



Southwestern Law School

Mindfulness ~ Stress Management ~ Peak Performance Program

THE PEAK PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Southwestern's Mindfulness, Stress Management, and Peak Performance 1L Program (the "Peak Performance Program") is designed to help students achieve law school success by increasing mental focus, decreasing stress, overcoming performance obstacles, and promoting greater cognitive performance and overall happiness.

The Peak Performance Program is premised on the notion that high stress and emotional struggles are not only unnecessary for optimal performance, but in fact obstruct optimal performance.

Students who participate in the Peak Performance Program will learn tangible tools, techniques, and skills that will allow them to optimize their law school performance by enhancing seven elements of peak performance: Attention, Beliefs, Emotions, Body, Energy, Purpose and Communication. Each person tends to be stronger or weaker in some of these facets of performance. But no matter who we are, if we want to maximize our performance and minimize our stress, we must be strong in all seven areas. When the core performance components function at maximal capacity and harmony with one another the results are inevitable: our stress plummets and our performance skyrockets.



7 Elements of Peak Performance

1. ATTENTION

Attention involves the ability to reduce the incessant chatter of the "monkey mind" (also known as self-talk), and direct our focus with precision and single-pointedness to exactly what we are working on in that moment (and nothing else).

Improved attention results from learning how to quiet our distracting thoughts, how to resist the external distractions that arise throughout our day, and how to quickly release and return from the distractions when we inevitably succumb to them.

“I thank you sincerely. I honestly can’t believe I was able to stay calm for every session, especially during those insanely long instructions, in that environment. I had practiced your breathing techniques all summer and was just amazed that under all that pressure, it actually worked! I am so grateful. I am really proud of myself for holding it together all three days and be able to completely focus and do my best---entirely, entirely thanks to your Stress Management workshop. THANK YOU!”

–Summer Bar: SW Custom Course Student, 2016

2. BELIEFS

Although sometimes conscious and rational, our beliefs are often unconscious and uninvestigated assumptions and cognitions that interfere with our efficient and focused performance (and happiness). Many of our beliefs, although self-created, cause us unnecessary stress and cause us to waste valuable energy, attention, and time while performing.

Belief optimization involves learning how to observe our underlying beliefs, how to identify which ones interfere with our performance, and how to replace those beliefs with more adaptive beliefs that enhance our performance.



3. EMOTIONS

Regulation of our emotions is essential to Peak Performance. When we are in control of our emotions, we perform with focus, energy, efficiency and conviction. In contrast, when we lose control of our emotions (even in subtle and less obvious ways), or succumb to emotional disruptions, our performance is necessarily impeded.

Emotional regulation involves learning how to become mindful of our constantly-evolving emotional state, how to preempt maladaptive emotions before they take us over, and how to recover from emotional disruptions once they occur, so that optimal performance can be salvaged as efficiently as possible after a rupture.

“I want to thank you so much for helping me through last semester. I feel so much more hopeful and encouraged to continue working because of all the tools and skills you taught me. I will continue to put them into practice for the next semester.”

–Mindfulness Monday Participant, Fall 2015

4. BODY

Our body is our physical instrument of performance. When we treat our body with deep care and respect (whether through exercise, sleep, relaxation, nourishing food, deep breathing, mindful posture, and many other modes), it will provide us with more energy and vibrancy, and less tension and pain. In turn, we will be able to perform with greater focus, stamina, and force.

Optimizing our physical instrument involves learning how to “feel” what our body needs in order to perform at its best (irrespective of what the judgmental mind says), how to build greater will power – so that we can do the things that will optimize our body’s functioning (even if they are not enjoyable), and how to build self-restraint – so that we can resist doing the things that undermine our body’s functioning (even if they are pleasurable).



5. ENERGY

Our energy is our performance fuel. In order to maximize our energy levels, we must master energy preservation (how to preserve the valuable energy we possess at any given moment, rather than needlessly and unconsciously burning it), energy generation (how to generate new energy when we need it), and energy efficiency (how to modulate our energy expenditure based on our existing performance needs).

When we learn how to deliberately harness our energy levels, our mental state and performance abilities skyrocket.

“Last month when I was struggling with anxiety, I was worried that I might not be able to take the exam. I don’t think I would be where I am now, able to take the exam next week, without your support along the way. I feel so fortunate to have met you, and I learned so much about myself from speaking with you. . . . You have helped me tremendously, and I can’t thank you enough for your patience, support, guidance, and motivation. . . . [You] provided me with great insights about my personality so that I can start viewing my thoughts and behaviors differently. Through speaking with [you], I gained a greater understanding about myself, about meditation, and I’m more aware of my thoughts.”

–SW Class of 2016, Summer Bar taker.

6. PURPOSE

Feeling a sense of purpose while in law school is essential to performance optimization. When we feel uninspired (including by the rudimentary readings or assignments that all students face at times), or when we fall into “tunnel vision” about law school tasks without feeling their connection to our deeper passions, we experience attention problems, energy depletion, and maladaptive thinking – all of which disrupt our performance.

Learning how to more effectively connect to our inner purpose, how to increase our passion for our studies, and how to find “meaning in the mundane,” are critical to Peak Performance while in law school.

“People were absolutely unraveling all around me on the first day of the California Bar Exam, but I was able to calm myself down completely. That was entirely thanks to Professor Simon and Professor Green’s joint Stress Management workshop—it should be mandatory!”

–Lindsey Hay, Law Review Editor, Class of 2016



7. COMMUNICATION

How we communicate with our fellow students, friends, professors, and family throughout the day has a significant impact on the quality of our performance. Every interaction with another person (particularly regarding law school matters) can either advance our mindset, energy, purpose, focus and productivity, or dampen it.

In order to improve our communication skills, and thereby benefit our own internal state and performance abilities, we must learn how to express our desires and needs assertively but non-aggressively, how to listen actively and openly, and how to better understand the volatile emotional states of others. The result is not only far better relationships with others, but far better performance for ourselves throughout the day, and throughout law school.



Jarrett Green is the Co-Director of the Mindfulness, Stress Management, and Peak Performance 1L Program at Southwestern Law School, and Adjunct Associate Professor of Law. Professor Green practiced high-stakes business litigation for approximately 12 years before becoming a full-time stress management and performance enhancement consultant. Professor Green works with law firms, law schools, and corporations to help reduce stress and improve joyfulness, culture, productivity and performance within those organizations.

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Rebecca A. Simon is the Co-Director of the Mindfulness, Stress Management, and Peak Performance 1L Program at Southwestern Law School, an Associate Professor of Law, and full-time faculty member working with the Academic Success and Bar-Related Programs Department. Professor Simon is the Co-Chair of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Balance Section's Mindfulness Affinity Group (MAG) and the Executive Director of the national Mindfulness In Law Society (MILS). She serves as the Faculty Advisor for the MILS student chapter at Southwestern and facilitates their monthly "Mindfulness Monday" sessions.

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ADD "PEAK PERFORMANCE PROGRAM" TO YOUR TWEN COURSE LIST

We invite you to sign up for the Peak Performance Program through our TWEN page. This is your opportunity to learn priceless tools and skills that will help you experience less stress and more success while in law school, and beyond.

There will be 14 class sessions, beginning Tuesday August 23 at 4:15pm in room W229, and ending Tuesday, November 22. You must be registered to attend the classes. The Program is limited to the first 40 students who sign up on TWEN, so if this opportunity calls to you, take action now!



Southwestern's Peak Performance 1L Program is an innovative science-based initiative, developed in collaboration between Professor Jarrett Green and Professor Rebecca Simon. The Program is premised on the “Peak Performance Path” developed by Jarrett Green, Esq.

For more information on the Program, please visit Jarrett-Green.com/lawschool



To sign up, add “Peak Performance Program” to your TWEN course list.