

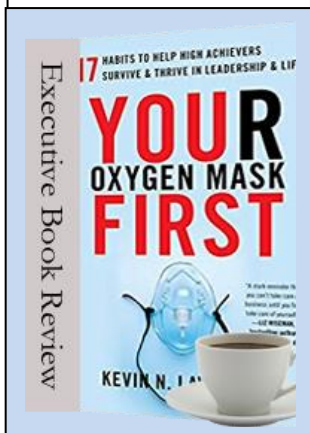


153 & 157

## Your Oxygen Mask First

By Kevin Lawrence

Reviewed by Peter Braeuler



**About the Author** Coach Kevin’s career spans 20 years and four continents. He’s worked with hundreds of CEOs and executives, helping them to break through business challenges, grow their companies and find personal success along the way.

Kevin is a Coach Emeritus with Gazelles, a member of Gravitas Impact coaching organization and a key contributor to Scaling up (Mastering the Rockefeller Habits 2.0).

He is based in Vancouver, Canada, can often be found tearing up the racetrack, or adventuring in the outdoors with his wife Angela, son Brayden and daughter Ashley.

### About the Book

This book was written to help high achieving CEOs and Leaders to have it all – a great business and a great life! If you pay attention to and strengthen your RESILIENCE, you can easily double your capability.

If leaders can’t scale – the business won’t grow! Leaders in all walks of life are looking for expert pain relief because they find that commitments usually exceed capacity.

Business and life will consume you if you let it.

This book is a concise but far-reaching summary of the best information and tools Kevin has discovered in two decades of coaching and advising. He tells it like it is and doesn’t mince words. P.18

### The Book’s ONE THING

**You can only shut out your “self” for so long until the self-neglect suffocates you. The only solution is to add that extremely crucial “self” category back into your reality. P.23**

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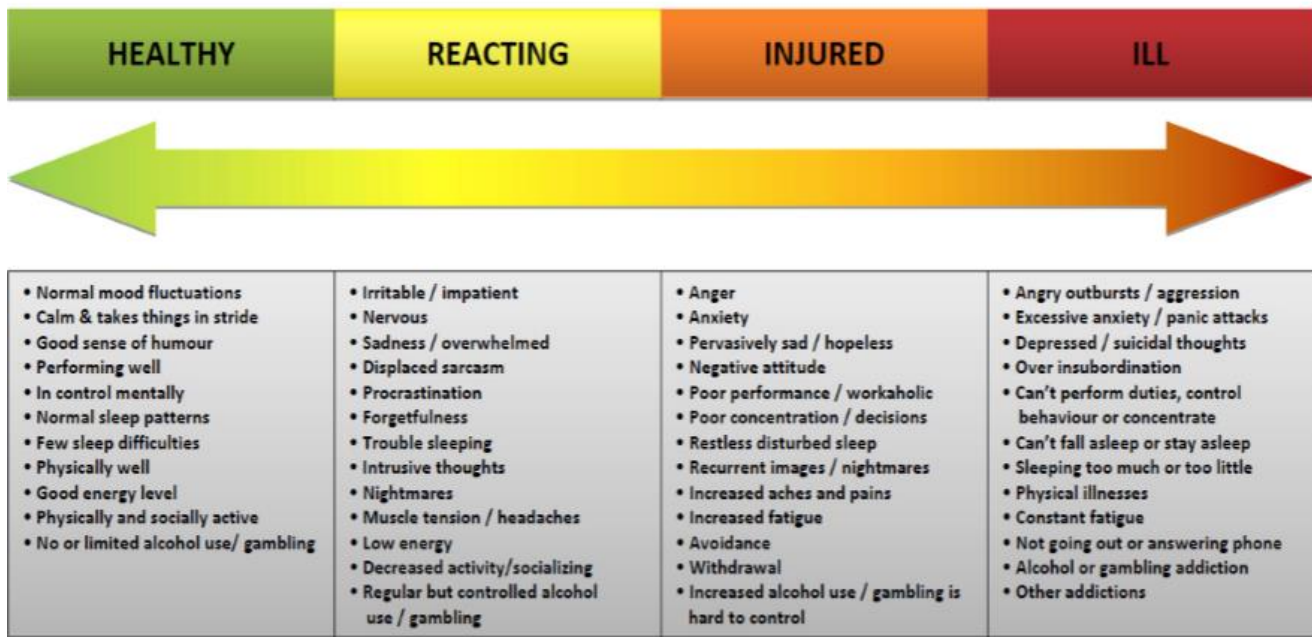


Habit #7 – Manage your Mental Health (p.93)

The uneasy truth is you can handle stress – Until you can't.

*All of us are one or two life events away from developing a mental health issue.*

**Mental Health Continuum Model**



What actions to take – There ALWAYS is path back to GREEN

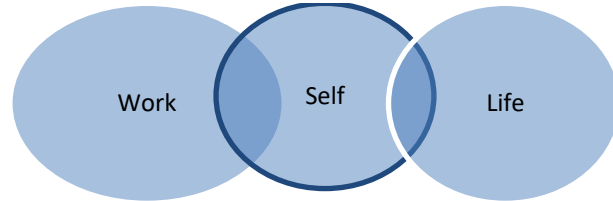
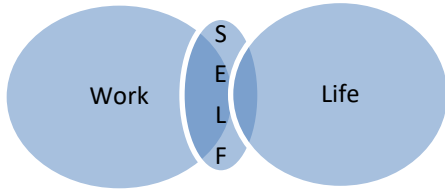
**MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM MODEL**





## If you ignore your own well-being, the smartest business strategy on the planet can't save you. Pg.23

Coach Kevin talks about what happens as we grow older – all that time we used to spend on ourselves, doing the things that fascinated us, begins to fade and our SELF gets squeezed by work and life. His book helps to gain back that balance and works on reestablishing your well-being and incorporating healthy habits into your life.



### How to use this book

The book has 17 chapters – one for each habit. You might benefit from scanning through the entire book and get a feel for what each one is about and then start working on one habit at a time. As Kevin says – this is a journey and each time you go through the work you can dig deeper.

Kevin also has several powerful resources available. Go to <https://Lawrenceandco.com/books> to access his free toolkit, check out his videos and access his free assessment.

### The 17 Habits

Polls of audiences about their #1 habit shows that results are quite evenly distributed across all habits. Everyone has different things going on and we master one habit and then need to focus on another as circumstances change.

As Kevin Lawrence described in his book *Your Oxygen Mask First*, the myth of martyrdom is the belief that you don't have enough time to do the things you want to do:

You believe there is literally no time in your life to take proper care of yourself, to indulge in activities that are just for you, and you alone. You believe as a leader, a spouse, a parent, a community organizer--whatever combination of roles you play--that these roles far outweigh your own personal needs. The myth of martyrdom is the dark lie that makes leaders feel guilty for having human needs.

### Habit #1 – Live an amazing life (p.27)

**Would you love to spend a lifetime living exactly as you are right now?** Success isn't only what you achieve or possess. It's how you feel about your life. Kevin shows you how to discover what you would do using his Amazing Life Grid and then pulls it together creating your Amazing Life Plan. Then you need to SCHEDULE key elements of that life plan to make it happen.

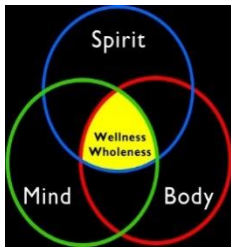




### Habit #2 – Forget Work-Life Balance (p.39)

**Balance is absolutely inconsistent with the life driven people choose.** Coach Kevin points out that the focus should turn to WORK-SELF-LIFE passion instead. And these will NOT be equal – you must figure out how you will allocate those passions. He does suggest starting with self-first and then determine your “passion ratio”. Getting this one habit under control will mitigate that feeling of being OUT OF CONTROL.

### Habit #3 – Double Your Resilience (p.47)



**Collapse occurs when we stop doing things to keep ourselves healthy.** You need a system for taking care of yourself! And that system must address your **BODY**, your **MIND**, and your **SPIRIT**.

Figure out what your rituals are and do them ALL THE TIME. Identify those times when these were the strongest as those are clues to what will work best for you. Don't rest on your laurels – reevaluate your rituals so you evolve, expand, and take your resilience to the next level.

### Habit #4 – Invest in Your Sweet Spots (p.59)

**Do the things you love to do – the way you love to do them!** Think about Strengths Finders which espouses working on the things you are great at and not focusing on improving your weaknesses. Coach Kevin says – figure out your true sweet spot and then work on a plan that enables you to spend 80% of your time doing that.

He takes us through an exercise of looking back at our achievements, dissecting those to determine our natural abilities and the environment conducive to that performance. [teaching in grade school] determine those things that give you energy and those that drain your energy. From there you begin to start doing more of what you love and stop doing the things that don't. And remember – it's a journey.

### Habit #5 – Lick Your Toads (p.69)

**When you get those irritating things off your list your energy is increased to accomplish the bigger things in life.** This one is all about stopping procrastination.

The key is to identify them -write them down. Then knock out one a day for 10 days. Alright that didn't taste too bad, did it? Now that you have developed the habit be sure to find the nastiest toad first thing every morning and deal with it! Your energy level and your outlook to the day will be much improved.



### Habit #6– Deal with Your Emotional Junk (p.81)

**Your emotional junk causes bad decisions, regrettable behavior and will hold you back as a leader.** One key step is the first step to mastery which is “If you are emotional, don't decide or react.” Good advice. Coach Kevin leads us on a journey for this habit by creating your Emotional Junk Grid which helps you identify what causes tense and uncomfortable situations and then learning how to work around those triggers until you can clean up your emotional junk.



## Habit #8- Learn Like your Life Depends on It (p.109)



**You need to keep up if you want to stay relevant and successful.** “If you believe you’ve got it all figured out – watch out!

Top leaders read – a lot – 24+ books a year. There are a lot of learning resources. Your goal is to be proactive about learning. Know your learning style; understand your learning preferences; tie some of your learning to your strategic direction; seek out some learning to expand your horizons. Be purposeful in your learning.

## Habit #9- Get Tough Feedback (p.121)

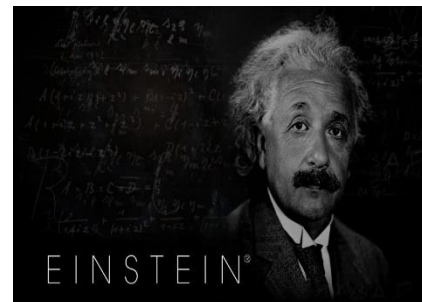
**To improve you need to know what to improve.** Ask others for honest feedback or do a 360 assessment. Do postmortems on projects. Seek out your “truth tellers”. Avoid defensiveness. Get a coach. Coach Kevin knows that those who seek out the truth and act on it will be better leaders.

## Habit #10- Make Yourself Useless (p.135)

**This one habit will buy you FREEDOM.** “To do this, you need to invest time hiring, teaching, coaching, challenging and providing feedback. When you help people grow, they gain the confidence and skills to manage day-to-day business without you.” Kevin’s steps include evaluating your team and creating a team of A players. He shows you the tools to accomplish this from hiring to firing.

## Habit #11- Quadruple Your IQ (p.151)

**You don’t need to be an Einstein; “you need to draw on the knowledge and brainpower of others.** This boosts your oxygen supply and makes everything in life easier.” He says that you should have a team of experts available at your fingertips. How many? Shoot for 24. Fill the gaps in your knowledge and resources and be sure you can relate to them. Create your own board of advisors and remember – you get what you pay for.



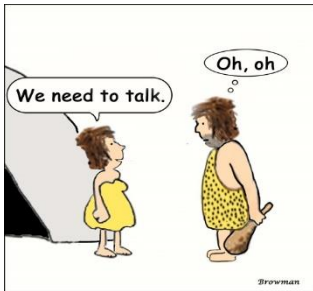
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## Habit #12- Stop Being Chief Problem Solver (p.163)

**You can’t and shouldn’t do it all.** Allow others to develop their abilities by making most of the decisions. When they come to you with problems, ask questions, don’t give solutions. If some members of your team continue to make poor decisions, then maybe they are not in the right job. Coach Kevin discusses four steps to mastering this habit, one of them being to require others to present solutions.

## Habit #13- Teach People to Meet Your Standards (p.173)

**“Greatness requires exacting standards...You cannot win if you accept mediocrity.”** You must have the conversation and be clear about your expectations and then hold people accountable. This doesn’t happen all at once. See the book for the 5 steps to mastering this important habit.



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**Habit #14– Tackle Tough Conversations (p.183)** “You can’t let important transgressions go unaddressed.” When we delay these fierce conversations, they build up and eventually become significant drains on our energy. Coach Kevin says, “be direct and compassionate and do it within 48 hours.” His strategy is: 1. Wait a few hours for the emotions to settle. 2. Schedule the conversation. 3. Plan what you are going to say. 4. Stick to your plan. 5. Have an open mind.

To take things to the next level read about his coaching triad model.

**Habit #15– Love the Lessons (p.195)** “Stare challenges dead in the eye, and say, ‘wow!’ instead of ‘woe!’” We all run into brick walls, failure, doing the wrong thing. How we react to that makes ALL the difference. Coach Kevin tells us to “get your money’s worth” from the experience. These are powerful lessons in life. In the book he shares his VENTING TEMPLATE to help you switch from woe to wow.

**Habit #16– Keep Going for It (p.205)** “Keep creating opportunities to be a novice learning from masters.” Don’t get complacent; don’t stick with what you know you can do well. Tackle things that make you stretch, make you uncomfortable, make you vulnerable. As you grow again and again you remind yourself that anything is possible. Create a stretch list and then just start.



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**Habit #17– Plan, Plan and Plan Again (p.215)** Have a simple, all-encompassing one-page master plan for work, self, and life. Create your plans EVERY YEAR and then check and re-plan every quarter. Rinse and repeat. I would add that you keep your goals down to two or three in each section and then create weekly milestones for those goals. You cannot help but achieve these if you stick to the plan.

These habits are not rocket science – they are mostly common sense. They are simple but not easy. Coach Kevin tells us this is not for everyone. As a leader of your business, your community, your church or your family you cannot do what you always did and be successful. Growth in yourself is the only way to help others grow. If we stop growing, we are dying. Start small and pick one habit and do the work. Then the next.



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### Actions



**What thought, or idea had the biggest impact on you today?**

**What is your ONE THING? What one specific action you will take TODAY from what was discussed?**

### Calendar of Events

**First Friday – Wittigs 2018 Avenue B San Antonio 7:30 – 9:00 [Sponsor: UTSA EMBA Alumni Association]**

- Mar 1<sup>st</sup> Sleep Smarter
- Apr 5<sup>th</sup> How to Fly a Horse
- May 3<sup>rd</sup> The Gifts of Imperfection

**Wine & Cheese Wednesday – Wittigs 2018 Avenue B San Antonio 5:30 – 7:00 PM [Sponsor: Haworth]**

- Mar 13<sup>th</sup> Engaged Leadership
- Apr 10<sup>th</sup> 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership
- May 8<sup>th</sup> Atomic Habits

**Second Tuesday – Wittigs 401 William St. Corpus Christi 5:30 – 7:00 PM [Sponsor: Wittigs & Haworth]**

- Mar 12<sup>th</sup> Engaged Leadership
- Apr 9<sup>th</sup> How to Fly a Horse
- May 14<sup>th</sup> Atomic Habits

**Fourth Thursday – Haworth 2 E Greenway Plaza #100 Houston 11:30 – 1:00 [Sponsor: Haworth & Wittigs]**

- Mar 28<sup>th</sup> How I Raised Myself from Failure to Success in Selling
- Apr 25<sup>th</sup> Your Oxygen Mask First
- May 23<sup>rd</sup> Resonant Leadership

**Fourth Friday – Alpha Home 419 E. Magnolia Ave. San Antonio 8:00 – 9:30 [Sponsor: Alpha Home]**

- Mar 29<sup>th</sup> Your Oxygen Mask First
- Apr 26<sup>th</sup> How I Raised Myself from Failure to Success in Selling
- May 24<sup>th</sup> Resonant Leadership