



by carlos salum

Performance Architecture

a blueprint to go
"beyond personal best"

I'm a Thinker.

I believe that the quality of our life depends on the quality of our thinking.

The many personality tests I've taken paint me as an Idealist, Theorist, ENTP, Early Resolver, Explorer, Influencer and Innovator.

I am fascinated by the future.

I envision; therefore, I expect.

I am able to see the consequences of new approaches, change and ideas in the real world.

I seek ways and means to change, isolate, neutralize or remove dysfunctional influences and systems on a global scale.

My lifetime goal is to become a versatile, flexible and creative thinker.

THINKING IS MY INHERITANCE

I grew up in Argentina in a family of high achievers who taught me that a skillful thinker is one that can always improve, someone who is competent but not arrogant nor defensive, a confident individual that evaluates alternatives and differing viewpoints before making decisions.

In the early 1900s, my Lebanese and French ancestors overcame monumental obstacles in Buenos Aires to give my parents and their siblings access to higher education. The Salum and Brieux children honored their parents' sacrifices by becoming scientists, lawyers, engineers and business managers who made significant contributions and gained international recognition.

I'm proud to have inherited my ancestors' thirst for intellectual freedom and individual progress, along with their rejection of authoritarian rule (the *Brieux ex-libris* designed by my grandfather reads: "*ny roi ni archevêque*," neither king nor archbishop).

Unfortunately, my generation would be denied the chance to fully develop as free thinkers by the dictatorships that ruled Argentina from 1966 to 1983. The National Security Doctrine, implemented by the U.S. government in alliance with South American military regimes, engendered "Operation Condor," a vast international plan to install a free-market economy through shock therapy, privatization and record levels of external debt.

THOU SHALL NOT THINK

Despite the paralyzing effects of a permanent state of siege and constant economic chaos, my parents encouraged my brother Robert and me to continuously expand our minds. Early on, we were told that we would inherit our dreams. They nurtured our intellectual curiosity by sharing their passion for experiential learning, traveling, languages, artistic expression and playing tennis (which would become our passport to a new life).

The “cleansing” of the Argentine society intensified under the military Junta that assumed power in 1976, whose clandestine counterinsurgency system effectively eliminated thirty thousand opponents without legal due process.

I was eighteen years old. I had rejected studying Medicine and inopportunately enrolled in Literature, just when Humanistic careers had become the hunting ground for military death squads. Naively, I dared to dream in Technicolor while the Junta’s National Reorganization Process demanded unconditional allegiance to their black-and-white version of Hell: you either marched in lockstep or you would be “transferred” to the bottom of the ocean.

The Armed Forces systematically rammed down our throats their fascist and fundamentalist dogma while committing mind-blowing atrocities, intending to infuse our young souls with “purpose” and “absolute certainty” in the infamous tradition of the Nazis and the Spanish Inquisition.

MARTIAL LAW WITH BLOOD ENTERS

On Sunday, July 4, 1976, at 8:15 am, I stood behind a police barricade, staring at the parochial house of St. Patrick's church. A few moments earlier, the bodies of Pallottine priests Alfie Kelly, Alfredo Leaden, and Eduardo Dufau, and of students Emilio Barletti and Salvador Barbeito had been found lying face down in a pool of blood in their living-room. They had been tortured for several hours and executed from behind with more than sixty-five bullets.

The massacre is the most violent crime against members of the Argentine Catholic Church in its 400-year history, perpetrated by a Navy death squad composed by six members of the Armed Forces who operated at the Navy Petty-Officers School of Mechanics (ESMA), the most notorious prison camp during the Junta's regime.

Father Kelly had been my spiritual advisor until two weeks before the massacre, when he unexpectedly told me we would not meet again because there would be big changes in the parish. He deftly brushed aside my anxious questions and, before our last goodbye, he made me promise that if I ever had power over others I would not exploit them. Alfie knew he would be assassinated and he hoped his death would serve a higher purpose.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel declared that the massacre was a thoroughly planned, well-coordinated military operation designed to weaken the scruples of the Catholic Church and to frighten the increasingly rebellious intellectual middle-class.

As I watched two ambulances take their bodies to the morgue, I swore that one day I would do something to honor the five martyrs' memory.

He deftly brushed aside my anxious questions and, before our last goodbye, he made me promise that if I ever had power over others I would not exploit them.

HAVE RACQUET, WILL TRAVEL. HAVE PASSION, WILL DISCOVER.

As studying Literature became life-threatening, I unsuccessfully tried Law by assisting a judge for a few months (a nice, yet deeply fascist fellow), until I finally settled for Medicine (they told me it's an art and I believed it). I studied half-heartedly for six years until my willpower evaporated.

All along, I taught tennis at several clubs with my brother, which enabled us to create a wide network of contacts and realize that we could positively impact people's lives. We developed a reputation for professionalism and ended up helping the Argentine Davis Cup team, producing an instructional tennis series on national TV, as well as doing radio commentary and writing columns in several publications.

In 1981, I traveled around Europe and the U.S. for two months with money I had saved from teaching lessons. My last stop was Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, where I became certified by Dennis Van der Meer, the legendary "teachers' pro." That experience changed my life. Watching Van der Meer marshal his operation with entrepreneurial zeal was a revelation for me. As a tennis evangelist, he was outstanding at creating massive energy around him and was able to make tennis look as exciting as riding a roller coaster.

Dennis is a South African immigrant who came to America with a racquet and a smile.

He figured out a better way to teach tennis and became famous coaching Billie Jean King and Margaret Court for their “Battle of the Sexes” against Bobby Riggs. He is not just a unique tennis pro; he is a brand and an ambassador. Although he had lost a fortune during the oil embargo, he recovered and built a global organization. I wanted to follow in his footsteps, as I was certain I could learn a lot about self-realization from him. I stayed in touch and managed to join his staff during two consecutive years of clinics in Uruguay.

Democracy returned to Argentina in 1983, bringing along a colossal hyperinflation that crippled our entrepreneurial dreams and crushed the hopes of millions. Unwilling to surrender to a doomed future, I made the radical decision to move to the U.S.

In April 1985, I accepted Van der Meer’s generous offer to join an internship program at his tennis center in Hilton Head Island, where I learned how to maximize traffic, resources and real estate in a tennis operation. Three years later, I met sport psychologist Dr. Jim Loehr, who was starting to get recognition for his approach to mental training. I saw an opportunity to develop his international speaking tours in Europe on a handshake and on my own dime.

The speaking tours’ success was my ticket to join Loehr at the IMG/Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy, where we worked with world-class tennis players such as Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Jim Courier, Monica Seles, Arantxa Sanchez, Mary Joe Fernandez, Gabriela Sabatini, and many others on how to achieve peak performance.

GABRIELA SABATINI'S BREAKTHROUGH

Saturday, September 9, 1990, was a turning point in Gabriela Sabatini's young life. She was just 20 years old, had a loving family, a great record as one of the top tennis players, lucrative endorsements, a best-selling perfume named after her, but she had never gotten what she coveted most: a Grand Slam title.

Five months before that sunny, glorious New York afternoon, she could not have dreamed that she could beat Steffi Graf in the U.S. Open Championships final. During the whole tournament, no one except a clairvoyant gave her a chance; she was not a contender in any statistical analysis. From the player's box, I watched her win the match point and leap towards the sky pumping her clenched fist. Graf was her nemesis and the No. 1 player in the world; beating her before millions of fans was by all means liberating. When she lifted the silver trophy, victory suddenly felt unreal: "There are no words to explain this emotion. I've been training a lot to win it; I just can't believe this came true."

I had known Gabriela since she was 9 years old, when she was beating my 12 year-olds in Buenos Aires. At 12, she was beating my 22 year-olds. She was painfully shy in person, yet an astonishingly mature competitor on the court. At 14, she was in the semifinals of the French Open battling the legendary Chris Evert and making the world fall in love with her. Soon, she became established in the Top-10 and collected victories against all her legendary, older rivals. We met again at tournaments in the U.S. and Europe and we deepened our friendship as her genius, curiosity and worldliness blossomed.

Life seemed a velvety red carpet laid out in front of her, but one morning in April 1990, her father Osvaldo called me at Dr. Loehr's office asking for support: Gabriela wanted to quit for good, disheartened by a series of early-round losses. At the time, she was ranked #3 in the world and he was willing to do anything to help her get out of her confusion.

After a crucial meeting with the whole family, we started a consulting process that included trips to the Amelia Island, Roland Garros and Wimbledon tournaments. Her family's commitment and support were remarkable; they were ready to make the changes that could help Gabriela feel whole again. She got a new coach, Brazilian Carlos Kirmayr, someone who could add humor and variety to her stale training schedule and shared our sport science viewpoint.

With Loehr, we worked on untangling Gabriela's emotional world. Emotional training can connect to the physiology as powerfully as physical training when the goal is to achieve peak performance. For Gabriela, emotional goals such as family ties, friendship, playfulness, entertainment, positive energy, adaptation to change and relaxation were given full attention and space in her training schedule. Gradually, positive feelings poured out, transforming Gabriela from a joyless routine-addict into a mentally tough player. She became confident, resilient, focused and daring in the face of adversity and competitive pressure.

Gabriela achieved her dream because she aligned her Focus and Energy to design her Breakthrough. Discovering her identity gave her Focus ("I am a fighter"). Embracing her challenges and adding fun to her training increased her Energy ("I love the battle"). Knowing that she would be leaving a legacy to all young women and sports fans around the world made her Breakthrough concrete and meaningful ("I am a champion").

Gabriela went on to capture 27 singles championships and 14 doubles championships, including the Wimbledon Doubles title in 1988 with Steffi Graf. She was ranked in the World Top 10 for ten consecutive years (1986-1995). . She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in July of 2006.

Soon after Gabriela's U.S. Open victory, other athletes, artists and executives came knocking in search of the secret to attain peak performance. Loehr's research on the psychology of achievement gained international visibility as it was proven useful in helping clients such as speedskater Dan

Jansen's Olympic Gold Medal in Norway 1992, Sergi Bruguera's French Open tennis championships in 1993-94 and many others.

Gabriela's triumph at the U.S. Open was also a turning point for me. She gave me the invaluable opportunity to witness her transformation up close and inspired me to chase my own "Grand Slam"—my own realization of the unthinkable by doing the possible—so I could help more people achieve their dreams as well.

Tennis has been the red thread connecting the many tangents, curves and blotches blurring my life's path. Andrew Cooper, in his book *Playing in the Zone: Exploring the Spiritual Dimension of Sports*, clarifies for me what tennis has brought to my life: "Sport is not the whole of life, but, by joining consciousness to excellence in form, it ushers us into life's wholeness. Sport may not make one a better person, but by showing much of what is best in us, it can help. It may not bring spiritual enlightenment, but it does display the spirit's dazzling glow. Sport rarely brings substantive self-knowledge, but few things so readily connect us with the source of self-knowledge: the center of our being."

Emotional training can connect to the physiology
as powerfully as physical training
when the goal is to achieve peak performance.

Take a moment to consider the following question.

What's the most extraordinary experience you've had in your profession?

My contribution in the experience was:

PEAK PERFORMANCE THINKING

We are all performers: we are judged by how we deliver results under pressure. However, corporate life can be a never-ending cycle of pressure, haste and fatigue due to the global economy. An executive's body and mind face unique performance challenges and are constantly threatened by burnout. So, it was natural for corporations to latch on to the concepts we were promoting. Within two years, executives made up fifty percent of our clients and we moved to Saddlebrook Resort in Tampa to accommodate the demand.

Billie Jean King, one of the greatest female tennis players in history, says: "Champions believe pressure is a privilege and they learn to adapt."

Regardless of our profession or activity, adaptation is what separates peak performers from the rest. The way we think about pressure influences the way we feel and the way we react. Conversely, acting is adapting. If we act confidently and relaxed, our body tells our brain "no problem here" and we start feeling calm and controlled. The better we become at acting out the emotions we need to feel, the better we can adapt to pressure.

Peak performance is commonly described as a psychological state using terms such as flow, excellence, personal best, concentration, the zone, full engagement, synergy, or the ideal performance state.

My work with Dr. Loehr helped me understand what's common to all definitions of peak performance: **it's the ability to consistently access empowering emotions on demand, under pressure.** It's a learned response to a physical or emotional challenge and it can be trained like other skills.

In his 2001 *Forbes* magazine article "Back on the Saddle," Lance Armstrong explained how pressure gave him a sense of purpose: "People ask me why I ride my bike for six hours a day; what is the

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pleasure? The answer is that I don't do it for the pleasure. I do it for the pain. In my most painful moments on the bike, I am at my most self-aware and self-defining. There is a point in every race when a rider encounters the real opponent and realizes that it's... himself. You might say pain is my chosen way of exploring the human heart."

Peak Performance Thinking is about drawing out high energy when it counts: it's about Responsiveness and it applies to any area of life. Peak performers can reproduce the thoughts, feelings and behaviors that lead to a state of high, positive emotion or the **"Ideal Performance State" (IPS)**, as defined by Loehr. We all have the ability to access IPS and cultivate it towards greater achievement.

Opera singer Renée Fleming writes in her autobiography *The Inner Voice—The Making of a Singer*: "Stepping into a role should be like getting into a car: you no longer have to be conscious of how to drive at this point, but only of where you're going. I expect it's the same kind of experience for an athlete—in that case, it's the concept of going into the zone. There is a kind of suspension of thinking involved, as though there is so much inspiration and ease that it feels as if you're channeling the music rather than singing it. Reaching that place allows me, in a sense, to step out of the music's way and leave my mind free to discover new shadings in the role that I might have missed in the past."

Peak performers describe IPS as a feeling of calmness, relaxation, enjoyment, energy, optimism, effortlessness, mental focus, confidence, control and being in the present, in the moment. Among all of them, **enjoyment under pressure** is a critical measure: peak performers embrace challenges and have fun "solving the puzzle," interpreting the struggle as "learning" to discover what works and how to reach their goals.

Peter Popovich, a realtor, engineer, coaching consultant and athlete from Charlotte, North Carolina, wrote in my Vortex blog: “To sustain peak performance, I focus on staying on task and in the present. Physical and emotional energy are being utilized but not exhausted. Breakthrough occurs when peak performance is maintained over time. It gets me to areas that I have not experienced before. For others to be peak performers, they need to find their goal, determine a path that is consistent with their strengths and their passion, and maintain that over a period of time.”

Defining Your “Peak”

Recall a peak event in your life or in your profession when you felt you were in your Ideal Performance State, in the flow, in the moment, where you felt synergy.

What made it so powerful?

- What you thought:
- How you felt:
- What you did:
- How you handled pressure:
- What you learned about yourself:

MAKING WAVES: THE KEY TO SUSTAINING PEAK PERFORMANCE

Tennis offers an in-built sequence for managing pressure within each point and throughout the match. Between every point in tennis there is a 25-second maximum recovery period during which competitors precisely manage their physiology and emotions by performing four distinct behaviors or stages:

Stage One: End of the point. The heart rate is elevated.

Stage Two: Recovery phase. The heart rate goes down.

Stage Three: Logical planning of the next point. The heart rate rises slightly.

Stage Four: Visualization of the next point. The heart rate is optimal to play.

The four stages represent “a wave” of physical and emotional control, determined by the heart rate and the transition from “fighting” to “relaxing” to “planning” and “visualizing.” The discovery of “the four stages” of the in-between-point time is Dr. Loehr’s greatest contribution to tennis, from which he elaborated his approach to develop mental toughness and full engagement.

Doctors Jim Loehr, Irving Dardik and Nicholas Hall have studied the impact of stress and recovery heart rate waves in sports performance and their effect on the immune system. The results show that a healthy individual is able to produce a robust wave (higher heart rate maximum, greater heart rate variability) when exercising and recovering, while in people with chronic disease, the wave is much flatter (lower maximum heart rate, lower heart rate variability).

This factor is evidence of “quick stress response/quick recovery” and leads to immune and emotional responsiveness. Making physical and emotional stress/recovery waves every hour of every day, week and month helps you live within “coping zone,” balancing stress by increasing the efficiency of your recovery, therefore making you more responsive to challenges (you can adapt instead of burning out).

A TENNIS PRO IN THE BOARDROOM

In 1993, I formed Salum International Resources, Inc. and moved to England for three years to manage a charitable trust focused on teaching tennis for free to thousands of children. The trust was the creation of Chris Smith, a generous commodities trader with offices in London and Southampton. Thanks to his bighearted funding, I was able to give children the same opportunity I had to use tennis as “a second language” and open doors to achievement for them. When I returned to the U.S., I joined three different Internet start-ups based on intellectual content brokerage, all of which had “zero-dollar” marketing budgets. You can imagine how that went; although it gave me the chance to get my entrepreneurial feet wet.

In 1999, my friend Gustavo Raitzin, a Swiss private banker, asked me to organize a corporate event based on Peak Performance Thinking, which led to a long-time collaboration with global and regional management teams based in Switzerland. Since my insertion in the corporate world as a performance consultant, I’ve honed my ability to act as a “**decoder**.” I can listen to voluminous information and redefine the problem at hand in a methodical manner, while I simultaneously interpret the client’s value systems.

According to a friend who’s a Harvard-educated eye surgeon, the same skills I have as an executive coach would have made me a great Oncologist. He says cancer doctors need to work quickly and decisively; they have to command respect, exhibit confidence, and yet show some degree of vulnerability and sensitivity (my parents will be happy to know that I haven’t strayed too far from Medicine after all).

One day, I asked my wife Karen: “What exceptional value do I bring to my clients?” Using her remarkable skills to cut-to-the-chase, she said: “You operate like an **architect**. You connect and integrate concepts to structure blueprints for achieving peak performance.” Bingo...

Answer (and ask your “warm” network to tell you):

How do I deliver exceptional value to others?

I'VE BECOME A PERFORMANCE ARCHITECT

I enhance the “peak performance thinking” of corporate executives in the U.S. and Europe in a variety of industries by sharing what I’ve learned about achievement in sports and the arts applied to the world of business.

I help peak performers unscramble their dreams so they can script them as if they are the Hollywood movie in which they want to star, the Grand Slam tennis tournament they want to win or the “killer invention” that will end hunger in the world.

I see my work as “a Cirque du Soleil of the mind,” a blend of art and science through which I can help others broaden and deepen their perspectives. Someone once told me that I’m an artist trapped in the body of a coach, because I enjoy surprising executives with out-of-the-box ideas and communicating with pictures, metaphors and philosophy. I take them on a journey where they discover plenty of relevant issues for their future life and business conduct.

Your turn.

These are my three Strengths as a professional:

These are my three Best Practices as an executive:

PERFORMANCE ARCHITECTURE: GOING “BEYOND PERSONAL BEST”

Working with peak performers has taught me that achievement for the sake of it might not lead to a richer life. Sooner or later, achievers learn that, besides financial gains, their success must provide fulfillment, meaning and help them leave a legacy.

True achievement means discovering our identity, expressing our uniqueness, creating value and leaving a path for others to follow. My friend Gustavo Raitzin calls this integration “going Beyond Personal Best.” To experience true achievement and wholeness we must **passionately engage in the design of our future so we can own it**. When we own our future, our personal energy powerfully ripples outwards to influence others and create waves of positive change.

Performance Architecture is a systematic thinking process for creating a personalized template (a *performance blueprint*) to design your future and obtain exponential results.

Your performance blueprint allows you to constantly expand your thinking and to multiply your portfolio of choices in life. You can obtain exponential results or “synergy” by integrating three key performance factors:

1 | **FOCUS: Identifying the Right Things to Do**

Define goals, objectives and inspiring visions.

Broaden your perspective and expand your possibilities.

2 | **ENERGY MANAGEMENT: Doing Things Better**

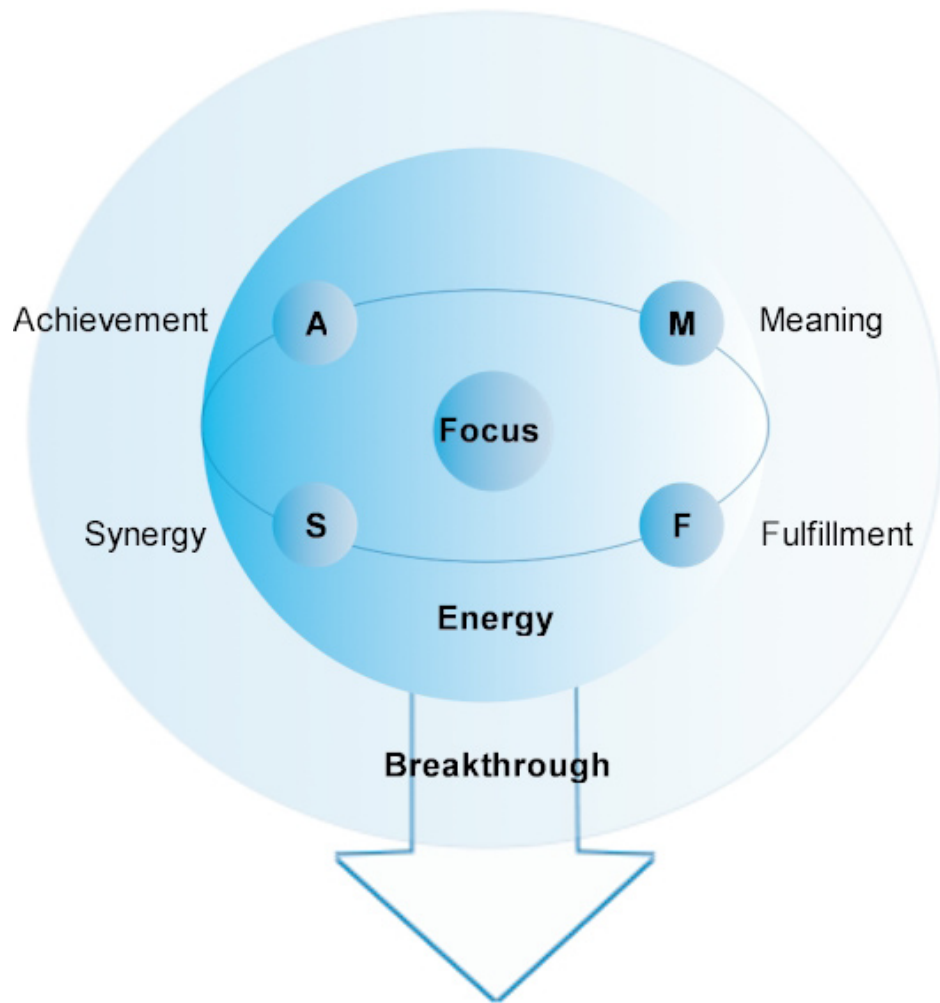
Expand your physical and mental capacity to respond to challenges.

Increase your influence by instilling energy and purpose in others.

3 | **BREAKTHROUGH DESIGN: Doing Better Things**

Surpass existing parameters to mobilize others towards positive change.

Accelerate your transformation and generate exponential growth.



WE CREATE WAVES OF EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

1 | **FOCUS**

Focus is represented as a blue pearl, the core or nucleus of our Self radiating our powerful energy outwards. Focus is understanding who we are, who we want to become, and aligning our values, goals and life mission (we figure out “the right things to do”).

2 | **ENERGY**

When you align Focus and Energy, your core Self expands outwards as you increase your sense of wholeness and purpose (you “do things better”).

You also increase your influence in others by balancing Achievement (“I’m reaching my goals”) with Fulfillment (“I’m satisfied with my achievement”) and by creating Meaning (“I’m contributing value”) and Synergy (“I’m leveraging my results”) through each one of your roles and activities.

3 | **BREAKTHROUGH**

You accelerate your transformation by challenging your limitations and looking for alternatives to standard solutions (you are “doing better things”).

Your energy waves continuously move outwards to join the waves of Influencers, Mavens and Facilitators, generating networks and the critical mass necessary to bring about positive change.

CHECKLIST TO DESIGN YOUR PERFORMANCE BLUEPRINT

1 | **FOCUS:** **Identifying the Right Thing to Do**

Define goals, objectives
and inspiring visions

Examine Your Personal Worldview

How you explain yourself: "I am..."
Why you do what you do for a living
What you would do even if they didn't pay you for it
Where your sense of mission comes from
(your calling, your vocation)
How you define success
Your highest goal in life

Discover Your Values (Your Beliefs, What Drives You)

Who and what has influenced you to shape your
worldview
How your mind operates: left brain or right brain
predominance
Evaluate your thinking strengths and weaknesses
How you make decisions based on your thinking
preferences
Seek to understand other people's values and worldviews

Identify Your Passion and Uniqueness

What makes you extraordinary and distinct
What are you passionate about
What drives you to make money
What value you deliver to others
What makes your actions important and meaningful
If your life would be a film or a famous story
or legend, which one would it be?

Broaden Your Perspective (Your Vision)

What you want to do and why
What you need out of life and why
Who you want to become and why
Your most compelling vision of success
Seek multiple perspectives: what others would say
about your vision
Visualize alternatives: If not now, when... "What if..."
Imagine how far you can go:
instead of 10% improvement, target 200%
How you will know you have succeeded

Expand Your Possibilities (Your Goals)

Identify your Top Five goals
Design long and short-term strategies to achieve
your Goals
List what you need: Staff and Skills, Information,
Resources, Training
How you will create active participation from others
How you will communicate you're determined
to achieve your goals
What you will delegate to achieve the goal and to whom
What key actions, processes, or systems you
must measure
How you will reward yourself on the way to your goal
What you can do to accelerate your performance
How you will celebrate the achievement of each
major goal

2 | ENERGY:

Doing Things Better

Expand our physical and mental capacity to respond to challenges and to increase our influence in others

Create Energy Waves

Conduct a personal energy audit of your physical and emotional energy levels

Recall your “peak” events or when you were at your Ideal Performance State

Identify how you access your Ideal Performance State

Identify how you break down and how you regain your sense of balance

Create a personal training plan to increase your capacity

Operate in High, Positive Energy states

Build energy expenditure and recovery capacity through training

Train your emotional intelligence skills: less arguments, more exploration

Embrace competitive pressure as a toughening tool

Increase your responsiveness to challenges

Create rituals to sustain high performance

Train Your Recovery Response

Schedule Focused, Planning and Recovery days every week

Take short breaks every hour

Use humor in your interactions with others

Monitor your diet and sleep and their effect on your mood

Protect your vacation time

Balance Achievement and Fulfillment

Quantify and qualify your results

Compare your results with your sense of satisfaction

Acknowledge the degree of happiness you feel while you achieve

Assess your physical and emotional endurance, strength, flexibility and resilience

Monitor your progress and calibrate your plan

Create Energy in Others

Define your Leadership Identity and Roles

How you act and think as a leader

How you act on what you promise

How you “walk the talk” and model positive behaviors

How you embody the values of the position and the organization

Purposeful Actions and Meaning

How you find new meaning in your roles

Develop Trust = [Communication x Cooperation x Commitment] x [Reciprocity x Rewards]

Promote access, inclusion and participation in your team or the organization

Create a new model for the future

Develop a common vision and set high performance goals

Train the team to visualize the successful execution of tasks

Diagnose dissent and dissatisfaction

Discover people’s competing commitments to facilitate change

Plan a process to implement your model

Consider and minimize the emotional and financial costs

Set the strategic direction

3 | **BREAKTHROUGH:**

Doing Things Better

Surpass existing parameters to mobilize others towards positive change

Accelerate Your Transformation

Challenge “what is” with provocative approaches

How things can be done differently than in the past

Uncover and question assumptions

Remove obstacles and constraints

When the cause can't be removed, design the way forward

Change what's taken for granted; reverse, exaggerate or distort it

Constantly improve your thinking skills to become a great problem solver

Design breakthrough tactics with the potential to surpass your initial targets

Collect thinking templates that can accelerate your effectiveness

Embrace challenges and use them to stimulate growth

Generate Exponential Growth

Spread your energy

Operate as a nucleus with global, exponential power

Share your energy outwards aiming to push your reach ever farther

Share stories, teach, facilitate, mentor, endorse and sponsor

Instill purpose in others by helping them align their

Focus, Energy and Breakthrough

Develop and nurture strong family and friendship networks

Promote synergy

Leverage your individual capacity creating “communities of common interests”

Fund education and creative thinking skills' programs

Train trainers

Incubate ideas in “idea banks” that might help trigger innovations

Plant “thought seeds” in people who can act as media for positive ideas

Design a path of continuous learning and improvement for others to follow

“Do you want to be a positive influence in the world? First, get your own life in order. Ground yourself in the single principle so that your behavior is wholesome and effective. If you do that, you will earn respect and be a powerful influence. Your behavior influences others through a ripple effect. A ripple effect works because everyone influences everyone else. Powerful people are powerful influences.”—John Heider, “The Tao of Leadership”

MY BREAKTHROUGH

I'm now certain that I was a witness to the massacre at St. Patrick's church so I would heed Gandhi's advice, and become the change I want to see in the world, as insignificant as it might be.

For over fifteen years, I buried the painful memories of the St. Patrick's massacre and focused on developing my career in the tennis industry. One Sunday afternoon in 1992, while I was watching Martina Navratilova and Billie Jean King play an exhibition at Saddlebrook Resort, a lady sitting next to me said, out of the blue: "You are a writer. You must write." I turned to look at her, baffled. She went on: "You should come with me to a playwriting class downtown. It's excellent." I was uncomfortable, so I blew her off and later forgot about it. The following Wednesday, she called me at the office: "We're going to class tonight." I told her I couldn't but she ignored me: "Pick me up at six because I don't drive."

That's how, thanks to Trish Gullet (an intuitive psychic and a masterful playwright), I joined Stageworks' playwriting class, where Mark Leib and Anna Brennen encouraged me to "resuscitate" the five martyrs in a two-act play, which I would nurse for four years and twelve drafts. My wife, friends, directors, actors and dramaturges helped me give birth to it.

"A Voice Screaming to Heaven" opened on July 3, 1996, at St. Patrick's church on the 20th anniversary of the massacre. More than 1,200 people attended in four nights. The following year, my play was staged by producer Susana Figueredo in London, England. "Time Out" reviewed it among the top-12 during opening week, which ensured a successful three-week run.

In 1998, I collaborated in the production of a TV documentary, "The Honor of God" with director Gabriel Seisdedos, based on his gutsy investigation of the massacre. It was post-produced at the University of South Florida and broadcast in Tampa, New York, Boston and Buenos Aires.

The Argentine Catholic Church and the Pallottine Community have initiated proceedings at the Vatican to beatify the five martyrs.

At St. Patrick's church dining room, where the five martyrs had their last meal together, hangs a faded poster with a quote by Edith Wharton: "There are only two ways of spreading light—to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." As I write the screenplay about the five martyrs, I wish to be the mirror reflecting the awesome light that will awaken new generations of creative thinkers who will courageously oppose reincarnations of fascism and fundamentalism.

"The Inquisition mentality increases in strength when we fail to speak out against it. The Inquisition mentality will continue to crop up and do its damage to Humanity as long as we allow ourselves to neither 'see,' react to, nor feel personally connected to the degradation of the Other." —"The Legacy of the Spanish Inquisition" By Raymond DeHainaut

I'm now an American, which in my rampant idealism I consider one of my greatest achievements. Like many people, I see America as a breakthrough idea, a living organism, a beacon of diversity that inspires individuals to go "beyond personal best" and seek choice over tyranny. I agree with Bill Moyers that, despite formidable odds, we must defend Democracy because "our moral, political and religious duty is to make sure that this nation, which was conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that we are all created equal, is in good hands on our watch."

IMAGINE A BETTER FUTURE AND DESIGN IT

There is a man in Spain who's building his very own Cathedral in Mejorada del Campo, 20 km outside Madrid. He's not an architect, nor a construction expert of any kind. He's an octogenarian farmer. His name is Justo Gallego Martínez.

Don Justo has no blueprints, just a vision that he adapts to possibilities and opportunities. He has no permits either, yet he has completed over 8,000 square meters of a Romanesque-style structure with the help of volunteers and family members. He finances the construction with proceeds from his farmland, with donations and by using recycled materials of all kinds.

Don Justo started working in 1961 after he was forced to quit his life as a Trappist monk due to tuberculosis. He doesn't know if he will ever complete his dream. "It's an act of faith," he says undeterred.

He's dedicated the Cathedral to the Virgen del Pilar and, although the Catholic Church does not support him, he plans to donate it to the local diocese. Many residents in the community think he's a lunatic and that his efforts are worthless.

In contrast, it's estimated that several thousand tourists a year visit the site, located in a street significantly named after Antonio Gaudí, the genius architect of the unfinished Temple de la Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

In 2005, Coca-Cola brought worldwide attention and increased support to the project by featuring Don Justo in a TV ad with the tagline "The human being is unpredictable."

His quest is a testimony of independent, versatile thinking and creativity. His detractors might argue rational and logical points, but analyzing "what is" doesn't necessarily help design "what can be."

I believe Don Justo's Cathedral is a symbol for something deeper than a controversial pile of bricks. I believe his true achievement is his patient attempt to become whole as a person. Each brick is a unit of hope, each wall units of meaning, the halls pieced together become glowing fields of possibility hoping to be transformed into sacred space.

My quixotic quest is also a search for meaning and wholeness. I want to absorb myself in visionary, innovative work that leaves a mark as well. Instead of bricks, my units of hope are concepts; instead of walls, my units of meaning are stories. Instead of a Cathedral, my sacred space is a stage. It could be a theatre, a tennis court, a boardroom, a conference, a blog or even a virtual reality game.

My stage is a space of revelations and new ideas, where awareness can lead to positive transformations. It's a powerful energy field for promoting inspiration instead of dogma, for rewarding imagination instead of certainty, for celebrating humor instead of shame and for praising positive action instead of righteousness.

I, too, want to share my creation with the rest of the world so there can be more versatile, flexible and creative thinkers.

I can't help it... I'm an Idealist. 🇺🇸

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carlos Salum is a Performance Architect. Performance Architecture is based on training principles utilized by world-class athletes and teams to win in sports, and can be applied to achieving excellence in business. He's the President of Salum International Resources, Inc., a management consulting firm based in Huntersville, NC, with international clients in the private banking, IT, medical, insurance and consulting industries. He's currently writing his first book, *Beyond Personal Best*.

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