

High Performance Habits Summaries

The 4 Minute Summary

1-Sentence-Summary: [*High Performance Habits*](#) is your guide to building the six systems that science and the lives of the most successful people in the world prove will turn you into a productive, fulfilled, and extraordinary person.

Do you know someone that seems to excel at everything they do, balance life, and make it all look easy? Whether you resent or look up to these high performers, they are all around if you go looking for them.

And yet, here you are, struggling just to complete the simplest task without getting distracted. You get stuck on emails, to-do lists, and other meaningless tasks, all while being outshined by the top performers.

Luckily, the research shows there's nothing they have that you don't. Or, at least, nothing that you can't develop. The real key to their success, as [Brendon Burchard](#) learned conducting one of the biggest studies on high performers in over 190 different countries, is their [habits](#).

And for the people around you that seem to have the Midas touch, they all have similar habits. These are the six common ones that Burchard discovered in his research:

1. Seeking clarity
2. Generating energy
3. Raising necessity
4. Increasing productivity
5. Developing influence
6. Demonstrating courage

If you're wondering what these are all about and hoping to develop a few of them yourself, you're in luck. Burchard has compiled the data on each of these in his book [High Performance Habits: How Extraordinary People Become That Way](#) so you can become excellent too.

Here's the book summarized in just 3 lessons:

1. Become aware of yourself, your purpose, and what it takes to be mentally and physically fit.
2. Raise the stakes and increase your productivity to improve your performance.
3. Give to others and demonstrate courage to make success inevitable.

Let's jump right into these High Performance Habits!

Lesson 1: Know your purpose and keep your energy levels high.

The first habit is seeking clarity, which means finding and following your purpose. This gives high performers focus and direction in everything that they do.

There are four areas that you need to work on to develop this habit:

- The **self**, or becoming the best you can be. To do this, ask if you're currently acting how you want to be and what you need to change to get there.
- The **social** sphere, which involves being intentional in how you treat others. Constantly ask yourself how you can improve every social situation you're in.
- **Skills**, for which you need to set aside time to develop by practice, feedback, and improvement.
- **Service**, or giving of yourself to help others. This keeps high achievers motivated and provides meaning.

Habit number two is to generate physical by exercising and mental energy by developing a positive attitude.

For exercise, stop making excuses and make it happen. If you want to reap the benefits it brings of improved focus, memory, and stress-management abilities, you need to set up a routine and stick to it.

Extraordinary people, the data reveals, are more positive than others even though they don't have any fewer difficulties. If you want to develop this habit, ask yourself every day what you have to look forward to, and believe that good things are coming.

Lesson 2: Finding reasons you have to perform well makes you more productive.

Pretend you're watching two runners walking up to the starting line before a big race. One is thinking about the fame they'll get by winning, and the other considers their children that they have to win the race for.

Who do you think is more likely to win?

If you chose the latter, you'd be correct. **This brings us to habit three, which is raising necessity.** This means having an external reason for your work, which increases motivation by directing your thoughts away from your selfish desires for success.

To practice this [habit](#), set ambitious goals and make sure that they are necessary and not just preferable outcomes.

Next comes habit number four, which is increasing productivity. Do this by separating the important work from the unimportant, and only put your energy into that which is vital.

Most people waste time on menial tasks like email because they feel like you're accomplishing something. When in reality you're putting off other, more impactful work.

Also watch out for the deadline trap, which is when people don't hold themselves to the deadlines they set. Set and commit to a clear due date and use a Ulysses Contract to hold yourself to it if necessary.

Lesson 3: Be generous with others and confident in yourself.

You've heard the phrase "it's lonely at the top" but is this actually true? Do the best people out there actually get to and work in their positions alone? According to Burchard's research, the answer is a resounding no.

Instead, excellent people follow habit five, which is to have a giving mindset. They value the relationships they have with others and work hard to establish deep connections wherever they go.

If you want to follow this same pattern, get to know people, including their struggles. Use the knowledge you have to help them get through difficulties and reach their full potential. And if you're in charge, trust them to make their own decisions.

The last habit is demonstrating courage. Extraordinary people know that reaping great rewards requires taking risks, and they've developed the ability to handle those risks with confidence.

The good news for you is that it's not some genetic trait that sets them apart. Instead, their practice has given them the courage to beat fear and work toward their biggest goals.

It might be scary at first, but each new opportunity you take will increase your confidence. Some high achievers have even gotten to the point that they enjoy the thrill of taking risks!

It's also necessary to be open about your boldest goals if you want to become extraordinary. Most people just work in silence and make it easy to let their faith die in the process.

High achievers, on the other hand, aren't afraid of being called "idealistic" or "delusional" when they share their big goals that can change the world.

Summary by Actionable Books

"Study high performers and you will see that they have systems built into their days that drive their success."- High Performance Habits, page xiv

How would your life change if you could say "*I now know exactly how to be consistently at my best*"? What if you had a field-tested and science-backed path to improve your life? That's what Brendon Burchard offers in *High Performance Habits*.

This book answers three questions Burchard has been researching for the last twenty years:

1. Why do some individuals and teams succeed more quickly than others, and sustain that success over the long term?
2. Of those who pull it off, why are some miserable and others happy on their journey?
3. What motivates people to reach for higher levels of success in the first place, and what kinds of habits, training, and support help them improve faster?

Burchard's high performance studies led him to interview, coach, and train many of the world's most successful and happiest people, from CEO's to high-level entrepreneurs, to entertainers, to 1.6 million students from 195 countries.

He has proven that with the right habits, anyone can dramatically increase results and become a high performer in almost any field. High performance is not achieved by a particular type of person, but rather by a specific set of practices, which he calls high performance habits. He lines them up, explains them, illustrates them, and promises that whether you are a student,

entrepreneur, manager, CEO, athlete, or stay-at-home parent, these habits will help you reach your next level. What are you waiting for?

The Big Idea: 6 High Performance Habits

"We can all achieve and enjoy long-term success. It just takes the right habits."- High Performance Habits, back jacket

These six habits and three practices to strengthen each habit have been proven to help you achieve an extraordinary level of performance. It is our option, Brendon says, to wake up each day and choose to practice these habits or not. What are they?

1. Seek Clarity

1. Envision the future four—self, social, skills, service
2. Determine the feeling you're after
3. Define what's meaningful

2. Generate Energy

1. Release tension, set intention
2. Bring the joy
3. Optimize health

3. Raise necessity

1. Know who needs your A game
2. Affirm the why
3. Level up your squad

4. Increase productivity

1. Increase the outputs that matter
2. Chart your five moves
3. Get insanely good at key skills (progressive mastery)

5. Develop influence

1. Teach people how to think
2. Challenge people to grow
3. Role model the way

6. Demonstrate courage

1. Honor the struggle
2. Share your truth and ambitions
3. Find someone to fight for

Of course, it's not enough to just know what the habits are. You need continual reminders and practice with feedback. Before every meeting, every phone call, and before you start a new project, revisit these habits. You can also assess yourself using Burchard's [High Performance Indicator test](#).

Insight #1: Telltale Signs Of A High Performer

"If you leave your growth to randomness, you'll always live in a land of mediocrity."- High Performance Habits, page 74

If you were to look in someone's agenda, what telltale sign would you see that would indicate it belongs to a high performer? It turns out that executives who score higher on the high performance habits tend to have more blocks of time scheduled for learning than their peers with

lower scores. They have a high internal curiosity and drive to build a deep competence in their field of interest.

They've built a curriculum for themselves in that primary field of interest and are actively engaged in learning. So, ask yourself *"What three skills are you currently working to develop so you'll be more successful next year?"*

The loud and clear message is that no matter your current level of performance, you must clarify your primary field of interest and the skills you will need to master for your next level of success. This must be a priority.

More telltale signs of high achievers? Here is a baker's dozen:

1. They spend more time doing things that they find meaningful and this makes them happy
2. They give more thought to "What do those I serve want?" instead of "What do I want?"
3. They think "How can I serve in unique ways?" instead of "Why don't people see my unique strengths?"
4. They don't wait for joy to land on them, they bring the joy!
5. They reflect regularly on all they are grateful for
6. They seek to insert appreciation, surprise, wonder and challenge into their day
7. They are optimistic and believe their actions will be rewarded
8. They think about how they want to feel and work to generate those feelings.
9. They prioritize proper sleep, nutrition, exercise, energy breaks
10. They set goals and monitor progress
11. They are happier and have less stress
12. They feel that they are making a difference and being rewarded for it
13. Their identify and enjoyment in life are tied to growth

There are plenty more. Can you picture yourself or someone you admire in the list above? Do you see any areas you could improve?

Insight #2: Develop Your Influence

"Influence is strongly correlated with feeling like you're making a difference."- High Performance Habits, page 220

High performers have influence in part due to their giving mindset. They enter situations looking for ways to help others.

I work with pharmaceutical sales people helping them learn how to be more engaging and create better patient outcomes. The top performers don't need to be taught this—they are already doing it. Their number one focus is on how to help the physician help the patient. They don't sell. They serve. And they have influence.

They aren't "asking for the business," they are asking the doctors what they are paying attention to, how they approach xyz, what would happen if..., what if you thought of it this way, etc.—all with a focus on helping improve patient outcomes. And as a result, they are doing meaningful work that makes a difference. They are more engaged and more engaging!

We could go through life and in the end say “I never knew *how* to be a high performer.” But now that Burchard has done the research for us, and laid it out so succinctly, what will be your excuse? You might as well pick up a copy and read it again and again as you practice and improve all the way to your best life!

Summary by Loomsoup

This book investigates the six habits that will transform you from an ordinary individual to high performance person. If you want to get healthier, enjoy work and improve overall wellbeing, this High Performance Habits summary is a good start. Based on of the biggest studies into productive folk ever performed, you know that you’re using tried and tested techniques.

High Performance Habits summary

Even though you work hard and aim high, you might still be average. But it needn’t be the case. Research shows that the key to success is rooted in six core habits:

1. Seeking clarity
2. Generating energy
3. Raising necessity
4. Increasing productivity
5. Developing influence
6. Demonstrating courage

Habits and confidence

Burchard has conducted one of the largest high performance studies in history, including people from 190+ countries. Rather than fixed traits like age, gender and race, he found that habits were the main predictor of success. It’s not who you are but what you do. Top performers cultivate the necessary actions deliberately. These aren’t life hacks, but rather require persistence and patience to implement. Confidence is also marker of success, especially when learning new skills or addressing challenges. Importantly, this confidence is earned, not gifted. Confidence develops through continued practice, as we slowly expand our comfort zone to tackle more difficult areas of work and life. It becomes a virtuous cycle, where the right habits create the success responsible for growing our confidence.

1. Clarity

Most people only question their direction in life when setting their new year’s resolutions. For high performers, it’s an ongoing process, providing a template for all our subsequent decisions and actions. Clarity such clarity provides benefits: (1) Provides purpose, (2) Gives goals to aim for and (3) Allows for focus.

Clarity is comprised of four main areas:

- (1) The self – do you know exactly the type of person you want to become. High performers want to be the best version of themselves and align their actions accordingly.
- (2) Social sphere – developing intention around your interaction with others in order to yield the outcomes you desire.
- (3) Field of skills – developing the base of skills needed for success. Most high performers dedicate themselves to one area and avoid distraction, diligently working to enhance their abilities.
- (4) Service – as opposed to a selfish endeavour, high performers give back to others wherever they can, providing more meaning in their pursuit of mastery.

2. Generating energy

Research shows that CEO's are incredibly fit and often possess the same energy levels as elite athletes. It's unsurprising, when exercise has been shown to regulate stress, enhance memory and improve learning. High performers create non-negotiable exercises habits, while underperformers create excuses. Studies also show that high performers generally possess a more positive outlook on life, despite facing the same hardships as their counterparts, playing directly into their success. They continually and intentionally focus on the good in their lives, which is something we can all practice. Research shows that just as much dopamine (the reward chemical) is released in our brains when we anticipate an event as when we actually experience [it](#). So regularly ask yourself...what do you have to look forward to today?

3. Raising necessity

Raising the stakes of any goal we're pursuing increasing the likelihood of its achievement. Underperformers tend to solely rely on their own desires. However, combining intrinsic motivation with extrinsic expectations is more effective and fuel for performance. This provides more motivation to do the work. Try the following to raise necessity:

- (1) To master your craft, set high standards and don't settle for easily achievable aims.
- (2) Attach your goal to an external result, ideally one that benefits another person or entity.
- (3) Share your goal with others, thereby raising expectations, accountability and commitment.

4. Increasing productivity

If you're always feeling busy and run down, but with little to show for your results, you may have a productivity problem. How to increase your productivity?

- (1) Learn to separate important tasks from unimportant – this liberates more energy as we make progress in what matters. Many underperformers focus on tasks that make them feel good but don't deliver results (like email).
- (2) Timing – High achievers know that setting strictly enforced deadlines are key to success, while for underperformers, they're merely preferable.
- (3) Planning – Overachievers know that effective planning helps them to hit their deadlines, overcome challenges and achieve their goals. Planning allows us to fend off distraction and maintain our energy levels.
- (4) Utilise sub goals – Many of our ambitions and goals will likely be years in the making. Breaking them down into more manageable pieces (4-5 steps) allows us to maintain focus and momentum over extended periods of time.

5. Developing influence

There's a myth that it's lonely at the top, but high performers are extremely capable to working with their peers. They possess a giving mind set and routinely invest in the growth of their contacts. They do this by promoting autonomy, providing the freedom for others to make their own decisions and assigning the right tasks to the right people, enabling them to reach the next level. They're also unafraid to ask for help when needed, in contrast to low performers, who allow the fear of rejection to prevail.

6. Demonstrating courage

Many of us prefer to stay within our comfort zone, while high performers embrace risk and making bold decisions. While risk increases the odds of failure, they have learned to overcome their fear and take action. With practice, embracing a positive perspective gets easier. Over time, rather than perceiving difficulties as obstacles, high performers regard challenges as growth opportunities. Many of us don't have the courage to be open about our ambitions, but to excel,

we must risk being called crazy or delusional. By doing so, we attract those who support us in our aims.

Takeaway

As Burchard demonstrates, the majority of high performers exhibit similar traits. Although these principles may not be sexy, nor is the road to success. It boils down to embracing the right mindset and applying the fundamentals through persistence and practice. By emulating these behaviours, we too can become more effective life practitioners.

Summary by Alexei on Medium

If you are not achieving the results you want, but are a hard worker, then you are probably an average performer, who is stuck in the daily grind of life, like most people.

This book addresses the fact that highest performing people aren't born that way, but instead rely on 6 different habits which were identified with research on high performance. These habits are: seeking clarity, generating energy, raising necessity, increasing productivity, developing influence, and demonstrating courage.

High performance has nothing to do with genetics. It's developed through practice.

- *Gender, race, age, or personality traits have nothing to do with high performance.*
- *High performance habits are not quick "life hacks". They all require a major, conscious and consistent effort.*
- *Self confidence is obtained by mastering difficult skills through practice. The more you master, the higher your confidence gets, and keeps feeding the cycle.*
- *Seeking Clarity in life is habit number one. Understanding what kind of person you want to be, and constantly ask large, difficult questions.*
- *Social experiences and interactions should not be accidental. They should all be engineered ahead of time for a positive outcome.*
- *Focus on a core, primary skill, with set-aside dedicated time without distractions, is key. Then proactively seeking feedback and opportunity for improvement.*
- *Focus on service and giving back to other people. ("Who needs me?")*
- *"Generating Energy" is the second habit. Regular scheduled exercise increases generated brain neurons, which relate to memory and learning.*
- *"Raising Necessity" is doing things for stronger reasons, making yourself more likely to win the race, because your motivation is grounded in higher stakes. Creating external public expectations and standing up to them.*
- *"Increasing Productivity" is the fourth habit. Focusing on important tasks only. Minimizing distractions by email, checking your phone. Avoiding "fake deadlines". Deadlines should always be enforced. If projects get too big, breaking them down into 4–5 smaller projects, each with a real, unavoidable deadline.*
- *"Giving Mindset" is the fifth. Share achievements with peers. Establish lasting, meaningful connections. Appreciate honest feedback. Be aware of people's strengths and put them in strongest positions to succeed. Ask for advice without worrying about being judged.*
- *"Demonstrating Courage". Bolder actions always have a higher risk of failure. Uncomfortable change can not be avoided. Act despite fear, even if people call you "crazy" and "delusional".*

Make your intentions known and look for people who will actually help you, because they share your vision.

1. Good habits and high confidence are key to high performance. High performance doesn't have anything to do with personality or inherent gifts. Brandon Burchard examined people from 190 countries to understand how high performers achieve what they do.
2. Gender, race, age and personality traits have very little to do with high performance. But key habits such as "keeping yourself fit", have a lot to do. It's not who you are, but what you do. These habits are not easy, straightforward "life hacks". They take major effort, and all people examined pursued establishing these habits consciously and consistently.
3. Another element of high performance is developing high confidence, which is earned through diligent practice. As you master more and more difficult skills, your confidence rises, in a continuous loop of growth.
4. Seeking Clarity is habit number one. It means constantly asking really difficult questions like: "What do I want to be remembered for?" and "What do I want to do with my life?". Constantly asking these, gives you a sense of purpose, and direction.
5. You first need to understand what kind of person you want to become. This could, for example, be kind, attentive and humble. Then you need to ask yourself whether you have been behaving this way to date, and what needs to be changed.
6. Secondly, social experiences and interactions should not be accidental. You should consciously work on making them positive. So for upcoming parties, meetings or lunch dates, high performers always try to shape those meetings in a positive way.
7. Thirdly, high performers know which skills to develop. They focus on a core, primary skill, setting aside dedicated time to practice it, during which there are no distractions. They then get feedback about their skill, and proactively look for what needs to be improved.
8. And fourth: high performers also focus on service, and working on behalf of other people, in order to give back to them. This gives them motivation, drive and meaning. They ask themselves "Who needs me?"
9. The second major habit is "Generating Energy". Research shows that most CEOs are actually similar in their energy levels to professional athletes. Neuroscience proves that regular exercise increases the production of neurons in your brain that are related to learning and memory. Exercise also improves mood and reduces stress. These all add up to contribute to enhanced leadership abilities.
10. High performers make exercise a regular, scheduled activity, and do not make excuses to skip exercise.
11. For generation of mental energy: high performers only focus on the positives in life. Their personal lives are just as difficult as all other people's, but they are intentionally cheerful and positively focused. They do not dwell on negative thinking at all. This results in higher mental energy.
12. To maximize mental energy and positivity, take a few minutes each morning to go over what you look forward to the most each day: such as solving a challenge, meeting a friend for lunch, or celebrating a birthday. Neuro science proves that anticipation of positive events releases as much dopamine (happiness hormone), as when you're actually experiencing the event. What this means is that, if you anticipate the positive events, you get twice the joy from them: once up-front, and once when it happens!
13. The third habit: "Raising Necessity" is about raising the stakes. If two athletes are going to race, and one is thinking of winning for personal glory, while the other one wants to win for his mother, the second athlete is probably going to win, because his stakes are higher. Higher performers have that "outside obligation" in addition to their own desires, which will push

them to work harder. If you only make your success dependant on your own desire, then it becomes optional, and reduces the chance that you will be successful.

14. You need to truly master your main craft, not falling for simple, easily achievable goals. Then add an external obligation that makes you work extremely hard to complete something, for the benefit of someone other than yourself (such as a charitable cause, for instance).
15. Another approach to creating external expectations is: publicly sharing your goal with the world. That makes you more committed to keep going, and will increase it's importance. Brendon did this himself by announcing to all his friends that he is making a personal development course, and asking them for the first round of feedback. He had to get the course done by the deadline because a lot of people were looking forward to it being complete.
16. The fourth habit is: "Increasing Productivity", which involves separating important work from unimportant tasks. This will allow maximizing output that's due for the energy invested. Email is a great example of unimportant work. People spend on average, 28% of their weekly time answering email, which gives them an illusion of being productive. But in reality it can just be distracting them from their work.
17. Another problem that unmotivated people have is "fake deadlines". They would set a deadline, but deep-down know that it's an optional, and not a real deadline. The due date really needs to be strictly enforced, so that you feel the true motivation to meet it.
18. High performers have a clear and challenging goal and deadline. They fight distraction, maintain focus and keep their energy up in order to meet the deadline.
19. If a project is especially big and long, it helps to break it down into 4–5 sub-projects. This helps being able to maintain strict deadlines, and not lose forward momentum.
20. The Fifth Habit is the "Giving Mindset". High performers always look for peers to share their achievements with, establish lasting, meaningful connections, be appreciative of, and are not afraid of challenging them, or expecting feedback back from. High performers appreciate people who can give honest, candid feedback.
21. High performers appreciate, notice and cheer on the work of their staff. They have empathy of what it takes to produce quality work. They also understand the value of trusting people and giving them freedom to make their own decisions. They are aware of peoples strengths, and assign work appropriately so people can succeed and move on to the next level.
22. High performers ask for advice without worrying for being judged, rejected or considered weak. Statistics show that asking for advice produces positive responses three times more than the expectation of the person suggests. Most people are too busy to be thinking about judging you, so relax, and never be afraid to ask for feedback.
23. The final, sixth habit is: "Demonstrating Courage", which is an act in risk taking. High performers still have fear, and do realize that bold actions involve a higher risk of failing, otherwise they would not be considered bold actions. They choose to act despite fear, and get a feeling of thrill from bold actions. Just like sky-diving, there's initial panic and dread, but eventually it's easier.
24. Higher performers see an opportunity for growth inside each new challenge. They know that to reach the next level, they can't avoid every uncomfortable change, but instead welcome changes with a smile.
25. High performers are open and honest about their ambitions, whilst average people are afraid of being judged or ridiculed. Even if some people call you "delusional" or "crazy", there will be others that actually help you and can immediately see your vision and direction, who will also help you get there. So make your intentions know, as opposed to working for your dreams in silence.
26. Summary: high performers are not born that way. They are not special genetically. They make conscious attempts to improve through practice. They embrace higher risks of failure, use

external motivators, increase productivity, build energy levels, see purpose in their work, connect with others, give back to others, and take risks. They consciously seek clarity in social interactions, asking questions such as: “How can I positively shape this upcoming social interaction”.