

This Is Your Life, episode number two. Hello and welcome to this episode of This Is Your Life. My name is Michael Hyatt and this is the podcast dedicated to intentional leadership. My goal is to help you live with more passion, work with greater focus and lead with extraordinary influence.

Today, I want to talk about something that is very near and dear to my heart and that is 10 practical ways to boost your energy level and I am going to show to you some of the strategies that I have learned through the years and toward the end of the program, I am going to answer some questions from my listeners about energy. One question I get asked a lot is this, "Mike, how do you get it all done?" Some of my friends say that I am the most productive person they know. I don't know if they need to get out more or what.. I sometimes don't feel like I am that productive, but I am very energetic and I think that is the key. I don't think it is about productivity. I don't think it is about time management, though those items really have a place in all of this. I think it really comes down to managing your energy level. It is really not about time management. I mean if you have got the energy, you will find the time. People say all the time, "I don't have time to work on my marriage," or, "I don't have time to take on those extra assignments at work," or, "I don't have time to develop my writing," or something else that they want to pursue. Baloney. It is really not about time. The reason they don't do that is they don't have the energy. If they have the energy, they would find the time.

I started learning this when I became an executive at Thomas Nelson. Because it seemed like every year-and-a-half to two years, I would get a promotion that would require more from me. It was more stress, more pressure and it was easy for my energy to slip away. There were many nights that I came home from the office and I slumped into a chair exhausted. I was just out of gas. You may be like that as well, when you come home at the end of the day. When I became the CEO of Thomas Nelson, it got worse because then my life consisted almost 100% of meetings. I would go from one meeting to the next to the next and really, from the time I got to the office in the morning, to the time I left at night, it was nonstop meetings, which is tough for me frankly as an introvert. Because I don't get energized by other people. I get energized from being alone. I had to work through that. Add to that, the economic downturn, the shift in the publishing industry of which I was a part going from analog to digital, 600 employees, the requirements and the pressure from investors and bankers. All of that was energy depleting.

Well, then when I stepped away from active management as the CEO of Thomas Nelson last April and I am still the chairman, but I am out of active management. I realized how much stress had been on me. A friend of mine said, "You don't know how heavy the rock is until you set it down," and you go, "Wow, I was carrying that". Well, that's how I felt, but then I got into a new level of stress by kind of starting my own business. I am writing now full-time. I am speaking. I am having to create out of nothing in many cases. I wrote a book this last year. I have launched this podcast. I feel like I have taken my blog to the next level. But it has required a lot of energy. I have had to be very intentional about manage my energy and that is the thing that I want to say to you today is you have got to be very intentional about it. Whatever your energy level is today, it doesn't have to be at that level. You can become more energetic, and you will become more energetic if you follow these 10 strategies. Now, I want to say that it is not one of these strategies. You may be doing five, six, seven of these strategies, but it is all seven of them or all 10 of them. If you don't have the energy that you feel you need, then I would ask you to go back and look at these 10 when we are done and

say, "What's missing? Where can I improve?" I would say also that it is not just your physical body that you need to pay attention to or your mind or your spirit. But it is all three of those in combination, one with another, that makes it work.

I am going to talk about them in that order, first the body and then the mind and then the spirit. Again, all are important, but there is a certain order to these.

Number one, number one strategy for how you can boost your energy now is get plenty of rest. Most people I know are not getting enough sleep. It is that simple. Experts say that the average adult needs seven to eight hours a night to be fully rested, and you may be a freak of nature and you can get by on less. But most of us can't get by on less for any length of time. Eventually, something suffers. Something blows out. Lack of sleep is hard on your autoimmune system. You are not as resistant to diseases, not as resistant to even things like the common cold. And thankfully, knock on wood, I haven't been sick in years. But it is because I manage my rest. I manage my sleep. I get seven hours of sleep at night. Occasionally, in certain seasons, I may try to get by on less, but I have got to catch up. I started getting grumpy when I don't get enough sleep, and I will tell you one of the worst things that happens and it may happen to you, too. When I am tired, I can't focus. It seems like it takes me twice as long to do the task whether it is writing or reading or creating or just even in meetings. I am there, the lights are on, but nobody is at home. And that is what happens when you get tired. You have got to get plenty of rest.

I would encourage you to think about the last week. How much sleep have you really been getting? When was the last time that you had a great night's sleep? Where you awoke in the morning and you went, "Ah, I'm refreshed. I feel like I've got the energy I need." Now, maybe not initially because you got to wake up, but when was the last time you started the day with a full tank? You have got to get plenty of rest.

Number two, exercise daily. Man, I think this is one of the most important things you can do to turn the tide and start feeling more energetic. I am not a counselor, I'm certainly not a psychotherapist. But I tell you, if I was counseling people that came in to me that were discouraged or down and I know there are people that are depressed, clinically depressed, and what I am about to say won't fix that. But I would start everybody on an exercise regimen because it fixes a lot of stuff. They are not too many problems that you have in your life that regular exercise won't improve. Because when you are exercising, you are more energetic and you have the energy to handle the problems that come your way. Now, why is this so? Because again, it is counter intuitive. You think, "Ugh, I don't have enough energy to go for a walk or to go for a run or to head to the gym. I'm just too tired. I'm gonna skip it." Or, "I'm gonna start next week," or, "I'm gonna start after I have a vacation and get some rest." This is the counter intuitive part. Exercise leads to energy. The more you exercise, the more energetic you are. I never feel more energetic than immediately after I have done strenuous exercise, and it is not rocket science. It is not that difficult to understand. This happens because when you exercise vigorously, you breathe deeply and the oxygen is really good for you. When you oxygenate your blood, it gets carried out to every part of your body, makes your body tingle, releases endorphins, all of the kinds of hormones that give you more energy. But you have got to do this like a lot of things in life by faith. You got to do it, exercise trusting that it is going to give you more energy, but I would encourage you if you are not doing this now, and again, think back over the last seven days. How many times have you really

exercised. Give this a 7- or a 14-day challenge. Get out there everyday and do some exercise, even if it is just a short walk. Do something, but get in motion. Motion leads to momentum. Exercise daily.

Third thing I recommend that you do to get more energy is to do drink eight glasses of water a day or about a gallon of water a day. This is a great energy replenisher, too. Most of us aren't drinking enough water. We may drink a lot of caffeine, we may drink a lot of sodas, but we are not drinking a lot of water. And water is kind of like the secret sauce. It is like the secret weapon that high energy people employ to have the energy they have. Think of this. What is it, 70% of the earth's surface is covered with water? You are about 90-95% water. You need water to function in a healthy way and most of us aren't getting enough water. If you can just start to replace some of the other liquids you are drinking with water, it will make a huge difference. Sometimes you may go out for a meal and you feel famished. Often times, that is not because you are hungry. It is because you are dehydrated. I recommend that you drink a glass of water an hour before a meal, and you will be amazed at how that curbs your appetite, but I just keep water nearby. In fact, I got a glass in my hand right now and I like to squeeze some lemon into it and then I also use a product, a powdered product, and this isn't a pitch because I get nothing off this, I am just telling you what I do. But I use a product that Tony Robbins sells called Inner Balance - Pure Energy Greens with MSM. I don't even know what MSM is, but this is a supplement that I put into my water. And I found, I have used it for years, that it also adds additional energy because I am getting those greens that so often in our diets today that we miss. I just keep sipping on that water all day long and it keeps me hydrated and keeps my energy level up. Another thing that drinking water does is it keeps your metabolism going so that you are flushing the waste out of your system. That is another reason you and I sometimes feel lack of energy, is because we got too much toxic, too much waste running through our system. And water will help that, will keep our system flushed.

Number four, eat high energy foods. Eat high energy foods. Food is kind of like a chemical or a drug. It has an effect, honest. Have you ever noticed this, like if you go out for lunch, you have a heavy meal, maybe some pasta or some kind of fried food. And you come back to the office and you try to get something done? What happens? You get really sleepy and that is because you are eating what are called high glycemic carbs. These are the carbs that quickly turn to sugar in your body. Because they burn quickly, they turn to sugar, they give you an initial spike, but then you hit a troth as the sugar is burned up and you are actually in worse shape than when you ate it. You got to focus on low glycemic carbs or the fat-burning carbs, not the fast-burning carbs. But the fast-burning carbs that you want to avoid are things like white potatoes, white rice, white flour, especially white bread. Again, this is the energy that isn't burned, but it gets stored as fat. You can find out where any food you are considering fits in the glycemic scale by going to a glycemic index, and I have got a link in the show notes for this so you can get back to it. But you need to focus on eating the slow-burning carbs, things like sweet potatoes, brown rice, wheat bread, anything that is dark is really good in terms of carbs. I would also recommend that you eat more frequent, smaller meals. I eat five or six times a day, but this keeps your metabolism up, keeps your blood sugar more level. I mean diabetics know this, you keep your blood sugar more level and, again, it just keeps your energy more on an even keel.

Number five, I would suggest that you take a good multivitamin. Personally, I don't think you need to take a handful of vitamins and supplements everyday, but a good multivitamin is

essential. If you are going to eat a lot of processed food, and hopefully after the last point you won't, but it is especially important. And even if you are eating well, a good multivitamin is good to make sure you have covered the basics because we are just not getting the nutrition we need from the food we eat. Now, again, this isn't a plug. I don't get anything off of this, but I use a product called Vitamin Code Men's Multivitamin, and it covers the basics. It is a good multivitamin. It is a good multi-mineral and I take two capsules twice a day, two in the morning, two in the evening and I find that that meets my needs. You might want to make sure you got the basics, the foundation covered with a good multivitamin.

Okay, so now let us shift from the body to the mind. Number six way to boost your energy is to feed your brain. You have heard of the saying garbage in, garbage out. It is obviously true when it comes to computers and technology. But it is true for your brain as well. If you want more energy, you have got to stimulate your brain by constantly feeding it new and stimulating content. And I don't know of a better way to do this than to read, than to read. Reading is like food for your brain and a lot of people say, "I don't have time to read." I want to say "hogwash." You have 24 hours in your day just like I do. What this really means is reading for you isn't a priority and it needs to be. If you are in a leadership role, it is especially important. Readers lead and leaders read. Leadership begins with thought leadership. The people that lead well, are the people that have the great ideas, that take the initiative, that end up influencing other people. But if you don't think you have time to read, you might want to read a post on my blog, a guest post by a guy named Robert Bruce, it's called "Five Ways to Make More Time to Read," and I have included a link in the show notes for this. Another thing I would encourage you to do is kill two birds with one stone. I actually don't read that many books. I get most of my book content through audio books. I listen on my iPhone as I am running or as I am on the elliptical machine or as I am exercising, sometimes even in the car when I am on a commute. There is a website called audible.com that is kind of like Amazon, but for audio books. It has got just about every audio book you can imagine, and it is hugely helpful. Don't be like a friend of mine. I would say this guy is probably the lowest energy person that I know. And when we would travel together, we go on a long flight and I love being 30,000 feet in the air, I love the creativity that I get. I love the work that I get accomplished, I am so productive. I would be working away on my computer, reading a book, doing something, glanced over at him and I am not kidding you, he would be staring into space. He wasn't sleeping. He wasn't working. He was just staring into space. He wasn't feeding his mind. He wasn't creating. This guy was low energy everywhere. As he walked through the halls of the company, he was just low energy. He just looked, I mean if I could pick one word to describe him, I would say sleepy. He didn't have any energy and he didn't seem to be interested in doing anything to get more. When I was around him, I would start feeling a loss of energy. It was just energy depleting to be around him. Don't be that guy. Feed your brain.

Number seven, maintain a positive attitude. This is so important. Your attitude is more important than you think. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he." "For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he." We are our thoughts. We become what we think about. Negative thoughts deplete your energy. Positive thoughts replenish your energy. And you know what? You can choose what you think about. You can choose your attitude. The thoughts that run through your brain are not just something that you have to live with and just say, "Oh, I'm sorry." It may take some work. I mean you may have to get some counseling. I don't know what your issues are. But I am just saying open up the possibility that the thoughts that are running through your head right now whatever they are can be chosen. Your attitude

can be chosen. You can't always choose what happens to you, I get that. For a lot of people, they have had a lot of bad stuff happen to them, but why is it that some people who have bad stuff happen to them don't have unhappy lives? They choose happiness as an attitude.

I recently wrote a post that was called, let me just find it here, it was called "The Secret to Happiness as You Get Older" and in it, I featured a video in which Tony Robbins interviewed Alice Herz-Sommer, a 180 -- 108, that would be amazing, 108-year-old Holocaust survivor who lives by herself in London and still practices the piano eight hours a day. And she says that the secret to happiness and she is smiling all through this interview, she is incredibly joyful, she says the secret to happiness is gratitude. She says more important than that is not complaining. The antidote to complaining is gratitude. If you are finding yourself being grumpy and complaining a lot, that will deplete your energy, but you can change your attitude by choosing gratitude.

Number eight, watch your mouth. That is right. Watch your mouth. Obviously, your thoughts are going to influence your words and your actions. But sometimes man, it feels like my mouth has a mind of its own. It just kind of runs out of habit. Have you ever been here where somebody says to you, "Hey, how you doing?" and without thinking you say, "Well, I'm surviving," or, "Well, just trying to hang in there," or, "I'm just waiting for the weekend," or, "Thank God, it's Friday." This is why I by faith when somebody ask me that question, I say, "Great," or I say, "Outstanding," and you may think, "Well, I can't say that because that's not how I feel." I am telling you, your words will actually shape your attitude. They will certainly shape your perception about reality. But if you don't think you are doing great or you are not doing outstanding, you need to go back to the gratitude exercise. I have got a blog post on this, which is called "Practicing the Attitude of Gratitude." There is a link in the show notes about it. It is really important and most of us don't think we are doing great, because we have lost our gratitude. We have forgotten what it means to be thankful. But I promise you, you are doing great. If you are listening to this podcast, guess what? You are alive. You got two ears to listen with. You have got the time to listen to this podcast. There is probably a lot of positive things happening in your life if you will just notice them and begin to speak them out loud. Another blog post that I wrote that I think is critically important under this topic of watching your mouth, is one called "How a Shift in Your Vocabulary Can Instantly Change Your Attitude." Now, this is subtle, but don't miss it.

Recently, I had to go to San Jose to speak. It was after I have been attending a long conference. I was real tired and a friend of mine called me on the phone and he said, "Hey, what you doing?" and I said, "Well, I have to go up to San Jose and speak for two days." Now, listen to that. It is subtle. I said I have to like it was an obligation, like it was something I was being forced to do. And I got off that phone call and I thought, "You know what? I don't have to go to San Jose to speak. I get to go to San Jose and speak. How many people out there would die to be speaking at this conference that I'm about to speak at? How many people would love to be living their dream and speaking for a living?" I mean totally, just that one word from have to get changed my perception.

I would encourage you. How do you use language to represent the task that you do everyday? I mean do you get up in the morning and you say, "Well, I have to go to work again." Or do you say, "I get to go to work." I have friends right now, that have been out of work, some of them for two years, some of them more than two years. One guy in particular

more than two years, almost four years he has been out of work. Do you know how much he would love to get up in the morning and say, "I get to go to work. Finally, I've got a job. I can pay my bills. I can have the dignity that comes from working. I get to go to work." If you got a job and you can be thankful, then say it, "I get to go to work," or at the end of the day, "I get to spend time with my family. I get to spend time with my wife or my husband." Or, "I get to go to church today." Whatever it is. You can find the silver lining and focus on the positive. See the glass half-full and it will energize you, it will change everything.

Number nine is really important, too. Avoid energy-depleting people. Now, this may not sound very benevolent. It may not sound very spiritual, but let us be honest. Some relationships are toxic. You know the type. Some people are so negative, that they are like energy vampires. When you are around them, they just suck the life out of you, they suck the energy out of you. They are always complaining. The other night, I was at a party and I was talking to a friend of mine and he was complaining one thing after another. It was like a litany of all the bad things that were happening in his life. And as he was talking, I could feel my physiology begin to change. My shoulders were slumping. I felt myself frowning just trying to be empathetic with him. And I started getting discouraged just listening to him. Finally, I had had enough and I just said, "You know, thanks. I'm gonna go sit down and eat now and talk to somebody else." I felt frankly like I was being a little rude, but it was killing my energy. Now, there is a place for that. I am not discounting the role of ministry and if you are in a helping profession, sometimes you don't have a choice over this. But I am telling you that it is really important to surround yourself, especially if you are in a helping profession, intentionally surround yourself with friends that will build your energy and not take away from it.

Number ten, connect with God. Maybe I should have started with this, but I think I have left the best for last and I would also say that often times people use this as a crutch. They say, "Well, I am spending time with God," but they are not doing the other stuff. They are not exercising. They are not eating well. They are not getting adequate rest. They are surrounding themselves with a lot of negative people and they wonder why they don't have any energy. What I am saying is that God has made it in such a way that certainly we don't function like we should without Him, I'll talk more about that in a second, but He has also put all of these other means into our life so that we can have the energy that we need. He expects us to be smart. He expects us to operate with wisdom. Here is the bottom line here, God is the ultimate energy source. Trying to navigate life without God is like trying to ride a motorcycle without starting the engine. You can do it, but it only works downhill and unfortunately, a lot of life is uphill. Now, practically speaking for me, what that means is that I start each morning by reading the Bible. I did it this morning, and I don't just read chronologically from Genesis all the way through Revelation. Instead I use a Bible reading plan. I use a Bible published by Thomas Nelson, the "New King James Daily Bible," and I will have a link in the show notes to it if you want to read it. Tyndale also manufactures "The One Year Bible," but it allows me to read four separate passages from four different places in the Bible. I don't get in those spots where I am reading a long extended passage of Leviticus and not get anything out of it. Maybe I should, maybe I am not spiritual enough, but I like reading a portion from the Old Testament, a Psalm, a Proverb, and then a portion from the New Testament and that really works well for me and makes sure that I get something.

Then I also try to pray. I pray at the beginning of each day, actually when I am still lying in bed before I get up. I pray at the end of the day with Gail as we are lying in bed together. We pray

for everything under the sun and then I pray throughout the day. But I intentionally try to connect with God. I am not going to have the energy, I am not going to have the life I need unless I connect with God.

Let me just say this in conclusion. Your energy doesn't have to remain where it is today. You have got more control than you think, but you have got to take the initiative. You have got to be deliberate in managing it. What is the one action you can take today to boost your energy level? Well, to comment on this episode, you can visit [michaelhyatt.com](http://michaelhyatt.com) and there are comments under the show notes. Leave me a comment. Tell me what you are going to do today. There is a real power in writing it down, there is even more power in expressing it to others and you can do that in the comments.

Let me get now to just a few listener questions. Rick wrote to me and he said, "Michael, thanks for your helpful and informative blog. I'm in the early stages of a church plant and I've been struggling with my leadership direction. Your blog has been an invaluable source of help and it is probably the only blog I read all the posts on as they come through my RSS reader. Here's my question. "How do you find your peak work hours?" Well, the simple answer to that, Rick, is you experiment. You got to work in concert with the design that God has created. Maybe you are a morning person. Maybe you are an evening person. Maybe, and I haven't met too many of these, you are an afternoon person, but wherever you are the most energetic, that is what I would use for the most important task I have to do. For example, my peak work hours are before lunch. The hours in the morning for me are worth twice as much as the hours in the afternoon. I get twice as much done. In fact, the hours before 8:00 a.m. are the most important. That is why I allocate those hours to my most important task. I have got a post on this where I have written called "Slay Your Dragons Before Breakfast," so They Don't Eat Your Lunch. That is where I expressed that concept.

John wrote and he said, "I love your blog and your new podcast. I alternate between P90X and Insanity." I am assuming Insanity because he has got it capitalized as an exercise program. He said, "I also play tennis, hike and skateboard. I get seven to eight hours of sleep per night. I try to eat healthy, but I probably don't get enough protein or veggies. Still, I'm pretty healthy. So, why does it seem like a lot of people who don't exercise or even think about eating right still have more energy than I do? Thanks, John." It is not just one thing. Sometimes the tipping point for you may be something different than what it is for me. You said you eat pretty healthy, but you are not getting enough protein or veggies. I will bet you are getting enough protein. You may not be getting enough veggies. You got to eat clean. That is just one thing. Eat clean foods, uncomplicated foods. Not heavy foods like gravies and fried foods, but clean, simple food, steamed, grilled, something that is simple. Again, it is not just that one thing. It is all the things. I would go back through the list that I have given you, and ask what is missing for you. Where else can you take control? Where else can you begin to exert some initiative so that you have got all of these things operating in balance?

I got another email from Caleb who said, "Hi Michael. One question I would love to hear your thoughts on in regards to boosting energy, is how you deal with disengaging when your workday is through. I have a young family and I find that even though I don't physically bring my work home with me, I mentally do. This drains my energy a lot. I love my job so I love thinking about it, but it ends up being counterproductive in the long run. Thanks, Caleb." Caleb, I totally get that. I struggled with this all my life because I love my work, too ,I always

have, and I have a hard time turning it off. Gail said to me just this week, I was in the middle of a project, and she said, "Mike," she looked at me across the dinner table and she said, "You've got to turn it off. Be here. Be present. Be with me." She was 100% right, not because she was being selfish, but because she was concerned about my welfare and knowing that for me being always on is not the most healthy place to be. Well, here is what I have done when I have done it the best, when I am not backsliding, when I have done it the best, it is been when I have had a commute and I intentionally begin to refocus on the evening and I begin to think about the outcomes I want to create. What do you want for your family when you get home? How do you want your kids to remember you as they grow older? How do you want your wife to remember you or how do you want your husband to remember you? It is really all about, again, kind of the theme of this podcast is being intentional. Choose your reality. Choose the kind of life that you are trying to create, and just make the decision. Not just that I am going to disengage, which is a negative like don't think about white elephants, but instead focus on what it is you want to accomplish. What is the outcome I am after? Turn that creativity that you obviously have, into creating an outcome in your family and in your own personal life that is meaningful to you.

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