

A FIELD NOTE FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE

THE 95% LEAK

Why high achievers lose 90 minutes a day
— and get it back in 3 seconds



Born clinically dead for 45 minutes. World record in the long jump, 4.98 m, Atlanta 1996, in front of 68,000 people. Felt nothing. That emptiness has a name.

For leaders who hit every target and felt nothing.

By Mikael Avatar Stjernvall • Sweden • Thailand • Worldwide



I thought sport would solve life.

1 / EMPTINESS IS A SYMPTOM

Something was missing.

Emptiness is a symptom — of something missing, or of something you expected to happen when you reached the goal.

I thought I would be happier, and that my life would fall into place after the Paralympics. I thought the world record would give me butterflies in my stomach, a euphoric feeling, and that everything would be fine. But I just felt empty. What I wanted wasn't in the world record or the Paralympics. No magic happened.

What I wanted wasn't there — and I didn't even know what I wanted. I thought sport would solve life. It didn't. I was just empty.

Today there is wonder around my results. Back then I didn't understand it, so I was forced to keep searching. My private life was chaotic, and in the end I left the sports world and never went back.

IF YOU CAME HERE FROM A PODCAST

You may know this feeling. You reached the number, the title, the house. You waited for the arrival. It felt like nothing.

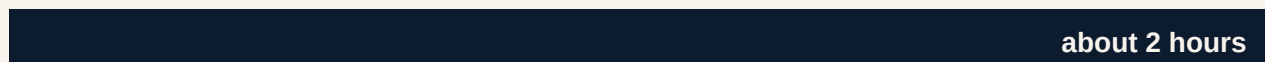
2 / A WAY TO PICTURE IT

2 minutes vs 2 hours.

Think of a child who needs you at 100% for just 3–5 seconds.

Give the child 95% and the same moment drags on for minutes. The child feels it instantly, starts over, pulls at you, tests you.

Now carry that picture into your day. Take 20 small, automatic decisions: which tone to use in the email, whether to answer the colleague now or later, what to do first. At full presence each one takes seconds. With a little resistance, a little doubt, a little tiredness — 95% — each one can quietly stretch into minutes of correcting, second-guessing and redoing.

Full presence (100%) about 2 minutes**Almost there (95%)** about 2 hours

Twenty small decisions in one day. An illustration, drawn to scale.

Twenty decisions at a few seconds each is about a minute of your day. At three or four minutes each, it is an hour or more — in this picture, roughly 90 minutes. That is the 95% leak.

A note on the numbers: this is an illustration, a way to see something that is otherwise invisible — not a laboratory result. Your own numbers will differ, which is why the exercise below matters.

THE SHOE EXPERIMENT

Which foot do you put into your shoe first? Most people have no idea — it was never decided, it simply runs on autopilot. Do the opposite for two weeks and notice how much of your day turns out to be automatic. Half of life runs without awareness. The other half, without passion, feels flat.

TRY THIS NOW

Count how many decisions you took today at less than full presence. Ten? Twenty? Multiply by three or four minutes. That is time that slipped away — not because you did too much, but because you were never fully there.



3 / THE LAPPING OF LIFE

You have to stop to hear it.

I live in a fishing village a few hours from Bangkok. Everything here has a quiet rhythm, like the soft lapping of the sea when it seems still. But the sea is never still.

Neither is life. We only think it is. Change is the only constant — the only thing you can truly rely on. In a few milliseconds everything can turn to chaos, or become extraordinary. That is the lapping of life.

You have to stop in order to hear it.

The first two years in Thailand, I walked the beach every morning and every evening. I watched the sun rise and I watched it set. No projects. No job. Just reflection. At 41 I asked myself: “What should I focus on for the rest of my life?” It took two years to get a hint, and five years to live it fully.

YOU DON'T NEED TWO YEARS ON THE BEACH

You need one minute a day.



Atlanta 1996. The long jump.

4 / 15,000 HOURS FOR 6 SECONDS

The record was never the point.

The call room before the 100 m is the craziest room I have ever been in. Eight individuals, all completely focused on themselves — and all of them winners, because reaching a final at the Olympics or Paralympics is the highest honour there is.

The warm-up happens in another arena. Two or three calls, then a bus to the stadium. No coach can come with you. Then the race, then the bus back to the village. That is it. Fifteen thousand hours of training, and you get a few seconds to show it.

It is incredible how small the margins are. Thousands of choices led to that moment. I wrote thank-you letters to everyone who helped me, and the list grew past 150 names. Some gave one hour, others several years. Without them nothing happens. The final phase of a world record is six seconds — but all of those people are in it.

It is a long chain of right choices towards a very odd goal, and it gives you a kind of power: people wonder, and some even follow.

Your exit, your sale, your title — the same six seconds. What comes after is the real race.

5 / WHO THIS IS FOR — AND YOUR NEXT STEP

You don't need motivation.

You need presence — a few seconds of 100%.



Where flow came back: painting.

I have not coached anyone with a physical disability since 1992. My cerebral palsy is my proof, not my niche.

I help leaders who hit every target and felt nothing find their way back to presence.

THE NEXT STEP

A real conversation. Not a pitch. You leave with clarity, whether or not we work together.

BOOK A FREE 30-MINUTE CLARITY SESSION

calendly.com/mikaelavatar/30min

Not ready to talk? Read the longer story first: the free book *Life Reset Zero* is waiting at mikaelavatar.com.

If you heard me on a podcast, this is the natural next step.

Born dead. Chose to burn bright.

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