.

**When you wish upon yourself**

Let's do an exercise. Create two columns on a piece of paper. The heading for the left-hand column should be: My biggest, boldest wish is . . . At this point, let your imagination run rampant: to sail the seven seas, to help with the winning play in a championship game, to fly an airplane, to improve the education or character of children, to invent a new food dish, to marry for love, to bring about peace on Earth, to save just one helpless child, to curb world hunger, to halt the spread of disease, etc.

The heading for the right-hand column should be: I can't because . . . Give valid reasons why you can't make this boldest wish of yours come true. What is it that stands in your way? It's true that very few of us may single-handedly win a championship game, but you need to have a better reason for why you can't than "It's too hard." In too many cases, we simply say that we can't. Those two little words shouldn't keep you from your deepest and most compelling aspirations. That can only lead to regret and heartache (not to mention mid-life crises).

Find people who believe in you, and in whom you believe. Ask them about their greatest desires and what they are doing to fulfill them. Sometimes it is difficult to talk about dreams and aspirations because verbalizing them can seem to trivialize them. It doesn't. Imagine you're riding on an airplane or commuter train and the person beside you says, "What's your story?" or "What gets you the most excited about life these days?" How would you answer that? You would describe your dreams with the passion that can only come from conviction, passion you will learn more about on the next lesson page.

**Launch that rocket in your backyard**

You will never know the absolute limits of your capabilities until you pursue something you are truly passionate about. Passionate birdwatchers will risk frostbite, drowning, and falls from great heights just to get a glimpse of the tailfeather of a rare specimen. Passionate cooks will invent new tastes and burn themselves hundreds of times in the process. A person who loves sports suddenly finds herself able to memorize sheets and sheets of inane statistics, even though in the past she has loathed the very mention of mathematics.

**Finding passion**

Passion's effects are always profound in the sense that they come from places deep within us. Unfortunately, so many children are told from before the time they can walk that as soon as they do take those first steps, they had better be steps on the line of conformity. We think that is the only way to get ahead in life. Getting ahead in life should mean truly living the life of your dreams, and you will never get that by toeing the line. When you wake up on Monday mornings do you view the prospect of another week with dread or look forward to it with excitement?

Don't keep your talents to yourself

Pause to think back across the past day or week. Ask yourself: How much of this time was spent doing something I love to do or shine at doing? Am I drawing on the utmost of my capabilities? Am I noticing and reinforcing the best in other people? Can I take on from others more of what I'm best at and ask them to lighten my load of the things I'm not great at?

It is that rarest of persons who goes to work every day prepared to be thrilled by another day doing his or her job. Even people you would expect love their jobs -- actors, sports stars, musicians -- often feel a sense of monotony about...
their work. Work is always hard, no matter how fun it may be, and any commitment feels like a chore at certain times. You should be worried, though, when your job cannot even engender enthusiasm, let alone excitement. That road leads all too quickly to numbness and regret. In fact, recent research suggests that a lack of passion for your work may hurt you more than a lack of ability for it.

The trick with passion isn't in creating it. Passion can breed in even the most adverse of circumstances. No, the trick is in finding passion where it hides. A busy life provides a great disguise for passion. Ask yourself: What do I love so much that I would do it for free? I would pay someone to let me do it. This is your passion. It may be a childhood dream long buried and forgotten. It may be something you always enjoyed but had no talent for and so were denied the opportunity of exploring it. Whatever it is that puts a smile on your face and a spring in your step, that is your passion. Most of us have more than one.

Follow your passion with action

Make a list of your top five passions. Once you know how to ask the right questions, the things you love to do usually bubble out onto the paper. Use this list to give you focus, to let you put your passions at the center of your life, rather than leaving them lurking and languishing about the perimeter. By the way, do you know the most compelling interests for each of the people closest to you? That's important, too.

Push a meeting back or take a shorter lunch and schedule in time to do those things you love every day. Work in the yard, play with your children, write in your journal, rekindle your romances, play the sport you loved as a kid. With these new routines in place, you will find yourself looking forward to every day with a renewed sense of vigor.

The simplest pleasures in life lead to the greatest joys. Those who are always waiting around for the one exciting event are disappointed, either by its lack of grandeur or by its lack of fruition. Every single dose of positive reinforcement -- a few moments of excitement, caring, enthusiasm, and enjoyment -- can produce positive changes in cardiac rhythms, brain waves, the immune system, and hormonal balance. Whenever possible, focus on that which brings you joy because every smile is like a burst of renewed energy.

Take notes

Whatever we focus on tends to grow stronger. Not only is the pen mightier than the sword, it is more connected to the human heart than the keyboard, according to the latest research. Therefore, when it comes to uncovering hidden passions, a small journal in hand can be very valuable in day-to-day life.

You may be passionate about something for which you seem to have no talent whatsoever. However, there is almost always a way to apply some natural ability of yours to that about which you are passionate. You don't have to be great at what you love, as long as you can find a meaningful way to pursue it.

Unfortunately, we have been raised to believe that if we aren't good at something, there's no point in doing it. Our perfectly natural lack of talent is seen as a weakness to be remedied. This leads us to look elsewhere for our passions. You are doomed to disappointment. Our passions find us, and if we fail to acknowledge them, it is like failing to launch the rocket that is waiting in our own backyard.

Moving forward
This lesson has touched on some simple yet uncommon ways to influence the future and bring out more of the best in ourselves and others. The assignment delves further into what it means to launch the rocket in your backyard, so be sure to check that out. Also, discuss your passions with your fellow students on the Message Board. You never know where a new friend or hobby may be lurking.

In the final lesson, we'll review some insights and skills on making adversity your ally and making more of a difference in the world around you.

Assignment #7

Determine what your natural talents are. Everyone has at least a couple of things that they can do better than 90 percent of the people in the world. Sometimes, these talents are difficult to determine because we may never have used them. Make a list of those talents. Now, next to each talent you have listed, estimate a percentage that defines how close you feel that talent is to becoming a strength.

To help you with this assignment, look back over the appropriate section in Chapter 9 of the text listing activities and approaches to consider.

If you want to learn more . . .

For more information about the ideas discussed in the lesson, read The Other 90%: Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life by Robert K. Cooper.

Quiz #7

Question 1:
A complete time horizon should contemplate things how far into the future?
A) One week
B) One month
C) Five years
D) 200 years

Question 2:
What analogy did Grandfather Cooper use when considering where a person was relative to where he or she wanted to be?
A) Garden
B) Telescope
C) Compass
D) Tree

Question 3:
True or false: According to the lesson, when you talk about your biggest dreams, it trivializes them.
A) True
B) False

Question 4:
True or false: The events that create the most lasting happiness are the big, life-altering occurrences.
A) True
B) False

Manage adversity and stress in a changing world

Life and leadership can be seen as laboratories of development, and some of the greatest chances for each of
us to learn and grow come when times are hardest and conditions are most uncertain.

Make adversity your ally

I showed you how men and women regardless of field or industry find success by focusing on the future and holding on to their defining dreams in the last lesson. In this, the final lesson, I'll provide a variety of tools and insights for better managing stressful circumstances and facing adversity.

If you want to unlock your hidden potential, sooner or later you need a variety of practical ways to outwit the ancient brain's tendency to react to rising adversity and stress by doing more of the same, only harder, longer, faster, and louder.

Grow your roots

Let's face it: many people have a low tolerance for discomfort. The moment things get really hard, we're accustomed to hearing complaints and excuses -- often our own. Research demonstrates that people who are mentally, physically, and emotionally prepared are better able to grow from the harsh tests of life. Such individuals seldom feel victimized by circumstances and tend to learn more from challenges. They're healthier and live longer, too.

While I was growing up, I would help my grandparents with small jobs after school. I would sometimes find my grandfather outside walking around or planting trees. Even with his canes and his other disabilities, he planted hundreds of trees in his later years. He was a fellow determined not to let life's downturns beat him.

In his later years, he never watered the trees he planted. When I asked him why, he said that in most cases watering trees only spoiled them. He said he hadn't thought that way years before, but now he did. "If you water them," he said, "each generation gets weaker and has shallower roots." He contended that without water a tree's roots will go farther down into the earth to find moisture. Similarly, we need to focus more attention on toughening up and growing our roots deep. Here are three simple, practical places to start.

Lungs and legs

Making it through tough times requires stamina. If your body doesn't have it, your spirit is likely to flag. Make sure you have the legs and lungs for meeting and defeating adversity. Use change-of-pace exercise to build stamina and toughness. If you can burn off a few of the excess stress hormones that accumulate, well that can only be a good thing, right?

Aerobic exercise increases oxygen flow to your body and all three of your brains. This type of exercise -- walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, skating, and rowing -- heightens your threshold for and improves your recovery time from high-stress situations. The last thing you want is to face any challenging situation with a feeling of ineptitude.

Once you have your routine down, spice it up by gradually changing the pace - - speed it up, slow it down, jog instead of running, swim a different stroke. This boosts your resilience. You see, once you become comfortable with a certain pace of exercise, the body can become complacent. The goal is to build

Stress-free sleep

Whenever you're under stress, rest takes on special importance. To sleep more deeply tonight, get up after your evening meal and go for a light walk of at least five minutes. This will deepen sleep by raising your body's core temperature within three to five hours before you fall asleep. At bedtime, put the day to rest. Think inspiring thoughts. Imagine your blessings. Relax your body. All these things matter.

Better safe than sorry

Although most of what we worry about never comes to pass, an ounce of prevention can help you sleep at night instead of staying up worrying about worst case scenarios.

Accidental damage protection
recoverability. You want the body to recuperate from heavy aerobic exercise more quickly. However, don't do anything your body isn't ready for -- you should never feel pain when exercising.

Building the stomach for it

When facing a difficult challenge, people are sometimes asked if they have the stomach for it. This is almost always meant metaphorically. Can you handle the problem intellectually or physically? It doesn't necessarily have to do with the stomach. But it should. The abdominal muscles are the strongest muscles in the body. They provide us the power to exert and resist force. A weak abdominal area will contribute to lower back pain and problems with posture, movement, and breathing.

Two specific muscles, the transversalis and the pyramidalis, strengthen your lower abdomen and protect your lower back. Those muscles can be toned by a simple breathing exercise I call the transpyramid. (For more on the transpyramid exercise, read the appropriate section in Chapter 15 of The Other 90%: How to Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership & Life.) Sit up comfortably. Take a normal breath in, breathe out, and then forcibly blow out as much air from your lungs as you can, allowing your lower abdomen (which is where these two key muscles are located) to come in and up as much as possible. At first, you might use your hands to gently push inward and upward on the lower abdomen during the exhalation part of the exercise.

Now try the exercise again. Slowly exhale and, as you reach the place where you normally finish breathing out, smoothly and forcefully breathe out more, using the power of your lower abdominal muscles. Work up to doing a total of ten of these exercises each day.

The following modified crunches will allow the lower abdomen to keep up with the transpyramid. Lie down on a padded surface, knees bent and feet flat against the floor. Cross your arms on your chest or keep them behind your head. Then, with your lower and middle back held flat against the floor, raise your head and shoulders about 30 degrees. Be sure not to arch your back or push out your lower abdomen. When you get to the 30-degree angle, hold it, then descend slowly. When you first try this, only do a few per day until you feel more comfortable and stronger. Work up to 50 repetitions every other day.

Put your heart into it

Robert Frost wrote, "Something we were withholding made us weak, until we found out that it was ourselves." I believe he was talking about the heart, about the realization that most people check the best of themselves at the doorway to stress and challenge.

Having heart is a trait of genuine leadership in every walk of life. You build your physical heart by exercise, by regular walks or other forms of aerobic fitness. You also build your true heart by your involvement with difficult situations -- your own and those of others you care about, especially those who are less fortunate, including children and the elderly. Think about your life: How can you develop more heart -- one day, one challenge, at a time?

The stronger your heart, the younger you feel -- as you shall see on the next page.

Aim to die young, as late as possible

Byron wrote, "Years steal fire from the mind as vigor from the limbs." As a poet, You're as young as you feel
Byron recounted only what he saw, not what was possible. It's true that the passing of years generally saps our energy and memory just as surely as it absorbs our physical strength. But those losses are in no way predestined.

Current scientific knowledge suggests that a human being has an optimum lifespan of 120 years. However, the majority of us check out almost 50 years earlier than that, when we should be just on the other side of middle age. If, on the other hand, you challenge yourself and pursue intellectual activities, there's no reason why you can't be as sharp -- or sharper -- at age 70, 80, and even 90 as you were at 20.

Every moment you are on this earth, you have a choice -- you either continue growing, or you start dying. Each and every one of your trillions of cells tries to improve its capabilities throughout its life cycle. By extension, we should also strive constantly to improve. If not, we are essentially slowly dying.

Stimulated brain cells begin to grow and change. Every time you solve a problem or listen to a new piece of music, your brain cells produce more electrochemical energy, form new connections, remodel nerve endings, improve receptor networks, and revitalize brain function. Your difficult and challenging interactions with life improve the overall quality of your life. Remember to live as deeply and completely as you can. Here are some suggestions.

Apply all senses

Improve your sensory experiences and you will slow down the aging process because your living body wants to live longer to experience more beauty. It can be a magnificent sunset, a heartrending piece of music, an exquisite meal, a warm embrace, a child's laugh, a breathtaking flower. Engage all of your senses and unlock more of your life's potential.

Observe natural wonders

This doesn't mean that you have to go to the Grand Canyon every few months just to renew your energy. You can stare out your window at a tree or a floating cloud formation. You can monitor the progress of the fish in your aquarium. What about gathering in all aspects of an approaching storm? Look up, look down, remember to look all around and notice how much sharper your mind becomes.

The Peter Pan complex

The story of Peter Pan is one of a boy who never wanted to grow up. He thought he could remain a kid forever and he encouraged other children to do the same. Of course, we all do grow up and take on larger and larger responsibilities, but the kid inside of us never completely disappears. We often simply lose sight of him or her.

One way to avoid this is to have as much fun as you can. Tell jokes, fall down on purpose, try to figure out why life works the way it does. Write poetry and engage in word play. All of these examples push you to look at the familiar with new, and younger, eyes. Children have all the energy in the world, and their destinies stretch open before them. We can learn a lot from them every moment of our lives. Try to capture this with more tools on the next lesson page.

The baseball star Leroy "Satchel" Paige once asked, "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?" What would your answer be? If you could remember everything except the exact year you were born, how old would you say you feel right now? That's a simple yet powerful marker not only of how long you are living, but also of how well you are living.

Raise a banner where a banner never flew
Your birth is your beginning, and you have no control over that. However, from the beginning to wherever you meet your end, you have the opportunity and the responsibility to do something no one else has ever done. Make a decision today to shape your own destiny, to glimpse your hidden, one-of-a-kind capability.

As the years go by, I find myself paying less and less attention to what people say or think or wish. Instead, I notice what they do, what I feel from them, and what they are working to become. You can develop your brain more each moment you are alive, but you have to have the will to develop yourself in the process. So many people work every day of their lives for so little because they put in only as much as they have to. The highest reward from school or work is not what we get for it but what we become by it.

We are each creating an imprint on the world in ways that extend far beyond the horizon of our comprehension. Every thought, feeling, dream, and action that you and I bring to life is woven in some secret yet measured way into the fabric of human destiny.

Life is too short, people say. And it’s true. Life is too short for hysterics, for faceless memos, for kissing up, for placing blame, or for chasing the illusion of riches and fame. But most of all, life is too short because we die.

If after taking this course and reading The Other 90%, you still find yourself lying awake at night pondering the stresses of the day, ponder this one other thing. What is it that matters most in life and what difference are you making in the world around you?

This is your opportunity. This is your time.

Goodbye and good luck

What should you take from this course and the accompanying book, The Other 90%? Don’t believe that you can be anything you want to be. That is a misconception. What you should take away from this course is that you can be a whole lot more than you are. Discern your hidden talents and develop them into lasting strengths. Learn to become brimming with calm energy, and leave the tense energy to those more concerned with wealth than wisdom.

This is not to say that you cannot have both. A more efficient and capable life may very well leave you with more wealth, if that is a goal of yours. It will certainly leave you with a wealth of knowledge and relationship riches. Think about your circle of trust, about the people who truly know you. What more can you do for them to help them unlock their hidden capacities and capabilities? Whatever you can do, please do, and whenever you find you cannot, please stop worrying and instead find something to laugh about, for laughter is the energy of the soul.

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Assignment #8

As soon as you have finished reading, go as far away from city life as you can get in an hour. Find a forest, a stream, a lake, a mountain, even just an empty field, and contemplate it. You can walk through it, around it, over it, near it, or just sit in your car and look at it. Bring a camera with you to capture the moment for future viewings.

When you return to civilization, gauge your energy level. Did it rise or fall? Do you feel recharged? Do you feel any change at all? Go to the Message Board and post your feelings about the exercise.
Read what your classmates had to say.

If you want to learn more . . .

For more information about the ideas discussed in this course, read *The Other 90%: Unlock Your Vast Untapped Potential for Leadership and Life* by Robert K. Cooper.

**Quiz #8**

**Question 1:**
True or false: People who are emotionally prepared for stressful situations live healthier lives.

A) ☐ True  
B) ☐ False

**Question 2:**
Weak abdominal muscles can lead to problems with:

A) ☐ Your posture  
B) ☐ Your self-esteem  
C) ☐ Your neck  
D) ☐ All of the above

**Question 3:**
True or false: Human beings are engineered to live for 120 years.

A) ☐ True  
B) ☐ False

**Question 4:**
True or false: According to the lesson, the highest reward from school or work is not what we become by it but what we get for it.

A) ☐ True  
B) ☐ False

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