



**Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, Episode 47**  
**A Series About Wake Up Eager Leader Habits: Enter the Zone: How Athletes Get In The Zone – An Interview with Sports Psychologist Dr. Tom Hanson**  
**-- Produced By Suzie Price**

Enter the Zone 2 – Transcript  
[www.pricelessprofessional.com/zone2](http://www.pricelessprofessional.com/zone2)

**Suzie Price:** Think of life as a baseball double-header, where Game One is a results game and in the outer world you're producing results, making money, whatever you want, but Game Two in that double-header is the experience game around, what it's like to be you and too often people will split that double-header. They win Game One, yeah, I', making money, but they might say, "I don't enjoy being me," they're not winning Game Two. That is information shared by Sports Psychologist, Dr. Tom Hanson, who I get to spend time with today and share with you in this podcast about one of the Wake Up Eager Leader Habits, Enter the Zone, which in our verbiage is about bringing the best of who you are to your work so you can be most effective, you can wake up eager and you can help and influence others. And in Tom's verbiage, when he's working with athletes, it's about helping the athletes bring their "A" game to what they're doing so they bring the results that they want, but they also do it by being who they are and bringing the best of who they are.

**Suzie:** So it's going to be very interesting. You're going to enjoy hearing about what he learned about superior performance by the interviews he did when he talked to Hall of Fame baseball players like Hank Aaron, he has those interviews and he's also worked with Major League players, plus all kinds of athletes over the years and so he's going to share lots of tips and insights about how do you get into the top five percent in your field and it's a mechanic and physical thing, but it's also, mostly what we talk about is mindset, and things you do with your mind and you'll like hearing what Hank Aaron shared when he was riding around running errands with Hank Aaron so they could have their discussion. It's really good stuff. He has distilled down some of the mental aspect of performing under pressure by creating something very simple and it's very wise, it's ABC, so you'll get to hear what that stands for. You can begin using that immediately to help you when you're under pressure. Something we talk about a lot, it's a recurring theme with Dr. Hanson is how important it is for coaches and leaders to provide guidance specific to each player, to their needs and their current situation, and so we touch on that. We talk about that and we also touch on, he is a Student of Axiology, which is something that I am also passionate about and use. It's the acumen "Under the hood" part of the TriMetrix assessment and we talk a little bit about how he uses that and the DISC assessment in his work when he's coaching players. Good information, fun dialogue. I can't wait to share it with you. Michael, hit it.

**Intro:** Welcome to the Wake Up Workforce Eager Podcast, a show designed for leaders, trainers and consultants who are responsible for employee selection and professional development. Each episode is packed full with insider tips, best practices, expert interviews and inspiration. Please welcome the host who is helping leaders, trainers and consultants everywhere, Suzie Price.

**Suzie:** Hey there. Welcome to episode number 47. My name is Suzie Price and I am an Assessment Analyst, a Professional Facilitator, an Author, the Producer of this podcast, and the



Founder of Priceless Professional Development and I am a lover of learning and taking insights and sharing them. And so it's just my honor and privileged to bring this information to you today. I get such a buzz. You know, we talk about being who you are and in episode number 46 we also talked about "Enter the Zone," with Sarah Derrenbacher and she talked about when do you most feel alive? And I tie that always to the assessments with TriMetrix and I noticed this last night after this interview and my interview with Sarah and writing up these notes, when do I most feel alive? Well, one place I most feel alive is in putting this podcast together, it's super energizing and fun for me. I really do appreciate you listening. We have a good number of downloads, which I feel good about, but more importantly, it's fun to put your energy towards something that fills your tank. So I say all that to say one, "Whoa, this is fun," and two do encourage you to pay attention to when your energy lifts, you are getting that second game in the double-header about liking when you're being you, you know, and using your strengths and your interests and your preferences because they do matter and they're really important and it is a big part of being top in your field is to tap into who you are and what works for you and bring that to the game that you're playing.

**Suzie:** I want to mention Audible. They do provide a great service with audio books and they have an offer for Wake Up Eager Workforce listeners, if you are new to Audible and you'd sign up for them using our link, you get a free 30-day trial and a free audio book that you can download and the link to it is [audibletrial.com/wakeupeagerworkforce](https://audibletrial.com/wakeupeagerworkforce). So you just say [audibletrial.com](https://audibletrial.com), forward slash and then put in the name of this podcast. They have over 150,000 titles. You can listen to them on your iPhone, Android, Kindle, MP3 player and some fun books that I thought I would mention. I always mention what I'm listening to because I have an ongoing thing with them, I get a book a month and I actually buy extra books sometimes. It's just easy to listen to them, like it's easy to listen to podcasts. That's why they support podcast because usually those who like podcasts are either in their car or they just like learning on the go or when they're working out, but when I was on some trips recently where I was driving, I get impatient driving in the car or sitting in the car. If I'm a passenger I just get a little restless, it just seems like you're not doing anything. There's a couple of fun books that I've listened to while driving or going on trips. One was *The Girl on the Train*. That's an awesome book by Paula Hawkins. If you haven't read that, it's a great mystery. I love mysteries and the stories and you just don't know where she's going with all of this. She's on a train and she's seeing this family every time she passes the train. So anyway, *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins, awesome. *Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'engle. That's awesome as well. It's the story that was recently made into a movie. It's not the movie version, but it's the timeless classic. And then I also like any kind of, and this captures my husband's attention, beat them up, shoot them up type books and David Baldacci had a good one *End Game*. And so he and I listened to that one the last time we were on a trip, so I think it's like watching a movie while driving. You don't see anything but it paints the picture and it's a great distraction and entertainment and fun. So [audibletrial.com/wakeupeagerworkforce](https://audibletrial.com/wakeupeagerworkforce). You can get books on there about learning and knowledge, but you can also have a lot of fun with a lot of those books with your family or by yourself in a car.

**Suzie:** So onto our series today, we are continuing our series around the five Wake Up Eager Habits for Leaders that we focus on here at Priceless Professional Development. They spell out the word eager, Enter the zone, Activate greatness, Grow trust, Evaluate job fit, Recalibrate daily, and these are habits that are important for leaders to own and make habits so that they can wake up eager and create the powerful culture and business that they want to create. The



first episode of this series was “Enter the Zone” and it was my interview as I mentioned a little bit ago with Sarah Derrenbacher. She talks about Rochester Institute of Technology where she coached a basketball team into the NCAA tournament when they were on a losing streak prior to that. So she talks about the mental game and that's episode number 46 and you can find it in the show notes or find it via [pricelessprofessional.com/zone](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone). This episode with Dr. Tom Hanson is episode number 47 and you can find it at [pricelessprofessional.com/zone2](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone2), the number two, zone 2. So that's the way to access this online and encourage you to get the app. We have an Android and an iPhone app. They're free. If you have those on your phone, then it's real easy to listen to you. You get notified that there is a new episode and you also can leave comments or leave a review and you can click on the show notes all from your iPhone or Android.

**Suzie:** So what is “Enter the zone?” We'll touch on that and then I'm going to tell you about Tom's background. It's when you're working and being at your best with limited resistance or inner tension, and what I encourage to cultivate this habit of spending time everyday training and focusing your time, money and energy so that you're working with a clear mind and a sense of purpose, so that you're aligned with your work and what you gotta go do every day. Even when it's a tough day, that you're ready for it, you're up for it and you wake up eager. So it's a conscious choice. You have to choose this, I believe. I don't think it just happens by itself because there's so many distractions and pressure on us and it's about managing your mind, your sense of well-being physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, growing your confidence, expertise. It's a mix of things and it's important, but it's tapping into all of who you are and bringing it to what you do.

**Suzie:** Dr. Tom Hanson does this in his work with executives and with athletes. Let me tell you a little bit about his background. He earned his PhD with a specialization in Sports Psychology from the University of Virginia in 1991. He served as the Cavaliers hitting coach for three seasons. He then became a tenured professor and head baseball coach at Skidmore College in New York, and then he started his coaching and consulting company in 1997, Heads Up Performance.com. He authored a book *Play Big: Mental Toughness Secrets that Take Baseball Players to the Next Level*. It won ABCAs best show award. It's a great story. We talk about a little bit. It's a ballplayer who's struggling, so he's having a hard time being successful in something that he really wants to be successful in and he meets someone who is a phantom coach. He doesn't know where the guy came from. The guy seems to understand him and has great advice, so it's like a mentor that helps guide him and anybody could benefit from the book. It's a very popular book. It was easy to read. I haven't read all of it, but I read part of it. He helps this player with his mental game. 150,000 copies have been sold and it's super popular, so we'll have a link to that in the show notes at [pricelessprofessional.com/zone2](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone2). Tom is a leading authority of mental game assessments, which are used for both player development and selection in baseball, softball, and other sports. He actually helped craft the baseball version of axiology and we talk about that. He has extensive experience in both sports and business. He was formally the full time director of performance enhancement with the New York Yankees and he's also consulted with the Texas Rangers, Anaheim Angels and Minnesota Twins in professional baseball. He's got many corporate clients including American Express, Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft, just to name a few, and also numerous small business owners. He's co-authored another book which we talk about in the end, he shares some insight around that with his wife, who is a Master Certified Coach. That book is *Who Will Do What By When*, and I'll have a link to that in the show notes. He lives in Tampa, Florida, and he has a son who he mentions that is also in baseball, it can be tough and great to have your dad as a Sports



Psychologist and a baseball expert when you're 15 years old, but his son's name is CJ and his daughter is Angelina. Let's get into the interview.

**Suzie:** Hi Tom. Welcome to the show. So glad to have you here.

**Dr. Tom Hanson:** Great. Thank you. I'm excited to be here.

**Suzie:** Thanks for taking the time. Hey, we're going to start with our quirky questions to get to know you better outside of your wonderful and amazing resume and background. Want to talk a little bit about your favorite guilty pleasure TV show? What is it and why?

**Dr. Tom:** Well, right now I would have to pick "Jane the Virgin" on Netflix, my wife got started on it, and I was just commenting on it, it is like bubble gum and you just come in and oh now he's with her and last episode I thought he was a her. So they're bouncing around and she's got a child having been a virgin was accidentally artificially inseminated. How much more quirky can you get than that?

**Suzie:** That's pretty quirky. I've not heard of that show, so you just like it because it's just so odd and off the cuff?

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah, exactly. It's bouncy, there is sort of a narrator that comes in and it's just really playful and it's really light and laugh about some, you know, just has a good energy to it and puts me in a good mood.

**Suzie:** Well, there you go. That's enough reason right there. Anything that interests you or entertains you is good, it's good escapism, a good visit. Alright. How about, what's your favorite possession?

**Dr. Tom:** Well, my favorite possession, I would say, that's a hard one, as I'd like to think that it is not about possessions, well if I do, I've got a copy here really two of them, of my Doctoral Dissertation at the University of Virginia. I did it's called "The Mental Aspects of Hitting," and I interviewed Hank Aaron, Rod Carew, who's done these recurring streams, Pete Rose, and just talk to them, pick their brain about their mental approach to hitting and the more time passes, the more I realize, "Whoa, that was pretty cool." I mean, I always thought it was cool, but it's gaining significance for me that I really just went for it. It represents a lot of things. It's the content of it in terms of say Hank Aaron, the all-time total bases leader, like telling me, "Hey, this is by far the most important part about hitting and no one has ever asked me that before." Gives me goosebumps every time I even share that story, which is very often. Then also what it represents for me in terms of just going for it. I just, "Oh yeah, I'm going to interview hall of fame hitters," like "Well, how are you going to get to them. I don't know, but I'll find some way," and then it really came together in a very serendipitous, but I really feel like it was because I was so on purpose and so aligned with what I really ought to be doing that I really caught breaks like the whole doors open for me, that wouldn't even be a closed door for someone else just because, I mean there's a bunch of stories I could go into of how I ended up getting this guy or that guy to do an interview. I felt like it was who I was being and being on purpose and playing big. So for all those reasons, with the content and the process, that's a favorite possession.

**Suzie:** Wow. And it's such a match to where you are today and where you were headed back then and like you said, it was your purpose and when you ignite your purpose, or do the things that are make you feel like you're on purpose, then things just happened, and they did. That's amazing. Who is your favorite interview? Was it Hank Aaron? Or someone else?

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah, yeah, by far, it was a couple of hours with him, it was kind of a fluky thing of how I ended up with the interview and he ended up "You want to talk, right?" "Yeah." Because I went down to Atlanta, flew down to do the interview and he said, "Oh great, I got some stuff I need to do, can we drive around while we do it?" I go, "Sure." I said, "Wait, you mean we are going to do some errands?" And he looked at me, "Yeah." Of course if your name is Aaron, you don't hear your own name as a pun. Unfortunately he didn't. And we ended up driving around and like I said him, I said, "Hey, talking about the mental aspects of hitting, how do you do it?" And this is what I talked about with executives. I mean with athletes or executives, this is like the best in the world, this is a top five percent guy every year for 23 years. If you know your baseball stats, it's like 30 home runs, a .350 batting average and 100 RBIs, that's his average year, which would put them in the top five percent of every year. He did it for 23 years. I go, "How did you do that?" And he broke Babe Ruth's homerun record, and it was like, "Hey, no black guy is gonna break Babe Ruth's record, you're gonna be in Montreal, July fourth, fifth or sixth, you're going to die one of those days, and he kept hitting homeruns. I go, "How did you do that?" And he said, "Well, it is all on how you prepare yourself to do battle." And I go, "You know, I go PhD boy. How did you prepare?" He said, "Well, I would visualize. I would imagine what was gonna happen or what I wanted to have happen. I think of an example. Okay, Jerry Cruzman is pitching for the Mets tomorrow night, so it starts the night before, you know, after the one game was, okay, Cruzman was pitching, what did he throw, a little of this and he throws that and what has he done to me." During the day the leading up to the games, he would visualize, the other guys would do other things, even lay down and do it. He would just play in his head and then when he was on deck, in the hole, at the plate, that's what he was doing. So he got so focused on the ball that he felt like he had been there before, all day, so he was really locked in and that's why he said I have a lot of ability, but it was my mental approach, how I prepared myself to do battle that enabled me to be so focused. He said is, was really, performance-wise, it's his focus. But his focus was, ground work, it was sourced by his mental prep of visualizing what he wanted to have happen. And then in the end he said, "You know, hey, this is the most important part about hitting and no one's ever talked to me about this before." And then at the end of it, yeah, it's like they want to talk about my wrist, like the mechanics. They want to talk about what I was doing with my hands. I was like, "Oh yeah, you're a real wrist hitter." He's like, "Everyone has wrists." And so, but it was my mental preparation and I said, that focus, could you always do that? He said, "No, no, no, I had to develop it." So you learn it through repetition, like your ABC's. So his whole life had prepared him for this homerun quest where he's tracking down Babe Ruth and he's getting death threats and came in second to Richard Nixon in 1974 in terms of amount of a male. He got, because under pressure because if you go up there to try to hit a homerun, you almost never do because you'd been pressed and try too hard.

**Suzie:** You're efforting and you're not in the flow or...

**Dr. Tom:** Exactly.

**Suzie:** I kind of didn't know all that, really. Wow.

**Dr. Tom:** The kicker then was at the end he reached out his hand to thank you, very authentically, like he, I don't know, he felt really good about it. I'm confident of that and I don't want to make any other words, but it's like he felt heard and so like I had a chance to get out, what really made the difference for him. That's really a foundation of anything else that we talk about and performance. It really comes back to that. It's like, how do you be a top five percenter? Well, it's a mental game.

**Suzie:** And isn't it interesting as much as he's been interviewed, he says to you, no one's ever asked me about the mental part.

**Dr. Tom:** Exactly. Well, they certainly never asked him.

**Suzie:** They never asked him in a way that you did, where you can elicit those kind of answers.

**Dr. Tom:** Right. Right. I was going to say like a follow up question that would take it deeper, because he would sit there and you'd be driving and like, um, I'd say like, were you visualizing yourself? Like you'd see yourself on TV or through your own eyes looking out at the ball. Had to stop and think and "No, it is through my own eyes what I would see when I'm hitting." And other examples like that where he had never articulated it before. And that's also why people who are really good at things often aren't the best teachers under because they don't really understand what they were doing

**Suzie:** They never dissected it, and they just somehow got into a flow where they did it, which says to me that's possible, but if we're not in it, it's nice to have somebody like you or hopefully me as I do what I do dissect what the steps are so that other people can do or mimic or. That's amazing.

**Dr. Tom:** Exactly, so it ends up being that as well what do you have players do or what do you have executives do? It's like, well, from a resource standpoint, it's like your own past, your own self. It's like know yourself and know what you need to do to play your best, and it's like, okay, when I was at my best, what do I do? A common exercise for me would be to go back to a time from any time at all when you had your "A" game and then I have a template of ABC's where A is Act big. How are you acting? How do you move? What's a rhythm, tempo, posture? B, how you were breathing. And then C, what are you committed to that part of the bat on the ball or having this guy by this gizmo or whatever it'd be. What are you committed to? And so you go out and do your ABCs, whether you're a shortstop or a salesman or a CEO, you are going to act big, breathe big, and then commit big. And then you just do it, do it. And you can only control yourself. So good question is how do you do that? How should I control myself and I'd be like, "Hey, one way is to do your ABCs."

**Suzie:** Yep. Act big. Breathe big. Commit Big. Is a process where somebody could say, "Okay, I want to be the top five percent, I want to be in the zone, I want to bring my best "A" game." Give us an example of act big, breath big, commit big for a player and you do it in your book, *Play Big*. Like give us an example of that and then we'll talk about it in relation to a leader, but I think if we can see somebody else outside of what we do every day as a leader, people that are listening could analyze it a little bit. So give me an example of that for a player, an athlete.

**Dr. Tom:** Alright, so again, I'm going to say that a player want be great at being himself. You can't be someone else. So use yourself as a reference to go pick a time for anytime at all when you felt totally unstopably confident and go back there and you can do it listening right now, you go back and see what you saw, hear what you heard, and feel what you felt. You notice how these feeling start to come in right now as you're just really connect with that feeling, or with that moment. Put yourself right back there and make the images bigger and brighter, the sounds louder and the feelings is coming in even stronger. And now notice how you're moving. How are you acting? What's your posture like? What are your shoulders and where's your head and look on your face and are you moving fast or slow? And then notice how you're breathing. How do you breathe when you're that confident, when you're feeling good about yourself, how and when do you breathe? For hitters saying you're outside of the batter's box, stepping into the box, notice your breathing is it deep and full or short and shallow. And then finally, what are you committed to? What are you up there to do? I'm going to drive the ball into the gaps, put the fat part of the bat and the ball square it up, but the barrel on it, mash it, crush it, what is it? And then I'll take them out of that and say, "Okay, let's look at the first thing of acting. What do you notice about how you're acting?" And the guy will say, "Well, head up, chest up, and I'm walking slow." Like Mike Trout is really the best player in baseball today. Worked with my friend, Ken Visum, for years coming through the Angels organization. And Ken asked him, "Well, what did you get out of our conversation?" He said, "Well, I walked slow to the plate," that's the first thing, "Walked slow to the plate," because then a big danger in sports and anything else is that things speed up on you and it goes really fast.

**Suzie:** You go unconscious really what happens is you actually you're moving and you're not in your body, I think sometimes. Would you say?

**Dr. Tom:** Absolutely. And sometimes that's really good. Sometimes it's really bad, because if it occurs like it's speeding up on you, everything's going fast, that's generally not good, race car drivers going 200 miles an hour it seems slow, you don't want it to seem fast and so he controls his body, controlling his body, that is A, act big, A is walk slow to the plate so he's very conscious and making a deliberate choice there about how to act and then head up, chest up and then B is breathe big. Sticking with Trout again, he said, "Well, I got to finish my breath and I stand outside the box." He doesn't always take a breath, I watch them, but very often in the outside, take a breath and finish that breath and now step into the batter's box, because if it's (quick breath) and he steps in right there again, it's going to have sped up on him hitting. In hitting you want to slow the game down, balls coming fast enough. And then commit big. What are you trying to do? Most of these guys like Hank Aaron, it's like, "Well, I wanted to put the fat part of the bat on the ball," it is Stan Usual, like my dad's hero, some of the younger people might not know even who he is, but he's second all-time in total bases, and total bases if you get a double, that's two bases, then a home run is four bases. And so...

**Suzie:** What was the name?

**Dr. Tom:** Stan Usual, Usual, played for the Cardinals he is a lifetime, .331 hitter and another 20 plus year guy, so that's the number one and two guys in total bases, meaning not only are you hitting for a long time, you're hitting for power because a single is just one base and a homerun again is four. So these are the top two guys and that's what I interviewed. And Unusual said, "Well, I knew where the fat part of the bat was, I want to put it on the ball," which is an odd thing to say. It's like I knew where the fat part of the bat was. Who doesn't? When he said that he

means that he's in his stance and he's got an awareness of the best of his bat, that's the fat part, is the best of his bat and that's going to go to the ball, which is the most important thing. So then from an executive standpoint, and I translated to how do you get your best? Again, the fat part of the bat is the best sweet spot. How to get your sweet spot to connect with the most important thing, most important thing in baseball, the ball, so that's how that extends out. So he was committed. It's C, committed to putting the fat part of the bat and the ball. So you got, here's how I'm going to act, and here is how I am going breath, here is what I am going to be committed to and I'm going to do that, because that's all I can control. I cannot control whether or not I get a hit, even the best of them that say they do everything right, they line out or not get a good pitch to hit or umpire disagrees with your decision and so I'm going to go out and do a great job with what I can control and here's the system helping me do that and it's based on my own best performance.

**Suzie:** So if we think about that we carry it to, I love the visual of all of this and if we think about this in regard to say a leader is struggling with communicating effectively with their boss or struggling with a presentation, so the way they could self-coach, self-talk or dialogue with you would be to go back and remember when things were working well, when they felt their best in their role as a leader, is that how you would guide them? Because I think that's a key part that could get skipped over. People kind of say, "Okay, I'm going to act big and you get all these neck up types of statements, but if you get in your, the visualization and actually feel and think about times that have gone well and that you felt well, it seems like that would give you totally different answers of what your ABC is going to be.

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah. Absolutely. And so it is like state management, put yourself in a resourceful state. So if I'm going to go talk to my boss or no matter what I do, so much of our performance is state dependent, like the mindset or the mood, the energy that we are in, what we're vibing. So for sure you're going to want to get good at that generally. This is a skill that you developed. I can't guarantee that. It's like, well, you learn it through repetition. So the ABCs is can be a model of like, "Hey, "I'm going to get up and do that, I'm going to do it a few times during the day, very consciously and going into a meeting, in the middle of a meeting, things aren't going well, okay, let me get into a good, resource, positive state. Okay, I'm going to move my body first, act big, and use my breath. Well, now what am I committed to here? What results do I want to produce or what's my process that I'm going to commit to now?" So you'd think that, you could think that through, "Okay, what do I want to have happened in this meeting with my boss?" And then prepare, visualize it, like Hank Aaron, visualize, "Okay, what does he have to say? Hey, what would I say? Okay, he's going to ask me what my solution is. I'm going to think through my solution first. So I come in with that and I imagine walking out with him and I on the same page or some agreement and I'm committed to producing this agreement." And so then you play it through in your head and then you get into as good a state as you can and then go knock on the door.

**Suzie:** See what happens.

**Dr. Tom:** And then it might all blow up.

**Suzie:** It may or may not, but at least you have some intentions and you come prepared. And so I think the trigger for all of this, any time, like I used to get slightly anxious but it's a lot better, but

it's not the greatest thing that that's the case because I'm in front of people all the time. But you know, in speaking or with groups, I mean I'd still pretty intense about it no matter how big or small it is, but it has truly helped me to visualize for me what I have to do is I craft out exactly what's going to happen in each segment, just over-prepare, and then once I show up, I let all that go and it just happens. I believe that that visualizing and advanced is huge. Otherwise we do the opposite of what you're talking about. Instead of acting big, we act small. We get little because under stress, that's what we do, we shorten our breathing and then we just say, "Well, I don't even know what I'm committed to this like, okay, whatever. I'll take whatever."

**Dr. Tom:** Exactly. And you become reactive, and you become a victim, a victim of your circumstances rather than a player who is playing, we want to have it be that world where your life occurs from the inside out, rather than from the outside in, and this is a big part of that.

**Suzie:** Yup. I love the ABCs, that is brilliant.

**Dr. Tom:** I came up with it to speak to an eight year-old baseball team. I was in Chicago for something, to speak to older guys and then they go, "Oh, could you do something at eight, eight in the morning? I'll have these eight year olds." "Oh sure." And then I was in the hotel and I was like, "What am I going to say that? Okay, well if I could only say one thing, what would it be?" It would be as to how to move, if I had five seconds with someone to go out before they competed, I would spend it on "Hey, act confident. Act like you know what you're doing."

**Suzie:** Yeah.

**Dr. Tom:** It is all breathing, that's close one and two, but breathing is huge. I wrote a book called *Heads up Baseball*, and the other day I looked and it is the number 12 best selling baseball book yesterday.

**Suzie:** Oh my gosh! How cool is that!

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah, and I wrote it with Ken Ravizza in '93. 1993 I wrote that book, so we a *Heads Up Baseball 2* right now, it's at [baseball2.com](http://baseball2.com), but it's somehow it really hasn't caught on like, it's a year, year and a half old right now. But anyway, the breathing when I was doing the research for that book Ken had worked with a lot of major league players, we went around and I interviewed them and I said, "What's the most helpful thing that you've gotten in your work with Ken?" And "Oh, the breathing far and away." They'll say taking a breath before each pitch, the breathing most helpful thing. And then Ken was a little disappointed, I think, because he wanted it to be something that maybe higher brow than that,

**Suzie:** Breath. Anybody can say that.

**Dr. Tom:** I have had plenty of executives that have said the same thing. They go to "I had a good week," like, "Okay, what was most helpful thing?" "Well, I really noticed my breathing in the meetings and I looked and I breathed and it calms you down, and then you can take more clearly then its focus, focused concentration. Originally it was concentrate with the first "C" and then it was more commit, you're all in rather than just concentrate. You know, it is pretty cool.



Act big, which the book is *Play Big*, act big, breath big, commit big. So it really came out of talking to 8 year-olds, which works well for executives also.

**Suzie:** Well, you know, I think the most profound things are simple things. It's all complicated; it just hadn't been distilled down yet. It's probably headed that way, but it has and we recognize wisdom when we can relate to it. Otherwise it's not very wise because we can't relate to it. This is great to talk about committing big, because I think sometimes people say, "Oh, you know, they're going to say something that sounds big, but energetically it kinda shuts them down." So it sounds good others, but it isn't really their next best step. Do you know what I'm talking about, where somebody says I'm going to run a marathon and they do two weeks and then they never do it, or you know, it says like the goal sounds good and they feel good initially when they say it. If we're trying to bring the best of who we are, which means reducing internal resistance, having mental clarity. When I'm committing big, I know what it is for me, like I will do what you said what's in the immediate, they're very intentional about, "Okay, this is what's going to happen in that meeting today." I do that like the teacher that you and I both know that does some dialogue around this called, "Segment intending," where you just intend how do you want the next part of whatever you're focused on to be, Hank Aaron and Stan Usual, they focused on something very specific. Talk a little bit about the differences between that, how you guide executives as well as athletes around committing in a way that's helpful and helps them get in the flow, in the zone.

**Dr. Tom:** I'll start with my usual caveat about individual differences, I had a teacher, Julio Olion, teach executive coaching, or life coaching really, back in 2000, I took his course and he was adamant about, hey anytime you say something that's definitive, I'll bet you I can point to something where the opposite is true. So you ended up with a lot of respect for individual differences, and I was talking this morning about that with a guy who's like, "Well, I'm talking to a bunch of softball coaches tomorrow to create a safe environment where they really feel safe." That's a fun challenge. Well, there's also plenty of people in the Hall of Fame who were motivated by fear of failure and they were afraid of failing and so that's what drove them and they succeeded, so while that wouldn't be my first choice, it'd be hard to say, fear in that case is always bad. So it's hard to know what's always. So a lot of it again would be when you've had your biggest success is when it's helped you the most or when you've been most successful, how have you done it? What really works for you? Like goal setting and someone would say, "Hey, set a big goal and tell people." Well, I think generally I would tell someone not to do that.

**Suzie:** I don't think it really works, from lot of people I know.

**Dr. Tom:** Right, and for some people it would, that's a really good idea. Maybe it is for someone with the running a marathon, but it would be foolish to do with something at work and so there's so much individual nuances to what someone should do. If I really let myself think about all the exceptions to everything that I say, I would tie myself up into a knot.

**Suzie:** What would the litmus test be? So I know I have picked something that's going to help me set up my better chances of success or at least go into something confidence, to play big. What would the litmus test be? Would it be, "Hey, it feels right to me, feels right in the moment. It feels empowering." What would you say?

**Dr. Tom:** I like your “Wake up eager.” Is it helping you stay eager, because normally you would set a goal or set intentions, like you'd have a sense of eagerness about it? I hope so, so that's a good barometer. When I think of writing a book, write a book, and I'm like, “Yeah, okay, let's go,” and you're writing away, then that's great. But if you think, writing a book, and you're like, “Oh my gosh, a whole book, look at all these words in this book, I couldn't do that. Like, “Okay, we gotta chunk, got to chunk this down,” and then it's like, do you think in terms of writing the book or how about develop the habit of writing for an hour a day? Writing for an hour a day. Oh yeah. I think that's great. So yeah, without the focus on when you're going to have this done, but you're going to develop the process or the habit of writing for an hour a day. No holds barred. Okay, let it rip. And so it's just different ways to slice it that way. And in sports, in baseball, if a guy is playing well the game is one thing. “Hey, what are you doing? I'm going to go play baseball.” You know, I feel at home, in baseball, and connected, now I'm up to bat and now I'm playing defense, now I'm in the Dugout, but it's all baseball. Then there's a guy really struggling, then, in general, it's best to segment it down. It's like, “Okay, I'm in the whole, I'm third up. What do I do in the whole? Well, I have to get my batting gloves. I'm going to do a great job of putting my batting gloves on and I'm going to feel the Velcro. Okay, feel that Velcro, okay, good. All right. Now I get my body ready.” And I'm succeeding in this manageable segment and now I'm on deck and now I'm walking to the plate. I'm going to take my right foot, left foot, right foot, left foot, and so the more you're struggling, in general, the more breaking it down into little segments and succeeding in the different segments as if you're moving through a submarine, you know, through the different doors. Should you do that? Well, that'll be great for some people who may be a high “C”, highly conscientious. That would be a great thing because that's how they roll and someone who's low in that element of process, procedure, that would be a stupid thing to do.

**Suzie:** It wouldn't work for them.

**Dr. Tom:** Right? So it's like, well, you want to know these options and then know yourself and then connect those two dots for the current situation.

**Suzie:** Yeah. So sometime commit big may be if you're going through the ABC process, it will always tell you to, this feels right to me, it makes me feel alive, makes me feel ready, good to go. Whatever you do, it's whatever is particular to you in the moment, because I used to wing it in my workshops and things and it's like, “Okay, that still worked out but it didn't feel like it needed to feel for me.” And so just doing kind of the Hank Aaron visualization, seeing it all the way through feels better. So that's my barometer, but that doesn't mean it's anybody else's. So I get that.

**Dr. Tom:** Correct. My PhD Advisor at Virginia who let me do that dissertation, interviewing the hitters, I interviewed Bob Rotella, who is still the top golf sports psychology, I don't know, top sports psychology guy overall, but his thing was all about free it up and let go. You know, these players to get freed up and let go. They would practice, in particular golf, or to attend a practice, and very meticulously and work really hard and then come up short, and that's why they ended up going to it, for a psychologist. It's like, “Well, I'm just choking. I'm great in practice.” Well, it's because you have this training mindset and you need to have a trusting mindset in competition and you can't do that if you don't practice that or if you don't even think of it. I was talking to a young player last night it was like he works super hard and then is awful because he's pressing and too tight and trying too hard. Your homework is to have fun. Go have fun. Rotella would

say, "Hey, Saturday night, if you're in contention, that more high strung guy, like you should go dancing, go out dancing so that you're in a more freed up mind."

**Suzie:** Get your mind off of the subject, you've prepared, you've done everything. Let it go. I like that.

**Dr. Tom:** And the kicker here is, I remember someone asking, "You want all the golfers to go for the green in two on a par five," which is a very aggressive strategy, it's designed to hit it in three shots. You'd say, "No, no, no, no." In fact, I often advocate a very conservative strategy; pick a conservative strategy, but then the totally confident, freed up and trusting and letting go inside of that. You can slice things up in a way that helps you the most. In talking to a golfer who played poorly on Saturday and I was going to Sunday, it's like, "Hey, Saturdays over. It has nothing to do with how you're going to play on Sunday." Right? He started, right, it's like, "You can be great on Sunday," and then the next guy it's like, "Oh, you were great on Saturday. Awesome man, you're on fire. It's going to roll right into Sunday."

**Suzie:** Different advice for different people. But people are in their mind, right?

**Dr. Tom:** Right. And then you ask him, it's like, "Hey, wait a second. It's one or the other, right?" He goes, "Well, no, it's they want to play great." So you have to figure out, well, what's the thinking that's going to help me play great for the one guy. That's a completely separate thing for the other guy. They're totally related, but the common denominator is what's going to free me up to play great, and so it really becomes a matter of slicing things at perspective athleticism, like being able to move around athletically from different perspectives that will help you both win what I call the double-header. I think of life as a double-header, where Game One is a results game like in the outer world, producing results, making money, whatever you want, but Game Two, it's experienced game, like what is it like to be you, and too often people will split that double-header and they will win Game One like, "Yeah, I'm making money but I don't really enjoy being me." And so I want to help people win a double-header, to really enjoy being them, as well as producing the results.

**Suzie:** Yeah, I love that because if we're talking about the name of the game, of life, is get the results you want and be you while you do it. And many people listening in to this conversation have taken the TriMetrix assessment, you alluded to the DISC part of it, but there's DISC Motivators and then the Acumen. And I know that you use a similar tool with athletes and actually you help craft a similar tool just for baseball, which I think is amazing. You're connected with people that I highly respect and learn from as well, The Mefford's, around the Science of Axiology, and I find that tool, if you talk about helping people get the results they want and be who they are in the midst of all of that, I find that that tool helps them get a double-header, because to your point, everybody needs something different. One golf player needs to be reminded start new, and another golf player needs to keep doing the same thing, but the assessments really help people see where their strengths are, helps their manager figure out how to help them be who they are, more, you know, so they can be more successful. Tell me how you use the assessments with players and then we can segway that into how leaders can use these tools.

**Dr. Tom:** To me, it is one of the key elements, is knowing yourself. As you can see in, one of the things of our conversation here, has been individual differences and situational differences also, so you have to really know yourself to know what buttons to push and what moves to make. It's like, "Well is that gonna work for me?" The common themes for me, talking to baseball players would be, you know, "This person says to do this, this person has to do that, what should I do?" Especially in a minor leagues, players getting to the minor leagues and then they get bombarded with coaching, all these different coaches say, "Hey, you need to do this, do this with your hands, do your hips, do this," and they'll get overwhelmed. They get overwhelmed. What you gotta do is figure out what you're good at and build that as a strength and understand what your blind spots are, so you know where to look. So the assessment helps with both of those. I can say, "Hey, look, you have great teammate ability." They have a great interpersonal relationship skills, so you want to leverage that by getting your energy out into being a great teammate, instead of being stuck in on yourself, when you're in trouble, you get really negative on yourself, so as much as you can, don't think about yourself." Leverage that strength of getting out to help other people, especially if that's something that's a motivator for them is helping other people. I had a major league player last week I, instead it was a somewhat unusual in my experience, but his top motivator, was helping others. Again, you want to take what the person really is motivated by and angle things toward that because that's what they're going to find fulfilling and satisfying and have them feel good and have the chi flowing, the energy flowing freely is when they're aligned with who they are, so the assessment enables them to see, "This is my strength, this is what I love," it's like I knew that, but it's helpful to see it on paper. You know, I might see, well this guy, a hockey player, just one of those things, I'm sure it happens to you sometimes, where you have one conversation with a person and they just take off. You might have 15 conversations with someone else and they don't get worse hopefully, but like I showed this hockey player, it's like, look, this high, see the big picture and understands the big picture of hockey, this conceptual hockey, it's like, that's really high, you know, he's an eight something, but then all of his scores on his self-view and he's like a hockey anorexic looking at himself.

**Suzie:** Doesn't have harmony with his roles. Oh no. That's an interesting way to say it, anorexic.

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah. You said a lot because it's a distorted lens and guys in particular that seem to relate to a girl or you generally I think is more often look in the mirror and think that they look fat and you're like, "Hey, Miss, no, you're going to have to mix a Snickers bar or something because the distorted lens." So I said, "Now, what I want you to do is picture yourself or step out of yourself and see yourself from the outside of the player and think, oh, what would a good player do?" He understands what a good player would do, but he has trouble seeing that for himself. So the practice was to step out of yourself no matter what you feel, you're going to probably feel horrible, you're going to probably feel a lot of doubt here, but just say, "Okay, what would a good player do, now," and do that, and so we're trying to leverage that strength of the concept of a good player and then apply it to his weakness, which was just whatever he's thought of himself. And he was like, "Oh," and he took off, and then his Dad's like, "What did you say?" I don't know what exactly what triggered, but you know, and then you talk to the son and he said, "I've told him that," I don't know, but it just clicked the way it's presented. It's something about seeing it on paper.

**Suzie:** It's the science, it is the visual, it is like, "That's why I've been feeling that way or I am really hard on myself." It's not just words, it's like there's a visual representation and if you're

listening, but what we're talking about is the Dimensional Balance page of the Accumen part of the assessment, which measures clarity of thinking, how someone's thinking about themselves and others, and how they make decisions. And it is an area, I call it "Under the hood," so I use a car analogy, so it's under the hood, you know your current horsepower and you can work under the hood and tune all that stuff up. And the higher or stronger or clearer the thinking is, the clearer you are about yourself and the world and everything's coming easier, or with less difficulty I would say, I guess, what would you say?

**Dr. Tom:** You know, really it is like anything else, it is like helping someone know or understand themselves, I had a guy that became a super high S, just a super competitive self, so steady, so slow down and think, and then you look at the Axiology part in a very low score on extrinsic, whatever you guys call it, the execution, you know the physical. He had a really low score so it's like, "Look man, what you're doing, you'll slow down and think about what to do. And so you're playing right into a weakness." You don't think clearly in the domain that you are shifting into. It's like, you're going to look for help in a place where you don't see clearly. So they, you know more, became about just getting out on the target and say, "Screw it, this ball is going in there," and let your body just figure it out, instead of trying to think it through and coach each muscle. I mean, I can go on, but those are some examples of how it ends up showing up. When I use it for coaching, where I watch my own son, 15 year old baseball player, it's like, "Okay, here's how he's out, he's a DI on the DISC and so he's very extroverted and talking and let's go fast and so he cannot not talk, if he's real quiet then you know he's not comfortable. Parent/teacher conference, "Oh, he's a very quiet, shy young man," well he is not comfortable in your class, you know, because that is a long ways from where he is.

**Suzie:** At that age, did you have him take the Acumen, Axiology part?

**Dr. Tom:** Oh yeah, that's very helpful because he's a super confident in his future and then not as much on the execution part and that shows up as well, he will believe in himself, but the blind spot would be how much work you should do today? Should I put the work in? I'm confident in my future. Okay. And I have a great, really high score on understanding baseball and great teammates, but then the sixish on execution, so it's like, that shows up all, "I know that I got this." No, you don't.

**Suzie:** Overconfident in an area that he might need to still work on.

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah, exactly. So then when I can tell a coach that it's like watch out, he really does know, but count the repetitions he does, be on him.

**Suzie:** It's hell having a Dad who is a baseball expert. Hell or good? I don't know, probably good. So awesome. So it was interesting, I was at a baseball game and it was only because my husband's company had tickets and we were right behind home plate, the Braves, years ago and I wrote article about it, and at that point Craig Kimbrel, I didn't know any of the players, I didn't, you know, I know the basics of baseball, we were right there, I mean, we're right behind home plate and you could see everybody and everything and he came in as the relief pitcher and he was on a streak at that point and I knew the minute he walked up to the mound, talk about act big, play big, commit big, that he was going to strike them out and the Braves we're going to win. I think all the bases were loaded, doing a terrible job of replay, you do a much

better job. But it was interesting, I was thinking of it through the lens of the assessment and I was thinking about Axiology and I was like, "Okay, he's feeling his role awareness, which is connection and harmony with the role. He knows who he is." Anyways, it was just amazing how when you have that language, how you can start to look at yourself and in others through the lens of how clearly am I thinking right now in these areas and how am I feeling, and then see how that shows up in performance.

**Dr. Tom:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Suzie:** And I didn't know baseball or who he was.

**Dr. Tom:** It can also go the other way. I love talking to Moms who grew up playing baseball, a lot of them are super sharp on baseball and just go and support their son and they see a different game. But you talk to a Dad, "Their hands are getting long, he extended early and he's got such a long swing," and the Mom is like, "Well I knew he wasn't going to get a hit when he walked out of the dugout. You could just see it, the way he looked." I mean both would be true, but there's different ways to look at it and being sort of naive in a sport can be a big advantage in terms of making some of those observations. I mean what Dad would say that. I mean some maybe, but it's not common. It's much more common, a Mom would say, "He didn't look right."

**Suzie:** It is human nature to focus on the mechanics of things, coaches do it all the time, where are your hands, where are your feet? And then people get all like in their head and then they can't speak because now they are all worried about how they are physically totally, as opposed to the mental, emotional part.

**Dr. Tom:** And the thing is that it's not true, it's just what is the most effective. You think, for a leader, what should I focus people on, what should I say to direct their focus that would be most effective and I can't say exactly what it would be, it's like whatever produces the best result.

**Suzie:** Here's a couple ideas. Let's look at the person and see what they need.

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah, you know, here's a cool example, if you have another moment, with the Axiology with coaching, so leading, well, this guy was a softball coach and he coached hitting and he scored, took the coaching version of it, and he scored very high, this is on the part one for the External, you're looking out at the field, how good are you making value judgments. He had a Systems Thinking, so his concepts, Conceptual Thinking, 8.4, very high score, the doing part, the hands on part, 8.4, the Intrinsic, like a 6.0. Know what to do and you can see it as, "Oh, he goes, I could watch one swing, I just have to see one swing and I could pick up six, seven, eight different things that she's doing wrong and the one thing that she should work on just swing better," and it's like, "Well, that's great." You know, it's like, "Her hip is turning open early." Say what if that's because her parents are going through a divorce and she's feeling pressured to get a college scholarship now, so she wants to hit homeruns. What if that's the driver? I said, that's what you're apt to miss because you'll see the hip and you'll be all over that hip and you're right, you're absolutely right, why is that hip going now? What is going on for this woman that is happening, that's going to be in that interpersonal domain that may or may not be comfortable with, I am just saying, you are probably missing stuff in that domain that has been contributing to what you're seeing in the external and how it is matching or not matching your concept of

what it ought to be and so that's how that can show up and that's such a common corporate thing that people are strong in the doing and strong in the systems, conceptual thinking, but not so much on the interpersonal. Not that they should. I'm just saying that that's often the denomination.

**Suzie:** You want to make better decisions to get better buy in, this is an area you can tweak if you choose to, you might want to, grow that, because this is the area, I mean we can always manage ourselves and we can always grow and there's a great example of, are they listening, are they tuning into other people, you know, and if you're lower in this one, Intrinsic, what you're talking about, you tend to maybe offer solutions that don't land, so you've got the perfect solution, but they can't hear it because they either don't trust you, even though you're probably totally trustworthy, somehow you'd not gotten that buy in. I love how you use that. I know you use it, in corporate, but how you're also using it with athletes and like this coach, I wonder if that coach made any moves? Do you know? Could he hear it?

**Dr. Tom:** Well, he responded like he could hear it, but then again it's a blind spot and that's where you follow up with coaching and ongoing observation. Then it gets harder to know if you're making progress or not, and that wasn't part of the deal with just the one hour, the take the assessment, do a debrief and then do more if you want it.

**Suzie:** Hopefully he takes it and he is able use it and if not, that's okay too, right?

**Dr. Tom:** Exactly.

**Suzie:** Great Nuggets. This has been so awesome. I love the stories and the things that you shared and the fact that we've been able to talk about Axiology and how you use that and I'm going to recommend to everybody that, I'm going to have a list of your books in the show notes of the *Play Big Book*, I read part of it, it's a great story. It applies to so much more than just baseball and it's a young man who is struggling in his game and he has someone that he doesn't know coach him. It's so applicable to everyone's lives, so I'm gonna recommend that plus your other books will be in there. What resources do you think leaders could refer to? What else would you suggest so they can bring the best of who they are to their work and have that double header that you talked about, get the results and be who they are. What are the things that you recommend?

**Dr. Tom:** I'd be remiss if I didn't point out my wife and my book called *Who Will Do What by When*. It's a lot of the big picture stuff and it also focuses in on here's what to say to get commitment, you know commit big. My wife is a coach. She works a lot in government. She doesn't work in sports, but she works with leaders in different capacities and great with a group of people in a room, a team in a room, and we wrote a book called *Who Will Do What by When*. It was really about commitment and getting commitment and she refers to it as commitment management, commitment based organization and where it's essentially getting promises, will you do X by Y? Yes, I will do X by Y, that's a clean handoff. Balls get dropped in football when it's not, like the quarterback, I think I'm going to give it to you or you want it.

**Suzie:** It's like, it drive me crazy that you leave a meeting and nobody's assigned, who's doing what and it's all vague and then everybody wonders why things didn't happen.

**Dr. Tom:** With that book, it's about ten years old now, it's every bit as relevant, and it's actually setting in insurance, but it's far from an insurance book.

**Suzie:** Oh, that's great to know.

**Dr. Tom:** But it is a story, the guy was a successful salesman, now he is a failing manager and his integrity his out, meaning he doesn't do what he says. In Chapter Two, he was a half an hour late again to pick up his girlfriend to go to dinner and she is, oh, not too happy about it. And so he's got the whole book to kind of get his girl back and get the team on track, before he runs out of pages. So it has to do with, well here's a getting a promise, will you do X by Y? Yes, I will do X by Y. And then what do you do if you've made a promise and now you're not going to keep it. We can't keep all your promises, but you can honor them. How would I honor this? I made this promise, I do X by Y and I can't do it by then, I better tell the guy, and as soon as I know I can't do X by Y, how about I do it by Z? Okay. And there's a whole model for them. Okay, what if the guy made you a promise but didn't deliver on it, nor did he come and apologize? What should I do skillfully so that I don't just pull the pin on a grenade and throw it into his office and run away? That's not really going to be the most effective thing in the long run. And people read it and they'll be like, "Duh, you know, finally somebody wrote down the obvious things that I do," and other people will be like, "Oh my gosh, I never thought about that." So it strikes a chord with people and the throwing and catching of business, is relationships, but it's fundamental of businesses are successful as it is good at keeping promises or honoring promises, I mean they're going to stack them, the delivery company, the one company had more errors, but the other company was perceived as less reliable because they didn't apologize the way that the other one did, so they restored their integrity by saying, "We screwed up. Sorry, can we make it up for it?" And there's languages to do it powerfully that respects that, you know the big distinction of life to me, it's that we don't live in a universe, we live in a multiverse, each of us has our own, and so we perceive things as being in a certain way and think that that's how they are. It's the reality mess, the belief that you see things as they are and that you and others see the same thing. You know the belief that you see things as they are; it's like, "Yeah, that's how it is, that guy was out, that guy was safe, that guy's a good manager, like that guy's a terrible manger. I tend to think I see the truth and that you would see the same thing, how could you not see that. So well, for example, my understanding was that you said you would do X by Y, was that your understanding? You see how respectful that is? And I understood that we had this agreement, did you understand that? Someone will say, "I had us talking at 11, is that what you had, in an email, it's like when the guy doesn't show up for a call, then the key is going to be that it isn't just that you can have text like words, hey say these magic words, there's a ground of being that they have to be set a context for them, but nonetheless it's helpful to see ideas like that about, oh, here's skillful ways to do that. So you know, that's a long, self-focused answer, but I really think that.

**Suzie:** I will have that in the show notes, and what I like about it, if you're talking about being a great leader, this is a skill bill; I mean being a great ball player is being able to do the basics really well. And so if this is a basic, I believe in and you probably see it as well, there are a lot of leaders out there who don't really have all the basics even though they're in a role that you would assume they do.

**Dr. Tom:** And even still in today's environment where one might look on the national stage and think to the contrary, your word is still your most important business asset.

**Suzie:** Yeah, there we go.

**Dr. Tom:** So this guy said, "I'll do X by Y, I'll meet you at noon at this place," and ended up is this person going to show up or not? And if he screws up another few times he'll say, "Well okay, I'll meet you there." It's like, why don't you call me when you're there and then I'll come because you don't trust them.

**Suzie:** And you know what is interesting, you know where I correlate that and I can think of some of my consulting clients, so people who are consultants who work with me or use the assessments and I know them because I've had them take the assessment. Sometimes where that is playing out in their assessment is the internals on what we call role awareness, they're not in harmony with their work, they're overwhelmed, it's not the only reason, but oftentimes I find that people who score lower in role awareness have a scattered focus, so they're not laser focused in their role and so they over commit and under deliver, and it's not always a one-to-one correlation, but it's interesting. That'd be a way to grow role awareness for a leader in regard to getting more comfortable, but understanding the skill set you're talking about.

**Dr. Tom:** Exactly.

**Suzie:** So we'll have a link to that in the show notes. Talk about what you do to get in the zone for yourself. What are some things you do? Actions, keys, key tools, mindsets. What does Dr. Tom Hanson do to bring his "A" game?

**Dr. Tom:** It is visualizing what I want to have happen, on better days, and when I visualize what I want to have happen, and when I have really clear targets, and this morning I got up and right now I'm doing these five Tibetan Rights, there's five yoga-like moves that are good energy generators and so I'm enjoying that. I've got a muse, which is a meditation device that goes on your head and gives you feedback, when you get real calm when you're meditating, when it gets down to a real calm level, there's a bird that tweets and then you are trying to get so many birds, tweets, however long you meditate for, so I do that. I've been doing a good job lately with smoothies, hitting the kale part. That feels good. I know that if I eat celery that I feel good. I am hitting the Pilates pretty hard the last couple months; the real deal with the machine is fantastic. I had both of my hips replaced and my right shoulder is very arthritic, so this has really been great for my body. And then as far as in a strategy, I love Dan Sullivan's *Free Day*, *Focus Day*, *Buffer Day*. Did we talk about that?

**Suzie:** No.

**Dr. Tom:** It is three days, you take 24 hours with no focus on your work, not easy to do for a lot of people, so we block it off, it's intentional, it's not accidental or deliberate until even Sunday, no work. Oh, but then I'll get ready at night, no, no, twenty four hours. A focus day is a period where you blocked it off and you're locked in and you're going to pick a project that you're going to work on in that timeframe, and by design it's about 80 percent of the day, not broken up, but you know from eight to two, it's blocked off, I have a day blocked off on my calendar, just recurringly for a focus day, and so it's push appointments away from it because I already have it in there. It's like you've got to have something in there first, otherwise you start to, you know, that's a focus day and it can be focused hours, a lot of corporate people I work with, see if you

can block off two hours. “And like you're talking to me right now, right? Yeah. Okay, we'll see you blocked off an hour for that, right?” So physically block off an hour for yourself and two hours to work on this project, and put that in before your calendar starts to fill up for the week. And then buffer day is where you do your to do list, where you do all the things that enable you to have a free day and a focus day, focus day you're intentionally not doing the little things, the emails and whatnot that would otherwise pick away at your day, but you have to do, and so that's on buffer day, and so I found it to be a little nice strategy as far as blocking off time in the day, say blocking off a couple of hours and treating those two hours like a game, like you eat and you do what you need to do to be locked in because I'm going to crush for two hours for most people if they could really crushing on something two hours a day, that's a lot, and you can get a lot done and it also has a nice window where it's not like, “Oh, if I don't answer two emails for two hours, Rome isn't going to burn, you know, it should be okay, but like a week, well that's a big ask. So those are some ideas.

**Suzie:** Love it. Great. Good, good, good. Good example, lots of good role modeling going on there. If you could have one billboard to leaders and athletes about playing big, getting in the zone, being your best, what would it be and where would you put it?

**Dr. Tom:** A couple of things vying, one idea is for this adoptive belief that everything is always working out for me. I was in an Uber the other day, or a Lyft, I was doing something for my wife, he was asking about successful marriage of 17 years, and as I was getting out, I said, “Wait a minute, no, none of that, I take all that back.” The actual answer is if you have a belief that everything is always working out for me, then that, that will carry you in a marriage a long ways.

**Suzie:** So it is like making a decision and making it right.

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah. So the other was going to be, we are all headed for the box. My mom died in March and then this coauthor, I've mentioned a couple times, Ken Visum, he died, I'm going this weekend to his celebration of his life. It's really shook me quite a bit and it sort of like, well, you end up in a box, well your body does, and I mean you can take that as just the body or we're more than that, but it's so like, “Well, what do you want to do while you're here? You're not in the box now, but there is an end in terms of this current life, as you know it.” At least, I don't want to, the big topic here, but I mean I guess I am, but it's like this life that you're in right now, what do you want to do with it, because the clock's running. There might be a better way to put it, the clock's running and it's not infinite as far as in this life right here. What's important to you? Then let's do that.

**Suzie:** Yeah.

**Dr. Tom:** So something that wouldn't really sit on a big billboard size.

**Suzie:** No, it was the first words you said, we're all here for a moment, is that what you said? I didn't catch the exact words.

**Dr. Tom:** Just for a short time, I mean...

**Suzie:** The clock's running.



**Dr. Tom:** Yeah, and it's like what is it that you want to do and who do you want to be?

**Suzie:** Do it.

**Dr. Tom:** And so back where right before we pressed the button to start, it was like having fun. I really enjoy it. I want to enjoy being me, if someone would ask me what my goal was for coaching someone, and that they would love being themselves. I love being me. I want that to be 10. That's true. Like, yeah, I love being me. That's always the target, intrinsic value, intrinsically, speaking theologically.

**Suzie:** I love it. I remember a marketing gal asked me something early on what I was trying to do in my newsletter and I said, "Well, I just want people to read it and, and then to feel good, and feel better about their day and maybe learn a little something and just feel good." And she's like, "I've never heard that answer before. Like I don't think that that's unusual, but it made complete sense to me." So we are in alignment there all. Wrapping up, I know you've got talks that you're getting ready for to go give. So let's do the last two questions and it's, what advice would you give your 25 year old self about what we talked about today? What would you tell yourself? Talking about the clock and thinking.

**Dr. Tom:** Lighten up and have more fun.

**Suzie:** Yeah.

**Dr. Tom:** It all works out. Lighten up and have fun.

**Suzie:** It's all going to go okay. As we close, one last bit of advice or wisdom you'd like every leader to take away from our discussion today about playing big, bringing their "A" game. What would you say?

**Dr. Tom:** At some point there was a highlight of the conversation and that that was the thing for you, so put that into action today. Does that make sense? But not for me to pick out what would be the highlight for someone else, but they would know it based on they were really engaged at the time, so pay attention to when you were lit up in this conversation and then look to extend that out into taking some action.

**Suzie:** Awesome. We'll have comprehensive show notes, so people will be able to go back and skim through those that highlight times of when different things were shared and we'll have links to your books because that's a good bit of action that could be taken if any of that spoke to them or anyone here. We'll have other links as well on the show notes so. Well, I've heard you referred to a Super Tom, and you definitely are, thank you for taking time to be on here today.

**Dr. Tom:** You're very welcome. I had a great time, very time in my life well spent.

**Suzie:** Awesome. That's a way to do it.

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah.

**Suzie:** Thank you.

**Dr. Tom:** Yeah. Love it. Thank you.

**Suzie:** So hope you enjoyed the interview with Tom and I am going to close with what I started with the day, are you, and it's Tom's quote, "Are you living a double header? Are you doing game one, you know in baseball, it's two games, right? Doubleheader, and you want to win both, game one, doing all the results things that you want, and also winning game two, enjoy being yourself." If either one of those games are not as strong as you want to be, consider Tom's challenge when we finished our dialog, to listen to, go back and look at the show notes, [pricelessprofessional.com/zone](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone) number two, so just type zone2, consider his challenge where he said, "Hey, think about what most stood out for you during this conversation and take action," so you can look at the show notes to be reminded where we put the time and where things are. So you'll look at that and you can also go back to my other interview, [pricelessprofessional.com/zone](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone), with Coach Sarah in regard to enter the zone ideas.

**Suzie:** I guess I would say to you, do you remember based on what I started with today when it talked about how much doing this podcast fills my gas tank, are you remembering what makes you feel alive and are you focusing on that and integrating it into your day and I challenge you to take your assessment and note your top motivators. Just do more of them and find ways to integrate and appreciate what your preferences are because they are some of your greatest strengths. And so other things in the interview today that spoke to me so much was when he talked about Hank Aaron and visualization, that is something that I just probably in the last five years, I'm very action oriented so I just want to take action and then I'll think about it later and I've switched that and it doesn't matter what your style is, you can make that be different. Using visualization, what Hank Aaron says, he'd see it before he played it, and I really liked his act big, breath big, commitment big, and then just do it. So hopefully those are some tools that you can begin using and other things in the podcast.

**Suzie:** So again, the show notes, [pricelessprofessional.com/zone2](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone2) and you'll get links to Tom's website, his books and other related articles that we have on our website and other related podcasts to this topic. So I want to close with at the end I asked Tom what he does to stay in the zone in his own life, some actions that he's taking. And asked Sarah the same thing, and I thought I'd share a couple of things that I'm doing in my life as I close this out, to stay in the zone, enter the zone, manage my mental game, my physical game, so I'm bringing the best of me to what I do and here's a couple of things.

**Suzie:** Mind wise, I've always taken time to do tune-in time and I'll put a link to that in the show notes, because I talk about a lot, it's taking 15 minutes a day to reflect, write, journal, pray, appreciate, meditate, just connect and I call it tune-in time. What I want to do more of, and on a regular basis, is meditate. So I've decided because I feel like that will center me more, help me access my intuition more, just bring a calmer, more subtler me, to everything that I do and I want to actually write about it. So I am taking time every day for 15 minutes, minimum of 15 minutes for 365 days straight to meditate for 15 minutes. And I'm in week four right now, and I have to say that the consistency is the thing that adds up, so in a year, 15 minutes a day is 92 hours in one percent of your is 15 minutes. So it's not a lot of time incrementally, but I'm interested in seeing how I feel and I'm not doing it for a result, but I'm going to notice any results

or wisdom that I tap into the I didn't have before as a result of meditating on a regular basis. Feels right to do it and we'll see if I make it 365 days, I believe I will. I'm using an app Stick, S-T-I-C-K-K, to remind me every week to check in and take notes on how I'm doing. And then if I don't actually do every day that week I have picked an anti-charity, something I don't agree with, that I will have to give them money. So that's my way of holding myself accountable. I like that Tom mentioned he's meditating on a regular basis and he's using the Muse Trainer, M-U-S-E. So I need to look that up. I've heard about it, I may try that and if I do I'll report back at some point and share what I've learned and if I tried that tool.

**Suzie:** So that's some of the mindset things that I had been doing, or that particular thing is the biggest new thing I've been doing. Body wise, so that it feel good physically, I have a home gym here in my home here in Atlanta, and what I like to do is a combination of Cathe.com, C-A-T-H-E, dot com, weight training workouts and she's awesome and they're tough and it's like having a personal trainer right there with you. And then I have all of her CDs, so I do that at least three days a week, almost every week. And then I have a spin bike, a very nice spin bike, but I use the Peloton spin bike app which is cool. It's like 12 bucks a month and you've got classes on demand and you pick a class and it's like going to the gym, so it makes it easy when your schedule's really busy. I can do a 20 minute HIIT workout, which is high intensity interval training, and it's amazing how much that is, if I have time, I'll do a 45 minute, but it's amazing how much you sweat and how good it feels, so I highly recommend the Peloton, and if you already have a spin bike, just get the app and pay minimal amount every month. So doing something physical, I've always been into fitness since I was in my twenties. I used to teach aerobics, so that's an important part, it is very specific to me, but I do think we all should do things that help us feel good in our body because that is the vehicle through which we do our work as a leader, as a consultant, as an athlete, and so that body/mind awareness, tying that together. I cover a lot of that in the book that I wrote, it's five years old now, but *Recalibrate Daily*. It's about stress management strategies. We talk about mind, body, and spirit in that book, but one last thing I'm going to mention and it is this awesome breakfast that I've been doing and I'm going to put links to all the products. It's a great way to start your day and for me, I find that if I eat breakfast and I eat something with protein that's very healthy, I mean I can go to 1:00pm or 2:00pm and not even be hungry and it just is a great grounding, kind of easy way to start. I use this Coconut Keifer. It's something you find at Whole Foods. It has all these amino acids and enzymes and vitamins and probiotics. It doesn't really have much taste, but it's nutrient rich. I'll put a link to that food so you can just see and it has a link to where to find it, but it's a cultured food that acts as a natural antibiotic. It's been around for ages, Kiefer has. I take that and put a scoop of that, I use some unsweetened Kite Hill Almond yogurt, which is high protein and it has no sugar, no dairy, tasty, I get that at Publix or Whole Foods, going to put a link, all of this in there. There's an almond butter that I like. It's only dry roasted almonds. There's no preservatives or attitudes. There's no mold from peanuts or any of that, it's just they roast their own process, it's yummy. I order that from Amazon. Put a scoop of Solutions4, it's a nutritional shake that has protein, digestive enzymes, vitamins and more probiotics. Put some organic blueberries in there, sprinkle Chia seeds, which are having an amazing source of Omega 3 fatty acids and they're rich in antioxidants. Have the all of that, mix it all up, takes all of five minutes when you have the ingredients, the Kiefer, the Kite Hill, almond yogurt, unsweetened, the almond butter, the scoop of nutritional shake that's not processed and has just great nutrients in it, the blueberries, the Chia seeds, mix it all up and then have a little bit of half-caffeinated, half-decaffeinated coffee from Bulletproof Executive, which is also available at Whole Foods. It's organic bean with no mold, no toxins, just really clean breakfast. It's my



favorite thing these days to have for breakfast, so it's like, okay, takes me five minutes to put it together, two minutes to eat it and I am clear minded and got all the nutrients in the world that I can use and I can work out, I can do about anything till about 2:00pm and then eat. So it's very cool. So love sharing that because you just love finding something that makes you feel good. I like flooding my body with nutrition, you know? I just think that's awesome.

**Suzie:** Let's go back the notes for today, [pricelessprofessional.com/zone2](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone2). You'll see all the links and you'll also remember that the related podcast, when we talk about flow, episode number 46 and enter the zone is [pricelessprofessional.com/zone](http://pricelessprofessional.com/zone). The link to get a free audio book with a 30-day trial is [audibletrial.com/wakeuppeagerworkforce](http://audibletrial.com/wakeuppeagerworkforce). Next episode we're going to talk about the next Wake Up Eager Habit for Leaders and it's activated greatness. That's the one where I'm starting to write a book, I'm working on the table of contents now. Want to remind you that we do have apps that are free for iPhone and Android. You can go to [wakeuppeagerworkforce.com](http://wakeuppeagerworkforce.com) to find the directory of all of our episodes. We're also on Twitter, Wake Up Eager, Facebook, Wake Up Eager and on LinkedIn, at Suzie Price. So you can also reach out to me, [pricelessprofessional.com/suzie](http://pricelessprofessional.com/suzie), S-U-Z-I-E, if you have any questions or ideas or suggestions. Go forth and have an awesome day. Thank you so much. Look forward to our next conversation, dialogue, sharing with you. Take care.

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