



WORKING RESOURCES

Dr. Maynard Brusman

Consulting Psychologist & Executive Coach
Trusted Advisor to Senior Leadership

*Strategic Talent Management Solutions to Select and
Develop Emotionally Intelligent Leaders*

The Power of Habit - How to Change Them

Mindful leaders know that serving others is the key to better business results, greater team involvement, happier followers and a sustainable future.

Act Mindfully

Many of the leaders I see in my emotional intelligence-based executive coaching practice of over twenty-five years are working long hours and are stressed-out. Some of my clients complain of low energy and exhaustion. They frequently are sleep deprived. Getting adequate sleep is an enormous help in restoring mental clarity and the drive to succeed.

My holistic approach to coaching is to work with the whole person, so upon request I weave into my leadership development work the importance of stress resiliency, mindfulness, daily meditation practice, exercise and proper nutrition. I recommend clients see their physician if they have specific health concerns, and make referrals to nutritionists, fitness trainers and other health experts when appropriate.

Act mindfully and savor your relationships at work and at home. Stop doing things that no longer serve you. Create the powerful habit of "pacing" yourself to restore energy, build resiliency and create well-being.

"Respect yourself and others will respect you." – Confucius

Identify Patterns

Watch this hilarious video:

Bob Newhart-Stop It <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow0lr63y4Mw>

In his thought provoking book "The Power of Habit", Charles Duhigg, an investigative reporter for The New York Times, tackles an important reality head on. That is, people succeed when they identify patterns that shape their lives--and learn how to change them. This idea--that you can indeed change your habits--draws on recent research in experimental psychology, neurology, and applied psychology.

Duhigg looks at the habits of individuals, how habits operate in the brain, how companies use them, and how retailers use habits to manipulate buying habits. The author's main contention is that "you have the freedom and responsibility" to remake your habits. He says "the most addicted alcoholics can become sober. The most dysfunctional companies can transform themselves. A high school dropout can become a successful manager."

"The Habit Loop" explains exactly what a habit is. According to the author, habits make up 40% of our daily routine. The process within our brains is a three-step loop. First, there is a cue, a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode and which behavior to use. Second, there is the routine, which can be

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physical or mental or emotional. Finally, there is the reward.

Your daily habits create the foundation of your life—your health, wealth, happiness, productivity, quality of relationships, and energy level. You can become more mindful creating the intention to interrupt patterns that don't serve you. Establish positive habits that lead to a happy and prosperous life.

Neuroscience research

You create habits as an efficiency mechanism. Neuroscience research tells us that the brain quickly transforms as many tasks and behaviors as possible into habits so that we can do them without thinking. This frees up the brain to deal with new challenges. But first, we have to integrate the new habit and that can feel challenging.

Think about when you start a new activity. Your brain works hard to integrate it into your life, processing huge amounts of new information as you progress through the activity. As soon as you understand how it works, your behavior starts becoming automatic and the amount of mental effort required to perform the activity decreases.

Positive new habits

The best way to approach creating positive new habits that will last is to take baby steps bringing them into your life one at a time. This gives you the opportunity to repeat the habit over and over until it is a part of your automatic behavior, and also allows you to focus the extra brainpower required for the habit on one or few activities so you aren't overwhelmed. Then when your habit is automatic, you can add another one.

It might seem counter-intuitive, and that this approach will bring slow results. But, when you consider that studies show most people only make changes for a short amount of time before giving up, this approach actually brings results fast. Plus, you can say goodbye to that discouraging yo-yo cycle of starting and then breaking habits! Dieting is a good example of an intention that often goes awry, and demotivates people.

Keystone Habits

Watch this video! http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=4H0fTwtPLfo

"It wasn't the trip to Cairo that had caused the shift, scientists were convinced, or the divorce or desert trek. It was that Lisa had focused on changing just one habit—smoking—at first. Everyone in the study had gone through a similar process. By focusing on one pattern—what is known as a "keystone habit"—Lisa had taught herself how to reprogram the other routines in her life, as well."

~ **Charles Duhigg** in "The Power of Habit"

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This is my favorite Big Idea in the book. The basic idea: There's a habit that when we change it will have the greatest positive impact on our lives. It's a **KEYSTONE habit**. Keystones are good.

As the Apple dictionary tells us, a keystone is "a central stone at the summit of an arch, locking the whole together."

So...what's your keystone habit? What's the #1 thing you could change that would have the most positive impact on your life? Is it quitting smoking? No longer drinking? Drastically reducing your internet time? Getting your inbox to zero? Meditating every day? Think about it. And pick one.

Exercise

This is a **keystone habit** for me that I commit to changing: Frequency of checking e-mail

So, let's look at my **Cue + Routine + Reward**.

Old pattern: Cue = Checking my e-mail first thing in the morning. **Routine** = Tell myself there might be something important that needs my immediate attention. **Reward** = Convinced myself that there are no problems lurking out there for me.

New pattern: Cue = Getting out of bed bright and early ready to get a fast start to my day. **Routine** = Tell myself how much more productive I will be getting some "real work" (writing a blog post or article etc.) before checking my e-mail. **Reward** = Honored my commitment to be more focused, strategic and productive. Stopped fooling myself that checking e-mail incessantly is helping me reach my goals for the day!

Back to you: What's *your* keystone habit? And your **Cue + Routine + Reward**?

The book goes into more detail that will be very helpful for you as you look to re-shape your habits, but let's take a quick inventory:

My keystone habit: _____

My current Cue: _____

My current Routine: _____

My current Reward: _____

My new Cue: _____

My new Routine: _____

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My new Reward: _____

Well done! Practice your new habit for thirty days so that it is well established. Change your brain and thrive!

Healthy Eating Habits

"We don't stop playing games because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing games."
-- **George Bernard Shaw**

What high performance leaders eat is so important to their success. A number of my clients seeking better nutrition have found reading the books "Eat to Live" by Joel Fuhrman, MD, and "The Perfect Health Diet" by Paul Jaminet and Shou-Ching Shih Jaminet, and changing their eating habits very helpful to restore energy and vitality.

Jack Lallane, the fitness guru recommended mostly eating "live food". Processed or man-made food may not have helped him in his 90's pull all of those boats in the water!

"Real Age" Health Survey

I recently took the "Real Age" Health Survey and found it a pretty good indicator of my health habits, which is vitally important as we get older and hopefully healthier and wiser. I'm really 58 not 66. My goal is to be 24. I can dream big and so can you!

A number of my executive coaching clients have found taking the health survey a real wake-up call! You can take the **free** survey at <http://www.doctoroz.com/realage>

Sustainable leaders take time for self-reflection, model healthy behaviors and flourish. They seek constant reinvention. A bit of luck can help too! Are your health habits serving you?

Are you working in a company where executive coaches provide leadership development to grow emotionally intelligent leaders? Does your organization provide executive coaching for leaders? Sustainable leaders tap into their emotional intelligence and social intelligence skills to constantly reinvent themselves, and create a more compelling future.

One of the most powerful questions you can ask yourself is "Am I taking care of my physical, emotional and spiritual health and ending bad habits?" Emotionally intelligent and socially intelligent organizations provide executive coaching as part of their leadership development programs.

Working with a seasoned cognitive executive coach and leadership consultant trained in emotional intelligence and incorporating assessments such as the Bar-On EQ-I, CPI 260 and Denison Culture

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Survey can help enlightened leaders create a sustainable future. You can become a leader who models emotional intelligence and social intelligence, and who inspires people to become fully engaged with the vision, mission and strategy of your company.

Working Resources is a San Francisco Bay Area Executive Coaching Firm Helping Innovative Companies and Law Firms Assess, Select, Coach, Engage and Retain Emotionally Intelligent Leaders; Executive Coaching; Leadership Development; Performance-Based Interviewing; Competency Modeling; Succession Management; Culture Change; Career Coaching and Leadership Retreats

...About Dr. Maynard Brusman

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Dr. Maynard Brusman is a consulting psychologist and executive coach. He is the president of Working Resources, a leadership consulting and executive coaching firm. We specialize in helping San Francisco Bay Area companies select and develop emotionally intelligent leaders. Maynard is a highly sought-after speaker and workshop leader. He facilitates leadership retreats in Northern California and Costa Rica. The Society for Advancement of Consulting (SAC) awarded Dr. Maynard Brusman "Board Approved" designations in the specialties of Executive Coaching and Leadership Development.

"Maynard Brusman is one of the foremost coaches in the United States. He utilizes a wide variety of assessments in his work with senior executives and upper level managers, and is adept at helping his clients both develop higher levels of emotional intelligence and achieve breakthrough business results. As a senior leader in the executive coaching field, Dr. Brusman brings an exceptional level of wisdom, energy, and creativity to his work." – Jeffrey E. Auerbach, Ph.D., President, College of Executive Coaching

For more information, please go to <http://www.workingresources.com>, write to mbrusman@workingresources.com, or call 415-546-1252.

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