

The POWER of HAVING FUN

**HOW MEANINGFUL BREAKS
HELP YOU GET MORE DONE***



**and Feel Fantastic!*

DAVE CRENSHAW

Author of *The Myth of Multitasking*

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"A masterful guide to freedom of time and creation of true joy. This book keeps its promise to make you richer—financially, yes, but also to find wealth money can't buy: time with loved ones. Dave Crenshaw helped me achieve new levels of financial success, all the while cutting my workweek in half. I've never been happier. Business has never been better."

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"Crenshaw provides a powerful system for making fun a vital part of your business strategy. Highly recommended."

—**Asher Raphael, Co-CEO and Partner, Power Home Remodeling**

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DAVE CRENSHAW



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The Power of Having Fun

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To my wife

You're always right . . . most of the time.

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**PLEASE DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO
THE FOLLOWING**

Introduction. Seriously.

Before we begin, I need to clear the air.

This is not a book about fun.

This is a book about *having* fun.

You may be thinking, “Oh, great. I’m not even one hundred words in, and this guy has already pulled the rug out from under me!” But hold on a second. If you stick with me, you’ll understand that the point I’m making is vital.

If this were a book about fun, you might expect me to talk about the science of fun, the history of fun, the value of fun, and the philosophy of fun. I’d create an elaborate equation on a quantum level: “If you take the square root of the song ‘Don’t Stop Believing,’ divide it by the cosine of a slice of pizza, and multiply that by ceaseless childhood wonder, you become a fun person.”

You’d probably also expect me to be a corporately appropriate pseudocomedian with wacky ties and a synergistic attitude. But this isn’t that kind of book. And I’m not that kind of guy.

This is a book about action—less about learning, more about doing. Yes, you and I will occasionally dip our toes into the research behind how having fun helps make you more productive and more successful. We’ll even brush up against how fun can help you be happier. But in the end, this is a

book about helping you make having fun a necessary part of your daily routine.

As a coach of leaders, I've spent years consulting with hundreds of individuals and training hundreds of thousands of people worldwide via events and videos. During that time, I've come to believe that taking action on knowledge is far more powerful than just having knowledge itself. In fact, learning something and then not acting on it is often educated failure.

Intelligent, hardworking people have gone to great lengths to conduct brilliant studies and wonderful research experiments. That information has value. Ultimately, however, I'm less concerned with an experiment attempted by someone else and more concerned with an experiment conducted by you.

That's where this book comes in. I've designed it to be something like a private coaching session between you and me. Imagine that we're sitting across from each other in your office. My goal is to help you unlock the power of having fun. It's something that so many of us want to do, yet we forbid ourselves from doing it. I find that, for bizarre and occasionally sadistic reasons, far too many of us deprive ourselves of having fun. Yet the very thing that we prevent ourselves from doing is the very thing that can help us be more successful. Fun and work are not opposites. In fact, they are two sides of the same coin. Your work life and your personal life are inseparably connected.

Don't just take my word for it. After all, a book is just words on a page. The power lies in what you do with the information you acquire. That's my goal: to help you do something about having more fun in your day. I'll make it easy and, yes, fun for you to experiment. But please experiment. Your day, your time, and your activities are the laboratory. You and I will put on our lab coats and pocket protectors and put your experiment into action.

Sound good? Great! Just a little more housekeeping . . .

My hope is that this book has value for anyone in pretty much any position or stage in their career. However, the people who are going to get the biggest bang for their book buck are those who have some degree of flexibility when it comes to their work schedule. In this hypothetical coaching-via-book situation, my assumption will be that I'm talking to someone who has some ability to control how they spend their time.

In other words, if you're at the C-level, on salary, a freelancer, a business owner, an entrepreneur, or even a stay-at-home mom or dad, you have the greatest opportunity to get the greatest value from this book. Why? Simply because a significant part of the experiment that you and I will be conducting has to do with crafting your schedule.

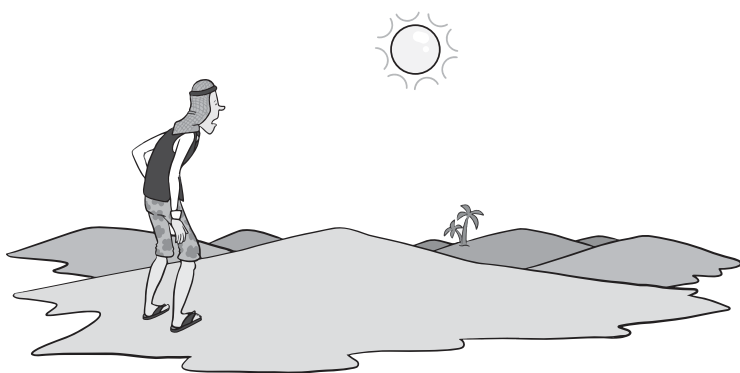
If you don't fit into one of these categories, if you are earning an hourly wage, or if you are working two or three jobs at present, you might find the execution of some of these principles a little trickier. Yet, if you still dare to continue reading this book despite being in one of those situations, you will still find value. I'd recommend that you approach this book with the mindset "How does this apply to me?" as opposed to "This doesn't apply to me." Read with an open mind, experiment where you can, and I believe you'll still uncover an empowering message.

Let's start experimenting with *The Power of Having Fun!*

Part One

The Desert and the Oasis

Lost in the Desert



Consider the tales of two executives . . . well, three.

Story One: Businesscraft

There was once a business owner. He was a young man growing a moderately successful business. He hired employees. He made the sales. He managed the managers. He processed the profits. And most of all, he hustled . . . hard.

So hard, in fact, that when he invited me to provide some productivity coaching, it was clear that he was on his last leg. He was dragging himself through roughly *eighty* work hours per week. When I first heard that number, my CEO-coach-Spidey-sense began tingling. Putting it bluntly, I'm of the belief that any person who works more than sixty hours per week just simply does not know how to manage time—regardless of how productive they believe they are.

We did a deep dive. We accounted for every lunch break, meeting, phone call, nook, and cranny. Was time management

a problem? Of course. But deep within the recesses of this man's schedule was a secret I was not expecting.

He was a paragon of the community. People flocked to him seeking guidance. He was well liked and had many important friends. His employees respected him. His competition feared him.

Yet he felt guilty, unproductive, and just a touch hypocritical—because a full twenty hours per week were lost to a secret habit he worked hard to hide. His wife and children had no idea. He would become the subject of scorn and ridicule among his peers were they to find out. You see, roughly twenty of those eighty “working” hours were spent in another world . . .

. . . the World of Warcraft.

Each day, he spent hours on end wandering the cyber wilderness as a level 47 Shaman because, in the real world, he was emotionally, mentally, and physically exhausted. He felt that he continually had to keep up appearances for his family and employees. Yet his desire to play caused him to jump in and out of the mists of Azeroth throughout the day to do battle with humans and orcs—then jump back into his business to haggle with suppliers.

When he made his confession to me, he hung his head. He knew he'd been caught. He expected me to tell him it was time to grow up, get focused, and behave as a good business owner should.

Story Two: Power Couple

Next is the story of two executives. They were a married power couple who worked in the same company. They were highly successful in their respective careers.

Together, they were a force to be reckoned with. She excelled in management and marketing. He was a wizard at the technical and financial details. They were a match made for the cover of *Fortune* magazine. They completed each other, professionally speaking, and they had me at “Hello, will you help us?”

Their relationship outside of work was going stale. Technically speaking, this couple worked a reasonable number of hours each week, meaning they left the office at a reasonable time. The problem was that they never really clocked out because when they got home, every conversation was about work.

Tuna casserole for dinner? Let’s talk sales strategy.

Date night? Action items for the upcoming marketing campaign.

Changing the baby’s diaper? Reevaluate current employee output.

While I helped them on the productivity side, we uncovered a deeper issue that needed resolution. Because a company is a reflection of its leadership, the couple’s lack of balance in their personal lives had begun to be reflected in the lives of their employees. Like their fearless, well-qualified leaders, employees had become drained and were losing enthusiasm for the company.

Because this couple was unable to connect with each other outside of work, not only was their marriage at risk but the business as well.

Defining the Desert

What do these stories have in common?

Both occurred in a metaphorical desert.

If you've ever seen a desert epic, such as *Lawrence of Arabia*, you'll recognize that, sooner or later, someone's going to have to walk a very, very long way to get from one side of the desert to the other.

Man, I hate those scenes. If you're like me, you just can't wait for them to end. Look, I get it, Peter O'Toole is thirsty. Give him a Vitaminwater or cut to the next scene.

This perhaps overused desert trope is symbolic of many struggles in our lives, isn't it? Nothing comes easy. In spite of adversity, we need to keep pressing forward for what we desire because, despite the obstacles, we can make it! Hard work and perseverance are rewarded! Play a fanfare! Start the parade! Hail the conquering hero!

So, what's your desert today?

When I say *desert*, I have a specific definition in mind. A *desert* is how I'll refer to an extended period of deprivation and/or chaos in your life.

What is something that you're pushing yourself through? What's a situation for you that's slow and painful, where you're ignoring the signs that life is giving you to slow down or stop? Where are you putting up with extended periods of chaos because you're in such a hurry to get to the other side?

Before you attempt to answer these questions, it might be helpful to explore some possible deserts. Often, we carry our own deserts with us. What do I mean? In coaching executives and managers around the world, I've come across several deserts people carry on their backs as they live life.

THE RETIREMENT DESERT

Many people relentlessly push themselves in careers they hate just to reach the glorious shores of retirement. All the years and stress they put in will finally pay off. Someday, maybe,

everything will be great, right? You can finally buy that RV you've always wanted and drive across the country. Or maybe you'll just live on a cruise ship in perpetuity—just one more slice of cheesecake . . . I don't want to be too full for shuffleboard this afternoon!

In the meantime, there's a lot of misery for a lot of folks. A study conducted by Harris and the University of Phoenix found that 59 percent of American workers wish they were in a different career. For those in their thirties, the number of disenchanted employees bumps up to 73 percent.

This news wouldn't be so bad if most people were truly building toward a healthy end-of-desert retirement plan. Yet they aren't. Per a GOBankingRates study, one-third of all Americans have absolutely zero in retirement savings, and 56 percent have less than \$10,000 saved. How long of a postcareer retirement will that afford you? Which brings up our pal inflation, humming along on average at just over 3 percent. Not too bad, right? Until you consider that a paltry 3 percent increase means prices more or less double every twenty years.

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL DESERT

For some, such as entrepreneurs and corporate executives, reaching the other side of the desert may be cashing out. You sacrifice your time, health, sleep, and occasionally a relationship or two so that a glorious harvest will occur when Microsoft or Google or some other large company comes in and buys you out. With a small percentage of the proceeds, you could buy your own private island, a sports car, and a football franchise. Perhaps *Shark Tank* will cast you as one of the new "sharks." You'll be on TV and the cover of *Inc.* magazine. Your name will be synonymous with luxury and opulence, like a boss.

Unfortunately, exit rarely happens the way you might

think. Most business owners admit to me that they don't reach the exit they intended in the beginning, and—if they created a vision several years ago—they are currently nowhere close to realizing it. Yet they continue to sacrifice health, credit, and relationships on the altar of their businesses, hoping to appease the tribal deities of Musk, Zuckerberg, and Bezos, who may smile upon them and bestow a bounty of wealth.

THE PERSONAL DESERT

Others carry a much more personal desert with them. For some, reaching the other side may be when their children move out. I'm a father, and I love my kids dearly. However, I also know the sweet morsels of freedom that my wife and I enjoy when the little monsters are out of the house for an hour or two. Heck, just keeping the house clean for more than twelve minutes at a time would be a blessed occurrence. Am I right? If that's your idea of a good time, then you might be a parent.

Kids are certainly not the only personal challenge. Others might feel the other side of the desert is when they get married, or when they get divorced, or when they graduate from college, or when they can finally quit physical therapy, or when they work up the courage to ask someone on a date. Your desert might be just making it through the workweek so that you can party on Friday! The list is endless.

WHAT THE DESERT IS NOT

To clarify, hard work is a good thing. We should not be afraid of effort but embrace it. Effort helps us grow and makes us stronger for the coming years. There's even some joy and happiness to be found in an honest day's work.

One of my favorite quotes about work comes from an

unlikely source. Former US president Richard Nixon isn't remembered fondly for many things—perhaps rightly so—yet I respect him for saying, “To write a novel, you need an iron butt.” Brilliant. Nothing crooked about that statement.*

In other words, if you're going to write a book, you need to put your butt in the chair and stay there until it gets done. I quite literally schedule “iron butt” time in my calendar when I set aside time to write. In addition to the mental demand, writing is also a test of maximal gluteal fortitude.

To do whatever it is you do, you need an iron *something*. Need to do those taxes? You also need an iron butt. Need to go out and make sales door to door? Iron legs. Creating a new proposal? Iron fingers and an iron mind. Kissing booth for charity? . . . You get the idea.

Hard work by itself is not a desert, yet it can quickly become so if we aren't vigilant. When we work as long as it takes to get the job done, when we keep pushing past the emotional and mental dehydration and deprive ourselves of necessary replenishment, we are building a life and career that are less likely to be successful.

Continual deprivation creates deficiency. Enduring chaos engenders fatigue. And, as the great coach Vince Lombardi said, “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.” This is the desert we're targeting in this chapter.

Taking Your First Actions

Let's pause for a moment. After all, this book is a private coaching session, with me acting as your coach. Every once in a while, you're going to see an image like this:

*Maybe Nixon would've stayed out of trouble if he'd spent more time playing with the family dogs. Just sayin'.



This icon is called an *Oasis Action*, and it means your coach wants you to do something with what you just read. Stop, take a moment, and do something quick, such as answer a brief question. By doing this, you'll not only gain knowledge from this book but also make positive changes starting today.

Here's your first action. Ready?



List any desert(s) you're currently experiencing. If you have a hard time thinking of any, list deserts you've experienced in the last year or two:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Next, write down the other side of each of these deserts. In other words, what is the end condition at which you'll know the desert is over?

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Did you do it? If you didn't do it, did you at least think deeply about your answers? Remember, this book is about the experiment of *you*, so the more involved you get in this process, the more valuable the book will become.

Let's continue. Whatever the other side of the desert means for you, the happiness that comes from reaching that glorious moment hides the dark and ugly reality that—between now and the other side—there's only:

Barren, dry land.

Buzzards.

Sun-bleached skulls.

Oh, sure, there are glimpses of hope here and there—a watery hunk of cactus or a Burning Man attendee, if you will. And that hope of reaching the end keeps you moving forward.

This desert mindset can be summed up in what I call the Culture of WISH:

WORTH

IT

SOMEDAY,

HOPEFULLY

Someday, all this effort will pay off. Someday, I'll feel better. Someday, I'll be happy. Someday, I'll have the success I deserve. Someday, we'll be able to be close as a couple again. Someday, I'll be able to focus on my children. Someday, I'll take that trip with my friends. Someday, I'll get a raise. Someday, I'll learn how to use chopsticks. Someday, I'll go for a Sunday drive. Someday, I'll take kickboxing lessons. Someday, bloody someday.

But in the meantime? Thirst. Frustration. Work. Stress. Lack of sleep. Anxiety. Being bombarded by a hundred demands simultaneously. Constantly putting out fires. Feeling the continuous pressure to stay ahead of the curve. After all, you never know who's going to come along and kick you out. Then, before you can shout "Time-out," there goes your hard-earned nest egg.

Sounds fun, right? Who wants to sign up for that ride?

Apparently, most of us. It's the way the system was set up, wasn't it? Dig in, endure, and push past the pain—that's the way we get the best results, right?

What if I told you that wasn't true? What if the Culture of WISH is, in fact, the pathway to less success? What if enjoying life now—today—in reality *increased* the likelihood of achieving success someday in the future? What if, by putting fun first, everything you do would be more productive?

That is the great experiment we're about to test together. Your work—no matter what it is—can and should pay off now. This month. This week. Today.

It's time for us to make the desert bloom—from the first step until your triumphant arrival at the other side.

Building Your Oasis

Remember the two stories I began with? Let's return to them to hear how they turned out. The envelope, please!



Businesscraft: Part Two

The young business owner was slumped in his chair, defeated by a natural 20 roll by his business coach wielding the +1 sword of truth.

"You're going to make me stop playing Warcraft aren't you?" he muttered in defeat.

"No, I'm not going to tell you to stop." I then asked, "Is it necessary for you to play these games? Does taking a break to jump into the game help you have a clear mind for work?"

"Yeah, it does, actually."

"Then I'm not going to tell you to stop. I'm going to tell you to schedule it."

After much discussion and some debate, we settled on five hours a week being a far more appropriate amount of time. This schedule allowed him to play in a focused way, slicing and dicing warlocks with ease. He scheduled one hour at the end of each day, *before* he went home. These virtual battles

gave him the ability to clear his mind of the day's real-life business battles. He could then focus his attention on enjoying his time with his family.

Overall, he dropped his work hours from eighty to fifty-five, including World of Warcraft time, and became far more productive on a weekly basis. He was more relaxed at work because he knew his outlet awaited him at the end of the day, and his relationship with his family improved.

Power Couple: Part Two

The couple pleaded for guidance. They were desperately trying to pull themselves out of their business-first marriage.

"What's something you both really enjoy?" I asked them. "What's something you could do together that would pull your attention away from work, even if it's just for an hour or so?"

Without speaking, they looked at each other as if to say, You tell him. No, you tell him!

Finally, the wife volunteered, "Well, we both like *Survivor*."

"The reality show?"

"Yes," she muttered.

Energized, I replied, "Great! Let's create an appointment for the two of you to make sure you watch *Survivor* together."

To you, that may seem meaningless, but to them, it was everything. Not only did the couple enjoy a group of fake castaways navigating physical challenges and sabotaging each other all in the name of staying on a TV show for another week, but the show gave them something to talk about other than the day-to-day chaos of running a business.

This simple act of having fun—mutually agreed upon and mutually scheduled—quite literally turned their marriage around.

The Culture of WIN

The Culture of WISH teaches you that hard work, at any cost, is the pathway to success. By making our efforts “worth it someday, hopefully,” our society is becoming dragged down, burned out, and bummed out. Some of us have reached a constant state of pathos. This may be one reason for the proliferation in recent years of books about happiness.

Thankfully, there is a surprisingly simple yet effective antidote to the Culture of WISH. We must make your effort worth it *now*. Not just sometime this week or later today, but right now.

This is the Culture of WIN:

WORTH

IT

NOW

Don’t worry. I won’t be in acronym mode for the rest of this book.* But this simple construct provides the antidote to “someday, hopefully.” When you transition to the Culture of WIN, you are creating not just a career but a life that is “worth it”—so to speak—right now. Today. Not just at the end.

Return with me to our metaphorical desert for just a moment. As rough and dry and nasty as a journey like this can be, imagine stumbling upon a beautiful oasis. Dehydrated, exhausted, sunburned, and pushed to the edge of sanity, you are met by a sudden yet welcome vision of a sparkling blue pool, palm trees shading a soft cabana, and fruit juice and ceviche by the truckload. Best of all, it is not a mirage. It is real. Such an experience would refresh your soul, would it not?

* After all, I’m not Gary Busey.

When you're stranded in an endless desert, an oasis becomes a powerful ally. There's a reason why they have historically been epicenters of trade, essential pathways to weary travelers, and battlegrounds for regional control.

Some people stumble across their oasis from time to time. A party bus in Ibiza here, an ice cream social there, a brief trip to YouTube-land. Sometimes, people try to furtively sneak these moments in between this email and that call.

How do many people feel when they have innocent fun? Guilty! The Culture of WISH tells us we don't deserve such moments. It whips us out of our temporary paradise and back to crawling beneath the blistering sun.

Deserve is an undermining word because it implies good behavior earns you a reward. The Culture of WISH uses it to keep us under its grimy thumb. You don't deserve a break yet because you didn't complete that project. You don't deserve to have a little fun because everyone else is working. You don't deserve it because of the psychological baggage of your past.

The Culture of WISH is lying to you.

Pop quiz: If you're wandering through the desert, is water something you deserve . . . or is it something you need?

Unlike the WISHy-washy culture, the Culture of WIN recognizes that these moments of refreshment are an essential part of the journey. Just as you require water to make it across the desert, so also does your day require meaningful, refreshing, and fun breaks.

How essential are they? We'll cover a variety of evidence in this book, and here is a taste to wet your whistle. A study by the *Harvard Business Review* and the Energy Project found that when a supervisor encouraged team members to take regular breaks, employees were 81 percent more likely to stay with the company and had a 78 percent increase in their sense

of healthiness and well-being. Additionally, those who took breaks at least every ninety minutes reported a 40 percent increase in creative thinking and a 28 percent improvement in focus. Who doesn't need that?

The Culture of WIN is about you taking control of your workday. You must claim the benefits of having little moments of fun not because you deserve them but because you know your performance will improve because of them.

The Oasis Strategy

The Culture of WIN, then, is about scheduling these refreshing moments first and making our enjoyment a top priority. Everything else must flow around them.

Think of this strategy as planning the entire desert journey, start to finish, and knowing ahead of time that you will need to discover small oases along the way. Every few miles or so, you can refresh yourself, replenish your reserves, and gain greater strength to continue onward to your final destination.

In this book, I'm going to regularly refer to creating your *Oasis* or *Oases*.*

An Oasis represents a moment that *you* create. It is not something the self-proclaimed conference experts nor a ruggedly handsome, superbly charismatic author-speaker-business coach tells you to create. No. *You* will create the minutes that make all your effort worth it today.

An Oasis sums up whatever you define as a meaningful break. It's an analog I had to create in place of a word that doesn't exist in the English language. Think of it as a moment of fun, play, enjoyment, reward, fulfillment, refreshment, recharging, and chillaxing all rolled into one tasty tidbit.

*Weird plural, isn't it? You'll get used to it, though. Promise.

Your Oasis is a powerful tool—not just to give you happiness, but for getting more done in your day. Believe it or not, my clients who establish fun moments for an Oasis become more productive and more successful because they feel that the work is worth it now.

The more work you intend to do, the more valuable and vital the Oasis is. The type of Oasis you choose is up to you, yet you must take these breaks to achieve your best performance. Make the Oasis a part of your routine, and your work today will be not only more enjoyable but more effective.

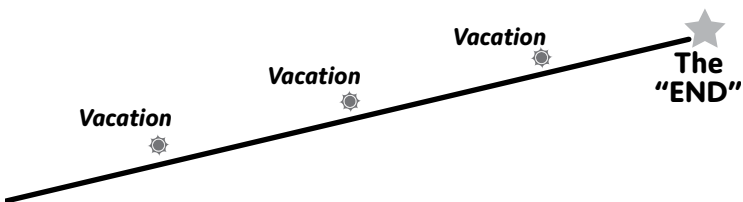
Our goal is to preschedule and predetermine specific times of the day, week, month, and year when you enjoy these Oases.

To be done first. Up front. In advance.

Not when you have time in your schedule or if you get your work done, but because you have the time scheduled, just as you would an appointment with a VIP. Which is, in fact, true because the VIP just happens to be you.

To give you a picture of how this works, let's imagine a person stuck in the desert of retirement. The Culture of WISH would tell that person that this is what a proper career path should look like:

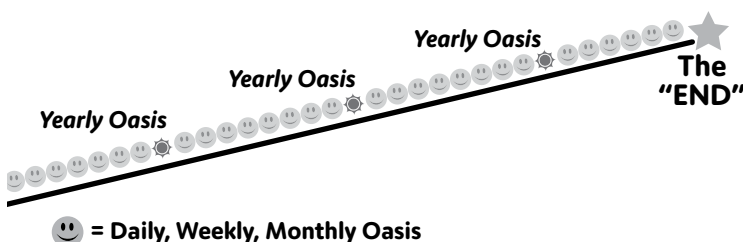
The Culture of Wish



The philosophy? One big payout at the end—retirement—interspersed with a few well-deserved vacations. Yes, there's that “deserve” word again.

The Culture of WIN, on the other hand, would say that a career should be a steady flow of joyful moments:

The Culture of Win



In this way, Oases become an essential part of how this person lives every day, week, month, and year. They become the top priority in daily and weekly planning. They are a requirement.

Regardless of the desert you find yourself in, the itinerary of your Oasis-filled journey should look like this: work hard for a short period of time and then take a small, refreshing Oasis. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

You take these Oases not because you are exhausted but because they are vital to your happiness and well-being. When you come back, you'll have enough in the tank for even more success. These Oases become one of the most—if not *the* most—important moments of the day.

Allow me to clarify a bit more. What are these Oases all about? What does—and doesn't—constitute an Oasis?

AN OASIS IS A TOP PRIORITY

To start, an Oasis isn't what happens at the end of the day. It's a critical part of the day. Your success is as dependent on taking this little break as it is for you to meet deadlines and respond to emails. Perhaps more so. As we dive into the

concept of permission, you'll discover a little science behind the importance of having fun.

As you read further, I'm going to make the case for how businesses should create policies that allow employees to take these brief, inexpensive, and frequent Oases in the middle of the workday. If these breaks become an integral part of how people work, we will achieve greater performance as a result.

AN OASIS IS SCHEDULED

An Oasis doesn't happen out of the blue or whenever you need it. It is a scheduled daily occurrence. An Oasis is not a rescue inhaler that you use at the first sign of possible life congestion.

Let's be honest: when do we have time for anything, anyway? Ever tell yourself you're going to do something "when you have a moment?" How does that work out for you? Probably the same as for everyone else: a pile of actions left undone.

We can't afford to treat our Oases that way. In the twenty-first century, we never have enough time. Because that's the world we live in, it is important that we schedule time in advance to take these Oases in our day. We must make them a regular, recurring part of our schedule. That will make it much easier for us to stick to them.

AN OASIS IS A PRE-WARD

An Oasis isn't a reward. It is a *pre*-ward. See what I did there?

An Oasis is not a Milk-Bone offered as a reward for rolling over, playing dead, and being a good dog. Oases are necessary motivators to help you move forward. By *pre*-establishing and *pre*-scheduling these motivators in your day, you will feel a desire to work harder because you know something good is going to happen.

This serves as an alternative to working hard in the hope

that some supervisor might step down from the clouds of Olympus to bestow a gift upon you. This is not a gift that someone else gives you. It's something that you give yourself up front.

AN OASIS IS A WANT-TO

An Oasis is not a "have to" type of activity; it is a "want to" type of activity. Sometimes, people get confused when I introduce the concept of Oases, immediately thinking that they should be activities akin to running a marathon or eating whole-grain sprout sandwiches. Look, if those are things that you get excited about and look forward to in your day, they very well can be Oases. Kudos to you, you wonderful freak of nature.*

For the rest of us mortals, Oases are far more tangible and immediately gratifying. I find it more common for people to be excited about watching a show on Netflix, listening to a favorite song, or just walking in the park with their dog. We'll get into the details of creating Oases a little bit later. For the moment, understand that these are actions that you love to do, not need to do.

AN OASIS IS AFFORDABLE

Oases are not expensive. They are free to cheap.

Occasionally, people throw up a defensive wall around the Oasis concept because they feel as though I'm asking them to hurt their chances at that which truly is "worth it in the end." Right? "Dave's telling me to go on exotic vacations and travel six months of the year while other people do all the work for me. But that will kill my retirement plans." That's a different book, sold by someone with quite a different philosophy.

*Secretly, I'm jealous of you.

In reality, with the system I will teach you, you are going to be spending very little money. Instead, you'll make careful choices about Oases that are free or very inexpensive that give you pockets of joy. As we explore the process together, you may be surprised at how many joyful things there are that cost absolutely no money.

AN OASIS IS OFTEN BRIEF

An Oasis needn't be time-consuming. It can be brief. When I talk about setting up a daily win, a client will occasionally say, "Dave, I've got a department to run. I have responsibilities to fulfill and deadlines to meet. Time is money, and money doesn't grow on trees." They rattle off these business clichés as a defense mechanism, thinking I'm asking them to sacrifice time. No, that's the way of the Culture of WISH.

Little do they know how little time commitment is truly needed. It takes only a few minutes scheduled into your day to give you a breather and a moment of fun.

AN OASIS IS DOABLE

Oases are not goals. They are activities. When someone sets a goal, they're usually looking for the light at the end of the tunnel. Something distant.

For an Oasis to be worth it, it must also be a do it. Enjoying an Oasis is a matter of action. In most cases, Oases will take little effort.

Now, these Oases may improve, get more interesting, get more challenging, get a little weirder, or, heck, become downright goofy sometimes. What, where, and how you take your Oases is up to you. What is important is that you are doing them and doing them starting today.

AN OASIS IS FULFILLING

Oases are not self-indulgent; rather, they are self-*fulfilling*.

True confession? I was extremely hesitant about using the word *fun* in the title of this book because people occasionally equate fun with activities that are self-destructive. If you've ever been forced to watch *My Strange Addiction*, you know that certain behaviors offer a moment of pleasure but have a long-term negative impact. Heaven knows I don't want to show up at your intervention having to tell you how sorry I am for turning you into an online shopaholic.

So, here's clarification about the kind of fun that truly gives you power. This flavor of fun—these Oases—are things that help you feel happy and help you feel joy and fulfillment, but never in a way that creates a negative impact on you or the people around you.

An Oasis is constructive, not destructive. Sometimes this is a matter of degree. A client once told me she wanted to enjoy a little chocolate each day for her Oasis. That worked for her. However, if food as a reward has possible negative consequences in your life, you won't want to use it as an Oasis. This applies not just to food but to any other kind of activity that has a potentially negative, destructive side effect in your life. Choose options that build you up and make you a better person.

Now that we're on the same page with what an Oasis is and isn't, let's take a bird's-eye view of where you're at, right now, in terms of having fun.

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