

HOW YOUR GUT BRAIN HELPS YOU THINK ABOUT OTHERS

A White Paper Adapted from

Shift the Work

*The Revolutionary Science of Moving From Apathetic
to All In Using Your Head, Heart and Gut*

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The Third Brain

Using our head brains to innovate and our heart brains to inspire isn't good enough to achieve different results if we aren't also connected, behaving like a hive, with a collective consciousness. This can happen only when we grasp the importance of the third piece of the puzzle, the brain in the gut: the intelligence center that has us thinking not for ourselves, but for the rest of the world.

In this white paper adapted from my book *Shift the Work*, I explore how our gut brains connects us to the world.

Readers of this series of white papers adapted from my book *Shift the Work* might assume that every action in my life is directed by a sense of mission, that every time I open my mouth, put my fingers to the keyboard, or speak to a client, I'm taking into consideration the impact it will have on the community and the world. In reality, I struggle with living up to my ideals every single day. Ideally, I'm always looking for ways to integrate my values into my life, but I, like everyone else, have problems with managing my priorities and remembering what's important in life.

Five years ago, I thought long and hard about my obligations toward the city I love. It was time to act on my principles. Politics seemed like a good entry point, so I applied to be on the Baltimore City school board. The universe didn't agree with my plans, and my application was swiftly denied. With that setback, I gave up any desire to get involved in local politics on a formal level. In the coming years, I'd channel my desire to make an impact by helping companies, organizations, and entrepreneurs integrate broader missions into their work culture.

In the spring of 2016, 25-year-old Freddie Gray was arrested by Baltimore police, and later died in the hospital. The public reacted with outrage, and a lawyer hired by the family agrees that the arrest was unjust, saying, "Running while black is not probable cause." After the Freddie Gray episode, the Baltimore City school board chairman approached SHIFT THE WORK asking for help. Coincidentally, this is the man who'd been selected over me for the position I coveted years before (they made the right call!). He wanted

SHIFT THE WORK's support with interviewing and assessing candidates for the position of Baltimore City school board CEO.

My wife, who works in PR, sized up the opportunity as a no-win situation. If the eventual CEO worked out, then nobody would care that we played a role in the selection process. On the other hand, if the recommended candidate ended up being a disaster, the press would surely come knocking when looking for someone to blame. They'd criticize placing the process in the hands of a private corporation, and we'd be held up as an example of greed ruining the public-school system. This seemed like the more

probable outcome given that the average tenure of a city superintendent in an urban environment is less than two years. Being publicly blamed for a major failure of the public-school system wouldn't be good for business. Logic was suggesting we lean out.

But civic duty called, and we decided to lean in. We made the vetting process as transparent as humanly possible. Ultimately, the board independently selected the candidate we recommended. Still, it didn't take long to catch flak from the press. Immediately, there were articles about the "secretive" and "underhanded" process to select the new board CEO. To the critics, it didn't matter that we were putting our best foot forward and acting with the city's interest in mind. We'd worked long and hard to build a solid reputation, and it sucked that this one episode threatened to damage our integrity.

The episode Shift the Worked my perspective on politicians. Sure, there are plenty of politicians who act out of corporate or self-interests. Yet, there is still a considerable group of other politicians who want to make a difference and help their communities, and they put themselves in the public eye knowing they, their families, their good work, and their reputations will take a good amount of abuse.

In the end, we decided against issuing a comment. We weren't going to acknowledge that there was even a question of impropriety. We knew our actions were pure and just.

If presented with the same opportunity, our team would make the same choice again without hesitation. In life, there's a constant battle between what you should do and what you need to do. We shouldn't have taken on this job. Something inside us told us we needed to lean in. It was a biological need that we couldn't ignore, with the brains in our guts calling us to a higher purpose. That's why we didn't feel regret.

Regret only surfaces in those moments when you ignore the need and instead follow the should.

The role of the gut brain in calling us to a higher purpose is best summed up by the famous quote from *The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas: "All for one and one for all, united we stand divided we fall."

We know what it looks like to lead a moral and ethical life but leading our lives according to those ideals is difficult. How many times have we seen another country treat its homeless and disabled in a way we find appalling, yet, on a daily basis, we find ourselves driving past these same people without lifting a finger? As a nation, we are charitable, but we're also regularly missing opportunities to contribute more or make charity a routine part of our lives.

Is closing our eyes to the half of the country whose lives are heading in the wrong direction morally acceptable simply because our lives may be headed in the right

direction? We should be thankful if our lives are going well, but it doesn't give us a free pass to ignore the misery that others experience.

The movies we love are the ones where the hero puts his own life at risk to save many. The selflessness of soldiers, firefighters, and police is the reason we celebrate them in our society. In the book *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why*, Laurence Gonzales uses science and anecdotes to show that the people who survive life's great challenges are not the ones who act out of self-interest. Rather, it's the people who are focused on achieving the best result for the entire group.

Do you lead with your head, heart or gut brain? [Find out](#)

The Neuroscience of the Gut

The bears have stopped chasing us through the wilderness, yet we live in an environment that requires an ability to cope with a much higher level of stress. We're taxing not only our physical muscles but also our emotional, mental, and spiritual ones. We rely on the gut to manage these greater levels of anxiety. Ninety-five percent of serotonin, the neurotransmitter that keeps our mood balanced and our thinking clear, is produced in the gut. In addition, 100 million neurons sit in the walls of our gut, which is more than in the spinal cord or the peripheral nervous system.

Nestled in the center of the gut is 90 percent of our immune system, the part of our body that keeps us healthy. The American Gut Project focuses on researching fecal matter to gain a greater understanding of the connection between the microbiome and health. Anyone can send them a sample of their feces, and they will test it for ailments and diseases. The goal is that in the future doctors will be able to look at someone's fecal matter and tell whether the person has cancer, needs a certain vitamin, or is dehydrated.

The gut is connected to the other intelligence centers in the body. Information is relayed from the gut brain to the head brain via the vagus nerve, the longest nerve in the body. For the most part, this connection is one-sided, with almost all of the information going from the gut to the head. During sleep, it's the gut brain that processes information. When people talk about getting butterflies before a speech, they are talking about cortisol secreting from the adrenal glands. This is the stress hormone, and 70 percent of our body's cortisol is secreted from this location. The head brain is



processing the situation, but it's the gut brain that's taking on the primary role of responding.

You Are What You Eat

The gut is an ecosystem. Dr. Mark Gordon, a renowned researcher, directs the Washington University School of Medicine's Center for Genome Sciences and Systems Biology. He has been studying the microbiome for decades. Much of this research is just starting to hit mainstream behavior psychologists to determine how gut health—specifically the bacteria that take up residence in the gut—defines who we become.

Is Your Gut Fit?

At a recent conference, I saw Naveen Jain speak about his new company, Viome—founded on the premise of creating a world where illness is elective. He talked about the simple, yet profound idea of taking control of your health, and becoming the CEO of your wellness.

Your gut has a unique army of approximately 40 trillion microorganisms that, when functioning in tune with your body's ecosystem, can maximize your health and potentially prevent disease. Learn more about their science and how it can help you with your gut health at www.viome.com.

Millennials Are All About the Gut

Millennials, with their need to impact the collective, are more connected to the brain in the gut than any generation before them. This sensitivity to what's happening in the gut brain and being in tune with all three brains makes them ideal candidates for tackling the world's greatest problems and becoming the greatest generation. People of older generations like to put down millennials as soft, claiming they know little about life because they've never had to endure the hardships of earlier generations. There's no question that adversity is instructive, but does this mean we should make the lives of millennials harder just to teach them a lesson?

We should be thankful that the people of this generation are faced with fewer adversities. This freedom allows them to engage the workplace in a unique manner. They don't have to worry about their paycheck, meaning they are free to focus on solving world problems like climate change, disease, hunger, racism, and inequality. It's our good fortune that they seem up for the challenge. What some people see as laziness is really a refusal to settle for any work that isn't meaningful. Millennials would

rather work as baristas than take a job that isn't socially conscious. They're willing to live in their childhood bedrooms until they find the right job, by which they mean one that has a mission they can get behind. As consumers with disposable incomes, they're speaking loud and clear. They'll buy TOMS shoes and shop at Whole Foods because they need to know that they're helping, and not hurting, the world.

This display of altruism, albeit selfless, has immense benefits to the giver that's been coined as the "helper's high." When we do good, our body releases serotonin, the mood-boosting chemical produced in the gut, which makes us feel happy. This feel-good high can have long-term effects on your body like decreased anxiety and depression, minimized physical pain, strengthened immunity, and improved sleep.

What are your natural gut brain skills? [Take our work superpowers quiz](#) and find out.

How Our Guts Work at Work

A purpose-driven mentality reminds me of how the army breaks down young recruits, only to slowly build them back up mentally, physically, and emotionally. Meanwhile, they're shedding the extra weight in the gut as they prepare themselves to become part of something greater than themselves. Our soldiers aren't unfeeling mercenaries. They're people whose values align with the country whose flag they're fighting under. Is there a same level of compatibility between your values and the organization's mission for which you work? Can you confidently say that you feel like you're part of a greater purpose?

Willingness to sacrifice is not about being afraid of how our opinions will make us look. Are you hesitant to take contrarian views if they may separate you from the group and damage relationships? Openness and honesty are about the courage to break free from these restraints of self-interest. Why should we stay silent if we feel the organization is moving away from its mission and values? Everyone says they want to be a part of something bigger than themselves until it comes time to sacrifice. We should be willing to sacrifice our time, our money, and our egos for a job we believe in. The gut brain will suggest the road less traveled, but we must have the courage to take that path even if it means walking alone.

Impact-driven is about whether you feel like what you're doing every day has a meaningful impact. My mother guided me to lead a life where the fire burned bright inside of me. Working for a big organization wasn't going to light me up, which is why I turned down the job at Andersen Consulting and, instead, started SHIFT THE WORK. It's been our mission since the beginning to show other companies how they can have an impact on the world and their workforce. Meanwhile, we've been our own test case,

which is why we take great pride in being named an Inc. Magazine's Best Places to Work for 2017.

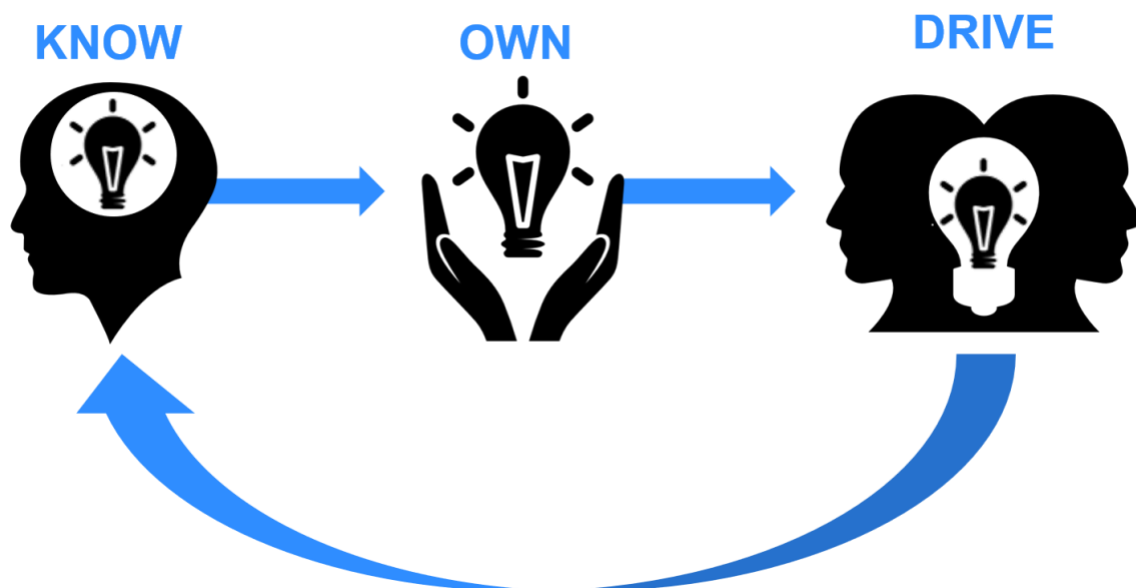
Strategies: You. Drive. Purpose.

Know with your head.

Own with your heart.

Drive with your gut.

This is how you work on your purpose.



Do the Work: Your Obituary

This is an effective exercise to help us lead a life without regrets. The name of the exercise says it all.

Grab a sheet of paper and write the obituary you'd want your family, friends, and peers to read the morning after your death. Write down the accomplishments you hope to achieve. Do you want charity and community service to be a major part of your legacy? Do you want to be known as an innovator at work? List the family members you will leave behind. Do you see grandchildren in your future?

Hopefully, when you read over the final version, you'll feel that there's a dimension to life greater than material and personal gain. Start living as this person every day.

Impact painting is similar to the obituary exercise. We did it at my company several years ago. It starts with a short lesson from an art teacher that covers the basics. Then, we set everyone up with an easel and canvas and ask them to paint what an impactful year looks like to them. Someone in our company drew a Buddha. Another person painted a chain of people circling the world. One team member did a drawing of an enormous heart that filled every inch of the canvas with shades of red.

Both these exercises are asking the fundamental question connected to the gut brain: What is this all for?

Strategies: Workplace

The emergence of social entrepreneurship has been a positive development in recent years. Companies have managed to influence real change in their local communities. Still, it's too little and too dispersed to have an overwhelming impact. The volunteer work and charity are usually enacted as separate from the work of the company. It's time for companies to extend their reach by integrating social responsibility into their work.

In 2014, a special working group of the United Nations drafted a list of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "The Elders," a group of luminaries that includes Sir Richard Branson, Nelson Mandela, and Jimmy Carter, helped compile this list of the greatest issues facing the planet and humanity. The goals are as follows:

- No poverty
- Zero hunger
- Good health and well-being
- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Clean water and sanitation
- Affordable and clean energy

- Decent work and economic growth
- Industry innovation and infrastructure
- Reduced inequalities
- Sustainable cities and communities
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate Action
- Life below water
- Life on land
- Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Partnerships for the goals

If every organization begins operating with these goals in mind, then we can prevent disaster on a massive scale and find ourselves living on this planet a little longer. Imagine the possibility for change if each company were to select only one item on the list as the focus of their corporate responsibility initiative.

The transformation will begin when the company's impact mission is woven into its business model. Our mission at SHIFT THE WORK is to Shift the Work the engagement of the workforce from 70 percent disengaged to 70 percent engaged. If we can reach that goal with just our clients, our overall impact on the world will be huge.

Weaving mission into the business model is the difference between one life insurance company simply trying to sell more policies and a different firm that tries to find the right policies for families. It's a bank issuing mortgages it knows can actually be repaid. It's about changing the conversation in companies, so the shareholders aren't only asking whether a company is profitable, but also whether it's a force for good in the world.

Organizations should focus on more than just what they do, according to Simon Sinek, in his TED Talk, "Start with Why." They shouldn't be focused on how they do it, either. Instead, the only question they should ask is why. As Sinek puts it, Martin Luther King Jr. didn't have a plan. He had a *dream*.

The Purpose Hotel is a Kickstarter-funded project whose goal is to design a hotel where each aspect of the hotel and a guest's stay is designed to benefit others. Internet fees fight human trafficking. Soaps, shampoos, and furniture are purchased from companies with the goal of making a difference in the world. Each one-night stay has the potential to positively impact the lives of a hundred people in the world.

Are you ready to be more engaged at work? [Start here.](#)

Strategies: Communities

Ice Bucket Challenge

The Ice Bucket Challenge was pivotal in promoting awareness of the disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. The idea was simple: film a video of ice being dumped on someone's head in order to promote awareness of the disease. When celebrities began filming themselves taking on the challenge, it became a social media phenomenon. Everybody wanted to participate. Surprisingly, people also wanted to give to the cause. The ALS Association ended up raising \$115 million from 2.5 million people. 50 percent of the people who gave were first-time donors. The success of the Ice Bucket Challenge proves that, deep down, everyone likes feeling good about doing good

Thread

The social fabric of our communities is built on the family structure. Thread, an organization in Baltimore, engages underperforming high-school students by providing a family of volunteers to help with academic and personal growth. Instead of one person mentoring a student, an entire family is recruited for each child. Someone takes the child to school. Another person picks him or her up. One volunteer is in charge of making sure he or she eats. The program has succeeded in graduating more than 250 students. It's the first program I've seen to raise graduation rates. The founder of the program started with eight hundred medical students at Johns Hopkins. Not a group of people who exactly had a lot of free time. But they made the time.

Routines, Rituals and Rhythm

As part of our effort to weave impact into our mission, we used to hold what's called "Impact Day," where we got out of the office, twice a year, to spend the entire day servicing the community. Admittedly, we stole the idea from Starbucks, which in 2008 was struggling through the recession. Howard Schultz, who had recently returned as CEO, took ten thousand managers down to New Orleans. Half the day was devoted to meetings, and the other half of the day was spent building houses. Over the years, we've increased our giving efforts both in frequency and in reach. We meet with cause partners throughout the year, on a monthly basis, to learn how we can show up and

give back to our local communities. We partnered with an organization called Buy One, Give One (B1G1) to give back to our world and to those who need it most.

When we think about the big issues, the ones that seem almost impossible to tackle, it puts our work into proper perspective. The work issues that seemed unmanageable become painless. It's like looking back at a time in your teens when you were hysterical over breaking up with a boy or girl. At the time, you thought the world was ending. Really, it was just beginning.

On Slack, our company has a channel called #impact. It's a place where members of the team can share ways they are giving back to the community and world. Someone may post about a race they're running, or an upcoming charity event. People post pictures of working at a soup kitchen or spending a week down in New Orleans helping build houses with Habitat for Humanity. It has an amazing ability to encourage people to join their colleagues or find impact activities of their own that better suit them. This goes back to the Ice Bucket Challenge. People want to get involved, but they don't always know the way in. They need a coworker to bring them along to an event or draw attention to an innovative charity that speaks to the person's gut.

Solutions: Tools, Technology, and Training

Steps: Your Impact

What do you want to be known for at the end of your life? When people evaluate your life, how do you want them to judge your relationships with your partner, children, community, company, coworker, and even random strangers? We all have different answers to these questions. The answers may even change from year to year.

By staying attuned to our gut brains, we can identify our guiding principles and lead life with intentionality and deliberateness.

If we don't impose our principles on life, then life will inflict its misfortune on everyone.

You can use your work superpowers to impose your principles, discover them [here](#).

How Does it Change the World?

An Olympic runner will train ten hours a day. The facility the athlete uses for training is carefully chosen. It needs to have the proper equipment and provide a comfortable environment. The athlete can't be distracted by small inconveniences.

Every moment of the day is carefully planned out. The athlete follows a special diet, not consuming any food or drink that will prevent the runner from maintaining peak performance. There is deliberateness to every action. The athlete must maintain this deliberateness even after the training session is over. The Olympic runner doesn't return home and eat a bag of Doritos and drink Mountain Dew. If the athlete doesn't get a good night's rest, then he or she won't be able to train the following morning.

If you want to become a world-class performer, work is your gym! It's where we spend the bulk of our day. When we connect to our bodies at work and hear the signals being sent by the brains in the head, heart, and gut, we can become more innovative, connected, and passionate human beings! When we work on purpose, we go home with purpose too.

Workers don't innovate if they don't feel a passion for the work. Likewise, they don't have a passion for the work if they aren't in a position to innovate.

A disengaged workforce is hurting the bottom line of companies and workers.

In recent years, companies have begun paying closer attention to how values impact their bottom line. They began recognizing the utility of hiring women and minorities. Part of this was because of consumer demand, but people also wanted to work in diverse companies. It's not appealing to go to a place that's known for sexism or racism. With these advancements, workers began to see themselves as agents of change. It's empowering for people, and it makes them feel committed to their jobs.



Making a Shift the Work

Are you starting to feel ready to listen to the brains in your head, heart, and gut? Ready to become engaged? Great! Now comes the task of Shift the Working your workplace.

It's not a question of can. It's a test of will. We know we should be going to the gym. We know we should be thinking about helping our neighbor. We know we should demand that our bosses adhere to their stated values and mission.

How will we trust our guts, follow our hearts, and stick to the plans in our heads?

What Next?

The diagnosis is clear. More than two thirds of the workforce aren't engaged, and unless we begin listening to the three brains in our bodies, we will fail at finding the greater purpose to Shift the Work these numbers.

In my job as a consultant, I take great pride in making sure my clients walk away with not only fresh insight but also tangible steps they can take to pursue a solution. Success, in other words, isn't achieved when the diagnosis is delivered. If I can't provide the client with effective actions, then my advice isn't worth the paper it's written on.

The question for us is how to turn our awareness and knowledge of our biology and its impact on engagement into actionable steps that will Shift the Work the direction of our lives. This series of white papers based on my book *Shift the Work* has provided tools, tactics, and practices to harness all three of your brains, but a complete Shift the Work and lasting commitment will require an overall change in outlook. Implementing the following six-step process will empower you to change your beliefs, behaviors, habits, standards, and results. I have also created a quiz so that you can get started by [learning your work superpowers](#).

Step 1: Shift the Work Your Perspective

Throughout this series of white papers, we've discussed how language has the power to Shift the Work perspective. Events are not happening to you but for you. Responsibilities are not something you have to do but get to do. Your greatest hardships and difficulties are nothing less than opportunities to open your eyes to what is important in life!

Parents feel exhausted and stretched at the end of a long day. The last thing they want to do is bathe an irritable child who is running on fumes. The night hinges on the parent's ability to pause and articulate that this isn't a burden but a chance to bond with the child, to make it a loving moment between parent and child and not one that is bitter and full of tears.

If you find yourself struggling with this exercise, consider volunteering in a retirement home. Sit with some of the older residents and listen to them talk about their lives. You'll hear stories of things left unsaid and unfulfilled dreams. You'll be able to feel their pain over the time that has passed and cannot be brought back. Regret is the greatest hurt because it hits with the realization that something cannot be undone.

The point of the exercise is to direct us to the matters, responsibilities, and people in our lives that we should honor and appreciate. It allows us to identify the superficial noise in our lives that is better left ignored, like the missed parties, the cars we can't afford, and the television shows that we don't have to binge-watch. We're our worst selves when we covet material objects more than time and relationships. In my family, we've adopted a rule of no more gifting objects. The only presents we allow are experiences that allow the family to spend time together, whether it's a vacation, an art project, or dinner out.

Look at your list of the twenty-five things that truly matter and ask yourself what you have control over and what you don't have control over. Buddhist tradition puts great emphasis on the idea of remaining unattached to the potential outcomes of matters we can't control. We can go to the gym religiously, hire the best financial planner in the world, and buy a lottery ticket every day of our lives but, ultimately, death, taxes, and winning the lottery are beyond our control. Limited control is a fact of life. We don't have veto power over who will love, marry, and accept us. All we control is the knowledge we let into our minds, the outlook we use to engage the world, and the kindness we show as a parent, spouse, child, sibling, and neighbor.

If we stay focused on chasing our passions and realizing our dreams—if we keep our eye on the prize—then we'll never feel regret again.

Step 2: Establish a (Real) Plan

Everyone sets a New Year's resolution, but few people draft a well-defined plan to help them realize their goals. Instead of ready, aim, fire, it ends up being fire, ready, aim.

Stephen Covey, the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, writes that once the end goal is clear in the person's mind, he or she needs to go through a process of reverse engineering to see whether the goal is realistic, and how it can be broken down into achievable steps.

In high school, I had the thought that I'd play in the NFL one day. I stood at 5'8, 176 pounds. Reverse engineering would've cued me into the reality that I'd have to figure out how to grow six inches, gain a hundred pounds, and shave a second off my forty-yard dash in the next five years leading up to the draft.

If we're going to be ALL IN, we need to know what ALL IN looks like, and for each person it's different. Most people say they want to lose weight and come up with a random goal of losing a pound a month. These people are playing checkers, thinking three steps ahead, instead of playing chess and breaking down every step needed to clinch victory. It's the difference between high performers and those who whine and cry about not hitting their goals.

As for myself, I've set, for example, the goal of achieving 7 percent body fat. After talking to people who've achieved a similar goal, I determined, through reverse engineering, the precise discipline and progression that will be required in terms of diet, exercise, and sleep in order to reach my goal.

Having a plan means writing it down. People who write down their goals have a greater chance at succeeding than people who keep them in their heads. It's about sitting down and recording in a journal a realistic, specific, measurable goal that can be executed within a particular time frame.

Establishing a plan may sound basic and simplistic, but it's common sense that's not commonly deployed.

Want to be more engaged at work? Start [here](#).

Step 3: Celebrate Your Progress

It's unrealistic to think we can live life on a constant high. Even if we're making progress, there will be a moment when we take a big hit and get knocked down to reality, or our past selves. How we respond to such adversity is a secondary challenge of growth.

In today's culture, we've learned to deal with adversity by taking our ball and going home. We've become a nation of quitters. We've cited the high divorce rates. We've examined the tendency of people to discard a slightly old iPhone in favor of the latest model. Too many of us face resistance, and instead of regrouping and moving ahead, we allow the setback to turn incapacitating.

A person makes a New Year's resolution to stop smoking. She sails through the first three weeks of the year without lighting up. One night, she goes to a party. The smell of a cigarette wafts in from the balcony. Minutes later, she is outside bumming a cigarette off a friend. The next day, she buys a fresh pack.

If only this woman would've stopped and celebrated her progress. Making the resolution is progress in itself. People who explicitly make resolutions are ten times more likely to attain their goals than people who don't explicitly make resolutions. She didn't stop and congratulate herself for sailing through the first three weeks and set a new goal of making it to four. Instead, she turned a small stumble into a complete collapse. She allowed perfection to become the enemy of good.

Scarcity isn't something we suffer from any longer. We lack for nothing. We're past the age of one-size-fits-all answers. Today, the resources to help people overcome their problems are immense. If we want to salvage a relationship, for example, there are a multitude of counselors and therapies to choose from. Instead of chucking our phones at the first sign of wear and tear, we can make use of companies like www.fixt.co that will come to our offices and perform on-site repairs of our broken mobile devices.

Instead of quitting, learn how to fail forward. Success is only linear in fantasies. The stretch of road that takes us from point A to point B is full of twists, turns, potholes, and bathroom breaks. What's important to remember is that the obstacles only come once we've started the journey. They only happen because we've succeeded in getting past the starting line. They're the greatest proof that progress has been achieved. These unexpected stops are teachable moments when we can modify and sharpen our plans, so we can better navigate the rest of the journey.

Most successful start-ups, in an effort to innovate, develop, and grow their businesses, use a methodology of build, test, and measure. Each step is an integral part of being ALL IN on an idea. Even if the test fails, it's crucial to measure all the ways it has succeeded, so the baby isn't thrown out with the bathwater when version 2.0 is built.

Brothers Dan and Chip Heath write about the need to celebrate progress in their book, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. Great leaders, according to the authors, begin all efforts of problem-solving by finding the bright spots of the situation, rather than immediately focusing on the problems. It's about seeing what works so we can better understand how it went wrong.

In therapy, this is called the sandwich technique. The patient begins the session with positive news, and then moves on to something negative, before finally closing with a second positive report.

By nature, we like to present pessimism. Walk down the street and eavesdrop on people's phone calls. An overwhelming majority of the conversations focus on the negative actions of others. Someone is complaining about a spouse, parent, boss, landlord, or politician.

Even if we like spewing pessimism, we much prefer hearing optimism coming out of other people's mouths. Most of us can't stand listening to negativity for more than a couple of minutes. If we stopped and listened to our own thoughts, we wouldn't enjoy it either.

Stand in front of a mirror and speak any negative thoughts aloud to yourself. You'll find that it's not much fun to hear yourself talk about all the ways you've managed to disappoint yourself in the last day.

Now, stand in front of a mirror and speak any positive thoughts aloud to yourself. Boast to yourself about all the great developments in your life. Celebrate the progress you've made. [You should also celebrate your superpowers.](#)

Step 4: Generate Passion

Fake it to make it.

The way we move and hold our bodies has a direct impact on how we feel about ourselves. If we walk with confidence, we will feel confident. If we slump our shoulders and drag our feet, we'll feel lethargic. It's why it's physically impossible to be mad if you smile, look up at the sky, and jump up and down. Communication, as we've discussed, is mainly about voice quality—tone, pitch, pace—and body language. It's our bodies, not our thoughts or words, that play a central role in generating passion.

Passion comes down to one simple question: why do we want to do this?

Once we know the answer, we need to set upon the task of creating the urgency and emotion it will take to make our visions a reality. It begins with the energy we exhibit when we wake up in the morning. It's how we carry our bodies as we walk through our day and the tone of our voice when we speak. Is the face we show the world one that beams, or are our lips turned down in a permanent scowl? When we exercise and get our hearts beating fast, we don't simply feel healthy—we feel optimistic about life. After an hour at the gym, we're more inclined to tackle a life-affirming activity—family time, work, studying—rather than wanting to vegetate in front of the television or go to sleep.

In these moments that we're walking, talking, and speaking with excitement and optimism, we're stuck in the present. We're not dwelling on the past, or anxious about the future. We're not stuck in a moment. We're stuck in the moment.

In the book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi talks about the power of getting into a state of flow, or what others call the “zone.” It's a moment when we have clarity of thought. The world, in effect, slows down.

Baseball players say that when they're in the zone, the ball comes toward the plate in slow motion. It can be a 95-mile-an-hour fastball, but the hitter can see the actual rotations of the ball and its stitching.

Passion is in the eye of the beholder. But if we're failing to clearly convey our passion to others, we're most definitely failing to communicate it to our own three brains.

In his talk, "Getting Stuck in the Negatives and How to get Unstuck," Tony Robbins says: “MOTION CREATES EMOTION.”

Step 5: Chase Your Purpose

Finding your path takes real work. We shouldn't expect to wake up one morning with a sense of purpose. Epiphanies do happen, but only once we've provided the brain in the head with enough thoughts, images, and experiences to make innovative connections. Steve Jobs's unique aesthetic values for Apple products can be traced back to a calligraphy course he took with a monk after dropping out of college. Larry Page came up with the distinctive approach for Google's algorithm after hearing an Italian professor speak at a conference in California.

We must chase our purpose with fervor. When we try to identify what excites us, we shouldn't measure the path simply on how it personally benefits us. This is not the key to finding something sustaining. The litmus test for what's considered a purpose worth going ALL IN for is something that benefits our families, our communities, the entire world, and us. The greatest influencers are people who've managed to come up with a mission that takes all of those elements into account.

What we are trying to find is our mission statement. Why are we here? How do we want to be remembered? If we can't connect our actions and work back to this mission statement, then we shouldn't be doing it.

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Step 6: Commit to Performance

Day-to-day life is about routines. We brush our teeth and get dressed a certain way. Every morning, we drive to work along the same route. The way we defuse conflicts fits into certain patterns. Following well-known practices provides us with comfort and certainty, even when they're ineffective. Such rigidity is not a recipe for growth.

Shift the Working behavior ultimately demands changing patterns. When we act deliberately and intentionally to change our behavior, new neural pathways that connect

the three brains are created. These fresh connections better allow us to connect our biology to the mission we've set out to achieve.

In order to produce more effective patterns, we first have to recognize our existing ones. Which patterns are constructive, and which ones are destructive?

My morning routine, for example, is what I consider constructive. I'm up at 4:30 every morning. The day starts with journaling, followed by writing and drawing. Then, I take a shot of Bulletproof Coffee before going off to boxing class. I'm back home at 6:15 a.m. to shower. Once dressed, I send my daily CEO riff out to the company. Having concentrated on my body, balance, business, and being, I've established my passion and purpose for the day, and I'm now ready to help get the kids ready for their day. This pattern is a keeper. Having recognized this as a constructive pattern, I can set it on rinse and repeat.

My evening routine, on the other hand, is destructive. After having skipped lunch, I return home and gorge. Dinner is incomplete without a bottle of wine and a giant chocolate-chip cookie for dessert. Despite knowing that I'll have to be up before the crack of dawn, I stay up until around 10:30 p.m. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that my nighttime routine needs to go.

How many of us are stuck in a nighttime routine where we fall asleep with the television on and our phones in our hands, even though studies show that nothing could be worse for our sleep patterns? If we stopped to consider how we are harmfully stimulating the brains in our heads, hearts, and guts at a moment when we should be trying to relax our bodies, we'd look for an opportunity to come up with a more positive routine.

We can't abandon our current patterns, unless we have new patterns to take their place. It helps to think of patterns as takeoffs and landings to the crucial activities in our lives.

Say there is a major deadline on a project at work. Normally, you procrastinate and the pressure of the deadline slowly builds. Also, you resist bringing in certain people for advice because you like full control. As the deadline draws closer, your stress level builds. You dread sitting down and doing it. Why not put a process in place to help you start (takeoff) and finish (landing) while maintaining a high level of engagement and a low amount of aggravation? Ask yourself: "What steps have proven effective in getting me to sit down and do the same work in the past? How can I set myself up to constantly succeed?"

Through effective routines, we control the tone, mindset, and standards we carry into every meeting, project, and relationship! At the very least, make the effort to design purposeful morning and nighttime routines for yourself.

Commit.

Start by learning your work strengths and weakness. [Take the quiz.](#)

About Joe Mechlinski



Joe Mechlinski is a *New York Times* bestselling author, speaker, and social entrepreneur who believes that an engaged workforce is the key to unlocking human potential. Driven by his deep-rooted passion for building mission-driven cultures, Joe founded SHIFT, a collective of businesses spanning consulting, executive membership, and venture capitalism united by their common mission to revolutionize workforce engagement and transform the world.

His latest book, [Shift The Work](#), focuses on this very idea. Filled with actionable strategies and inspiring true stories, *Shift The Work* reveals the revolutionary science behind employee engagement and how readers can use the brains in their head, heart, and gut to transform their workplaces and lives, for the better.

Always embarking on new adventures, Joe launched his podcast, [Shift Happens](#), which features inspiring icons and influencers such as *New York Times* bestselling author Dan Pink, and three-time *New York Times* bestselling author Tucker Max.

About the Book

With every tick of the clock, millions of people inch closer to their breaking points—a growing epidemic of apathy and anxiety in the workplace that is affecting life outside of the office. But meaningful work-life integration is possible.



In *Shift the Work*, Joe Mechliniski, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Grow Regardless*, shares his personal journey to find purpose, and how it influenced him to take a deeper dive into the science of human behavior. Inspired by neuroscience research about the connections between the brains in the head, heart, and gut that drive human perspectives and conduct, Joe shares how everyone can re-engage with their work and impact the world.

Filled with actionable strategies and inspiring true stories, this indispensable guide motivates readers to seek fulfilling opportunities, reconnect with their passions, and recognize their power to make a difference.

Discover Your Work Superpower Today!

You are Minutes Away from Discovering Your Work Superpower

Answer these 20 questions honestly and openly, don't overthink them. If both choices seem true for you, select the answers that is true most often, or the one that you would rather be true. When you are finished you will get your results immediately. Have fun!

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