

WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER

10 Rules
to Fuel Your Life, Work, and Team
with Positive Energy

THE ENERGY BUS



JON GORDON

Foreword by Ken Blanchard

Coauthor of *The One-Minute Manager®* and *Leading at a Higher Level*

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THE ENERGY BUS

10 Rules to Fuel Your Life, Work, and Team with Positive Energy



JON GORDON



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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Gordon, Jon, 1971-

The energy bus : 10 rules to fuel your life, work, and team with positive energy / Jon Gordon. p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-0-470-10028-8 (cloth)

1. Teams in the workplace—Management. 2. Employee motivation. 3. Motivation (Psychology) I. Title.

HD66.G665 2007

650.1—dc22 2006024223

To my mother, Nancy Gordon Nicolosi

Your strength and courage in the face of cancer will always inspire me. I love you from the depths of my heart.

Foreword

In many of my seminars I begin by asking people to stand up and do two things. First, I ask them to greet other people as if they are unimportant. After an initial chuckle or two, there's a dull hum as everyone walks around trying to ignore each other. Then I stop them and ask them to continue to greet people, but this time, to do it as if the people they are greeting are long-lost friends they're glad to see. The room erupts with laughter and the volume rises as people run around, smiling, hugging, and chatting with each other.

When the people in the audience sit down, I ask them, "Why do you think I had you do those two things—besides the fact that I'm from California?"

After the audience laughs, I tell them that the answer is positive energy. "To run a successful organization," I say, "you must learn to manage people's energy, including your own. When was there more energy in the room—during the first activity or the second?"

Of course, everyone shouts out, "The second!"

"What did I do to change the energy in the room?" I ask. Then I answer: "All I did was change your focus from a negative thought to a positive thought, and the energy of the room increased tenfold."

What I just described to you is why I'm excited about Jon Gordon and *The Energy Bus*. Every morning you have a choice. Are you going to be a positive thinker or a negative thinker? Positive thinking will energize you.

When you get to work, you have another choice. You can catch people doing things right, or you can catch them

doing things wrong. Guess which of those two activities energizes people more?

If you want to fuel your family, your career, your team, and your organization with spirit, read this book. Jon's energy and advice will leap off the page and help you cultivate positive energy in everything you do—and you will make the world a better place for your having been here.

Thanks, Jon, for pumping us up and making sure we get on the right bus.

—Ken Blanchard

Co-author of *The One Minute Manager*[®] and *Leading at a Higher Level*

Acknowledgments

I truly believe that no one ever creates success alone. Everyone needs a positive team with supportive people at their side. I am thankful that I have been blessed with truly amazing people on my bus and journey through life.

First I must thank the driver of my family's bus, my wife, Kathryn. You are the glue that keeps us together. Your support has made all the difference. Without you I would not be the man I am today. And I thank my children, Jade and Cole, for reminding me what matters most. Every day you make me want to be a better father. My favorite part of the day is asking about your success at bedtime. I love you.

My parents get a big thank you for always cheering as my bus drove on. You were invariably there supporting and loving me every step of the way.

Thank you to my brother for always challenging me and helping me improve this book. Your ideas, suggestions, and encouragement helped make this book the best it could be. I look forward to seeing your book next to mine in the bookstore. Also, special thanks to my grandfather Eddy, who at the age of 89 inspires me to live young, have fun, and enjoy the ride.

Thank you to my Chief Energy Officer, Daniel Decker. You are not just a business partner, but a true friend who has helped me grow as a leader and as a person. I appreciate every ounce of energy you pour into our mission. I am thankful God brought us together on the same bus.

Thank you to my friends and agents, Arielle Ford and Brian Hilliard. You have helped me pave the way to do the work I am here to do and I am forever grateful. You helped open

the gates so my bus could drive through. Thank you for your confidence in me.

Thank you to Kate Lindsay, Shannon Vargo, Matt Holt, and the incredible team at John Wiley & Sons for seeing my vision for the road ahead and for making it possible.

To the other members of my team who not only provided fuel for our bus ride but who also got out and helped push when the bus broke down: Francis Ablola, thank you for all your hard work and web site creation. Shawn O'Shell, thank you for your amazing talent and design. Vince Bagni and Jim Careccia, thank you for continuing to spread the energy. Susan, thanks for the gifts you share with others.

Thank you to all my clients who allow me to work with your companies, organizations, teams, and people. I am grateful every day to get to work with so many wonderful people.

I'd like to thank Ken Blanchard, Danny Gans, Pat Williams, Dwight Cooper, Fran Charles, Linda Sherrer, Tom Gegax, Mac Anderson, and all the people who read and supported the book.

I'd like to thank all the subscribers to my weekly newsletter and the readers of my books. You have shared your life stories, your hearts, your pain, and your triumphs with me and I am honored that you trust me to be a part of your life and growth. We are all teachers and students and I learn so much from you.

Most of all I'd like to thank God. Thank you for the signs that show me the way. Thank you for the gift of Jesus. Your holy spirit flowed through me as I wrote this book. You strengthen me and you are the ultimate driver of my Energy Bus.

Author's Note

It is fun to look back at your life and see how certain events led to where you are right now, like the inspiration to write this book. I was traveling on a 28-city book tour for my first book, *Energy Addict: 101 Ways to Energize Your Life*, when I met an actual bus driver who took me from the Denver rental car lot to the airport. The bus driver not only had the biggest smile I had ever seen but dispensed life-changing wisdom that truly impacted me. This bus driver embodied the positive energy I was traveling the country talking about. I wrote an article about this meeting in my weekly e-newsletter called “10 Rules for the Ride of Your Life” and was inundated with enthusiastic responses calling it the best newsletter yet. Then one day while taking a walk the idea and story for this book just literally jumped into my head. And once I started writing, I couldn’t stop. The words flowed through me, and now you are holding this book.

So it is my pleasure to invite you on the Energy Bus as we take a short, fun, meaningful journey together. I hope you use this book not only to fuel your life, work, and team with positive energy but also to enjoy the ride of your life. After all, the goal in life is to live young, have fun, and arrive at your final destination—as late as possible—with a smile on your face, because this would mean that you truly enjoyed the ride.

I’d like to also give credit to the following people and work for inspiring certain ideas in this book.

Words from the Energy Bus children’s book were inspired by Richard Bach, the author of *Illusions* and *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, who said, “You are never given a wish without the power to make it come true.”

The positive energy formula was inspired by the formula $E + R = 0$, which Jack Canfield, author of *The Success Principles*, shared with me.

The information from the Energy Book referred to in the story is from my book *The 10-Minute Energy Solution*.

The story about Abraham Lincoln waiting for Civil War battle reports to come in was inspired by an audio recording from Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*. But while Jim Collins also talks about getting the right people on the bus, the idea for this book was my own.

I learned about the airplane design study for rule #9 from Laurie Beth Jones and her book, *Jesus CEO*.

Research about the energy of the heart was from the Institute of HeartMath, www.heartmath.org. They are doing phenomenal and innovative work.

Joy's bus was number 11 for a reason. It's a special number to me.

I'm sending positive energy your way,

Jon

Introduction

Positive energy... . It's a term being talked about a lot more frequently in conference rooms, classrooms, locker rooms, and even living rooms. Perhaps it's because there is an abundance of new research that shows that positive people, positive communication, positive interactions, and positive work and team cultures produce positive results. Or perhaps at a deeper level we all know that every person, every career, every company, every organization, every family, and every team will have to overcome negativity, adversity, and challenges to define themselves and create success.

No one goes through life untested, and the answer to these tests is positive energy—not the rah-rah, cheering kind of positive energy, although there certainly is a time and a place for that as well. But rather, when I talk about positive energy I'm referring to the optimism, trust, enthusiasm, love, purpose, joy, passion, and spirit to live, work, and perform at a higher level; to build and lead successful teams; to overcome adversity in life and at work; to share contagious energy with employees, colleagues, and customers; to bring out the best in others and in yourself; and to overcome all the negative people (whom I call energy vampires) and negative situations that threaten to sabotage your health, family, team, and success.

Positive energy is very real, and in my work with thousands of leaders, salespeople, teams, coaches, organizations, teachers, athletes, moms, dads, and even children, I have witnessed the amazing power of positive energy. I have seen principals turn their schools around and enhance morale. Leaders have told me how they used my strategies to help their employees and teams become more

successful. Cancer survivors have told me how they won with a positive attitude. Athletes have shared how they've overcome adversity to reach their goal. Hardworking employees have e-mailed me and told me countless stories of promotions and accomplishments at work. And one mom even called to tell me a story about her son Joshua who, after hearing that his mom and dad were getting a divorce, said he was going to try to be strong and positive through it all because positive people live longer, happier, and healthier lives. It turns out Joshua remembered what I said to him a year earlier when I spoke at his school about the importance of positive energy. Not only was I touched, but I was deeply inspired.

People like Joshua inspire me to write about and share positive energy because deep down I know it matters and I know it works. My hope is that you will use this book to cultivate positive energy in your own life and career and then share it with your colleagues, customers, organization, team, friends, and family. I'm confident that when you apply the principles in this book you'll find greater happiness, enhanced success, higher performance, inspired teamwork, and significant results.

While this fable takes place in a business setting, please know that this book was written for everyone. We all are part of a team, and every member of our team—whether it's our work team, sports team, family team, church team, or school team—can benefit from the 10 simple, powerful rules shared in this book. After all, positive people and positive teams produce positive results, and the essential ingredient is positive energy.

Chapter 1

Flat Tire



It was Monday and Mondays were never good for George. He stood in his driveway looking at his car and shaking his head. He wasn't surprised, really. Misfortune had been following him for the past few years like a dark rain cloud hovering over his life, and today was no different. His tire was completely flat, and George's face was about to burst. "Not today!" he shouted as he opened the trunk only to find a flat spare tire.

He heard his wife's words in his head: "You should get that fixed, George. One day you're going to have a flat and wish you had a spare tire."

Why does she always have to be right? he wondered. George thought of his neighbor Dave and ran down the block to see if he had already left for work. Dave worked downtown, too, and George was hoping to catch a quick ride with him.

George had an important meeting with his team at work, and today he couldn't afford to be late. Not today. Especially not today. George punched the air with his clenched fist when he saw that Dave's car was gone. Of course, he thought. Why would he still be here? That would be too easy.

As sweat poured from his brow, he ran back home, then stood in his driveway and looked at his cell phone trying to think of someone at work he could call. Think, think think, think think.

Then it dawned on him. He couldn't think of one person at work he could call who would come pick him up. His only option left was his wife, and she was the last person he wanted to ask.

George walked in the house and heard the usual noise and chaos coming from the kitchen. He could hear the puppy jumping around and his wife trying to get the kids to sit still and eat their breakfast before heading off to school. He peered through the kitchen archway. As soon as the children saw him, the cheers erupted. "Hi, Daddy!" they yelled. His daughter came up to him and wrapped her arms around his hip. "I love you, Daddy," she said as George barely acknowledged her. His son shouted, "Dad, can we play basketball right now?" George was like a reluctant celebrity in his own home. They wanted a piece of him, but he just wanted to hide in silence.

"No!" George shouted back. "It's not a weekend. I have to get to work. Now both of you just please be quiet so I can ask your mother something. Honey, I have a flat tire and I have this really important meeting I have to get to today and I need your car!" he said frantically.

"What about the spare?" she asked.

"Of course you would bring that up. I never got it fixed."

"Well, I can't help you, George. I have to take the kids to school, then I have a dentist appointment, then I have to get the puppy to the vet, then I have a parent-teacher meeting. Should I continue? You're not the only one who has things to do. You act like you're the only important one in this family, but I run this house and this family and if I