

# Six Characteristics for Achieving Peak Performance

By Charles Marcus

We hear a lot today about being your best, taking care of business, achieving success, performing at your peak. What we don't always hear is what it takes to sustain peak performance.

Peak Performance is a commitment to your physical/mental/spiritual being and to your personal growth and development at all times. Peak performance, in my opinion it is not something you can switch on and off; it is what you commit to and strive for always. It is not just about business and achieving goals. It is also about balance between work and family, friends and fitness. Finding the right combination for each of us is personal, but I will share with you 6 Characteristics that have worked for me along the way.

**1. Look after your health/diet and exercise.** This is one so many of us take for granted. I know I did for so many years. The sad but true reality is if we don't have good health, the rest does not really matter because the other steps of peak performance will not fall in place and we will not have an opportunity to enjoy the rewards.

- See your doctor on a regular basis. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to share personal details. I know for some of us it is uncomfortable at times, but don't mess around if something is bothering you. Case in point, I went recently for a colon cancer examination, not the greatest test to have to go through, if you have had one you will know what I mean, but the peace of mind afterwards was worth a day of discomfort..
- Watch your diet. Educate yourself on eating right. There are lots of wonderful books out there on the subject, or go and see a qualified dietician if you like. Drink lots of water as well, 6-8 glasses a

day at least. You will feel better and healthier for it and for those of you watching your weight, it will definitely take those hunger pains away in the afternoon and late at night.

- Exercise moderately. I have a treadmill in my basement, for years it just sat there and collected dust, now I use it 3-4 times a week for 30-40 minutes, which fits in with my lifestyle and schedule. Do what is right for you. Join a health club, walk, swim, play tennis, golf. Exercising in moderation is wonderful not only for the body but also for the mind.

**2. Discipline yourself to get up one hour earlier,** or if you can't do that, strive for even 30 minutes earlier than you do now and invest that time in yourself. I know that is not easy, we all lead such demanding lives and have family obligations. **MAKE** that time! Trust me, try it for 30 days, you will be glad you did. I started this discipline in 1986, after a successful course I went on to overcome my stuttering disability. I had to find the time for doing my speech exercises to keep my fluency. Do I succeed every single day in doing this, now especially with a young family? Not always, but I do as often as I can. I always feel better for it. There is something about rising early. Maybe it is the tranquility, the piece of mind, watching the sun rise, hearing the birds sing, taking that first cup of fresh coffee or fruit juice and focusing on the day ahead.

**3. Challenge yourself to learn.** Peak Performers constantly challenge themselves in many areas. They regularly read books, listen to motivational or business tapes to stay up to date. They are not afraid to be

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wrong. They are inquisitive and ask lots of questions. They spend less time watching television, and more time educating themselves.

**4. Plan for peak performance.** Peak Performers maximize their time. They prioritize, set goals for themselves, analyze their performance, and constantly ask for feedback. They go the extra mile and are single minded in their pursuit of excellence and success. They work hard, but they also work smart and they save and spend quality time with their family and loved ones. Life/Balance sometimes gets lost with people who are obsessive about success, but I believe it is essential for sustaining peak performance.

**5. Take quality time off.** I know it is not always possible for us to take regular vacations for one reason or another, but at the very least, take a mini vacation, even a day off devoted solely to something other than work or business. Take a walk in the

park or woods near you, smell that fresh air. Take your children or nieces or nephews to the zoo. Treat yourself every now and then, it does not have to be grand and elaborate, use your imagination. For example, take yourself to your favorite restaurant. I love to go and explore the great multi-cultural neighborhoods of my home city of Toronto. I go browsing in the shops, treat myself to a great lunch...Find what is right for you.

**6. Be comfortable with yourself.** Peak Performers are comfortable with who they are. They know that things will not always go their way, that life is not always easy, that there will be sacrifices to be made. The bottom line is that people who succeed in the business of life know this. They surround themselves with a support system to help them, and they are comfortable enough with who they are to know that ultimately they will get to where they want to be and they know what it takes to stay there.

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