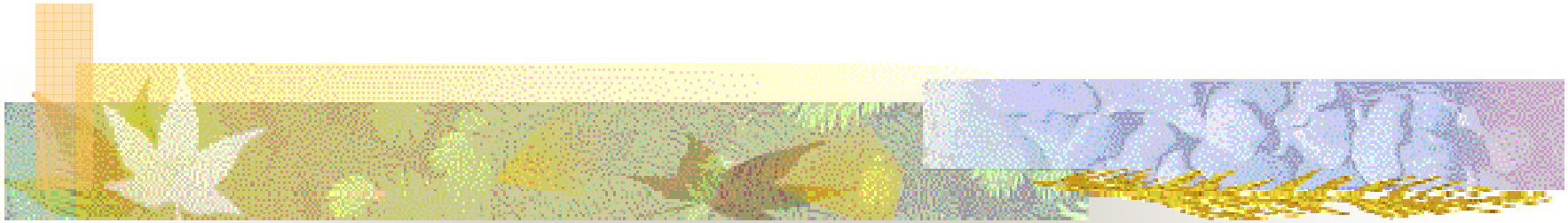
# Guiding Your Personal Life: Plan-driven or Agile?



**Linda Rising**

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# The Industrial Age

**A surge in economic growth—occurred first in England around 1800**

**Giant career move from the farm to long hours as a factory worker**

**There were many elements that played an important role in this upheaval.**

# Clocks!

During medieval times, schedules were lax, holidays many, disorganization pervasive.

And no accurate timepieces.

Galileo, 1583, discovered the uniformity of pendulum motion

But it took over 100 years for practical application and widespread use.

# Beer for Breakfast

**Heat beer in a saucepan.**

**In a separate small pot beat a couple of eggs.**

**Add a chunk of butter to the hot beer. Stir in some cool beer, then pour over the eggs.**

**Add a bit of salt, and mix all ingredients, whisking well to keep it from curdling.**

**Bon appétit ☺!**

**Europeans averaged ~3 l beer/person/day**

# Caffeine for Breakfast

Boil water to make a cup of coffee or tea.

Decreased incidence of disease in crowded cities.

Coffee and tea, clocks, and the first factories appeared at the same time.

They facilitated the great transformation of human economic endeavor that started the Industrial Age.

# An Un-natural Way to Live

For most of human existence, sleep and wakefulness was determined by the sun and the seasons.

The inventions of the clock and the availability of caffeine changed lives.

We now had to adapt and cope with a work schedule set by a clock, not by daylight or the natural sleep cycle.

# Caffeine in the Body

- Moves easily from stomach and intestines to the bloodstream, to the organs, and almost every cell of the body.
- Crosses the blood-brain barrier, reaches its peak concentration in the brain in ~ 1 hr.
- Blocks the effect of adenosine (one of the body's natural sleeping pills) and keeps us awake.

# The Downside

Yes, we take control from our hardwired circadian rhythm.

But we pay a heavy price for extra wakefulness.

Without adequate sleep, we are not at our best, physically, mentally, or emotionally.

We have come to believe that sleep is a waste of time and makes us overall less productive.

As a result, we are sleep deprived and our brains show visible signs of premature aging.

# Caffeine no Better than Breaks

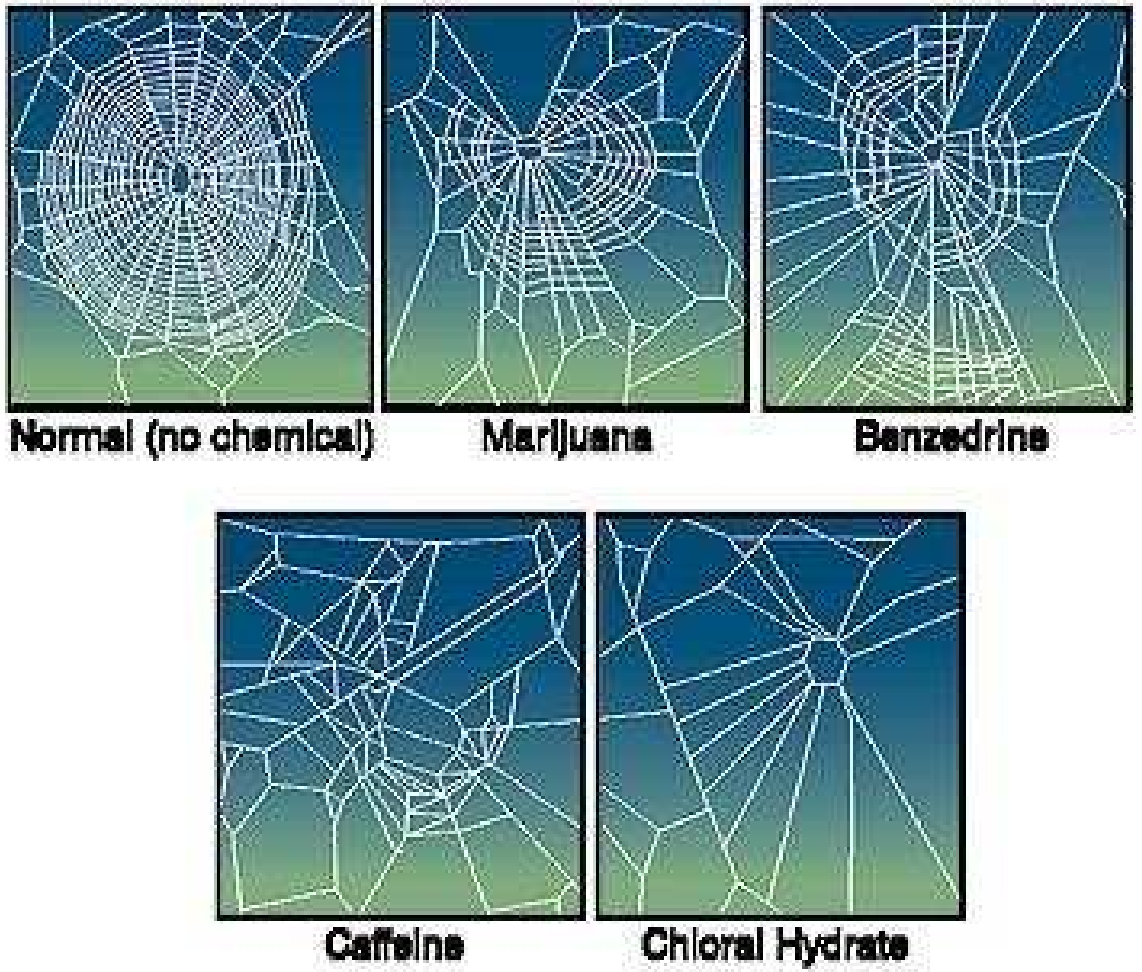
- Caffeine improves “vigilance tasks” - prolonged attention, little physical activity.
- Effects most apparent after long effort.
- When allowed to take breaks no significant benefit from caffeine.
- Good night’s sleep improves performance, mood, alertness better than caffeine and benefits last longer.

# Introverts vs. Extroverts

For simple tasks, everyone tended to do better when given caffeine.

On complex tasks, extroverts' performance tended to improve, while introverts tended to get worse.

# Spiders on Drugs



# 50% more caffeine
# www.cult.dk

# Sleep is needed for learning

**Thomas Edison**

**Poincaré**

# Memory consolidation - I

**Two groups were taught a task.**

**One group then took a nap, the other group stayed awake. The “nap” group improved.**

**After a night’s sleep, both groups were at the same level.**

# Memory consolidation - II

One group was taught a task.

During the 6-8 hrs after learning the first task, a second task was introduced.

The next morning the group had not improved in either task.

# Memory consolidation - III

Two groups were taught a task.

Both were taught a second task, but one group took a nap in the interim.

No improvement was noticed later in the day, but the next morning the “nap” group had improved at both tasks.

# We sleep in cycles

**Sleep is divided into ~90-minute cycles**

**Some track those cycles and schedule their sleep time as a multiple of 90-minutes.**

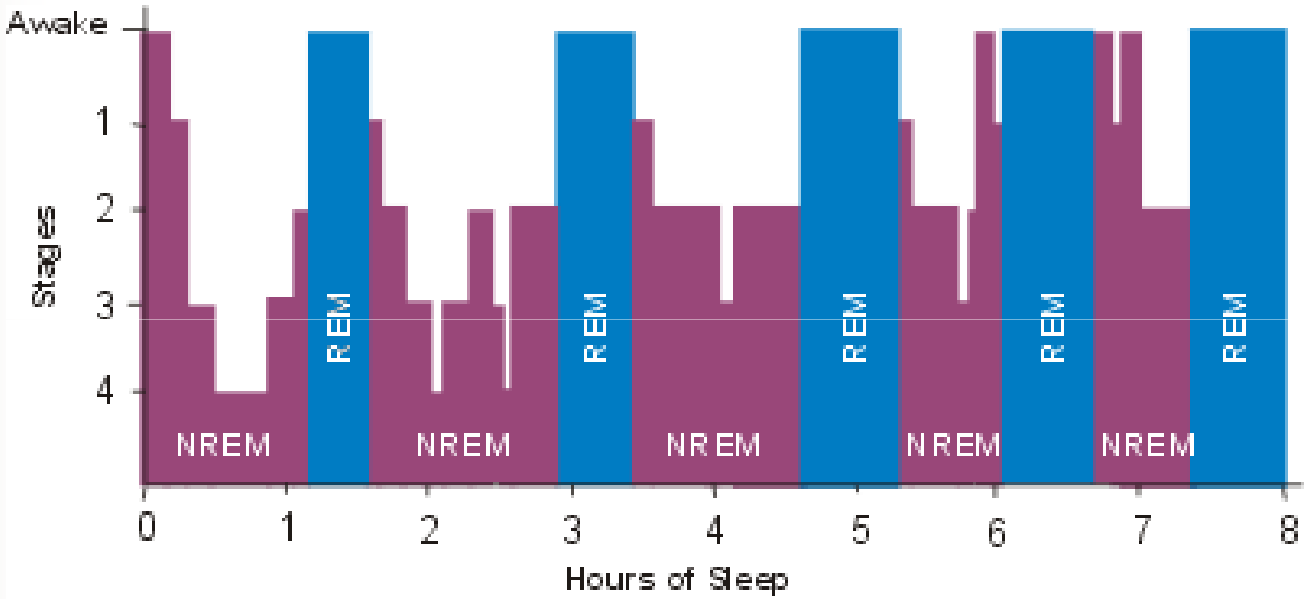
# Sleep phases

Light sleep, non-rapid eye movements (NREM), lowered body temperature, muscle relaxation, slowed heart rate.

Completely asleep, NREM, further drop in body temperature and relaxation of the muscles. The immune system repairs damage.

Deeper sleep, NREM, metabolic levels are extremely low.

Delta or REM sleep, blood pressure rises, heart rate speeds up, respiration becomes erratic, brain activity increases, sleeper become paralyzed. Most restorative part of sleep. Most dreaming occurs.




**Sequences of states and stages of sleep on a typical night**

# Do we cycle in the daytime?

**Humans are not designed to be linear, but rather to pulse—to move between expenditure of energy and renewal of energy.**

**When we establish that rhythm, we're most productive and most sustaining.**

**“Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time,” Tony Schwartz, *HBR*, October 2007**

# Promiscuous Pairing and Beginner's Mind: Embrace Inexperience

Arlo Belshee

Proceedings Agile 2005 Conference,
Denver, Colorado, July 2005

**Experiments with pair durations:**
**1 hr, 90 min, 2 hrs, half-day, 1 day,**
**3 days**

**Optimum duration - 90 min - but longer pair durations had slightly higher mean velocities.**

# Our Typical Behavior

If we are under pressure, we work longer and harder.

Is this the personal equivalent to Brooks' Law at the project level?

Athletes know the importance of a training schedule, never having two hard days in a row, allowing time for rest.

# Good for teams? Good for us?

Is it possible to apply an approach that works well for teams to our own lives?

We assume that what was good in the Industrial Age must be good for us now.

Perhaps we should be experimenting, learning, working toward the goal of living our lives in the best possible way.

# Find your own cycle

**Focus without interruption for ~90 min**

**Take 15-20 min break—do something different!**

**Repeat until the end of the workday**

**Get at least 7 hrs sleep!!!!**

**J.B. Rainsberger, "Personal Planning," *IEEE SW*, Jan/Feb 2007**

# Maybe we don’t need caffeine?

If we were in synch with our natural cycles of working in the daytime and sleeping at night, we wouldn’t need to resort to command and control force-fitting our lives.

Maybe there is a better way?

**Buddhists call this “beginner’s mind”**
**a willingness to step back from prior knowledge and existing conventions**

**to start over and cultivate new options…**

# Extra info

- The Pomodoro Technique – www.pomodoro-book.com
- InfoQ.com – search on “Linda Rising” and look for “Born to Cycle…”
- Email for J.B. Rainsberger, Arlo Belshee, or HBR articles