

Energize



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Learning Continuum¹⁹: Learning new things takes time and requires practice. We begin with an intellectual understanding of an idea, and by practice, develop rudimentary skills. More practice (ideally in real-world environments) allows us to develop the skill into ability. Even more practice turns it into habit. (Our basal ganglia run much of the activity unconsciously, and more efficiently). Years of this habit build mastery (this seems to take at least 10,000 hours of practice).



Negativity Bias¹⁹: We have a genetic pre-disposition to see danger and negativity, and our danger circuitry is exceptionally quick to detect dangers, even in situations where danger is unlikely. This tendency is called a "negativity bias." It keeps us alive, and it impacts our world negatively.



Rebalancing¹⁹: However, blaming and focusing purely on negativity does not create solutions. It does not inspire people to go above and beyond. To be highly successful in the complex lives we live today, we need to rebalance ourselves by focusing far more on positives than negatives.



High Performance Balance: We suggest aiming to be positive ten times as negative. Using a "Capture Lab" researchers²² saw a strong average correlation between positive language and performance. Low performing teams communicated 1 positive for every 3 negatives – 1:3; Medium teams averaged 2:1; High performing teams ranged from 6:1 to 11:1. Too much positive, 12:1 or more, "calcifies a team", making necessary change and adaptation difficult. This is how we balance our tendency toward negativity.

Sustainable marriages²⁴ apparently need at least 5 times as many positive emotions regarding one's partner as negative—5:1 (when talking about a conflict).



Inner Movie: Our body follows the image on our "inner movie". Highly successful athletes often visualize successfully accomplishing each step before attempting it. Jack Nicklaus wrote, "What we tell ourselves causes the whole body to respond to what the mind imagines is possible."³¹

Words create mental images and feeling states. Negative words such as "stop", "avoid" and "don't" try to negate them. The brain immediately sends out emotion biochemicals in response to imagery – creating feeling states within milliseconds. Plus, the brain does not know how to negate a mental image.

E.g., when we say to a child, "No, do not go into the swimming pool," the child's mental image is going into the swimming pool. Therefore, saying *not to do something* urges our body to do the very thing we want to avoid. Instead say what you *do* want done.



Brain Science: The amygdala, part of our limbic systems, is primarily focused on survival. It gives us energy to protect ourselves by pumping adrenaline and cortisol into our bodies for energy and decreased pain sensitivity. It is responsible for survival, eating and mating. It cannot tell the difference between a life and death threat and an emotional one. So it often reacts as if there is far more danger than there is.³⁸

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The ACT Team¹⁹: In our mind are three imaginary characters: the Artist, Caveman, and Thinker (see the book “Energize” for the background story). These are the parts of our brain that motivate us, give us energy, and help us think intelligently.

When the A.C.T. team works well together, we have creative energy to perform at our best. It’s important to know that the inner movie has a profound effect on these parts of our brain and how well they work together. Let’s look at each of the characters in some detail.



Convince the Thinker: We nicknamed the prefrontal cortex the “Thinker”¹⁹ because of its ability to plan, think complex thoughts, consider consequences of actions, and to moderate correct social behavior. The Thinker in each of us helps us to see the big picture, to come up with creative responses to challenges, and to see others’ points of views.³³

However, logic without emotion actually diminishes leadership, teamwork and motivation.

By balancing the passion of the Caveman with the forethought of the Thinker we can act powerfully and wisely. We can choose language (e.g., reframes) that motivates others.



Caveman’s F Responses¹⁹: We also nicknamed the amygdala the “Caveman” because it is the most primitive part of our brain. It is responsible for our survival. It triggers the Fight, Flight and Freeze responses. These rush through our bodies in milliseconds, before our conscious mind can make meaning of the situation. These can cause a decrease in working memory²⁸ that can last 18 minutes. Our ability to see multiple options drops from 16 to 9 to 3 to 1; and that one response will be fight, flight or freeze. This dynamic can literally disconnect neural connections in the “Thinker” (prefrontal cortex), lessening the ability to control impulses^{1,33}.



Energize the Artist¹⁹: The Artist is our brain’s creative urge searching for opportunities¹⁹. It focuses on positives to create solutions for us. We can tap into the passion that the Artist brings to everything to fuel major change. Lasting change requires the energy and optimism that the Artist provides when excited about the results and the process.



Get you’re ACT together: The ACT Team is the Artist, Caveman and Thinker. They key to getting your own ACT together is to be able to Calm the Caveman, Energize the Artist, and Convince the Thinker. The Caveman needs to calm down to allow the others to engage well. The Artist is energized by inner movies of future or past success. The Thinker is convinced with good logical reasons for moving towards your goal.



Calm the Caveman¹⁹: Our parasympathetic nervous system sends out biochemicals that help us relax, recharge and refocus. They help us think more calmly and clearly³⁸. When we balance the energy of the Caveman and the calm of the Thinker we can achieve a solution-focus. Plus, a solution-focus helps us to find this balance. It works both ways. This is one of the many wonders of how our bodies work.

Some ways of calming the caveman are: slow, deep breathing; positive imagery; taking a break from a situation; stretching, emotionally enriching experiences; thinking about the positive traits/accomplishments of the person you’re upset with; soothing music... and a solution-focus.

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The Power of Focus: The human brain can only take in so much data at once. What we unconsciously or purposely focus on ends up limiting our ability to see other things⁸. So what happens when we choose to look mostly at negatives or limitations? What happens when we focus mostly on success? Choosing to focus on solutions enables us to see opportunities that we may have otherwise missed³³.



Problem focus often does work. It is a legitimate and natural approach. Drawbacks: It usually takes a longer to get to the solution. It creates more resistance along the way. Advantages: It is more intuitive, particularly under pressure. There are times where a brief time focusing on the problem is necessary before moving to solution focus; specifically venting, acknowledgment, empathy and/or apologies. These may be helpful at times to rebuild trust and get back to a solution-focus. At times analyzing past problems may yield useful data.



Direct your Inner Movie¹⁹: Choose your words and tone carefully to help inspire the reaction that is most helpful. Create a movie in your follower's minds that helps them see that they are a positive part of the solution you need. Ignite their caveman's passion for the journey ahead and their part in it.



Positive Priming¹⁹: *Everything* we see, think and experience primes (biases) how we respond to the next thing we encounter. For example, if you win one contest, you will understandably feel more confident entering another contest. But the confidence can also apply even when the two activities are completely unrelated.

John Bargh, a psychology professor at Yale, did a fascinating experiment on this topic in regard to how people view aging. In 1996, he video recorded research participants coming to, and leaving from, a research lab. While in the lab, he exposed them to different words. Those who saw words related to being elderly tended to exit the hallway more slowly than when they'd entered. The BBC posted a fascinating YouTube video of their replication of Bargh's experiment called "The Science of the Young Ones: Priming."



Chameleon Effect⁵ **on ourselves:** We all have an "inner movie" going continuously in our minds, projecting ahead of ourselves both optimistic and fearful images. Scientific research is full of examples of our beliefs and internal images heavily influencing our capabilities³³. The Chameleon Effect (Placebo & Pygmalion Effects) even helps people recover from many illnesses. Research on patients recovering from heart surgery has shown that; those who fared the most poorly had a 1:1 ratio or worse of good to bad images; those that recovered the best had a 2:1 ratio of good to bad images.



Chameleon Effect⁵ **on Others:** Teachers in one experiment were told that certain children were gifted, and certain children had difficulty learning. In truth all the children were randomly selected. The teachers unconsciously began to treat these two groups differently. Even more remarkable was how the teachers' actions affected the children. The "gifted" children's performance improved and the "difficult" students' performance deteriorated. The effects, positive and negative, lasted for years.^{34,35} In a 2007 article one student admits that he is still negatively impacted by that experiment decades later. An example of a positive placebo effect is: One poll of fortune 500 senior executives revealed that every one had a mentor that believed in them when they first started managing. Israeli Army training research showed a positive Chameleon Effect increased average test scores by 22.7% in their officer-training program¹⁷.

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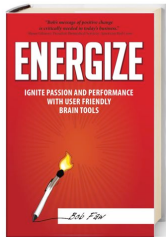
Chameleon Principle¹⁹: We form certain expectations of people or events. We communicate those expectations with various cues (such as: words we use, tone of voice, volume, facial expressions, body language and amount of attention to them and about what). People tend to respond to these cues by adjusting their behavior to match them. This is especially true for those who depend on us. They even adjust their self-concept!



Negative words such as “stop”, “avoid” and “don’t” are our attempt to discourage actions, but the brain does not know how to negate a mental image. So when we say to a child, “Don’t jump on the bed,” the child begins to see herself jumping on the bed and feeling the pleasure of it. Saying not to do something urges our body to do the very thing we want to avoid. Instead say what you *do* want done.



Reframing: This is a powerful motivation tool. Reframing our language helps us to influence the “inner movies”¹⁹ that we and others see in our minds. This can make a huge difference in how others perceive us and what we’re telling them. This is also true with family and friends. This truly can help “Make Friends and Influence People”. Because of our caveman, our immediate gut reactions are often to focus on risks and only see problems. This can blurt out “caveman comments” that activate F Responses in others. Going Positive reframes create inner movies in people’s minds of the goals and actions need to reach them³³. They also inspire the emotion needed to motivate people to action.



“Energize: Ignite Passion and Performance with User-friendly Brain Tools”. Learn secrets of motivation being unlocked by researchers. Bob Faw has turned these scientific insights into tried and true tools. Leaders, use Energize to motivate your teams. Jam-pack your communication with these tools to calm fears, energize passion, and convince people. Be the best of who you are, by learning to “prime” your brain to get your brain chemistry on your side. Change the old limiting stories playing in your head, to “inner movies” that supercharge you for success. Rewrite your “inner autobiography” to broaden your horizons.

Learn
through
Teaching

Teaching is one of the most powerful ways to help increase your competency. Here are some videos you can use to help teach others.

Influencing Your Inner Movie – The Thinker and the Caveman (10 minute video by the Matchbox Group)

<http://matchboxgroup.com/inspiring-tools/inspiring-videos/>

9 short videos on: Using the positive change tools for conflict management (by the Litle University class of 2012)

<http://matchboxgroup.com/litle/videos/>

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Other Positive Change Resources:

- Daniel Goleman's "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ"
- Martin Seligman's "Learned Optimism" – from Positive Psychology
- Positive Deviance Method: positivedeviance.org
- Bob Faw's Blog on creating positive change: <http://energizeperformance.com/blog>