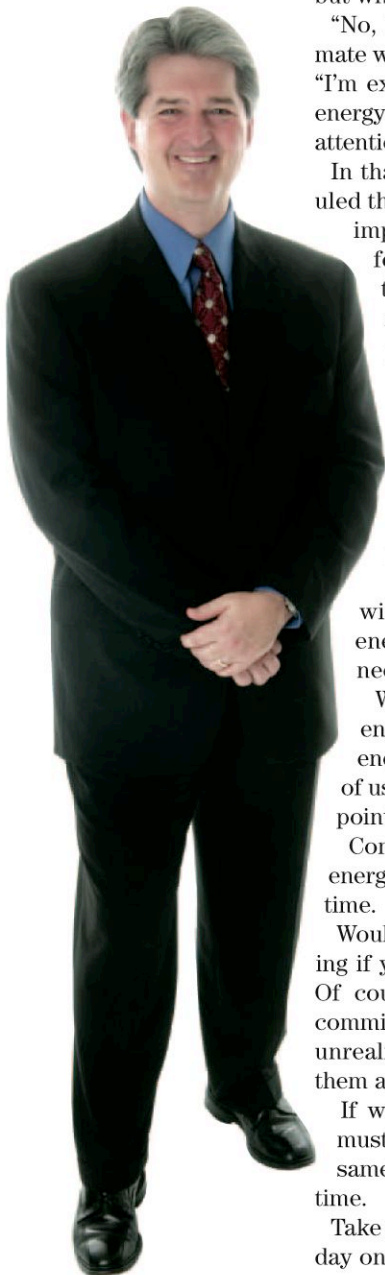


Invest energy in what matters

Do you manage your most vital resource as well as you plan your time?



“**Y**ou’re not really listening to me, are you?” The question snapped my attention back to the executive who was briefing me.

Although I was tempted to deny it, it was true. I wasn’t really listening and I couldn’t even remember when I had stopped.

We were at the end of a long day filled with nonstop meetings, including a team meeting over sandwiches at lunch. Technically, I had time for this final meeting — the slot was open on my calendar — but what I didn’t have was energy.

“No, I’m not,” I confessed to my teammate who, fortunately, was also my friend. “I’m exhausted, and I just don’t have the energy left to give you or this issue the attention you deserve. I’m sorry.”

In that moment, I realized I had scheduled the meeting without considering the implied commitment I was making to focus and engage at a high level at the end of a very long day. As a result, I had made a promise to a person who mattered, on an issue that mattered, that I could not fulfill.

The disappointment on the face of my teammate taught me one of the greatest lessons in the business of life — the importance of managing our energy.

Have you ever found yourself with available time but without the energy, focus or passion that you needed?

Whether in a business meeting or engaging with a spouse or child at the end of our day, it has happened to all of us. And when it does, we often disappoint the people who matter most.

Compare this way of managing your energy with the way you manage your time.

Would you commit to a two-hour meeting if you only had 30 minutes available? Of course not. But we routinely make commitments for energy that are equally unrealistic because we don’t evaluate them as closely.

If we want to be truly successful, we must learn to pace our energy with the same careful planning that we do our time.

Take a look at the next particularly busy day on your calendar and place a number

between one and five beside each meeting or activity to indicate the energy that will be required, with five representing the highest level.

Now, evaluate the pacing of your day. Is it realistic?

Many times, we schedule consecutive meetings for which the energy requirement is level five and believe that we can sustain that level of concentration and engagement throughout all of them without any need for recovery. This is usually self-deception. Even though we may want to perform at our peak all day, the people around us can see that our energy is progressively declining.

Mapping your energy requirements and then realistically evaluating your capacity will help ensure that the promises you make are ones you can keep.

And what about your commitment to those outside of work? If we were asked whether our work was more important than our family, most of us would quickly say no.

But paradoxically, we deplete ourselves throughout the day on the unconscious assumption that our family and friends don’t need our prime energy.

Choose one day this week to imagine that you have an important meeting with your boss scheduled that evening, and then watch how you automatically reserve enough energy to be at your best. Do the people you care about most deserve anything less?

You’ll be surprised at how much it means to them when you ensure you have energy left to give at the end of the day.

Finally, remember that your energy capacity can be expanded to be greater than it is today. Focusing on the people and activities that strengthen you and enrich your life, such as exercise, prayer, time alone and close interaction with those you love, will not only replenish you, they will increase your ability to create the life that you want.

Begin today to take personal responsibility for how you invest your energy, and you’ll be amazed at the results.

JIM HULING is CEO of The Jim Huling Group, a strategic consulting company enabling leaders and their teams to achieve extraordinary results. Jim’s leadership experience spans over three decades, including eleven years as CEO of a leading technology company named multiple times as one of the “25 Best Small Companies to Work For in America.” Jim is a nationally recognized keynote speaker and is also the author of *Choose Your Life!* a powerful proven method for creating the life you want, now available on Amazon.