

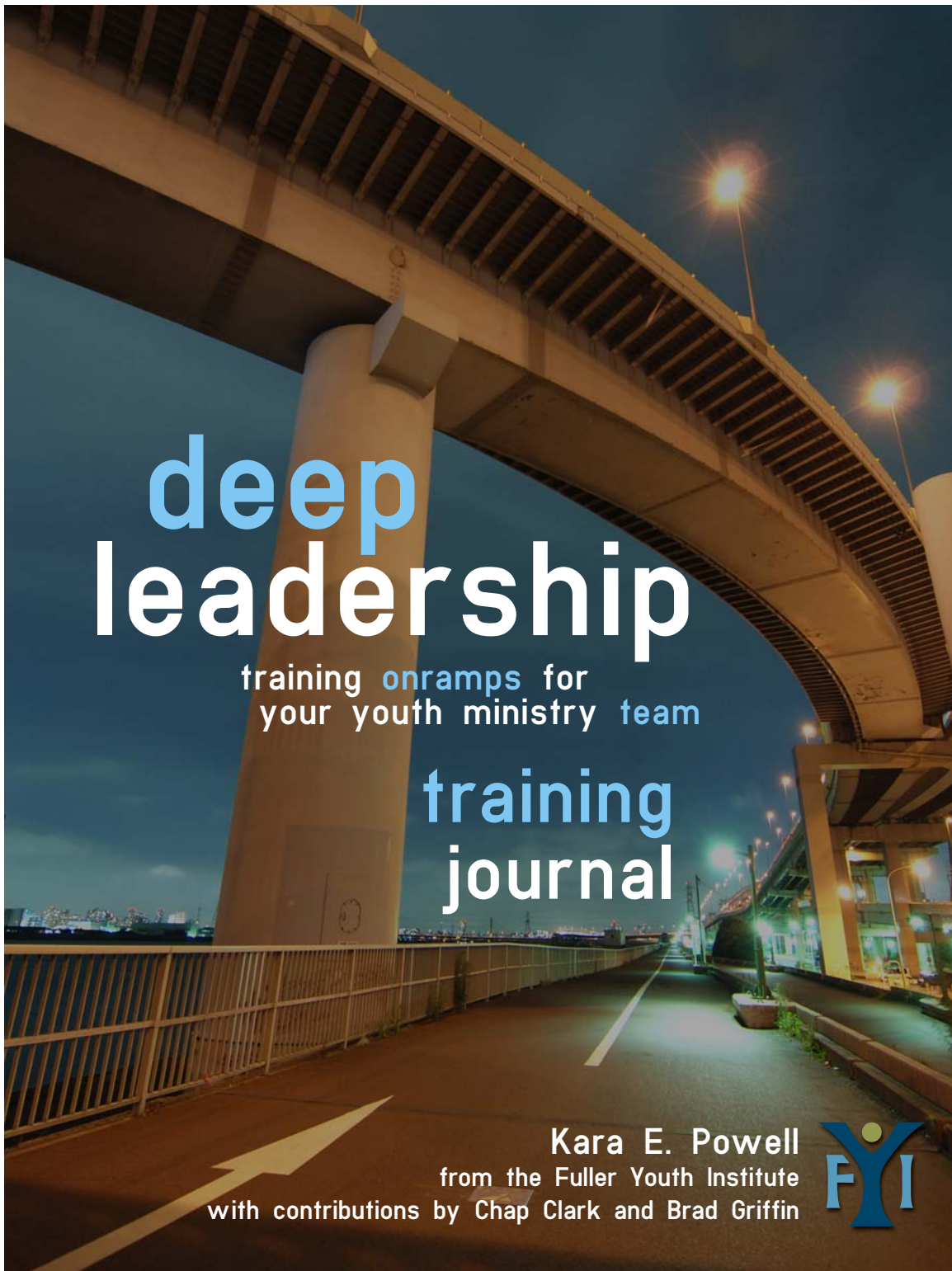
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FULLER YOUTH INSTITUTE





deep leadership

training onramps for
your youth ministry team

training
journal

Kara E. Powell
from the Fuller Youth Institute
with contributions by Chap Clark and Brad Griffin



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training onramps for your youth ministry team
training journal

by Kara Powell
from the Fuller Youth Institute



with contributions by Chap Clark, Brad Griffin, Jude Tiersma Watson, Pamela King, Cynthia Eriksson,
Mark Maines, Kim Williams, and Meredith Miller



deep rest two practices every leader can try

hitting the road¹

You might have an addiction—an addiction so secret that even *you* don't realize your dependence.

You may be steering clear of internet pornography and drugs. You may even tell yourself that your love for Café Mochas in the morning is more about the taste than the caffeine, and that your Wii obsession is just an attempt at remaining “culturally relevant.”

For you, it's not those external substances that are your first love; it's a substance produced by your own body. Ironically, you might be addicted to adrenalin. Adrenalin addiction, while rarely discussed, is perhaps one of the more pervasive addictions for leaders and youth workers today.

Two Decades of Research

Over the last two decades, the research and writings of Fuller Seminary professor Dr. Archibald Hart have helped thousands of leaders wrestling with adrenalin addiction break through toward some answers. In his groundbreaking book, *Adrenalin and Stress*, Hart writes,

The lives of most of us are hectic and fast-paced. We are driven by a need to succeed, and our hectic lives leave little room for relaxation. It's as if we are trapped on a runaway train and don't know where the brakes are—or the engines of our bodies have been jammed at full throttle.²

Hart also suggests in his book, *Thrilled to Death*, that today's stress levels are creating even more significant problems than when he first developed his adrenalin addiction theory twenty years ago. Hart warns,

Unless we, as a society, learn to slow down, examine our values, and change our hectic lifestyles, we will continue to suffer from cardiovascular disease, immune deficiencies, depression, and a host of other illnesses. Further, we will pass these traits and poor coping skills to our children.³

¹ This section is an adaptation of two articles entitled “R-E-S-T: The Four Letter Word of Youth Workers” by Brad Griffin and “Adrenalin: Our Secret Addiction” by Jude Tiersma Watson and Kara Powell, available at www.fulleryouthinstitute.org.

² Archibald D. Hart, *The Hidden Link Between Adrenalin and Stress: The Exciting New Breakthrough that Helps You Overcome Stress Damage* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995), 3.

³ Archibald D. Hart, *Thrilled to Death: How the Endless Pursuit of Pleasure is Leaving us Numb* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 62.

Two Ancient Escapes for Our Current Reality

Escape #1: A Weekly Sabbath

Hart recommends a number of paths toward freedom from our adrenalin addiction, including monitoring our adrenalin arousal, conscious physical relaxation, sleep, and changing our Type-A thinking patterns (and even in rare cases, medical treatment). In addition to all of these, perhaps one of the more effective escape routes for youth workers trapped in adrenalin addiction stems from one of the areas inevitably affected: our spirituality.

This might surprise you, but we who struggle with busy schedules and adrenalin addiction can find the first of two escapes in an Old Testament book we probably don't visit that often: Leviticus. While we often dismiss Leviticus as "just a bunch of rules," these rules are enveloped in an important context: "As you do these things, remember that God is holy and you have been claimed by his love." So take a look at Leviticus 23:3:

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.

You may be thinking, "Great. Bring on more guilt. I know this one: I'm a Sabbath-breaker!" Relax. I believe God intends this to be a word of freedom, and we're invited to claim it for our own lives—even for our youth ministries.

This freedom begins by understanding some of the early words of the Old Testament:

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 2:2-3)

The poetry of this creation account culminates not in the dramatic work of God, but in the powerful revelation that the Creator rested. God stopped. God was not anxious about creation or worried about what would happen next. God was confident enough to cease—to *Sabbath*—and Scripture says God did this for a whole day.⁴ The key here is not whether God created in seven actual days (you can take that up with your favorite biblical scholar), but rather the radical announcement of the Genesis text: our God does not feverishly race to do more stuff. We can have confidence in a God who boldly rests.

Our God does not feverishly race to do more stuff. We can have confidence in a God who boldly rests.

⁴Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, ed. James L. Mays, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 35.

Escape #2: A Regular Prayer of Examen

A second ancient practice that can help us to stand against our addictive tendencies, whether they come from within or without, is the *Examen of Consciousness*. The *examen* (say it just like “examine”) is rooted in Ignatian spirituality and can be traced back five hundred years to the founder of the “Society of Jesus” (or the Jesuits), Ignatius of Loyola.

The *examen* helps us escape our adrenalin addiction by causing us to stop and see where God has been present in our day and give thanks. Given that it generally takes about fifteen minutes, it can be done anytime, anywhere, alone or with others (i.e., your spouse, your family, the kids in your youth ministry). Most often it is done during the last hour before bed (a good reason to turn off your TV or computer a little earlier). There is always the danger that we rush through the *examen* just like we rush through the rest of our lives, so we’re best off if we have the time and space to settle in and focus.

1. Stop and Be Present to God. The first step in the prayer of examen is to slow down, to stop, and to create some space. We allow ourselves to simply sit and be, and to remember that we are in the presence of God. Once we truly stop, we take a moment and remember that we belong to God, that our days belong to God, and that our ministry and our kids belong to God too.

2. Look Back Over Today With Gratitude. Next, we ask God to illuminate the day as we prayerfully review the day’s events in the light of Christ. We remember the day with gratitude and give thanks for the gifts of this day. This review causes us to remember moments that would otherwise get lost in the midst of our adrenalin-fueled busyness. A few questions to ask ourselves include:

- > What was the “high” of my day? For what am I most grateful?
- > Where and how did God seem most present to me today?
- > What was most life-giving for me today?
- > When did I feel rested and balanced?

3. Uncover the Lows. As we continue to allow the Holy Spirit to illumine our day, questions to help us better understand the low spots include:

- > What was the “low” of my day? For what am I least grateful?
- > Where did I least sense God’s presence with me?
- > What was least life-giving, or most draining, for me today?
- > What pulled me away from being rested and balanced?

As we uncover these struggles and trials, we can commit them to God, confessing any sin and asking God to bring new life into the dark places.

4. Rest With God. The key to the examen is its simplicity as a prayer of rest and reflection before God. Close your time in prayer by simply thanking God for being present with you.

Examen:

1. Stop and Be Present to God
2. Look Back Over Today with Gratitude
3. Uncover the Lows
4. Rest with God

One Youth Worker's Use of the Prayer of Examen

Dr. Jude Tiersma Watson is an Associate Professor of Urban Mission at Fuller Seminary as well as a member of CRM/InnerCHANGE, a Christian Order Among the Poor, in Los Angeles. As a busy urban youth worker, the *examen* has helped her carve out the time she needs to stay centered and balanced. She writes,

In my early days in ministry, living in a busy urban center, my life often spun out of control, and I felt like I was losing touch with myself, God and others.

A wise woman first suggested that I take time to examine my life at the end of each day by doing the *examen*. This was a difficult season in my life, and I often felt as if God was absent; practicing the *examen* gave me an opportunity to see that in fact God had been present, but I had been too preoccupied to notice. The *examen* gave me a tool to pay attention to my fast-paced life, to pay attention to where God was present, and to pay attention to myself and my own responses to the events in my life.

As I examine my day, I remember those moments when I overreacted to a situation, or times when I was unloving. In the presence of God's love, I can give those things to God for growth and healing and move on. While so many things around me can seem to take my life from me, in the *examen* I reclaim my life; I again *choose life*. If I am running on adrenalin, this stopping to review my day reminds me that this is not how I want to live my days, and not how I want to live my life. One of the questions that helps me do that is: "If my day has been too busy, what could I have said no to today?"

The *examen* is also a great relational tool. My husband and I use the *examen* questions to catch up with each other after a busy day—sometimes in the car, sometimes over dinner, and sometimes before going to sleep. It gives us a chance to reflect on our day with each other, as well as with ourselves. We also use it as a youth ministry tool, periodically asking groups of young people about their highs and lows for that day or that week.

Counter to a culture that endorses billboard messages like "You can rest when you're dead" (which I saw recently in a gym), the Sabbath and the *examen* remind us that real life doesn't come from adrenalin-hyped action-filled lives and ministries. Real life comes from the realization that God was there, throughout the day, whether we realized it in that moment or not. This realization may or may not bring us our next "high", but it offers the true power of the Holy Spirit to sustain us and give us rest from our adrenalin addiction.

"The examen gave me an opportunity to see that in fact God had been present, but I had been too preoccupied to notice."



deep rest team talk

now

How might your _____ become an addiction?

In his groundbreaking book, *Adrenalin and Stress*, Dr. Archibald Hart writes,

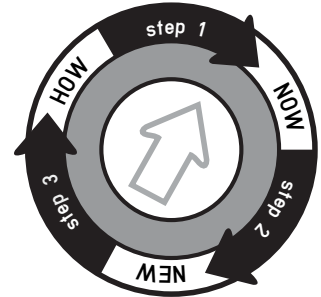
The lives of most of us are hectic and fast-paced. We are driven by a need to succeed, and our hectic lives leave little room for relaxation. It's as if we are trapped on a runaway train and don't know where the brakes are—or the engines of our bodies have been jammed at full throttle.¹

How do Hart's words relate to your own life?

Hart also suggests in his book, *Thrilled to Death*, that today's stress levels are creating even more significant problems than when he first developed his adrenalin addiction theory twenty years ago. Hart warns,

Unless we, as a society, learn to slow down, examine our values, and change our hectic lifestyles, we will continue to suffer from cardiovascular disease, immune deficiencies, depression, and a host of other illnesses. Further, we will pass these traits and poor coping skills to our children.²

How might our own tendencies toward adrenalin addiction affect the kids in our ministry?



¹ Archibald D. Hart, *The Hidden Link Between Adrenalin and Stress: The Exciting New Breakthrough that Helps You Overcome Stress Damage* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995), 3.

² Archibald D. Hart, *Thrilled to Death: How the Endless Pursuit of Pleasure is Leaving us Numb* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 62.

How does our busyness and adrenalin addiction affect our psyche? How about our relationships with others? What about our relationship with God?

How is an addiction to adrenalin and a busy schedule similar to other addictions? How is it different?

new

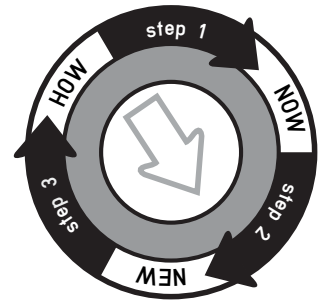
Exodus 3:11-14

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and then ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you."



God tells Moses in Exodus 3:14 that God is the great _____.

If God is the great _____, what does that make us? The great _____.

how

The irony about this addiction is that we might be _____ but since we're doing good things (like youth ministry!), we're labeled as "dedicated" and "godly."

As followers of Christ, there's a special kind of rest we get: _____.

Some folks think that the Sabbath is an Old Testament rule that Jesus abolished. But Jesus NEVER abolished the Sabbath. In fact, he called himself the _____ of the Sabbath in Mark 2:28. Jesus abolished the _____ of the Sabbath, but not the Sabbath itself.

According to Eugene Peterson, Sabbath is a time to _____.

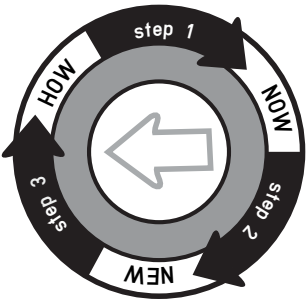
Here are some other Sabbath tips to help us remember that we are the great I AM NOT:

- 1. Each week look ahead on your _____ and block out some time by writing the word "Sabbath" on it.
- 2. Consider a day other than _____.
- 3. Set aside as much time as you can, even if it's just a _____.

When might you have a Sabbath in the next week or two? Write down your answer on your calendar or in the space below...

- 4. Avoid items on your _____ list.

What would you like to do on your next Sabbath?



deep rest action plan

Ideas our team has to move forward into deeper rest include:

overall goals	action steps toward these goals	specific prayer requests	signs of God's activity