

# REACH YOUR PEAK

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# Welcome!

You know what can drive you crazy? When you do everything you're "supposed" to do in life in order to be happy, but it still feels like something is missing. You may have a circle of friends who like you, perhaps a family of your own, career success, and even the material rewards that go along with it: a comfortable place to live, nice car and clothes, etc.

But while you may feel happy and satisfied sometimes, that doesn't seem to last, and you end up feeling dissatisfied again and wondering what else you need to do. You can start to feel disgruntled: stuck on an achievement treadmill while at the same time feeling that you're not making progress in any way that really matters to you.

You can end up stuck perpetually feeling like you aren't good enough, or haven't done enough. Relationship problems, procrastination, and unhealthy or harmful behavior patterns might show up. Perhaps even your motivation to pursue your career—that shining beacon of your abilities and competence—starts to take a hit.

It's what some people call burnout, but it's often a bigger problem than that term implies, and it can feel like there's no solution.

## **But what if there were a solution?**

What if it were possible to feel fully alive, energized, productive, and deeply happy? What if you felt empowered to meet challenges gracefully and respond to them wisely and confidently, consistently making forward progress toward the things that *really* matter to you? (Things that you can't necessarily see, touch, put in your mouth, or buy, that is.)

And what if all that were possible without your ability to achieve at work, or in any other area of your life, being diminished? But instead, what if you were even more

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effective, because you're unstoppable when you're firing on all cylinders as a human being?

The truth is that it is possible.

I'm not going to tell you that it's easy. But it is possible if you're willing to commit to doing some things differently, and make consistent effort—the most rewarding effort you'll ever make.

### **It's not an accident that I do this for a living.**

I know how crazy-making this “burnout” problem can be. And I know how glorious, life-affirming, and fun its reversal can be, and not just from my perspective as a coach and therapist, but from my personal experience.

You see, I didn't always do this work. In a former life, I was in the private equity business, and successful at it. I had a comfortable lifestyle with VIP travel, fine dining, and no financial worries. Yet, there was something missing.

I was lonely, especially in the early years, because, while I had friends, they were pretty superficial friendships. When I was out of the office long enough to have a romantic life, it was chaotic and unfulfilling. Physically, I went to extremes a lot: super healthy for a while, and then super indulgent and unhealthy.



I'd sit at my desk in my gleaming white office, with fine art on the walls, overlooking the sparkling San Francisco Bay, but rather than feeling like I'd arrived, I felt like I was lost en route to somewhere else. I had this nagging sense that I had somehow ended up in the wrong life for me, and the one I really wanted to live was somewhere *out there*.

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Sometimes it was bleak, like I was just grinding out an existence as I marched inexorably toward the grave. And, depending on whether I was at a healthy or unhealthy extreme at the time, maybe not even leaving a good-looking corpse!

**Work wasn't the answer. It was part of the problem.**

I was something of a workaholic. People are workaholics for a variety of reasons. For me, it was because I didn't have much that felt good in my life, and performing at work was at least one thing that did. But it was a self-fulfilling prophecy: the more I retreated into work, the fewer resources I had to invest in other parts of my life.

In the early years, I tried the "work-life balance" approach that we hear about so often. I reallocated that time to hobbies, exercising, being more social, and even some less healthy coping strategies. Those things would only help temporarily, but still, something felt like it was missing.

So, I started doing even more different things. I started practicing mindfulness meditation (and have kept it up for about half my life at this point), and that did help in a lasting way. I started reading all kinds of research in psychology, sociology, and neurobiology, and using that knowledge to experiment with new ways of engaging with my experience of the world, the people in it, and myself.

Things started to change for me. I began savoring what I had and, at the same time, seeing clearly what I didn't have but really wanted, deep inside. I learned how to identify *those* itches and, over time, how to scratch them.

I started to learn how to act consistently in alignment with my long-term best interests, even when that was hard. It took 15 years of study, practice, and trial and error, but I started to figure out how to reverse my feelings of burnout and start tapping into my innate energy, clarity, productivity, and true happiness. How to come back to life, really.

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**If I hadn't gone through that, I wouldn't be writing to you.**

It was a bit of a bumpy ride. But along the way, something very important happened. I reawakened to a passion, and a knack, for helping people that I'd discovered and nurtured in college, and then put aside.

I started volunteering in the mental health field in my spare time (private equity guy by day, crisis line operator by night!) and passing along what I'd learned. I helped people gain new clarity, meaning, and purpose in their lives, and it felt really good for me, too.

I ended up making a pretty dramatic career change, to devote myself full-time to this work. I walked away from my old career. Then came more years of education and training, plus a lot more research, to flesh out, test, and refine the approach that I'll cover in this report.

**Now I have what I always wanted.**

I've loved every minute of my second career, as an executive coach, personal coach, and licensed psychotherapist. And I'm pretty good at this one, too. I've been published in a textbook, quoted by publications like *Fast Company* and *Self*, and appeared on morning talk shows around the country.

But those achievements aren't what "does it" for me. What does, is the front-row seat I have for the greatest show on Earth: people transforming into the best versions of themselves right before my eyes. I'm successful in my career *and* I love my life. I couldn't always say that second part.

I have a very simple goal for my coaching work, which includes freebies like this report. It's to provide the framework for understanding how you might be getting in your own way, and then the support and guidance to make use of that understanding, which I didn't have when I needed it.

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You can feel fully alive, happy, and naturally energetic and productive, starting right now. And I can help you do it a bit more efficiently and painlessly than the 15-year-long do-it-yourself approach that I took.

It is my sincere hope that this guide serves as a launching pad for that journey of your lifetime.

So, I invite you to relax a bit now and settle in to read this guide, because you've found the right place for help. You won't find woo-woo metaphysics here. Everything you're about to read is supported by the latest scientific theory and research, and/or is verifiable in your own experience.

There's no need to take my word for anything. In fact, there's a part of you that already knows exactly what you need and how to have it, and it's that part of yourself that you need to trust.

It's the same part of you that prompted you to download this guide, so you've already started trusting it.

In addition to this report, since you've joined my email list, I'll be sending you even more insight on the topics in this guide, and many more. (I've also included links throughout this report that will take you to articles or podcasts of mine that expand more on those topics.)

If you ever want to stop receiving my emails, you can simply click "unsubscribe" at the bottom of an email.

Please feel free to connect with me on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and/or [Twitter](#). Also, feel free to [contact me](#) with any other thoughts or questions, or just to introduce yourself and say hi. Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the top.

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## Does This Ring a Bell?

I meet a lot of professionals who have spent their lives working toward what they've thought, and have been led to believe, would make them happy, but it hasn't really worked out that way.

Often, they look successful on the outside, but on the inside, it's a different story. They feel empty, lonely, and stuck in the wrong life for them.



They begin to realize that they've been reaching for the next "thing," whatever that is, all their lives, but never gotten what they really want.

Sometimes they don't even know what that is, just that they don't have it.

There is a persistent sense of unfulfillment; a questioning of their path in life. Sometimes they come to [feel like oddballs](#) because so many other people seem to be happy with the superficial trappings of success, or things they find mundane, while they can't shake the feeling that

something is missing.

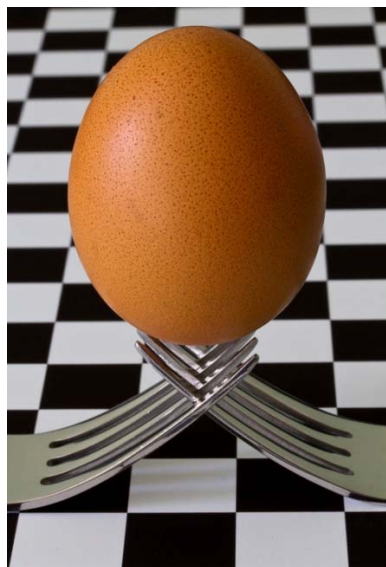
And despite all of this, they still feel compelled to keep plowing ahead on an achievement treadmill. Sometimes it's laborious, because burnout sets in, along with things like procrastination and difficulty staying focused, at work or elsewhere.

But still, there's the compulsion to keep going. Always going somewhere but never really getting anywhere that feels *right*.

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# The Problem with “Work-Life Balance”

Society has an easy solution for these problems: “work-life balance.” That’s it. Just work less, or don’t work so much that you sacrifice your “life.” We hear this advice in the form of prescriptions, even, like: “work less, play more,” or “work hard, play hard.” Sounds so simple!



Except it doesn’t seem to work. Clients who work crazy hours come to see me, sure. I also see clients who work 40 or 50 hours per week, and “live” the rest of the time, but still feel burned out—either in their career, or in their lives overall.

In my former life, I tried the “work-life balance” approach, and “lived” outside of work as much as I could. I went on multi-day backpacking trips in Yosemite, multi-state motorcycle tours, and socialized plenty with my coworkers and other people in my social circle. Those things were fun, but they didn’t change my feelings of burnout, unfulfillment with my life, or stuck-ness. They were great diversions, though!

Now really, is it any surprise that “common knowledge” clichés aren’t all that helpful? Conventional wisdom is often off base, right? As far as I’m concerned, “work-life balance” is a flawed concept right from the get-go.

**For starters, let’s run some numbers.**

We each have 168 per week at our disposal. Now, if you’re adequately attuned to your body’s sleep needs, you’re hopefully sleeping for around 60 of those hours, leaving 108 left over. If you work 40 hours per week, that leaves 68 hours in which to “live,” per the work-life balance hypothesis.



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But many professionals I know work more than 40 hours per week. Fifty or sixty isn't unusual at all. Eighty or more isn't unheard of, either. But the point is that, according to the "work-life balance" model, you're supposed to be content "living" in the 40, 50, or 60 hours left over after you sleep and work.

*You're supposed to be content with the scraps.* That doesn't sound like a very attractive proposition to me—does it to you?

But the folly of "work-life balance" goes beyond writing off half your waking life as unlivable.

**It can spoil your well-being in the half you *do* live.**

That's because, for one thing, it creates a false dichotomy between work and life. It's false because the reality is that active engagement in the world, including through your career, is fundamental to human well-being. Work is a *subset* of life, not something separate.

In a similar way, it creates a split between "You the Worker" and "You the Live-r." This can cause you to feel split in half; alienated from one part or the other. This is diametrically opposed to the sense of wholeness and integration that we need as humans in order to thrive.



Therefore, for the purposes of this discussion, I'd like to propose an alternative to "work-life balance."

What about sleeping for 60 or so hours per week, and then for the other 108, being awake? But I mean *truly* awake, and fully alive, in your work and every other aspect of life. Doesn't that sound better?

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This is what I call living your Right Life. It's the life that fits you—your truest, most authentic you—just right, and in which you make use all of your innate energy and wisdom, and experience deep happiness and contentment rather than fleeting bursts of satisfaction.

You only get one crack at this life, right? Let's make every minute of it count.

## Balance /s Important

Now please don't get me wrong—balance is very important in life. It's just important to know that you're really balancing several things. We're not looking for work-life balance, but whole-life balance. Here's what I mean.

When it comes to having a baseline level of well-being sufficient for getting by and surviving, we need health in four domains of life: the physical, social, psychological, and vocational. (Note that for our purposes here, the vocational domain includes all forms of industriousness, including things like volunteer work and hobbies, not just paid work.)

Every aspect of our lives ultimately plays out on one or a combination of these domains. You might imagine that the four comprise four parts of a wheel, each of which must be adequately inflated in order for the wheel to roll.

Inflating them is simply a matter of having your basic needs met in each:

**Physical:** What we need in the physical domain isn't rocket science: we need to be in good health. That is, we need adequate food, water, and shelter, and without a serious physical illness or injury.

**Psychological:** Basic psychological well-being means that we have a healthy and stable sense of who we are and our place in the world, don't engage in behaviors that harm ourselves or others, and are able to fulfill our social roles. If we're suffering from mental health problems, this part of the wheel starts to go flat.

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**Social:** In this domain, what we need is the company of others, as opposed to isolation. The research on this is clear: being isolated triggers a cascade of both psychological and physical problems. (No surprise that isolation has been used as a form of punishment for so long.)

**Vocational:** Again, this domain includes our productive activities, not just in our paid work, but including things like hobbies and volunteer work. We're wired to be busy and active. When we're idle instead, the research shows that we suffer all manner of psychological and physical health problems. (I'm not talking about gaining weight from being sedentary. The research is clear that our need to be busy doing things generally is a need separate from physical fitness.)

### Meeting these needs isn't that hard.

Now, you may have noticed that the bar isn't set very high when it comes to meeting these basic needs. Physically, you can't prevent yourself from ever getting sick, but you can balance your food intake with your energy expenditure so you don't gain weight. You can avoid artery-clogging food, and you can go to the doctor when you are sick or injured. Doing your part of being in good health isn't so hard, right?

Similarly, you can avoid the adverse effects of isolation simply by being out among people—even going to the park and being around strangers would mostly do the trick. Make it a rule to accept more invitations than you decline, and you'll probably do okay.



Psychologically, you can [make sure to get enough sleep](#) (which is also important physically, by the way). If you have unhealthy thought or behavior patterns, or trouble meeting your obligations in life, you can go to a therapist and receive some help.

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Vocationally, if you keep yourself busy doing things—anything, really—you’ll avoid the consequences of being idle.

It isn’t all that difficult, then, to be reasonably well-rounded. Make some efforts to meet your basic needs, and don’t neglect any of the domains of your life, and you’ll be balanced and well-rounded. Pretty simple.

However, simple and easy aren’t the same things. There are two factors that might complicate your efforts to have the balanced, inflated “wheel” of your basic needs being met.

## The Snowball Effect

One of those factors is something called “interdependence,” which is just a fancy way of saying that each of the four domains of your life influence each other.

You’ve seen this in your own life when, for example, you come down with the flu. When you’re sick (physical health), that can make you feel grumpy (psychological health), right? That, in turn, can cause you to distance yourself from people or snap at them (social health). It can leave you feeling listless and unmotivated as well (vocational health).



Interdependence is what enables downward spirals to happen, and this is the risk of neglecting a domain or two.

Having a lazy day, declining an invitation to socialize, or indulging in a mopey mood can seem pretty harmless in the short run.

However, there is the potential for a snowball effect, and once the ball starts to roll, it becomes harder to stop.

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Importantly, it's not necessary for us to have all of our basic needs met perfectly all the time. Even with a domain or two of the four running a little low, you still basically have a wheel that can roll, even if it's a little bumpier a ride than it could be. It's the potential chain reaction that is the big concern.

## Imbalance and the Hard Worker

The other complicating factor in maintaining balance among the four domains is that for most people, one tends to be their priority, for a variety of reasons. It can be any of the four but, with the people I work with, it's often the vocational domain.

Their career is the last part of their life that they'll allow to suffer an impact. Perhaps it's the area of their life where they feel most competent or secure, their personal identity is closely tied to their professional identity, or they've come to view professional success as a sign of their worth as people.



For whatever reason, many professionals are so focused on maintaining the integrity of their vocational domain that they take their eye off the ball in other areas of their life, not giving them the attention that they're due.

Even as their physical, social, or psychological health suffers, these people might still show up to work, do their job, and even be quite good at it, even if they're not passionate about it. But when they're away from work, life can seem pretty gray and unpleasant.

With only one quadrant of your wheel inflated, you aren't rolling very well. This is where people's feelings of burnout can start to intensify.

It's also very difficult to sustain that situation in the long run, because you have a lot of interdependence working against you. Over time, even the smartest, most

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dedicated, accomplished professionals can find their vocational health beginning to slip, too.

Feelings of burnout mount and make it harder and harder to feel motivated to be active at work and elsewhere. Sometimes people start making mistakes, procrastinating more, or sabotaging themselves in other ways.



In the worst case scenario, even the vocational domain can wither and deflate, leaving you immobilized, isolated, sad, stuck, and flat—running on empty.

In this state, you have very little ability to cope with the inevitable curveballs that life throws your way, and are vulnerable

to being seriously destabilized by them. Not everyone ends up this way, but the risk is there.

Fortunately, interdependence isn't all bad, though.

## Let the Rising Tide Lift All Boats

Although it's because of interdependence that your well-being can slip away from you when you begin to neglect one or more domains of your life, the good news is that it can be your ally when you're making changes for the better.

You know how laughing with a friend (social health) can put you in a good mood (psychological health)? Or how doing some physical exercise can boost your mood, and even your confidence (psychological health) and, in turn, affect how you relate with other people (social health)? These are all examples of interdependence at work.

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What this means is that you have lots of flexibility. Right now, it might feel like the most prominent obstacle to your happiness is “toxic” people who make your life miserable, a career that you can’t stand, the lasting effects of a big setback, or something else.

*But you don't necessarily need to confront the most prominent obstacle head-on.* You can really begin anywhere and take advantage of improvement in one area of your life to improve other ones.

## So It /s Just About Balance, Then?

Okay, now we've covered:

- Why “work-life balance” isn't quite adequate to describe what needs balancing;
- How that oversimplification can actually work against you;
- A more complete understanding of the basics of human well-being;
- What you need in order to have a baseline level of well-being and combat the most obvious contributors to “burnout”; and
- How interdependence can both hinder and help your efforts.

You might understand now why sometimes I put the word “burnout” in quotes, too. It's a pretty simple word for the complex process by which we can come to feel stuck and unfulfilled—and it might not even be primarily a career issue.

But you downloaded this report because want to know *what to do* about this problem. You might be wondering, then: does having an inflated, rounded, well-balanced “wheel” of these four domains prevent feeling burned out, stuck, or unfulfilled? Is that all there is to it?

Well, in my professional experience, I'd have to say “no.”

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As I mentioned earlier, clients who are lopsided in favor of their careers or other domains come to see me. So do clients who are running on empty, with minimal well-being in any domains. Clients who are well-balanced, with fairly round, inflated wheels, also come to see me. Do you see my point?

*They all still come to see me. They still feel like something is missing.*

Having those basic needs met didn't work for me personally, either, as I told you earlier. I was successful in my career, in great shape (at least sometimes!), and socializing a lot in my former life. But still, inside I wasn't happy. I felt like I was somehow wasting my life. I experienced a pervasive dissatisfaction with things that no accomplishment, workout, outing, or purchase seemed to satisfy.



I hear similar feelings from my clients all the time. Some of them describe it as a question that comes to them in the dark of night: "Is this all there is?" To the rest of the world, and even to parts of themselves, they have everything they need to be happy. They *should* be content and happy, they feel, but something is still missing, no matter what they do.

Sometimes they're alone in these feelings, because other people don't seem to understand. Or they're afraid to even say anything to anyone, lest they be seen as ungrateful, or a complainer.

Yet, that sense that something is missing is well-founded, because there is *a lot* missing from that two-dimensional conceptualization of human well-being I just gave you.



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## Third Dimension of Human Well-Being

We've visualized the physical, social, psychological, and vocational domains of life as four quadrants of a wheel that must be inflated in order for the wheel to be able to roll. This means that your basic needs in each are met, and you have a baseline level of well-being: you're surviving.

However, in each of those domains, there is actually a third dimension, reflecting the difference between surviving and *thriving*. Rather than a wheel, the real picture of human well-being looks more like a four-part bucket!

Allow me to explain, starting with the physical domain. Here, our basic need is to be in good health; that's how we survive. However, being in good *health* is different than being in good *shape*, right? Being in good shape implies being fit, toned, and athletic, etc. It means thriving physically, rather than just having a beating heart, lungs that work, and no sickness.

A similar distinction exists in the other three domains, except in each of those, there are *uniquely human needs and capacities* that must be met and exercised in order for us to thrive as human beings. If they aren't, we aren't going to feel or function at our best.

This is why even people who are well-balanced in the four domains, with a life that looks pretty good on the outside, can still feel unhappy, burned out, and stuck in a life that doesn't feel very fulfilling.

In the sections below, I'll cover these uniquely human needs and capacities and provide some tips for how you can start meeting and exercising them right now.

## Social Health

Humans have [social needs](#) that are scientifically proven to be hard-wired into our nervous system. At the most basic level, [we suffer when we go without the](#)

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[company of others](#) for too long (that's why solitary confinement is so awful), but [higher levels of well-being require deeper connections with people](#).

You need to see yourself reflected in others' eyes as someone who is worthy of acknowledgment, concern, and even love. You need to feel that you exist as an individual with needs that matter. That you have a base of support, with at least some people, to bolster you when difficulties come your way.

It's not enough for *you* to be attuned to your deepest human needs and capacities—you need to feel that other people are attuned to them, too.



You do this by practicing [healthy communication skills](#) and being more selective about the people you share your life with. Best of all is if you can [find and nurture relationships with people](#) who not only support you in [your quest for a rich, full-color life](#), but who are on their own quest, too.

You're more likely to have fun and stay motivated, and less likely to get lost, if you travel with a partner.

### What to Try Today

You can develop a greater sense of attunement in any relationship you currently have. Here's something to try. Next time you see a friend, say over coffee, start by asking them an open-ended question—a question beginning with *who*, *what*, *where*, *why*, or *when*.

Then just sit and listen without interjecting, using your eye contact and body language to convey interest. (Don't tell them that you're doing an experiment.)

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Then, when they're done answering, instead of providing feedback, your opinion, or another form of commentary, *ask an open-ended follow-up question about what they've just told you*. Then sit and listen again. And repeat one more time.

You're doing something special with this experiment: you're giving the gift of presence and attunement to the other person.

You're demonstrating that you're interested in their experience of life, and are listening closely enough that you can ask pertinent follow-up questions seeking even more access to what makes them tick.



Why am I recommending being attuned to someone else, when I just got through telling you that you need people to be attuned to you? For two reasons. One is that the muscle of attunement that you're exercising gets a workout whether you're the one initiating it or not.

The second is that, once you drop into that deeper attunement with someone, they are likely to return it to you, often without even realizing it at the time. Consider it a no-lose situation. The worst case scenario is that you exercise your innate capacity for empathy and attunement, which will benefit you. The best case is that you get some of those things back.

In daily life, people rarely do this. Instead, we're often formulating our response to the other person while they're still speaking, which makes it really hard to be fully present with people.

Give this experiment a try and see how the other person responds, and pay attention to how *you* feel inside when you show up for another person in this way.

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# Vocational Health

Sitting around doing nothing isn't good for us psychologically or physically because humans have a basic need to be busy doing things. But not having things to do is probably the least of your worries! Nowadays, who feels they have enough hours in the day?

If you're working, that probably consumes the largest chunk of your waking hours. Therefore, it's [the primary way that you engage with the world](#), explaining why it has such a huge influence on workers' happiness, sense of meaning and purpose, social health, and even physical health.

It's important to figure out how you can use your [vocation](#) to meet and exercise those deep needs and capacities that live at your core. Simply collecting a paycheck doesn't do that.



Maybe it would be helpful to make some changes to the way you approach your existing work. Perhaps taking on a new responsibility, or letting one go, would help you reallocate your time and energy at work in a way that feels more right for you.

You could also let your time at work do double duty by meeting needs or exercising abilities from other areas of your life.

For instance, you could just as easily try the conversation experiment I just gave you with your boss or coworker as with a friend. It might give you a boost of connection in your workday. Being more attuned to others in the workplace may have very real benefits for your career, too.

Many people struggling with “burnout” consider, at one point or another, starting a new job or career altogether—one they hope would resonate better with values or

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qualities they cherish. If you are, I encourage you to take your time with that decision.

It might be that it a new workplace or career isn't what's needed, but rather a new relationship to the one you have. You might be able to scratch your vocational itches with new hobbies or volunteer work, as well.

In any event, you don't need to decide anything today. Try something new at work, like I described above, or a new internal orientation to it, as I describe below, and see how you feel.

Just remember: if you're feeling unfulfilled vocationally, there's a reason for that. Your unique set of skills and talents are like seeds, and if you don't water them they'll remain dormant, or go dormant, and that's how you'll feel.

### What to Try Today

It's easy to become fixated on the observable outcomes of our efforts, and of course, there's nothing wrong with wanting to benefit from hard work. In fact, it's very important to have objective *short- and mid-term goals*, so we can see our progress and get an emotional boost from the sense of accomplishment.

*However, concrete, objective goals make for poor long-term motivators.*



The research is clear that people oriented toward “extrinsic,” or tangible, outcomes in the long-term are much more likely to be unhappy and unfulfilled than people whose long-term sights are set on “intrinsic” – intangible, subjective— goals.

These are things like values. For instance, justice, competence, and being of service are examples of intrinsic motivators. They are things that you can feel in your bones when you have them. They aren't outside of you.

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So, today, see if you can identify some core values that make you tick. Then, for the rest of the week, do at least one thing every day to act in accordance with them. For example, if you're going to work, you might try to focus on being as competent as possible, or the best teammate you can be with your colleagues.

The fringe benefit of this approach is that you're just as likely to achieve your objective goals if you're acting in alignment with your core values. (For example, someone who is competent and a good teammate is likely to do well at work.) *Plus*, you'll be deriving more meaning and fulfillment from your activities at the same time.

You'll have your cake and be happier, more content, and have a more meaningful experience of life, too.

## Psychological Health

When people are only concerned with surviving—with being well-rounded in terms of basic needs—they're apt to be oriented toward short-term gratification. That's because the primitive parts of our brain, whose job it is to help us survive, are pretty . . . simple-minded.



They think that anything that feels good is likely good for survival, and anything that doesn't feel good is not. So, these "reptilian" parts of the brain are in search of a 100% pleasurable experience of life.

If you tend to have more pleasant than unpleasant experiences, then your reptilian brain thinks you're doing fine.

The downside is that things like vulnerability with other people, effort, attunement to your feelings, and doing new, different things aren't easy, fun, and safe all the

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time. Therefore, your reptilian brain isn't a fan of doing them. Unfortunately, though, they are *exactly* the things you need to do in order to achieve your full human potential.



The feeling of true happiness that comes with that is called “eudaimonic well-being,” from the Greek “eu” (good), and “daimon,” (spirit).

It's the good life: a life infused with well-being, meaning, and purpose that exists even when you're having a bad day or month—because eudaimonic well-being is big enough to include all of it.

It's the kind of happiness the uniquely human part of you wants, even if you aren't fully aware of that right now.

In the quest to avoid pain and difficulty, sometimes people develop unhealthy thought or behavior patterns, which can harm themselves or others. These include, but certainly aren't limited to, substance abuse, angry outbursts, workaholism, and persistently negative opinions of themselves and others.

Now, if you're experiencing any thought or behavior pattern that is harmful to you or others, or making it difficult to fulfill your roles in life, I'd recommend that you seek a therapist, so that you have someone to talk these things over with.

That aside, I have a more general tip for you.

### What to Try Today

It's something called mindfulness meditation. [Mindfulness](#) is the quality of awareness, curiosity, and acceptance of your unfolding, moment-to-moment experience of life.

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Most people spend a lot of their lives—more than they realize—lost in negative thoughts about the past or future, or just zoned out with planning or fantasizing.

Chances are, for large chunks of your life, you're moving mindlessly through it, with little or no awareness of your present-moment experience—it's just the way our brains tend to work. When you're mindless like that, your short-term-pleasure-oriented reptilian brain is calling the shots.



Mindfulness meditation is a practice of inclining toward your higher-order, uniquely human brain structures (the cerebral cortex). Your uniquely human needs and capacities reside up there, along with the ability to experience joy, contentment, and eudaimonic well-being when they are

being attended to.

Your human brain has your long-term well-being in mind. Orienting toward it can make it easier to make decisions that are in alignment with your core motivators. It's the wise part of you that is willing to make some effort right now in order to achieve loftier goals.

There are plenty of shorter-term benefits of mindfulness meditation practice, too. Studies reveal that even moderate practice can yield improvements in stress and blood pressure, mood, [compulsive behaviors](#), empathy and [compassion](#).

Mindfulness meditation practice can be practiced anywhere, anytime, since it's a matter of awareness of what's happening right now. Therefore, you can cultivate mindfulness while walking around, shopping . . . even standing at a rock concert!

However, carving out some time for dedicated meditation practice can yield more benefits. It's also a way you can send a message to yourself that you care enough to make time to do something good, just for you.



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So, how about giving it a shot today? You can [click here to try a mindfulness meditation](#) right now on my website; I have ones as short as 15 minutes and as long as 40 minutes. Give it a try (ideally, every day for at least a week to allow yourself to settle in to the practice a bit) and see what you think.

## One Size Fits You

The changes you want to make will, of course, require you to change the way you do some things, which means *not* following the path of least resistance. Doing new things, or old things in new ways, is harder than maintaining the status quo. But you've already tried the status quo, and that led you to me.

The good news here is that you don't need to make wholesale changes to your life right now. You don't need to change careers, get a whole new set of friends, sell everything to go live on top of a mountain somewhere, or start running marathons. Those things, or countless others, might be part of your Right Life, and they might not.

What you really need to do right now is start filling your "buckets" however you can. Start paying attention to your fingerprint of uniquely human needs and capacities, focusing on the intangibles that motivate you.

Chances are, there are areas of your life where you aren't consciously aware of what scares you and energizes you; what warms your heart and what leaves you cold.

Once you make those things conscious, you'll find areas of your life where old fears, unmet needs, unexercised abilities, and unhealed wounds have been influencing your decisions. You'll find that your reptilian brain has had you acting in opposition to some of your core motivators . . . and holding you back.

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# Take Advantage of Guidance

Of course, it's hard to be conscious of things that are unconscious, and to see into your own blind spots—hence the name! That's where I come in with my coaching clients.

I bring a third-party perspective, plus the tools and techniques that I've developed over the years to help people discover exactly what makes them tick, where they're getting stuck, and then how to get unstuck as efficiently as possible.



After we make that game plan, we're off and running. My coaching clients and I don't spend years dissecting the past and going nowhere. The process is mostly present- and future-oriented, emphasizing solutions that work.

I remain involved every step of the way. I'm your accountability partner and trusted advisor. I help you make course corrections as necessary, and address the new challenges that inevitably arise in any change process. I help you spot the unforeseen opportunities that arise, too, and celebrate with you when you seize them.

We don't just roll over roadblocks, but dissolve them for good, and achieve all-new levels of personal and professional satisfaction, energy, productivity, and true happiness in all areas of life.

I've helped surgeons, lawyers, actors, CEOs, reality TV stars, salesmen, screenwriters—you name it. If you'd like to be next, I'd be happy to speak with you to see if we could work well together.

Just [click here](#) and you can learn all about personal coaching with me, and also schedule a free, confidential, 20-minute phone consultation.

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## Not Easy? No Problem.



Very few things that are worthwhile and meaningful in the long run are also easy. And growth, by definition, isn't easy. It requires pushing your envelope; challenging yourself to try new ways of understanding yourself and the world around you, and then acting in alignment with your most authentic self.

That's it, really: simple, but not necessarily easy.

However, I can guarantee you, both from my professional and personal experience, that every bit of effort you make toward your Right Life will be returned to you in multiples.

It's the most important work you'll ever do, because the reward—being fully alive and moving through your life with ease, contentment, and wisdom—is the key to everything you want.

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## Stay in Touch!

Please feel free to drop me a line with any comments or questions, and to connect with me on social media:



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## P.S.

I wanted to add just one more thought, which is that, if you read this far, that means something. It means that right now, in this moment, the most human part of you is at the controls. It's the part that wants to feel energized, productive, fulfilled—to have that eudaimonic well-being that we talked about.

There is *no way* that your reptilian brain would have kept you reading.



So, you do have a choice. You can choose to take the information I've given you, file it away in your brain, and carry on as before.

Or, you can put it to work right now, trying some of the experiments I gave you.

(Better yet, you could choose to explore coaching with me since, having made it this far, you're probably the kind of person that I have the most success with.)

Choices mean that a decision has to be made, and decisions are more than thoughts. They are thoughts coupled with an action. Without the action part, decisions are just wishes. You've probably done a lot of wishing already.

The thing is, you'll make your decision no matter what. You'll either take the action of turning down a new road, toward the life you want, or you'll plant your feet in the life you have.

[I'm here to help](#) you make that turn if you'd like me to.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.