

[A Book You Should Read: The Power of Full Engagement](#)

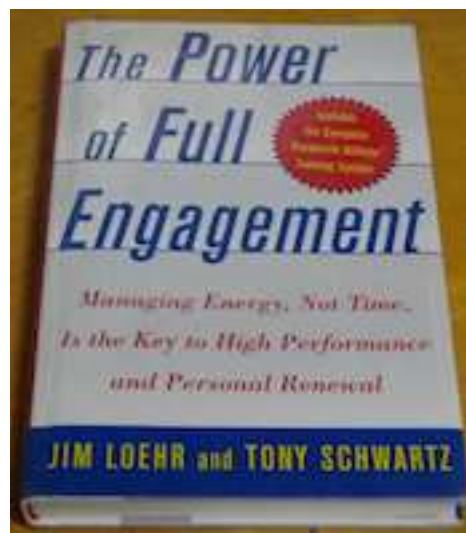
By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 24th, 2013

I originally posted this blog in December of 2007. I still find great value going back and reviewing many of the points made in the book reviewed in the post.

Laura is a lawyer I coached when I was in charge of attorney development in my old law firm. One night when she and her husband were eating dinner with Nancy and me, Laura shared with us that at the end of each day after she put her two children in bed, she was absolutely exhausted and dreaded starting the same grind the next day.

Like many lawyers I know, Laura rarely got up from her desk while at work. She frequently ate lunch at her desk and spent most of her time focused on her computer screen.

When I heard Laura describe her typical day, I suggested that she read the book: [The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal](#) by [Jim Loehr](#) and [Tony Schwartz](#).



I have both the written book and the audio version and I urge you to read or listen to the book if you end each day exhausted.

I love a point the authors make early in the book. They say:

To be fully engaged, we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest. Full engagement begins with feeling eager to get to work in the morning and equally happy to return home in the evening and capable of setting clear boundaries between the two.

The authors assert there are four key energy management principles:

1. Full Engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual
2. Because energy capacity diminishes both with overuse and with underuse, we must balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal.
3. To build capacity, we must push beyond our normal limits, training in the same systematic way that elite athletes do.
4. Positive energy rituals-highly specific routines for managing energy-are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance.

Chapter Ten of the book is titled: "Taking Action: The Power of Positive Rituals." In that chapter the authors note that "a growing body of research suggests that as little as 5 percent of our behaviors are consciously self-directed. We are creatures of habit and as much as 95 percent of what we do occurs automatically..." They point out that great performers all rely on positive rituals to manage their energy and achieve their

goals. They suggest that these great performers have rituals that optimize their ability to move rhythmically between stress and recovery.

How did reading this book change what I was doing? First, I divided my lifetime goals into four categories:

- physical/economic
- mental and growth
- emotional and relationships
- spiritual

Second, I decided to get up from my computer and least once an hour; I quit sending emails to someone who was just down the hall from me; I quit eating lunch at my desk; and, I changed my exercise routine to include interval training.

Finally, I tried to create positive rituals including getting up early to workout, setting aside time to work on client development and spending Saturday afternoon with my daughter, Jill and playing golf each week with my wife, Nancy.

The book includes a full Corporate Athlete Performance Development Plan. Interestingly, I found many of the same steps in the plan that I included in the Personal Performance and Development Plan I had prepared for associates in my firm.

Are you exhausted when you get home each day? If so I urge you to read *The Power of Full Engagement* and make the changes suggested by the authors.

P.S. The Texas Young Lawyers Association recently published an article I wrote titled: [Practical Tips on Client Development for Young Lawyers](#). Take a look and pass it on to young lawyers in your firm or your Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.