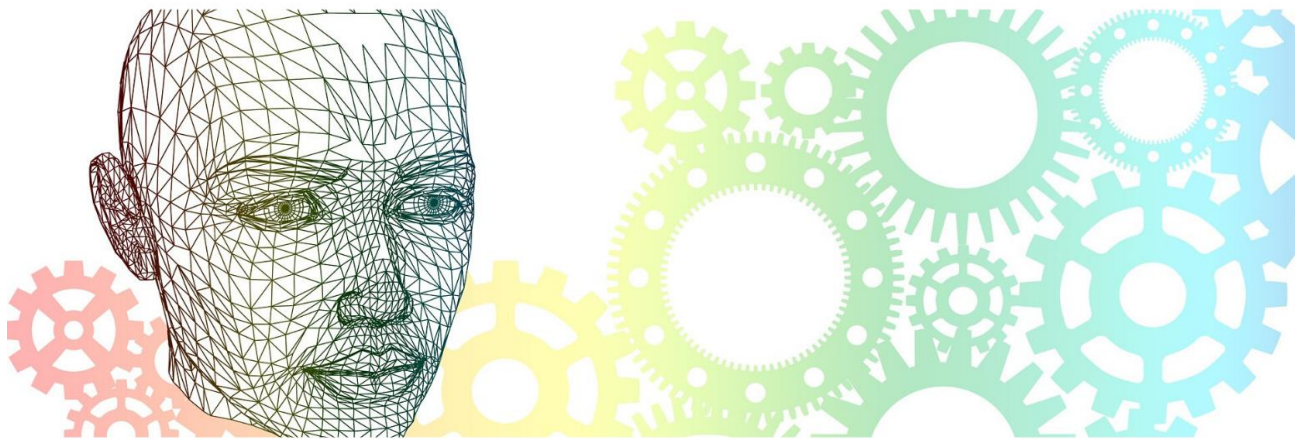


REWIRE YOUR BRAIN FOR SUCCESS: A GUIDE TO REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL



Bring more joy, health, and balance into your life, in and out of work with these strategies.

- Start to feel more relaxed and confident and put energy into what matters.
- The no-cost, no-effort approach to becoming better every day.
- Ways to inspire others and yourself to greatness.
- How to take positive steps forward in whatever you are trying to achieve.
- Strategies to overcome uncertainty.
- Actionable steps to reaching your full potential.
- Inspire a more connected and innovative community.

Recreate The Best Version Of Yourself

Rewire Your Brain For Success



Do you feel like bad habits and negative thought patterns are holding you back at work? The good news is, you can eliminate them by activating your brain's [delete button](#).

Using neuroplasticity, you can rewire your brain by changing your behavior, thinking and emotions. This shift means no one is doomed to be a control freak, conflict avoider or bad listener. Alas, we all have the power to reprogram how we lead and work through problems with focus, commitment and self-compassion.

You must first recognize and identify the unwanted thoughts linked to your negative behaviors and as they show up, remind yourself that they are false messages sent by your brain.

Like any skill needing development, they can be improved when you take actionable steps to adopt positive behaviors and patterns.

Here are a few of those actionable steps, along with some of my clients' direct insights and suggestions for reaching your full potential:

1. Be Less Controlling

If you demand perfect results and believe your way of doing things is the only way, it's time you started letting go. Not only does this mindset increase your workload (Hello, stress!), but it also damages relationships with colleagues and can ultimately hinder your organization's success.

Ironically, the more you relinquish the need to control, the more in control you will feel (Goodbye, stress!). As one client described it in a coaching session:

“The more I relinquish control, the more I’m in control because when I do that, I am more serene, and the serenity is where my greatest power and influence resides. When I’m in that zone, I know that what I say has meaning, is relevant and is the right thing for whatever I’m dealing with. If I’m not there, what I say and how I behave is probably driven more reactively or impulsively ...”

Start by challenging yourself to relinquish your need for perfection, remembering that the [80/20 rule](#) not only applies to what your organization does, but what you do as well. By relaxing your standards on certain things, you will become open to alternative approaches and will likely learn something powerful in the process: a win-win.

2. Improve Your Listening

Listening well is critical to effective communication, fostering high performance, strong relationships and greater employee engagement.

Becoming a good listener requires proactive practice in conversations and meetings. So, the next time a situation demands your attention, maintain eye contact with the speaker. As you listen to their points, remain attentive and open-minded, as judgment detracts from your listening.

Do not interrupt. Rather, wait for a pause to ask any clarifying questions. Share any feedback while mirroring the speaker’s sentiments and demeanor. This simple act ensures conversational counterparts know they were heard and their thoughts valued.

3. Embrace Conflict

Too many of us allow our egos to cloud our judgment in [workplace conflict](#). And we all know that running away from workplace problems only spirals already undesirable situations further south. In his book, [The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom](#), Don Miguel Ruiz asserts the importance of taking nothing personally. Instead, respect others' subjective opinions, realizing their views don't necessarily define us accurately.

To effectively create separation between the conflict and yourself, adopt the belief, "It's not about me." As one client described it in a coaching session:

"It's not about me. It's not just me. I have a team ... There is a bit of mindset shift that's happening, and I want to make the best of it. The only way that's going to happen is if I take charge and stop feeling like things are happening to me. It's not going to be perfect and that's okay ... There are limits to how much I am going to stress myself out because of what other people may comment on or say. I am taking more control of my day-to-day and my interactions and not fearing the consequences from my boss. They are my choices, and it's about making them in a way that honors my needs."

With this mindset, you quickly realize just how rational, assertive and positive you can be during confrontation. So, the next time conflict knocks, leave your ego at the door, and allow growth and learning to take flight.

4. Be Confident

Don't waste your brain cycles on false messages that only lower your confidence. Instead, replace the negative self-perception with a positive one and focus on the skills you do have. If you're constantly telling yourself, "I'm not deserving of a promotion," change this belief by making a list of the work you put in every day that qualifies you for a promotion or raise.

This will culminate in what I call a promotion résumé that will be ready to hand to your superiors at annual review time. If you feel you are still undeserving, think outside the box and ask your boss if you can take on new projects.

A saying credited to Thomas Edison says, "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is to try just one more time." To create lasting change within yourself and never look back, stay [optimistic](#).

Get excited about how empowered you will feel when you successfully act in more positive and constructive ways.

Five Strategies for Befriending Uncertainty



Every rung I climbed on the corporate ladder was giving my ego the success it so craved. But there was one glaring problem: I wasn't truly fulfilled. Compelled to reevaluate my life and career, I asked myself the all-important question: What truly matters?

What followed was unthinkable for someone in my career stage, I dropped my profession, packed my bags and moved to Costa Rica with my husband.

There was so much uncertainty surrounding this very unconventional move, but instead of letting our doubts run the show, we decided to roll with them. In under a year, the identities we held on to for eons evolved with each new, greater challenge we faced.

I soon realized that the situations I feared the most led to a heightened sense of accomplishment once overcome. I genuinely started to crave uncertainty.

It turns out our brains are hardwired to avoid uncertainty. It is what scientists refer to as [information-seeking behavior](#). This phenomenon may explain why we find change generally unpleasant.

Contrary to what your brain signals, my experience has taught me that uncertainty is not the enemy. Rather, these unsure occasions are growth opportunities when you shift your mindset.

How many decisions do you make on a weekly basis without knowing exactly what the outcome will be? Probably more than you can count. Though most of these decisions are minor, their existence underscores the big picture: Uncertainty is a certainty.

The next time you face uncertainty, use these strategies to turn that situation to your advantage:

- 1. View uncertainty as if it is always working in your favor.** The moment you start trusting that uncertainty is here to strengthen your grit, intelligence and success, you can start freeing yourself from false constraints. This new perspective will enable you to accept the present moment and roll with it. In turn, you will acquire new skills, a newfound confidence and a greater sense of achievement.
- 2. Observe your thoughts and emotions.** Thought patterns are conditioned by past experience, and by the environments in which we were raised. In essence, our thoughts are shaped by the past. By acknowledging them without judgment, rather than immediately reacting to them, you'll have the clarity to do what is in your best interest.
- 3. Write down any negative thought patterns.** Write down any situations that trigger undesirable behavior, be it procrastinating, getting angry with colleagues or giving up on big goals. By journaling how you react to uncertainty, you can effectively detach yourself from these harmful patterns, giving you the space and confidence to prepare for whatever life throws at you.
- 4. Get practical.** The next time you catch your brain obsessing over uncertainty, Jordan Harbinger, of the wildly popular podcast, [The Art of Charm](#), says to ask yourself the following questions: Can I get this information? Do I need to know this information right now? This rationale will end up saving you the energy you would have spent stressing over something likely out of your control.
- 5. Commit yourself to the next phase.** Many of my clients will reach pinnacles in their careers and then feel it is time for something different. For them, it isn't time to retire — it's time to rewire. Navigating a new chapter can make you feel like a fish out of water, but when you fully immerse yourself in your next phase, the new will feel like normal in a flash.

Imagine how freeing change will feel once you accept it as if you had chosen it. Though I would highly recommend a jungle experience, it doesn't take one to untap your true potential in the face of uncertainty.

Worry Less Now: The Three P's of Anxiety



Why do a staggering [40 percent](#) of adults suffer from an anxiety disorder on a regular basis, making it the most common form of mental illness in the U.S?

The primary cause of anxiety's steady climb since the Great [Depression](#) is [uncertainty](#). Generally, people like being able to predict what's next, and not knowing creates distress. In fact, the [Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale \(IU\)](#) developed by Quebec scientists confirms that high IU is linked to [generalized anxiety disorder](#) (GAD) and worry.

We worry when we think about possible future threats while also feeling the emotional and physical symptoms of anxiety. Depending on how well one tolerates the [groundlessness](#) of life – not knowing what to do, what is coming or what others are thinking – a range of triggers induce anxiety.

In this way, both GAD and subclinical anxiety exist on a continuum and is predicated by our reactions to environmental factors. Not all uncertainty is bad, though. We tend to become excited and even work harder when the size of the reward is unknown – but to a certain point. It is when the stakes get too high that excitement can shift to [fear](#) or even terror.

The 3-P Poison Pill of Anxiety

What are the true primary contributors to anxiety? We like to think about it in terms of three P's.

1. Perspective

Where are you? Where do you want to be? The greater the gap between those two, the higher your likely level of anxiety.

Many people want an immediate pot of gold in the bank. Of course, we all need to invest material effort to achieve success, but science says working more than 40 hours a week often [backfires](#) and even [harms our health](#).

And those seeking immediate and exorbitant riches work relentlessly to achieve their goal and hardly ever arrive because their present expectation gap is so large.

If your anxiety levels are high, the first question to ask yourself is whether you have established small, manageable milestones toward your goal and if even those “small” bites are realistic. You've heard it before. [Slow and steady](#) wins the race.

2. Pressure

Why do so many people place themselves in situation that induce anxiety through undue pressure? Consider the manufactured strain some place on themselves to finish binge-watching a program, ironically converting the calming benefits of recreation into pressure.

Speaking of irony, anxiety creates adrenaline, which is naturally addictive. So much pressure arises from the [subconscious](#) need for more anxiety in life.

3. Permission

Many of us don't give ourselves permission to step away from anxiety when it is at its height or even think of doing so. If life's uncertainties have become a hazard to your wellbeing, it is time to take a step back and shift your approach.

Give yourself permission to step away from those things in life that seem to be triggering the most anxiety. It could be as simple as going for a [15-minute walk](#), looking at images and [sounds of nature](#), or it could require taking a deep look at how you spend your time and the people you have in your life. Self-awareness is the first step here.

From there, popping the permission pill will give you space to assess the best next step(s) to improve your mental health.

The Mindfulness Solution

It takes as little as 10 seconds to disrupt the momentum of stress, and frequent disruption can be your greatest weapon in beating anxiety.

Make a conscious effort to monitor your stress. When you are feeling particularly stressed, try this [anti-anxiety breathing exercise](#) for two to three minutes at a time.

What's more, remember the expectation gap above? It holds true in the current moment as much as it does over a number of years. When you are feeling [anxious](#), think about your current situation and what you wish it was.



Then try adjusting your expectations to align with the way things currently are. You'll be amazed at how calming that is. To reach an even more tranquil state, take deep breaths to lower your cortisol levels and therefore, your stress.

It is also important to understand your triggers, and there is an effective mechanism to accomplish that. Replay in slow motion the last event that triggered an unwanted emotional response. Sit with the event and take slow, deep breaths. Then, write down the answers to the following questions (adapted from [Dr. Rick Hanson, Ph.D.](#), author of *Buddha's Brain*.)

- What moments of the event are resonating with you the most?
- Without judgement, become aware of the emotions and feelings arising. Simply ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" On a scale of 1-10, record how intensely you're experiencing each sensation.
- Notice any other toxic thinking patterns associated with the experience. Detach yourself from them as if you're the observer, and record any negative [self-talk](#).

- Now, change the story you've created and write down statements that affirm your negative reaction. You can say, "It's no wonder I felt so offended by so-and-so because I'm telling myself, 'I'm not smart enough...others are better than I am.'" We have control over our own thoughts. So, only choose those that build up your [confidence](#). There is great power in that!

Writing your answers will give you a clearer sense of how you handle [stressful](#) situations, invoke greater accountability and ownership over your behaviors, and provide a baseline to revisit as you assess progress made.

For those seeking additional guidance, seeing a psychologist/counselor or a psychiatrist if medicine becomes necessary is an excellent way to address anxiety.

But if you have the patience and [willpower](#), [mindfulness](#) and other techniques above are free and effective tools. With a little knowledge of who you are, you can always prescribe some of your own medicine.

5 Ways to Inspire Others and Yourself to Greatness



"After all, that's why they call it work." We've all heard people say that. For so many, the workplace sucks precious energy and joy from them that could be invested in their personal lives. For that reason, people do not like their jobs.

The truth, however, is that you have more control over your work environment than you could ever admit—until now. You have untapped mega-powers over your attitude and that of others in the workplace. What’s more, being in a more pleasant work environment means a healthier, happier, more upwardly mobile you.

You certainly can think of that one person who comes into a jovial, happy-go-lucky room and empties the atmosphere of all fun. Or conversely, there might be that colleague who can hop on a conference call, and their mere presence lifts your soul.

You can be either of these people. It’s up to you. You have an amazing power to command the energy of anyone in your environment because all of us are human and feed off one another. This is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself and anyone else, and it’s free!

What’s more, the more you help people to feel good, the more the energy you created in them will rub off on you.

Here’s how you can tap into this endless renewable energy resource:

1. Lead With Your Smile

When you are facing someone to speak, the closest part of your body to them is your face. How appropriate. After all, our face is the source of over 50 percent of our communication. Thankfully, you are in complete control of what you wear on your face, which also affects the tone of your voice, from where another roughly [40 percent of your communication](#) comes. Early in our [public speaking](#) careers, we were taught by the experts that if we projected our chin forward and smiled, that would take care of 90 percent of the energy in the room.

A dirty little secret is that after that’s taken care of, the content of the speech is just icing on the cake. So if you take just one simple thing out of this article, realize the importance of smiling on those around you. It is a cinch and nothing short of huge.

2. Inquire and Know About Others

Having our own businesses for well over a decade, we are veterans of networking and, with that, the importance of being interested in others. An ABC of networking is to always record another person’s particulars in your rolodex—their birthday, children’s names, favorite music, etc. Funny thing is, many people only go into this mode when looking for a job or have their own businesses.

How valuable is it in a full-time job to come into a room or hop on a conference call and begin inquiring about these types of things immediately as you wait for others to arrive, for example? You'll see a sense of [teamwork](#) and connection immediately start to bloom.

The effect on others of taking interest in them is truly immeasurable. Try it. “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.” - Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*

3. Encourage Others to be Genuine

For better or worse, people act like the person they think you want them to be. The result? Most have a rather homogenous view of the buttoned up professional at work—more email in the inbox than they can handle, juggling several critical projects at once, and having the phone in front of them during a conversation in case the President needs authorization to use the nuclear launch codes.

Everyone strives to act fairly the same, making the workplace more boring and less interesting than it could be. During the writing of our bestseller [Radical Sabbatical](#), we brought the related victories and defeats of authorship to our clients and friends, and we were brutally honest about it.

As we shared something deep, unique, and personal, our clients began to do more of the same, creating a more engaged, creative, and connected energy in all our work with them. And it made it more fun to “inquire and know about others,” (see above) since they were more unique and interesting. Others will present you their genuine selves when you go first.

4. Pay Compliments

As consultants, we have the fascinating privilege of witnessing team dynamics with detachment from the [politics](#) of our clients' organizations. Part of that is watching personnel rise up through the ranks.

When you are in a group setting and compliment others, you not only make them feel amazing and lift their energy, you give off to others that most powerful trait that everyone is looking for in a leader—empowerment of others.

Paying others compliments will also create positive energy within yourself! And those around you will develop more of a likeness toward you and the recipient. All this positivity truly comes full-circle. What could be better?

5. Be Thankful

This one will be fairly automatic if you follow the first four points above. Quickly review our recommendations and see how you empower yourself and others by focusing your energy on giving.

Why is giving so powerful? Because—here’s something counterintuitive—it makes you more grateful. And nothing we have recommended costs a cent!

Rather, it comes from within you—intrinsically. When you appreciate positive feelings created intrinsically, an endless stream of riches are at your disposal. It is at that moment you become truly grateful in the purest sense of the word, and [study after study](#) points to [gratitude](#) as possibly the greatest contributor to a happier life.

Knowing joy comes from within, it may be time to stop looking at your boss or company as the reason you don’t like going to work. Likewise, it may be time to stop looking for a new job. Instead of looking outward to feel whole again, heal from the inside out.

A change inside outshines the value of external changes countless folds over. The good news is, it is all under your control, and a simple decision right now will promote long-term [happiness](#), health, and balance.

De-Stress Your Way out of Distress



I love jumping into cold water.

Well, wait. Let me back up. I love jumping into cold water with other people around. Why? Because after thirty seconds of acclimation, I get to chuckle as my friends negotiate the inner fortitude to get themselves to do the very thing they just watched me do.

It's a bit of a guilty pleasure, admittedly, but who doesn't have those? And this feeling carries over into the aftermath of [Radical Sabbatical](#), when Glen and I came home completely rewired and ready to live life on our own terms.

It became music to our ears to hear people say, "I don't know how you're doing it." How are you entrepreneurs working exclusively from home, they'd wonder? How are you shutting down every day at five?

How are you dictating your own vacation schedules and unplugging at will? I'm not without [envy](#) of certain things, but the envy that people have expressed for the life we lead surely provides legitimacy for the risks and bold steps we've taken.

So here are some bold steps you will likely need to take to bring balance to your life and win it back from whatever incessant pursuit is swallowing you whole:

1. Strive to Hear Three Sweet Words

You're not dumping most of your existence into an unfulfilling, blood-sucking activity for the hell of it. In this day and age, like we did, you likely have tried to mold your life into one that would get the most approval from others.

If it's time for you to get off the crazy train, it's probably because you're at the top of the game you molded to gain that approval. That's why when you announce to the world that you are going to back off and get out of the business of pleasing others, those very same people you are trying to impress are going to say **three sweet words**: "Are you crazy?" Just expect it and know that when you hear them, you're on the right track.

2. Face Realities About Your Career

You, like many, may be in a job where work-life balance is not possible. I know a partner at a big law firm. One of his partners sends out an e-mail every year that says, "Please report to my assistant what time you plan on celebrating Christmas this year."

If you're in an environment like this, your life is gone and will stay that way. If you want to get it back, you will have to leave that environment. Scared? Just think about how quickly you adjust when you jump in the pool. The biggest part of anything worthwhile is the part where you get going.

3. Build a Detachment Habit

Our brains are geared to master our life tasks and make our days as easy as possible through powerful habits. These habits are so pervasive that most people can't tell you which pant leg they put on first every day and often end up at work not remembering anything they saw on the way.

Be careful of the habits you develop because they are so powerful, whether we realize it or not. Turn around any that don't serve you. Having parts of every workday that are yours is a great reminder that *your life* is yours and will prevent you from falling into the brain trap where the only fulfillment you get is from work—perish the thought. Protect your time by doing the following:

- **Utilize your calendar.** Put a period of time in your calendar right in the middle of your day and call it “My Sacred Time.” You can also create an intentional “out of office”_during certain times of the day. Use it to check tasks off your to-do list without interruptions. Do whatever you can to manage your time at all costs. A little white lie here and there won't hurt, either.
- **Disconnect from all digital.** At times it's more difficult to turn away from your computer or disconnect from work when working remotely. Decide a few hours in a day when you stay away from all gadgets. Be sure to disable your notifications for social media apps and alerts to avoid any urges to pick up your phone.

And getting your life back takes guts. I wish there was a way around it. But relax. This isn't a never-ending battle.

Right now, it seems like one because we think of all discomfort in our lives as permanent. In reality, all you need to do is create a little disruption for a while, and take the plunge.

“This, too, shall pass.” ~The Buddha

Then you'll be in that refreshing water watching everyone wonder how the heck you took the plunge.

The Greatest Mantra for Success



We all strive to take positive steps toward our goals. Sometimes, however, we fall back into old habits that sabotage our efforts or fail to recognize we've moved forward because our gains seem trivial.

The important thing to recognize is the alternative is moving backwards, and relative to that, any forward progress is a truly positive thing.

- Check an activity off your list as done.
- Meet someone new or try something you've never tried and assess if he/she/it works for you or if you should move on.
- Increase your chances of succeeding versus sitting at home rearranging your rabbit foot collection :-).

Consider the experience Glen and I had when first beginning to market our books and Life Leaps program. South Florida's WPLG ABC-TV wanted to feature our book, [*Fall in Love Again, Every Day.*](#)

The book, is a glimpse into our [radical sabbatical](#) and showcases the tool that pulled us out of what most people conclude is “irreconcilable differences.” We were thrilled with the prospect. I planned, prepped, and prepared for days.

But on the morning of our interview, I got a message from the reporter saying that her cameraman had called in sick. She asked if we could stand by until 9 a.m.

Crestfallen, I knew that the drive to the interview was at least an hour and a half away. We were scheduled to be interviewed at 10:45am. Should we get ready, wait, give up? Then at 9:00 a.m., I received another message from the reporter saying that she still didn’t have a new cameraman, but that she would keep us posted. At that point, I was beginning to feel deflated. Was this incredible opportunity slipping away?

Then Glen looked at me and said, “Forward progress only.”

It was our New Year’s resolution, and boy did that mutual promise come in handy in that moment.

We immediately began getting dressed and headed to the studio. Worst-case scenario, we’d get a call saying the interview was officially canceled and would take each other out for a fantastic lunch.

Life is all about showing up.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “Never look back unless you are planning to go that way.”

Ask yourself:

- How are you showing up in life—at work, in relationships, spiritually, and mentally?
- Do you undervalue yourself, give up, doubt, [self-sabotage](#), compete, or push too hard?
- If you’re showing up, do you do it consistently everywhere in your life?

Think about it. Make a list and write down your answers. And think about this: When you show up, you enhance your experience, which makes you want to show up next time, and the next time, and the next . . . A domino effect is triggered and feeds itself!

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