ANDY CORE

Change Your Day, Not Your Life

A Realistic Guide to Sustained Motivation, More Productivity, *and the* Art of Working Well

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To my wife, Naomi Core,
and my little girls, Bella and Camille:
I cannot thank you enough for your love,
support, and for showing me
what truly matters.

And also to my mom: Everything good in me is
because of you.

My brothers, Matt and Jess Core:
Team Core.

My mentor and friend, David Pincus,
whose vast intellect is only matched by the
size of his heart.

Jan Dargatz, a true master in the art of
writing and communication.

To my clients, who have trusted me to
share in their journey.

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Preface

The sheer amount of work you do each day can leave you tired, stressed, and less than enchanted with work and life. The problem and the paradox are this: hardworking adults striving to grow often end up defaulting to a daily life that is undermining their ability to succeed. Have you experienced the symptoms of this paradox?

- No energy
- Distracted and unconnected
- Too busy to be productive
- Too worried to be fully present today

Author Andy Core can help you beat this. For over two decades, Andy has helped working adults and organizations all over the United States, Asia, and Europe add positive energy to their work, teams, and personal lives. And he does so with a surprisingly simple premise—Change Your Day, Not Your Life.

You will better understand "Why am I so tired?" "Why am I so stressed?" "Why don't I want to do what I know I should do?"

You will learn to beat "Motivational Amnesia," the strange phenomenon in which your motivation to hit your goals can be high one day, but disappear the next . . . then reappear . . . and on and on . . .

You will learn specific mini-patterns that you can plug into your day that will trigger the best parts of who you are to emerge or brighten and become more powerful drivers of what you do and how you think.

Change Your Day will introduce you to "Thrivers, Strivers, and Strugglers," and ask the question, "What makes some people thrive in high-demand environments while others struggle?" The answers are simple. Thrivers:

- Are better at how they mentally approach their work, especially under pressure.
- Are better at keeping their energy up.
- Are more clear about why they are working so hard.
- Are better at designing the flow of their day.

Next, you identify where you stand with these Core characteristics. Then, you will learn specific examples of how Thrivers use these ideas in the real world.

And finally, it will help you Change Your Day, but not your whole day. You will start building mini-patterns into your day that will become part of your way of life and will consistently fuel your motivation, productivity, and ability to work and live well.

With this book you will turn wasted hours into tasks accomplished. You will find you want to live healthier, even though that was not your intention. It will fuel your want to achieve great things, just for the sake of achievement. In the end, you will create sustainable motivation, be more productive, and will be able to work and live well.

CHAPTER 1

A Secret behind the Magic

A hired car glided smoothly into the pick-up area in front of the MBA advertising agency in London. Two advertising agency executives climbed into the car at the chauffer's directive. They had no idea where they were going or why. They at least knew they weren't being kidnapped—they were only going on a secret assignment.

The executives settled into the backseat and watched the buildings go by as they were driven through the heart of London. They soon arrived at a business office, where they were greeted by Darren Brown, a well-known illusionist in the United States and the United Kingdom, and the host of a popular television show titled *Mind Control*.

As they sat down in a conference room at Brown's direction, they were given this challenge: "Design a logo and strap line (slogan) for a new chain of stores." The product? Taxidermy, the stuffing and preserving of dead animals.

Before he allowed the advertising executives to begin their design work, Brown announced he had already drawn up some ideas and had put them in a sealed envelope, which he had placed under a stuffed cat on the conference room table. Brown gave them 30 minutes to complete their task, and he left the room.

The ad men immediately launched into full brainstorming mode. They identified various ideas and themes, threw out most of them as "ridiculous," and then focused on one idea and developed it as best they could in the time given.

Brown returned to the room and the men revealed their ideas:

- **Logo:** A bear sitting on a cloud playing a harp.
- **Slogan:** "Animal Heaven: The best place for the best dead animals."

Brown complimented them on their creativity and then asked them to open the sealed envelope he had left in the room. They opened the envelope and as they read the contents, the blood seemed to drain from both of their faces. One of the men dropped his head into his hands as he thought, *I've been gutted*.

Brown's document showed:

- The sketch of a logo with a bear sitting on a cloud playing a harp.
- The slogan assigned to the logo read, "Creature Heaven: Where the best dead animals go."

The wording was not identical, but it was close enough to be uncanny.

How did Darren Brown influence these two highly paid creative professionals—whose livelihood was to come up with original ideas—to draw nearly the same logo and write nearly the same slogan that he had developed?

Was there a secret?

Yes.

As the ad men walked out of the building to get back into the car Brown had sent, their attention was caught by a painting on the wall of a nearby building—plainly in their line of sight as they had arrived at Brown's office. It was a painting of a bear. As they reviewed the route to the meeting, they noted that they had first been driven past the London Zoo. At a stoplight by the zoo, a group of people walked across the crosswalk: All were wearing light blue sweatshirts with the word "Zoo" printed across the front. At the next stoplight, to their right, they had seen a department store window with a big harp on display. They were then driven past a coffee shop with a chalkboard outside that included the words, "Creature Heaven." As they had entered Brown's building, they had walked past a man holding a flip chart with more subtle cues.

In the time that it took to drive these two ad men across town, Darren Brown had cued . . . influenced . . . triggered . . . and motivated these men to think and act in a very specific way.

Scary, huh?

When I first read about this incident, I was so fascinated by it that I decided to test it on several audiences, with a combined total of 9,000 people. One of the audiences had 4,000 health-care designers, creative people by training and experience. I asked these audience members to do the same exercise Brown had prescribed: draw a logo and invent a slogan for a series of taxidermy shops. I did not, however, give them any of the "cues" that Brown had known were along the ad men's drive to his office.

Without the cues the ad men were exposed to on their trip in London, how many in my audience do you think drew a logo with a bear—much less a bear sitting on a cloud playing a harp? You're right if you said *none*.

Of the 9,000 people asked to come up with a slogan, how many of them used the phrase "Animal Heaven" or "Creature Heaven"? You're right if you said *zero*.

There has been an active debate through the years as to whether "subliminal" advertising works—most experts agree that it does *not* work. Hidden messages don't seem to have much of a mysterious influence on us. But, at the same time, research has shown consistently that cues have a surprising effect on us. Environmental triggers—those things we encounter and perceive as we go through our lives, whether they are consciously or unconsciously perceived—*do* influence our attitudes, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors—far more so than most might think.

HAVE YOU EVER ASKED . . .

Have you ever asked yourself, "Why don't I *want* to do what I know I should do?"

Have you ever thought, "Why don't I seem to be as happy as I should be, given what is going on in my life?"

Have you ever questioned, "Why am I more cranky or tired or less patient than I should be, given the facts of my life?"

The truth is, your day is a series of cues that trigger how you feel, act, and think much more than you may realize.

From the moment you awaken, the supercomputer between your ears begins to take in a wide variety of information through all of your senses. These cues trigger a sequence of thoughts, feelings, and actions that build upon one another—each thought, feeling, or act becomes another cue.

The momentum associated with these cues builds not only in the moment, but throughout the day. Each passing hour adds more cues, forming the "conclusions" about your day—it is a good day or a bad day, you are feeling positive or negative, you have been productive or unproductive, you are energized or you are drained, and so forth.

That prevailing opinion of your day likely carries on into your sleep, and determines an "upon awakening" set of cues that begin your next day.

Over time, the cues you routinely take into your mind can create a prevailing attitudinal "world view"—one in which you can eventually feel trapped without even knowing that you have been taken captive. Cues can eventually produce a general attitude—pessimism, optimism, fatalism, or any of a number of other "isms."

Perhaps the most insidious of all facts related to this is: What you imagine—or the series of thoughts that play out in your mind—are cues that trigger you. You will begin to look for, validate, and reinforce the cues that you think about, even if you have not encountered those cues in real life.

Let me give you an example: Close your eyes and imagine that you are walking down a sidewalk past a small bakery. The aroma of cinnamon and yeast bread is filling the air. You can almost feel yourself salivate at the idea.

Does this smell trigger you to quicken your pace to "outwalk" the temptation? Do you veer into the bakery and lay claim to one of the biggest and most sumptuous cinnamon rolls you have ever seen?

In the aftermath, do you feel proud of yourself for resisting? Guilty for succumbing? What do those thoughts trigger? Will it trigger a change in your lunch plans? Will it impact your communication with people you now perceive as cinnamon-roll-worthy colleagues, or those you believe should abstain from having as many cinnamon rolls as they seem to be eating?

These cues and triggers build upon one another and become basic patterns of thinking and feeling!

To Change Your Day . . .

To change your day, begin by considering the cues that you encounter on a daily basis.

If the cues you are experiencing are not serving you well—if you don't like the way you are thinking, feeling, or acting—make an intentional decision to refocus your attention, to redirect your imagination and patterns of thinking, and to begin to absorb cues that you believe can create greater motivation, energy, productivity, optimism, creativity, and more rewarding relationships with others.

People who thrive in a high-demand world:

- Take a more intentional approach to what they PERCEIVE.
- Choose to really look at their world, and be aware of what is being absorbed into their conscious and subconscious minds.
- Build their daily life so that it consistently cues greater and greater positive energy.

CHAPTER 2

Behavioral Momentum

The CEO of a Fortune 100 company stood on the stage, behind a lectern and in front of a large digital display panel. On the display were the words "Thank You!" along with the logo of their "Platinum Award."

The event was part of an incentive trip for the top salespeople in the corporation, and it was being held on the island of St. Martin in the Caribbean. Only the top 1 percent of salespeople had been invited. The audience of several hundred people was attending this very special corporate meeting. They looked very festive in their Hawaiian-print shirts, swimsuit cover-ups, and flip-flops.

The CEO said, "As you know, this trip is not about work, but reward. Today we officially announce the top 10 sales reps of our entire company."

As the CEO then announced the reps, one by one, he began with number 10 and counted his way down, generally adding a comment that went something like this: "Ben Smith, of the Southeast region, who has the account with Company ABC, which grew X percent over last year to a total of X thousands of dollars."

This general statement accompanied the introduction of the reps numbers 10 to 5. When the CEO reached the rep in position number 4, he said: "Barry Ozturk, from the South Central region, whose account with ABC . . ." and then he flipped over the page in front of him to keep reading, "DEF, GHI, JKL Companies . . ." He paused and with amazement in his voice, he continued, "Wow, Barry produced X percentage increase this year and did so without a primary account."

Most reps who reach the Platinum-Award level in this company have only one big account. Barry had reached the number 4 spot by hustling among several small and medium-sized accounts, which is significantly harder and very rare.

I had made a presentation to this conference right before this awards event and was listening to the CEO from backstage. After I heard the presentation, I tracked down Barry and arranged to have breakfast with him the next morning. My main question to Barry was, "How did you do it?"

He said, "Andy, by nine o'clock every morning, most of my peers are sitting at their desks finishing their read of the morning paper. By nine o'clock, I've already met with two to three new prospects. I've exercised, eaten a healthy breakfast, and had coffee with my wife."

He continued, "I'm not trying to say that my coworkers are lazy. They are not. I know many are working past eight o'clock on most worknights. I just don't think that is the most productive way to live, and it is certainly not the way I choose to live."

I could see how such a fixed routine might work for a person who goes into a main office every day, but that was not the case with Barry. He told me, "My days are always different. Some are in the office. Sometimes I am traveling or meeting with people. Other days are spent doing paperwork. But, I have very consistent patterns."

Barry's pattern goes like this: He wakes up early, walks to the opposite side of the room to the table where his alarm clock sits. He flips the alarm off—no snoozing. He walks into his closet and puts on exercise clothes that he has laid out the night before. He goes immediately to the gym, the treadmill in his home, or jogs outside for 30 minutes. He cools off after his exercise, has a mug of coffee from his programmable coffee maker (which was preset the night before), and sits down to eat a breakfast that he also laid out the night before. He eats while reading the newspaper or a business journal. He showers, spends a few minutes with his wife and children, and then heads out the door.

His first two meetings or activities were scheduled the day before. After those meetings, he usually swings by the home