

Your Core 4

The four intentions that separate high performers from everyone else.

Habit is not the enemy.

Unexamined habit is. When you study high performers across every field, four intentions show up without fail: Self, Social, Skills, and Service. Not as tasks — as a daily orientation.

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Habit is the supervillain of the modern world — or so we are told. But what if habit is a superpower?

The story usually starts the same way. The awkward outsider, in possession of some quirk that makes them unrelatable. Then one day they get control of it. The quirk was the power all along.

Habits work the same way. They become a superpower the moment you recognize them — not as unconscious loops, but as deliberate tools. Top performers did not develop better habits by accident. They created them on purpose, for a specific person: their future self. To abandon the routine would be to abandon that future. That is why they will not.

Self

Self is the most important of the four, and the most misunderstood. It is not self-care in the popular sense. It is future visualization — the consistent, practiced act of designing a version of yourself worth becoming.

High performers fix their attention on a future, improved self, and let that image govern today's decisions. Everything they do is in service of that version, not a defense of the past.

Three questions to build this practice:

1. Look back over the last few months and describe how you showed up — at work, with your partner, in hard moments. 2. How would your future, improved self show up in those exact same situations? 3. Define three values for that future self. Say them out loud three times a day.

Social

Social does not mean social media. It means the physical, present practice of being valuable in the lives of people around you.

High performers are attuned to their role in their social environment. They act on their social intentions proactively rather than reacting to whatever energy is already in the room. This is why successful people always appear to be working the room — their energy is infectious not by accident but by design.

Three questions to build social intention:

1. How can I be a good person in this coming situation? 2. What will the other person need? 3. What energy do I want to set walking in?

Skills

That high performers invest in skill development is not surprising. How they do it is worth noting.

They are not scatter-shot learners. They are specialists. They protect time for learning, invest in coaching, and have high-skill hobbies — not because those hobbies directly benefit their career, but because the practice of mastery is the point.

Three questions to build skill intention:

1. What three skills make people successful in your field? 2. What will you do to develop each one — and when? 3. What three skills will matter most in your field five to ten years from now?

Service

When you are task-saturated and operating in survival mode, it is impossible to think about the value you provide. You are just trying not to get eaten.

High performers protect time to serve. Not in an altruistic sense alone, but in the sense of being obsessed with the quality and meaning of their work. They carve out space to do the work and to appreciate it. They care about the details that busy people cannot afford to care about.

The distinction is between a task list and an intention list. High performers do not work off task lists. They set intentions.

Three questions to build service intention:

1. How can I deliver beyond what is expected of me today? 2. What do the people I serve actually need right now? 3. How can I serve in a way that is unique to me?

The Point

No one can tell you which specific habits to build. Be suspicious of anyone who tries. What you can do is hold these four as a frame — and evaluate your current routines against them. Are your habits serving your future self, or your past one?

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