

Session 3.15 | Recharge and Rest

In the last few sessions, we've been looking at the importance of applied learning and key reasons why leaders struggle to Apply Learning.

1. Investing in Other People. You and I are already spending so much time investing in other people that setting aside time to invest in yourself and for me and myself is often difficult for us.
2. Busyness & Distraction. You and I have very little margin and so we live every day distracted and overwhelmed with busyness if we're not intentional. In the last session we looked at the primary reasons why leaders struggle with busyness and distraction.

In this session, I'm going to share with you the secret to energy and focus for leaders. Take a moment right now to download the Worksheet for this session so you can follow along as we move forward in this session.

The third reason that leaders struggle to Apply Learning is they...

3. Don't take time to fully recharge. We rarely take time to fully recharge and because we don't recharge, we're continually drained of energy.

The result is:

1. Low productivity
2. Strained relationships
3. Information overload
4. Stagnation because of our inability to process and apply what we're learning.

What can we do about taking time to recharge?

The secret to higher levels of productivity is less about managing our time and more about managing our energy. And there are two key disciplines for managers and leaders to follow in order to maintain energy...

1. Rest. If we're going to recharge effectively, we have to get proper and sufficient rest. The most important discipline for maintaining your energy is Rest. If you are getting ample rest, it will solve many of your energy problems.
2. Time Away.

Let's look at both of these in a little more detail.

Rest

When it comes to getting ample rest, there are two primary disciplines that make a significant difference in your energy...

1. **Getting Sufficient Sleep at Night.** There are numerous studies about how sleep affects energy and productivity. I read a study a few years ago which showed top athletes in a number of sports and the amount of sleep that they get each night. Many of them averaged 8-11 hours nightly.

The needs for each individual leader are different. What is important is that you know what your rest needs' are. For years I've evaluated the amount of rest I'm getting and how I feel, how my mind feels, how my energy feels, how healthy I am. And I've watched how my sleep patterns' affect each of those areas.

I found that in order for me to be at maximum health and maximum energy, I need to average 7 hours of sleep each night to bring my highest and best to my work and to others so that I can be most productive. And while I can function for several days on less sleep, sometimes 4 or 5 or 6 hours of sleep, over time my energy, my focus, and my productivity will wane.

2. **Take Regular Breaks.** I get up from my desk and from my work at least once an hour on average. In fact, in the recording of these sessions, I made sure that about once an hour, or once every 90 minutes or so, I took a break, and I went and work on something else, or we went and took a walk, or we did something to get my mind off of what I was doing to take a few minutes to recharge so that I could give maximum time and attention to the work that I'm doing.

Often during the day I'll walk around, or I'll write on a whiteboard or flipchart, or I'll stand up and do my work. Many times I'll take a walk while I'm on a phone call or coaching session.

These regular breaks energize my mind, they sharpen my creativity, and they increase my productivity.

3. **Take Regular Naps.** Now, before you totally discount it, listen to me for just a second. For several years, our daughter, Madison, who plays soccer at a really high level, she's been taking a nap every single day. In fact, the way it happened, the way she began working this discipline into her daily life was when she was at this tournament where they would play multiple games in a day. She found that if she would go back to the vehicle, and lay down in the vehicle, and take a 30 minute to an hour nap, it would give her, it would re-energize her, recharge her. And so when she would come back out in the afternoon for these afternoon games, she would be so much more energized and so much more effective than many of the other players who weren't doing the same thing.

When I saw the impact that it was having on her energy, and the impact it was having on her training, and in her game play, I began reading about rest. And I learned that many top leaders take regular naps. In fact, many historical leaders took naps:

- a. John D. Rockefeller, renowned oil industrialist and philanthropist, napped every afternoon in his office.
- b. Physicist Albert Einstein napped daily - after averaging ten hours of sleep at night, he still took a nap.
- c. President John F. Kennedy – it's said he ate his lunch in bed and then took a nap - every day.
- d. Winston Churchill – he believed that a daily nap was essential saying it helped him to be twice as productive each day.
- e. The French Emperor Napoleon took daily naps.
- f. President Lyndon B. Johnson napped every afternoon at 3:30 breaking his day into "two different shifts".

What did these successful leaders know that we don't?

After watching Madison, our daughter, practice this daily discipline for more than 2 years, I discovered...

3 Ways that Regular Naps Helps us Maintain Energy and Focus...

1. Restores Alertness. When your energy dips in the afternoon, you start feeling a little sleepy and then you begin to lose focus. It happens to most of us. A quick nap can bring us back up to speed.

Sometimes, in fact, the National Sleep Foundation found that a short nap of twenty to forty minutes improves alertness and performance without leaving you feeling groggy or interfering with nighttime sleep.

2. Increases Productivity. Numerous studies have demonstrated that people become less and less productive as the day wears on. Think about your own experience. A Harvard study found that a thirty-minute nap provided a boost to performance, returning the individual's energy and productivity to the beginning-of-the-day levels.
3. Prevents Burnout. In our connected, driven culture, we are "always on". Yet, our bodies and minds are not meant to go for extended periods of time without sufficient rest. When we do, we experience higher levels of stress, higher levels of frustration, we experience overwhelm that's going to lead to burnout.

Rest allows our bodies and our minds to recharge and to reset providing energy to focus and to be more productive.

If you haven't already, take just a moment to download the Worksheet for this session and complete the action steps. .

Next Session

In the next session, we'll look at the second key disciplines for leaders to follow to maintain energy.

Remember, you don't have to get it perfect, you just need to take the next step.

I'll see you in the next session.

Fast Action Steps

1. Schedule regular breaks throughout your workday. You may find it beneficial to set reminders (alarms) on your phone to help form this habit.
2. If possible, set a time and place to take a nap.