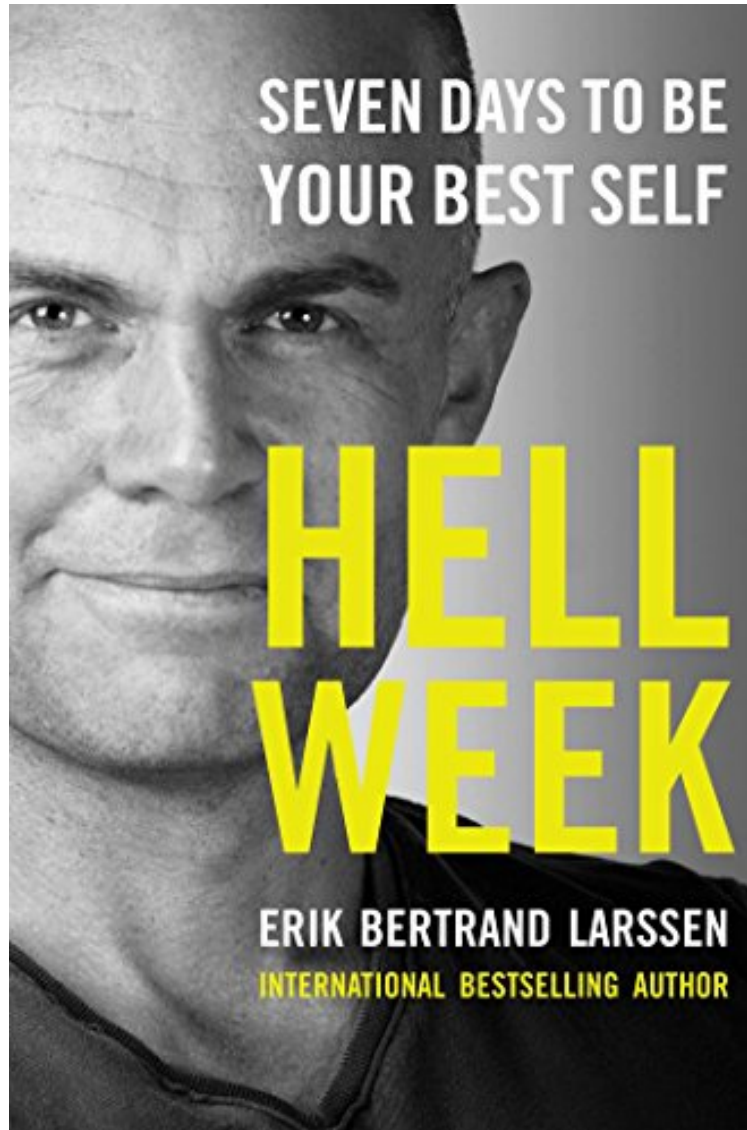


(Download pdf ebook) Hell Week: Seven Days to Be Your Best Self

Hell Week: Seven Days to Be Your Best Self

Erik Bertrand Larssen

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Erik Bertrand Larssen : Hell Week: Seven Days to Be Your Best Self before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hell Week: Seven Days to Be Your Best Self:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Helping grow and sustain work performanceBy MikeUncomplicated motivational strategy to help people work with more sustained energy closer to their peak for longer periods of time. Who wouldn't like to do that? Nothing crazy or extreme or calls for turning life upside down - just a lot of good sound advice, well-presented and with a terrific kick-start strategy. I made multiple to-do's incorporating the recommendations and started implementing several immediately before I finished the book. The cognitive change elements were as or more valuable than the physical demands A productive, self-driven motivational book.33 of 34

people found the following review helpful. Passion Meets Self-Discipline By Frieda Rose Hell Week seems to be written mostly for people who have careers, and that's not a bad thing. But I'm a retired older person with several medical issues, so parts of his program, like staying awake for 41 hours on Thursday (ahem, there are only 24 hours in a day, so I'm not sure how that works, but I'm only halfway through the book and still in the preparation phase), and exercising for an hour each day would be difficult for me. The best part is about pushing your way through your fears, not giving up when it's rough, really rough, calming your anxieties, fake it 'til you make it, and really listening to others. I'm sure I've missed some things. It's not unlike other things I've read, but at the same time it is. I very much enjoyed reading about his life, and reading the accounts of others who've followed his program. I won't do everything (and that's my choice and my own physical limitations), but the incentives, life lessons are what I intend to bring into my own life. Update: I have finished the book, and changing the rating from 4 to 5 stars. This book is for anyone who is not (and I'm sorry for the cliché, but it fits) doing and being all s/he can be, regardless of whether or not you are a student, working, or retired. There are so many lessons to be learned here, and Mr. Larssen has a unique way of inspiring you to dig in and learn them. I also love the quotes by famous and not so famous, or known and unknown people past and present scattered among each chapter. Even if you don't do Hell Week itself, or you don't do it as he has laid it out, you will gain invaluable information and make you think of the smallest details in an entirely different way. One thing I took to heart was what happens on Sunday of Hell Week: reflecting on your mortality. I have now started my own countdown (I'm 71 and counting down to 90) on my calendar of how many days I believe are left to me. This is not something he has recommended but is a version of what someone he knows has done. This will remind me to get off the couch and live each day.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. it is an easy read. Erik Larssen exemplifies and seems to give ... By Oleh Plowed through this book in a night, it is an easy read. Erik Larssen exemplifies and seems to give a weeklong recipe for lasting change. I have been through military hell week myself and have experienced much of the effects Larssen is telling us about. I will definitely arrange my own hell week according to Larssen's recipe.

From world-renowned mental trainer Erik Bertrand Larssen, whose clients include Olympic athletes and Fortune 500 CEOs, Hell Week is a military-inspired yet accessible guide to making the critical changes necessary for long-term professional and personal success and overall lifestyle improvements. Norway native Erik Bertrand Larssen is many things: a veteran paratrooper who served in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Afghanistan; a successful entrepreneur; and a critically acclaimed performance consultant. He has helped catapult the success of countless high-achievers, including Microsoft, Boston Consulting Group, and Statoil ASA executives and Olympic medalist Martin Johnsrud Sundby and top golfer Suzann Pettersen. His life-altering and revered method improves performance by getting people to push themselves past the brink of self-imposed limitations. Central to his technique is the commitment to live and experience just one week as your best self. "This week, Larssen says, that will be the catalyst to making the most of the rest of your life. Offering accessible tools and pragmatic, inspirational advice including how to incorporate exercise into your daily routine, Larssen's game-changing Hell Week shows you how to apply his principles to everyday life, leading to lasting improvement, personal and professional success, and most importantly, a new way of living to a higher standard. Hell Week will resonate with and inspire you to be the best you can be and make everlasting positive changes in all aspects of your life.

"Too frequently there is chatter around finding purpose, achieving dreams, and living a great life. However, seldom are any specifics offered on how to actually discover passion, overcome adversity, and fulfill personal potential. In Hell Week, Erik Bertrand Larssen provides both the roadmap to live more abundantly one week at a time and the encouragement to begin living it today." (John O'Leary, international speaker and #1 national best selling author of On Fire)

About the Author Erik Bertrand Larssen is a performance consultant who energizes people into successful careers and happier lives. After serving with the military as a paratrooper, he worked in the telecom industry, moved into headhunting and then started mental and career coaching. Holding a Masters degree in business economics, Erik is the number one mental trainer in Norway with clients ranging from business executives at Fortune 500 companies to Olympic medalists. An Oslo, Norway native and a father of five, Erik splits his time between his hometown and New York City.

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Hell Week STEP ONE: EMBRACE ADVERSITY If I had to choose one word that embodies Hell Week and the method behind it, that word would be adversity. For soldiers undergoing the military version of the seven-day challenge, it's all about the will to continue. That's why I love that quote from Churchill in the introduction: "If you are going through hell, keep going." As you get ready for Hell Week, the notion of adversity always should be foremost in your mind. My clients are sometimes confused by this mandate when I first start working with them, since my method is so much about focusing on success. They're confusing failure with adversity. Failure is a negative. Adversity is a positive. Indeed, it's one of the best forms of motivation, provided you're prepared for it. I once served with a fellow paratrooper whom we called Ice Cube because he loved the cold. Norwegians are, of course, accustomed to frigid conditions, but this guy really seemed to thrive in them. I asked him about this one day and his response was simple.

“I’m good at being cold,” he said. For whatever reason, Ice Cube was able to withstand cold temperatures much better than other people. It’s not that it was easy for him. I watched his teeth chatter and his lips turn blue along with everybody else. But he was able to persevere and see through to the other side of the pain. And this became an incredible motivator for him. Every time he overcame the cold, it provided a sense of achievement and recognition. During Hell Week, I want you to get good at being cold. I fully believe that it’s possible to teach yourself to not just handle adversity, but to truly enjoy it. And through that process, you will build strength and character. It’s a great opportunity that so many people miss because they’ve been conditioned to avoid adversity. Remember, adversity doesn’t equal failure. It equals opportunity. Adversity is part of the journey toward a worthwhile goal. I learned this lesson the hard way one morning in February 1996. I was still in the military, returning to the base from a twenty-four-hour R and R at my family home. The mountain roads were icy, so I was taking it slowly. Around a sharp bend, a bus filled with tourists heading for a skiing holiday slammed into my tiny Renault. Just before impact, I assumed the position we use in parachuting, pulling my legs halfway under my body, hunching my back and neck, and pushing my underarms together and my fists over my head. A shrill, metallic sound followed, then the violent force of impact—twice, in fact, as the bus spun around and broadsided me a second time. Then all was silent. I sat still for a few seconds and examined my body, patting my legs, my thighs, my stomach, and my chest. I felt intact. I crawled out of the shattered windshield and shifted into military mode, doing my part to secure the scene and tend to injured tourists. Eventually the emergency services arrived. A policeman approached me and said they were looking for the passengers of my Renault, and pointed to my crumpled wreck of a car. For the first time, I let myself slip down onto the ground. “I think you should come along to the ambulance,” the police officer said. The adrenaline seeped out of my body, and all at once I felt the pain in my knee, chest, neck, and head. Fortunately, miraculously, none of my injuries were serious—a couple of bruised ribs, a mild concussion, and a gash on my knee. I was discharged from the hospital, feeling very lucky, except for the crushing pain in my head and neck. That’s when the real struggle began. The first year after the accident was the toughest of my life. The pain didn’t go away. It stayed with me all day, every day. Though I was able to complete my certification as a paratrooper, the pain eventually forced me to leave the military. I made the decision to study economics at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, hoping the rigors of academia might distract me from the pain. One day into lectures and the pain had won. I couldn’t concentrate. Sleep was fitful at best. I lost my girlfriend. I began to despair and feel sorry for myself. I met with all kinds of specialists, from chiropractors to physiotherapists. My depression only grew deeper. I traveled to Sweden, the United States, and Australia to meet with more specialists. Nothing helped. I started to lose faith and think even darker thoughts. One day my father called to see how I was doing. I told him the truth, putting it all on the table. “It must be challenging,” he said. We talked about this and that, and then he said something unexpected. “Erik, you’re in one of these situations where, as they say, the wheat is separated from the chaff. This is where you get to prove what you’re made of.” That same day I had a conversation with a minister whom our family had known for years. He, too, asked how I was doing, and again I told the truth. For the second time that day I got a surprising response. “Isn’t it fascinating,” he said. “Fascinating?” I answered. “Yes,” he said. “The range of emotion we have inside. It’s fascinating. A human being can feel everything from extreme happiness, love, joy, achievement, and safety to the deepest sadness, fear, and misfortune.” In the days that followed I reflected on these two conversations. Slowly, I began to see my situation in a different light. The state of adversity I was in was a kind of challenge. My father’s words made me realize that. They got my competitive juices flowing. Would I overcome it or be swallowed whole? The minister’s words, meanwhile, made me think about the inevitable ups and downs of life. I realized that I was on an incredible high before my accident—thriving in the military, being in love with my girlfriend, and forging lots of friendships. Now I was experiencing the opposite. I was in the downturn, and I actually felt lucky to be there. Life becomes stronger and richer when you can feel the ups and downs, and the bad feelings with the good. With this new perspective, I began to rally. I countered the adversity with small changes, both physical and mental. I began to build up my strength and my powers of concentration, allowing myself longer breaks and rest periods in the beginning. I was in hell. I just needed to keep going. I began to like adversity. I wanted to win. It took me eleven years to get through business school. The journey was longer and harder than I thought possible. But when I phoned the exams office to learn my final grade on my master’s thesis, and the woman on the other end of the line said “A,” I burst into tears of happiness. Today, the experience of my accident and recovery is central to who I am. I wouldn’t have gotten where I am without it. I actually feel lucky to have been through the ordeal, because it allowed me to recognize life’s ups and downs. I know that whenever darkness descends, I can fight my way back into the light. That’s one of my adversity stories. What are some of yours? That’s the question for you to answer during this stage of your Hell Week preparation. Obviously, you’re not going to go out and seek to create adversity in your life (especially a horrible car wreck). But I do want you to redefine the meaning and role of adversity in your life. Remember that anyone can perform well when things are going their way. The difference between the best and the rest is their ability to mobilize in the face of hardship. A businessperson might find motivation by performing well in a tough market. For the athlete, it might be

playing through an injury. On the journey toward your goal, whatever it might be, you always have to expect a downturn. It's essential to have this in mind, because emotions to a large extent are steered by expectations. If you expect your journey to be nothing but fun and games, your emotions will play out differently than if you expect some degree of hardship. And the journey toward your goal will be filled with meaning. Do this right, and you'll come to welcome the hard times. You'll want life not to be easy all the time, because you'll know that something beautiful is waiting for you at the other end. It could be just a short period of physical training, knowing the rush of endorphins you'll have afterward. It could be putting in that incredibly hard week at work, knowing the intense feeling of reward it will bring on Friday. Through a full-scale embrace of adversity, you will come to appreciate the fullness of life.

THE ACTION PLAN Take stock. I always ask my clients to list the ups and downs in their lives. The highs include their proudest accomplishments and happiest moments. The lows might include the loss of a job or the end of a relationship. The point of this exercise is to simply make you recognize the peaks and valleys that are part of life. By accepting that fact, you'll be less likely to fall into a state of despair and self-pity when bad things happen. Instead, you'll see them as a simple matter of course and take the steps necessary to move past them. Look for the lesson. Adversity is an opportunity to grow stronger and learn something new about who you are as a person, but you first need to be able to see the challenges in life as teachable moments. To do so, it helps to recognize the fact that negative states are temporary (as are positive ones). "This, too, shall pass" is the old adage. In that mind-set, you'll have an easier time analyzing the adversity, understanding how you ended up in the situation, and figuring out what you need to do to get out of it. Share your pain. Thinking back on my own adversity story, the period following my accident when I was locked in my own head was the darkest. As soon as I confided in my father and minister, the darkness began to lift. Make a list of people you know you can turn to when the going gets tough. Knowing that you have a network and a support system in place will help you prepare for adversity. That's especially true if your network is filled with positive people. Remember that it's a two-way street. You need to be there when someone from your support system is dealing with adversity. As you get better at this, you'll learn to recognize when they're in that state, which will raise your overall awareness of adversity as a simple fact of life. Create choices. The best leaders always have at least a plan B, and often a C, D, and E to go with it. Having options is especially important during times of hardship and adversity. You can start by imagining the best possible option, but also think about outcomes that would be tolerable, at least in the short term. You are definitely going to deal with some kind of adversity during Hell Week. As you prepare, think about one possible scenario, and the various choices you'll give yourself to get out of it. Forget excuses. If choice is the enemy of fear, as the saying goes, then excuses are one of its staunchest allies. We have a tendency to shut down and ignore our options when faced with challenging situations, and that opens the door for all kinds of excuse making. And excuses have a way of building on one another, accruing into full-fledged denial. You're faced with a problem. You come up with a list of excuses for why you can't deal with it. Eventually, you convince yourself that the problem isn't so bad, when in fact it's getting bigger all the time. During Hell Week, you will find the courage to banish excuses and confront adversity head-on. Think about it. Overcoming adversity is a kind of problem solving, and one of the best ways to tackle a problem is to come at it with a clear mind. That involves learning how to get yourself into a calm state where you have full control over your emotions, which is another reason I'm such a big proponent of meditation. I'll come back to it many times throughout the book, but in the context of adversity, let me just say this: I've never known a committed meditator who hadn't also learned how to embrace adversity. The skills are practically one and the same. Find the humor. We all know about the power of laughter to lift our spirits. Humor is a great antidote to all kinds of adversity. One technique that I encourage many of my clients to try, especially the hopelessly serious ones, is to skip—I mean the kind of skipping children do when they're on their way to school. You might skip down the hall or across the parking lot or, if you must, around your office with the door closed. Wherever you do it, I guarantee the act of skipping will bring a smile to your face. That brief moment of levity will empower you to embrace adversity.