

Unfinished Business



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How Much Battery Do You Have Left?



Our smartphones – we’re connected to them like they are an additional appendage. We care for them by protecting them with fancy, durable covers and keep them clean and working efficiently by wiping their screens, updating them and restarting them when necessary.

When a last-minute request comes in or an urgent email flies into our inboxes, smartphones enable us to respond as if we are seated at our desks, even when we’re not. They keep us clued in to what’s going on around us. They keep us up-to-date. They keep us on task. They keep us connected to the world outside ourselves.

In fact, when the battery on my smartphone starts to dwindle below 50 percent and then below 20 percent, I start to get nervous. At about 10 percent, I know if I don’t start searching for an outlet, I might be in trouble. By 2 percent, I drop everything and plug in ... unless I’m in the middle of a deadline and then I may let it go to 1 percent. I’m constantly testing the limits of my iPhone.

Even Arianna Huffington, who’s Pulitzer Prize-winning blog, The Huffington Post, is read by more than 43 million people worldwide every month, in a recent episode of Bulletproof Radio said, “I sometimes joke when I look at my iPhone, and I have these very exact reports on the state of my iPhone, like 20 percent battery remaining, 17 percent battery remaining. By about 13 percent, I get anxious and I look around for a recharging throne.”

Huffington, as cofounder and editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post Media Group, one of the fastest growing companies in the world, is celebrated as one of the world’s most influential women. She even graces the covers of magazines. She is, by any traditional measure, extraordinarily successful.

Yet, a personal wake-up call that came in 2007 in the form of a broken cheekbone and a nasty gash over her eye – the result of a fall brought on by exhaustion and lack of sleep – forced her to ask herself an important question as she found herself going from brain MRI to CAT scan to echocardiogram to find out if there was an underlying medical problem beyond exhaustion: Is this really what success feels like?

“The truth is when I collapsed, I must have been below zero percent battery remaining, and I wasn’t even aware of it,” she says, referring to her iPhone’s status updates.

What is your current status update? How much battery do you have left?



What Huffington is referring to is people’s drive for success, which is usually defined as more money and more power. However, Huffington likens this definition of success as only two legs of a three-legged stool. “They may hold us up temporarily, but sooner or later we’re going to topple over,” she explains. “We need a third leg, a third metric for defining success, to truly thrive.”

The third success metric she’s referring to is wellbeing. How many of us are driving hard toward success – working late, sleeping little, eating poorly, running from meeting to meeting, being too connected to our smartphones to the point where we’re not really connecting at all – slowly dwindling our reserves. And there’s no indicator of battery life we can access to find out how close to crashing we truly are. “Our relentless pursuit of money and power has led to an epidemic of burnout and stress-related illnesses, and an erosion in the quality of our relationships, family life and, ironically, our careers,” she says. “In being connected to the world 24/7, we’re losing our connection to what truly matters.”

Here are some of Huffington’s tips from her latest book, “Thrive,” to help us all connect to this third success metric: our own inner well-being and wisdom.

- **Drop Things That Don’t Matter** – At the end of each day, find something that is constantly on your list to do that you aren’t going to get to and just drop it. Drop the projects or to-dos that no longer serve you. Do the same thing with grudges you’re holding on to, letting go of these worries. These things are huge energy drains; dropping them drops all the associated guilt and helps you let go and regain focus on more important to-dos.
- **Improve Your Quality and Length of Sleep** – If you’re only getting four to five hours of sleep a day, gradually work up to seven to eight. The result will be greater clarity and focus, in addition to a happier and healthier you. Have a transition period before bed to help ease your body into rest and tell yourself the day is done.
- **Don’t Let Devices Rule You** – If possible, keep smartphones away from your bed so you can sleep at night. When you wake up in the morning, don’t check your email first thing. “Be in charge of your own agenda,”

Huffington says. "The minute you go to email first thing, you are saying, 'I'm in charge of the world's agenda' before I even have my first cup of coffee."

- **Don't Be Afraid of Failure** – As Huffington learned from her mother, "Failure is not the opposite of success," she says. "It's just a stepping stone to success."
- **Remember, You Are More Than Your Job** – "If we didn't have our jobs, that doesn't mean we wouldn't still be, in our essence, who we really are," Huffington points out.

Hopefully these tips help you reconnect with some of the things that truly matter in your life so you can continue to run a successful business. I know, in my case, I'm finding more times throughout the day where I put the smartphone out of reach and out of sight, so I can unplug and take that mental break. Try it. You'll be amazed at how much better you operate from a truly recharged place.

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