



The Charge: Activating the 10 Human Drives That Make You Feel Alive

By Brendon Burchard



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In *The Charge*, world renowned motivational speaker and bestselling author Brendon Burchard argues that in the hyper-digitized world in which we are living, the time has come to revise the classic 'hierarchy of needs' - which places the basic needs of safety and sustenance at the bottom. Burchard makes the case that it's time to re-examine what it takes to feel alive and fulfilled in a stressful, chaotic world. Using pioneering studies from the fields of positive psychology and neuroscience, as well as great stories from his own experience, Burchard identifies the ten simple drives of human emotion and happiness: Control, Competence, Congruence, Caring, Connection, Change, Challenge, Creative expression, Contribution, Consciousness. He shows how the 10 Cs, which you can use to evaluate all your thoughts, feelings, and behaviour from the past 10 days -- and in every moment of your life -- are the gateways to your psychological health and happiness. *The Charge* provides the keys to understanding and activating these drives in clear and concrete ways that will inspire and help everyone find the one thing we all are searching for: more life in our lives.



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Editorial Review

Review

“There hasn't been a game-changing book on personal development in a long time. The wait is over. *The Charge* confronts our very notions of what drives us as humans, and after reading this book you'll find a new internal charge that's stronger and more energized than you ever imagined possible.” —**Jack Canfield, Co-author of the Chicken Soup for the Soul series and author of *The Success Principles***

“Every once in a while you read a book that completely changes how you think about your life, igniting within you a new internal drive to be more, do more, and give more. This is that kind of book.” —**David Bach, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Automatic Millionaire* and *Start Late, Finish Rich***

“I look for authenticity and proof when I learn from someone, and I can share that Brendon Burchard is one of the most engaged, energetic, and enthusiastic people I've ever met. I've always wanted to know how he developed such a remarkably strong internal charge. This book reveals his secrets. If you too want to perform at higher levels of joy, engagement, and productivity—buy this book. It's a must-read for any serious student of success and high performance.” —**Darren Hardy, Publisher of *SUCCESS* magazine and New York Times best-selling author of *The Compound Effect***

“*The Charge* will change your life. Our brains are hard wired to meet specific human drives, and learning to harness and activate those drives is the secret to success and happiness. This is a smart and beautifully written book, and it will electrify your life. Get this book!” —**Daniel G. Amen, MD, New York Times best-selling author of *Change Your Brain, Change Your Life***

“*The Charge* is an inspiring guide to the one thing we all want: more life in our lives. Brendon Burchard proves that we can harness our emotional drives to feel more alive, and that it's our internal charge that helps us meet life's challenges with joy and courage. I love this book.” —**Paulo Coelho, New York Times bestselling author of *The Alchemist***

About the Author

Brendon Burchard is the founder of High Performance Academy and author of the No.1 New York Times and No.1 USA Today bestselling author of *The Millionaire Messenger*. He is also author of *Life's Golden Ticket* and *The Charge*, and one of the top business and motivational trainers in the world. His famous training events and videos inspire millions of people to start anew, find their voice, live more fully, and make a greater difference in the world. He has shared speaking platforms with legends like the Dalai Lama, Sir Richard Branson, Tony Robbins, Stephen Covey, Deepak Chopra and Jack Canfield. His clients have included the largest companies and nonprofits in the world. Visit him at www.brendonburchard.com

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Introduction

This book is an unapologetic assault on boredom, distraction, mediocrity, withdrawal, and living a “normal” life. It will directly call into question why you are allowing yourself to live at the energetic level where you

currently reside, and it will aggressively challenge you to live a more vibrant, strategic, and engaged life.

In the pages ahead you will find a pragmatic, often counterintuitive guide that cuts through the clutter of bad advice, lays waste to nearly half a century of psychological misunderstanding, and paves a shimmering golden path to one, and only one, destination: a new life that makes you feel truly, fully, magnificently *alive*.

Face it: the emotional energy of the world has flatlined. Over the past forty years, across almost every developed country in the world, the diagnosis of clinical depression has grown nearly tenfold. This, despite the fact that almost every factor we associate with well-being—plentiful food, money, education, safety, access to the arts and health care—is abundant in these societies. Increasingly, people are reporting feelings of restlessness, fatigue, stress, and a sort of unnamable malaise that leaves them too often feeling bored, unsure, or frustrated.

My guess is, you can relate. Like everyone else, you have everything they say you “need”—safety, shelter, sustenance—and yet there are too many days that you don’t feel as excited, productive, or fulfilled as you thought you would. At some level, you may sense that you are not fulfilling the promises you’ve made to yourself or expressing the potential that lives within you. You start each year fired up for the big race, only to finish at a slow trot. Your week is scheduled to the hilt, but deep down you can tell that the work keeping you busy isn’t your life’s work. You’ve got the smarts and the soul and the hunger and the will, but all too often you find yourself spinning on a less-than-merry-go-round of doubt and delay. You’re connected to everyone and everything online, but you don’t feel nearly as connected to the world or to others as you would like. You’re waiting for some kind of permission or right timing to live full out every single day. You feel a restless desire for something more.

Well, I’m here to tell you that you *deserve* something more. But there’s a catch: to get it, you’re going to have to demand more of yourself. Those words might discourage you or even stop you dead from reading on, I know. You’re already fighting hard to stay afloat and awake, hammered by a tough economy, unreasonable demands from every quarter, and not enough sleep. Probably the last thing you want to hear is that you’ve got to try harder, work smarter, or give more in life.

The problem is, you do. And whether it makes me popular or not, I’m going to challenge you in these pages—and I hope you let me and then rise to the challenge, because I think you know there actually *is* more for you out there. I think you’ve tasted plenty of magically happy, engaged, and satisfying moments in your life and are willing to do what it takes to enjoy more of them. You can remember times when you had more fun, when you were wild and carefree and felt more excited and hopeful than you ever imagined possible. In short, you’ve already had a glimpse, a taste, of the Charged Life—a heightened existence that makes you feel energized, engaged, and enthusiastic about living.

If that’s true, then let me show you my cards: I don’t think the restlessness, boredom, anxiety, fear, or any other enduring negative emotion you may feel about yourself, others, or life in general has anything to do with the economy, the evermore chaotic world we live in, your childhood, bad luck, or any other easy excuse that the propagators of victimhood are handing out these days. No, any lack of charge in your life is only the result of a colossal failure in *strategy*. Only the failure to strategically control the contents of your consciousness keeps you from feeling the consistent internal charge of being fully alive, engaged, connected, and fulfilled. The good news is, you now hold in your hands a very strategic book.

I’m convinced that you’ve felt a spark in life before, one that lit you up for days. But I don’t want just to give you back an emotional charge you may have sensed once or twice before—that would be the sort of cheap trick you could expect from a carnival hypnotist. I want to show you an entirely new plane of possibility and

emotional vibrancy that you never knew existed. A more vital, more colorful, more exciting, sexier reality can be yours.

To help people reach that kind of existence, I've spent fifteen years intricately studying everything I could get my hands on in the fields of psychology, neuroscience, human potential, and high performance. I've dedicated my life to the pursuit of helping others strategically, radically, and permanently increase their energy, their engagement, and their enthusiasm—their *internal charge*—in every area of life. I've helped executives reinvigorate not just themselves but their entire companies, couples reignite their love lives, athletes get their mojo back, artists reconnect with their higher genius, parents revivify their relationships with their children, and celebrities and politicians reenergize their followerships, all by helping them tap into a stronger internal charge—something they already had waiting within them. For this work, I've become one of the best-paid high-performance coaches and trainers in the world, and my world-renowned seminar, High Performance Academy, sets the standard in the personal growth and effectiveness business. But here's the thing: this isn't about me, and it never has been. I don't do this by chest pounding or by hyping you up with affirmations. I do this by building a strategic plan that allows you—no, that *challenges you*—to live your best life.

Modern Motivations

It's time we all got more strategic and purposeful in how we live our lives.

Why is it that in our abundant world of choice and connectivity so many of us feel lacking and detached? With all the how-to information available at our fingertips, why are we so unsure of which levers to pull to dramatically improve our lives? How is it that we have so much—a roof over our heads, opportunity, safety, choices, access to the entire world—and yet don't feel sparked with energy *all the time* (or at least a lot more of the time)?

In days gone by, self-help gurus and armchair psychologists would respond to these questions by suggesting that we're all crazy, ungrateful, or oblivious of all the good things being heaped upon us. They would say we are driven by dark needs that don't allow us to bask in the sunlight, that we are too trapped in the past, that we expect too much, that we are unconscious of our real thoughts and patterns, or that we are not sending out enough powerful thoughts to attract the happiness in life that we deserve. These answers, of course, are inadequate. In fact, they have caused more harm than good.

So . . . back to the essential question: With so many of our basic human needs now being met, why don't we feel more electrified and satisfied with our lives?

The answer introduces a controversial argument: We feel unsatisfied because the entire baseline of our human motivations has *evolved*. What made us feel happy, energized, and fulfilled just fifty years ago no longer applies, because our brains, bodies, and society have changed so radically.

Such evolutionary language riles a lot of old-school biologists, who argue that the human brain and body could not have evolved fast enough in the past half-century to change our collective human motivations—that as a species, we've always been motivated by the same basic human needs. Even if that's true—and many have argued otherwise—what is clear is that in our abundant modern culture, the *way in which* we activate and feel satisfied by those needs has changed entirely.

Consider this. In the most recent eyeblink of our history, our human experience and our collective culture have transformed in every imaginable way: in what we do (more creative and autonomous work now than

task-driven, managed, repetitive work); how we get our food and what we eat (leading to an astonishing evolution in the size of our bodies worldwide); where we call home (the global migration into cities); how we interact (a recently interconnected planet working in offices and organizations rather than fields and factories); what we buy (more nonessential purchases based on aesthetic preferences rather than on functionality or utility); how we spend our time (more at work and yet still more in front of the television and computer); how long we live (longer, but with more health problems than ever—many *because* we live longer); and how we structure our organizations and nations (more democracy and tolerance worldwide—a trend closely tracked since 1981). If you could hopscotch back through history to fifty or a hundred years ago, you would see how much *everything* has changed. And having changed our world so completely, it was inevitable that we humans ourselves should also change in order to survive and thrive. The ways we think, feel, and behave—our psychology—had to keep pace with our world. Thus, the way we express and meet our human drives has evolved.

As our society becomes more abundant, people are no longer driven by just what they *need*. Most of our basic human needs for food, shelter, safety, and belonging have been met and structured by an advancing society. Yet meeting those needs does not, by itself, make us happy. Far from it. Unfortunately, much of our basic understanding of pop psychology still comes from Abraham Maslow's famous "hierarchy of needs" developed in the 1940s. Maslow was brilliant, and much of his work was misinterpreted, but its lasting legacy is this: if we can meet our needs, we should be happy. So when we have our needs met and *don't* feel happy, we all feel that something is wrong with us.

The reality is that in an abundant culture we simply no longer have to focus as much on what we need, so we focus on what we *want*. We have more options and, thus, more freedom to choose what we want our lives to be about. Surrounded by a million choices, we are freed from the constraints of need and yet, at the same time, challenged to find our focus and meaning in life. But no one would suggest that we turn back the clock. It's a blessing to be able to search for what we want. It just so happens that what we want today is very, very different from what we wanted just a decade ago.

Think about how the tidal shift from needs to wants has washed ashore at work. Our modern workforce isn't driven by the mere security of a paycheck or the primitive motivation of the carrot-and-stick wielded by manipulative managements. Today's workers have a new and insatiable hunger for intrinsic motivations, especially the engagement and fulfillment that comes from projects involving creative control, social connectivity, design, story, and contributions that extend beyond the confines of the cubicle and the greater organization. We've become an on-the-go, "friended" workforce that places social interaction, aesthetic experience, innovation, and meaningful collaboration at the top of our priority list when evaluating jobs, causes, projects, and leaders. The old concepts of motivation at work, based solely on compensation, a corner office, and long-term ladder-climbing ambitions, no longer apply (and haven't for a decade). We just aren't as fooled by all the usual trappings of success anymore, because in an already abundant society, *what drives us* has changed. Our modern lives simply don't function based solely on the same considerations of security and sustenance anymore, nor do we see our path to self-actualization the same way we saw it even a generation ago. With all the choice we have, we'll skip traditional security and instead seek novel, challenging, connected, and creative experiences. This isn't just the ramblings of a self-confessed modern free agent. Neuroscience is proving that indeed, when our brains are free from the basic animal needs of safety, what engages the most neural activity are those very things: *novelty, challenge, connection, and expression*. And many of the world's largest happiness surveys are finding the same at a global level—we want to feel engaged at work, and what makes us engaged are things like choice, contribution, and creative expression.

We have watched our professional and personal lives blend more and more, until the concept of work/life

balance seems a nostalgic pipe dream from the 1950s. Today our home lives are more hectic, stressful, and unstable than they have ever been. People have trouble staying together or even getting along. Parents have a hard time understanding what drives their children's behavior, let alone their own. With the kids booked up doing after-school activities, and Mom and Dad at work all the time, what can families *really* hope to accomplish together? Putting a roof over your family's head, or food on the table, isn't enough anymore, no matter how much you might wish it were. In a hyperconnected and abundant world, your family members are supremely aware of the choices they have. Every day they see better houses, parents, schools, and toys and gadgets on television and the Web. So they care little that they have what they need—that, for them, is a given. They care about having what they *want*.

How can we think more strategically about ourselves and what motivates us today when meeting our basic human needs simply isn't moving the happiness needle out of the blah zone? What's going to lead us to exciting, fulfilling lives amid the sea change going on in our workplaces and our personal lives? How do we get that spark back into our lives, so that what we do fills us with joy and satisfaction? What levers can we pull on this grand ride of life so that we reach our full potential and travel in style to our destiny?

In *The Charge*, I'll answer these questions by proposing a new framework for thinking about human motivation—one that moves us away from merely doing what we need to do to feel secure and comfortable and into the drives that make us feel truly *alive*. Along the way, we'll go deep inside your mind and understand the structure of your brain, and we're going to give you the mental levers to actually *change* that wiring. The mixed bag of emotions that you feel about your life and your work is going to be laid bare before you, and, perhaps for the first time in your conscious adult life, you're going to learn how to control, reassemble, and reconfigure it so that you can experience the Charged Life.

A Charged Life is a consciously designed existence that feels evenly engaged, energized, and enthusiastic. It's a life that is purposefully chosen and activated by leveraging the 10 drives that make us human, which are the subject of this book. The Charged Life is not a one-time feeling or a fleeting spark. It's an enduring flame in the soul that illuminates you throughout all your days no matter the darkness around you. Nor is it about wandering around with a fake perma-grin or feeling supercaffeinated or amped up by some syrupy cocktail of self-help affirmations. It is about elevated yet consistently even energy that is strategically planned for and sustainable, allowing you to be fully engaged in the moment and optimistic about the future. I'll further describe this life in the next chapter, but for now you should underline the operative phrase in its definition: *a consciously designed existence*.

In order to better design your life, you'll need to understand and activate 10 simple drives of human emotion and happiness. These are the psychological levers that you can use to reshape and reenergize your entire life. In section I of this book I'll teach you to understand and leverage what I call your five "baseline drives," which are the most automatic desires you have to develop control, competence, congruence, caring, and connections with others in your life. In section II, I'll unveil the "forward drives," which will help you use change, challenge, creative expression, contribution, and consciousness to radically advance your life. Together, the baseline and forward drives add up to the 10 human drives that will help you ignite your new and fully Charged Life.

All this "change your life" stuff might sound grossly exaggerated and out of reach, if not for some recent advances in the fields of neuroscience, positive psychology, and high performance. We've learned more about how our brains function in the past three years than in the previous three thousand. We've broken psychology's century-old focus on neurosis and what's wrong with us and reframed our study on what's *right* with us. We've cracked the code on what it takes for you to perform at higher levels of joy, engagement, and productivity.

Now is the time to bring our new understanding of human experience to the forefront of how we structure and strategize our lives. The timing couldn't be better. You see the disenchantment, lack of direction, and soul-searching of your family members, friends, neighbors, and office mates. Everybody is looking for something, but he or she isn't sure what it is or where to look for it. The answers, as usual, are already within us. We simply have to understand ourselves better and activate the parts of us that make our lives rich, colorful, connected, and meaningful.

I won't pretend the journey to knowing oneself is an easy one. In consciously deciding to take the reins of your life and ride off in a new direction, you're going to find yourself (at first, anyway) on a bumpy, uncomfortable road. But that's okay—it's the only road worth taking. Life change is hard. Believe me, I know. It's taken car accidents and career changes and chaos and epic internal struggles to get me here, living my best life. But along the way I've learned to direct my human drives better, and because of that I live a life of joy, vibrancy, and fulfillment that I could never have imagined. So have my clients. I want the same for you, and to help you get there, I'm willing to rattle your cage and drive you from the land of comfort (which is also the land of mediocrity). I hope you'll play along, because the alternative—staying on the same path, hoping for something better while refusing to act boldly—is beneath you. Our times are calling for you to master your mind and contribute more magic and positive energy to the world. We all need *you* fully engaged again and sharing with us the fully expressed, extraordinary you. We need you to choose a different kind of life and to charge up for the challenges that lie ahead for all humankind.

When Willpower Trumps Brainpower

No matter your position, circumstances, or opportunities in life, you always have the freedom of mind to choose how you experience, interpret, and, ultimately, shape your world. If you can believe this, then you can strategically choose and create a Charged Life. I believe this now more than ever, and not just at a philosophical level but at a very practical and physical level as well.

Despite being known worldwide as the high-performance guy, I recently lost the charge in life for a period of several months. I had to get incredibly conscious and focused in order to stoke my internal flame and reignite my life. I had to fight, *every single day*, to activate the 10 human drives that are the guts of this book. In the process, I learned that our minds are more powerful than most of us imagine—stronger even than our brains, but we'll get to that.

To be honest, I've lost and reclaimed the charge in my life three times. The first was when I fell into a depression after a terrible breakup with my high school sweetheart in college. I was in a horrible space, suicidal, for an entire year, and it took a car accident to shake me out of it. (I wrote of that accident in my earlier books *The Millionaire Messenger* and *Life's Golden Ticket*.) In brief, after being in a car that flipped over a curve at eighty-five miles an hour, I learned that when we crash onto death's doorstep, we're all forced to ask three questions: *Did I live? Did I love? Did I matter?* It was a soul-shaking experience, to say the least, and it made me question everything in my life. I had never really lived life before, and the accident made me get serious about doing so. It was Virgil's quote that summed up my feelings: "Death twitches my ear. 'Live,' he says, 'I am coming.'" I decided to use my ticket to a second chance to consciously create a better life, so that when I round my final corner, I'll be happy with the answers at the end.

My ticket turned out to be good for fifteen remarkable years of vibrancy, connection, and meaning. In that span of time, I discovered and mastered the 10 human drives you will learn in this book. I built multimillion-dollar businesses, coached some of the world's most famous celebrities and executives, wrote a few books, fell in love, got married, supported my family in difficult times, traveled the world, blasted easily through almost every challenge, spoke on stages with legendary thought leaders and motivators, hung out with

moguls and ex-presidents, and gave and achieved more than I could ever have imagined. I was living the fully Charged Life, and everyone around me always asked, “How in the world do you have so much fun, focus, and energy?”

Then, recently, everything changed. My father, whom I loved dearly and who was my best friend, was diagnosed with and died suddenly of leukemia. As I’ll share later, I held it together the best I could for quite some time. I had all the mental levers to cope with our sudden loss, thank God, and fortunately I used them well enough to stay strong for him, myself, and my family during that difficult time. Still, there is no doubt my charge diminished with the sudden loss of Dad.

Then, more recently, things completely fell apart in an instant—in another accident. Ironically, the third time I lost the charge happened just as I began to write this book.

I remember the day vividly. A group of close friends and I were racing down a deserted white-sand beach in Mexico on ATVs. The sky was a perfect cool blue, the air just slightly humid. The ocean was smooth and calm, the color of turquoise. I had been riding through the desert all day, smartly and safely. Heading down one of the final stretches of beach, I was relaxed, breathing in deeply, enjoying the adrenaline from a good ride and the blessings of a picture-perfect setting. That day, I was thinking a lot of my dad. He had taught me to ride, to live.

Maybe there was a moment when I lost my presence, tuning out for just a moment and gazing out at the ocean for just a beat too long. Whatever the case, cruising down the beach at thirty-five miles an hour, I didn’t see the little pillow of sand in front of me. Unlike the slow-motion special effects when our car flipped into the air and off the highway fifteen years earlier, this time everything happened *fast*. The ATV hit the pillow of sand, went airborne, and landed on the front left tire in such a way that it flipped hard to the left, slamming me onto the ground. I felt the impact of the sand and the air bursting out of my lungs. I remember rolling along the ground and the scratching sound of sand beating against my helmet. I could hear the ATV bouncing alongside me—boom! boom! boom!—and I thought, *God, please don’t let that thing land on me*.

I awoke to my friends huddled and kneeling around me, and asking if I was okay. The guide just kept repeating, “Did it land on you? Did it land on you? Did it land on you?” I didn’t know and couldn’t reply. I was blinking the stars away from my vision, trying to catch my breath. Closing my eyes, I tried to feel my body, and it took a few seconds to sense anything at all. My head hurt; my left leg was numb; my left arm was screaming. The guide started patting down my body, looking for any bones sticking out or internal swelling around my ribs and stomach. My friends helped me sit up, and I blacked out briefly, just for a second. That’s when I knew I was in trouble. My entire left side hurt fiercely: head, shoulder, wrist, ribs, hip.

My friends deserve a medal for getting me onto the back of an ATV, then getting me to base camp and then into town to the hospital—a two-hour window of time that was more brutal than I care to remember. The initial verdict wasn’t so bad: a broken wrist, which required surgery, a few bruised ribs that wouldn’t let me breathe normally for a couple of weeks, a wicked case of whiplash, and a very sore hip and shoulder. I thought I got off lucky.

Three months later, though, right when I started writing this book, my life was a mess. I couldn’t concentrate. I was having trouble planning, imagining, remembering things. My mental speed of judgment was sluggish, and my hand-eye coordination seemed lacking in racquetball. Successes were feeling hollow, and I seemed unable to resonate or empathize well with people. My mood was all over the place, and I was acting impulsively. I didn’t feel alert, engaged, connected, or satisfied in any way. Worse, I wasn’t coping well anymore—sad thoughts about my father’s death were consuming me. The charge was *gone*.

Feeling adrift in the random flow of life, I was unhappy and unfulfilled. Like a lot of people, I just pushed aside my reality, blaming my emotional malaise and erratic behavior on busyness. *I must just be tired and stressed*, I thought, *but this too shall pass if I just keep on keeping on*. After all, I had all I was supposed to have to be happy: gorgeous wife, loving family, passionate work, cool cars, nice houses, celebrities on speed dial. But something was very much amiss.

It turned out that writing this book saved my life. I'd been researching neuroscience for years to clarify and support my beliefs about what drives human behavior and motivation. I had learned a lot about the brain, and one morning something happened that made me think of my neuroscience research.

After weeks of battling with writing issues, one evening I had a caffeine-fueled breakthrough and wrote twenty pages. The next morning, I ran to the computer and started scanning what I had written the night before. It's weird how just a few moments can change your life forever. Right there on the screen, I discovered that I needed help. What I saw was sentence after sentence with missing words. Somehow, the words I was thinking weren't coming out through my fingertips to the keyboard. Worse, in many of the sentences, I couldn't even decipher my own meaning well enough to fill in the gaps. In reading what I had written, I was terrified to see an illogical soup of fragmentary thoughts and sentences. Something was clearly wrong with my language skills and memory.

All this sparked concern and reminded me of what I had been researching in neuroscience—specifically, how people with brain injuries often have language issues. But they also tend to have issues with vision, impulse control, empathy, memory, and motor control. I hadn't had *all* those issues, too, since my accident . . . had I?

Suddenly, I realized that there wasn't something wrong with "me"—there was something wrong with *my brain*. Moments from the past few months came to mind: that time when I was shooting a video for my customers and my right eye started wandering suddenly, out of sync with my left; that time I decided, quite out of the blue, to buy a car (not exactly a decision to be impulsive on, which my wife was quick to point out); those times I didn't feel joy or connection when I usually did; the troubles I was having paying attention on important projects; the sudden inability to cope with strong emotions, like the sadness of losing my dad; how my team kept asking me if there was "something wrong," because they didn't feel my usual presence or empathetic resonance. The list went on.

Within days, I had a brain scan, and the final verdict from my accident was in: I had a form of brain trauma—postconcussive syndrome—with low activity in the prefrontal cortex, cerebellum, and hippocampus. I took a few cognitive tests that further confirmed the verdict. My cognitive ability was in the lower 25th percentile of high school graduates. The damage to my prefrontal cortex was undermining my concentration, emotional control, and abstract reasoning abilities; the low activity in my cerebellum was slowing my ability to make decisions; and my poorly functioning hippocampus gave me a really bad memory—all major problems when you're navigating life, let alone taking a cognitive test or writing a book.

Fortunately, the human brain is often repairable. Just as you rehab any other part of your injured body, you can rehab your brain by focused and consistent practice and therapy. Leveraging the brain's capacity for what neuroscientists call "neuroplasticity," you can aim your thoughts and experiences in a way that reshapes and restrengthens the damaged parts of your brain. Specifically, by taking on new challenges and using conscious thought, meditation, and mind puzzles to activate low-performing parts of your brain, you can, as my friend and leading neuroscientist Dr. Daniel Amen says, "change your brain and change your life."

As I wrote these pages, I had to struggle with all my might to get back the charge. I had to practice mind over matter, using my thoughts and attention to reactivate parts of my brain and reenergize my life. I had to put into practice everything I've ever learned in psychology, neuroscience, and high performance. I fought every single day to find the raw willpower needed to focus my attention, muster my energies, overcome my physical limitations, and bang on these keys for you. I spilled my blood on these pages, testing the boundaries of my own philosophies.

I've been with people as they coped with major illness, injuries, and death. My accident, my story, wasn't all that dramatic or earthshaking in the big picture. I share it because I've fought through the challenges, learning to consciously control my mind and my life, which is exactly what I'll be asking you to do. I did this under extreme emotional stress, with limited mental focus and capacity, at a time when I had enormous expectations on me to write this book and run a multimillion-dollar business. I was traveling all the time while I was trying to care for my wife and family, my friends, my team, my customers, and myself. The one thing that kept it all together was that I had a plan. I knew the path back to a vibrant life. I knew the 10 drives of human experience and happiness. All I had to do was work my butt off to activate them.

I'm happy to report I'm *back*, fully restored, fully charged. I cannot possibly describe the levels of energy, engagement, and enthusiasm I have in life again, thanks to the most disciplined efforts I've ever given to activating the strategies in this book. Instead of describing the feeling, I'll let you discover it for yourself in the pages ahead.

What I will share with you now is that I'm simply thankful that I knew which levers to push and pull in my life to ensure that I didn't slip into pools of sadness or apathy during one of the hardest times of my life. Writing about the Charged Life and the 10 human drives reminded me how much control I had over my life, no matter how broken it was. And it kept me focused on what mattered as I struggled toward what became a full and healthy recovery. My greatest ambition is that it does the same for you. Personally, I think your life is on the line every single day you exist. Your ultimate life experience and legacy is being built moment by moment, day by day. Your story is being crafted by your every action, all leading somewhere, all leading to what one hopes will be a magnificent crescendo. Perhaps you don't need a whack on the head like I did to decide to fight and struggle for a better quality of life. Perhaps you'll just choose, in this very second, to activate the best within you once more.

This is your time. Your destiny awaits. Ready yourself. Let's roll.

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