

GREAT WORK

HOW TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE PEOPLE LOVE

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INSIGHTS FROM THE LARGEST-EVER STUDY OF AWARD-WINNING WORK

Adam runs his own gym. Big deal, you might think. If you've seen one gym, you've seen them all. And for 99 percent of the gyms out there, you would be right. The fitness category has been made up of the same good stuff, the same foundational elements, for years: there's the memberships, the workout equipment, music, TVs, locker rooms, amenities, and so forth. But in 2007, Adam had an idea: what if there was a way to harness the energy of exercisers and convert it into electricity? In that instant, Adam's passion for a great new mix began.

At the time, Adam was a personal trainer. He didn't have any experience in electrical engineering, and this was his first entrepreneurial leap. But his desire to make a difference, plus his environmentally conscious sensibility, inspired a can-do attitude. And so he flung himself into it, gym shoes first. His first move was to search "green gyms" on the web to see what was already being done. The results: nothing, except for a little gym in Hong Kong that was making electricity with elliptical machines. Adam purchased that equipment, but it was substandard for the gym he wanted to create. Back to zero.

Over the next year or so, Adam experimented with various types of gear and gadgetry, jerry-rigged parts from this source and that, read Seth

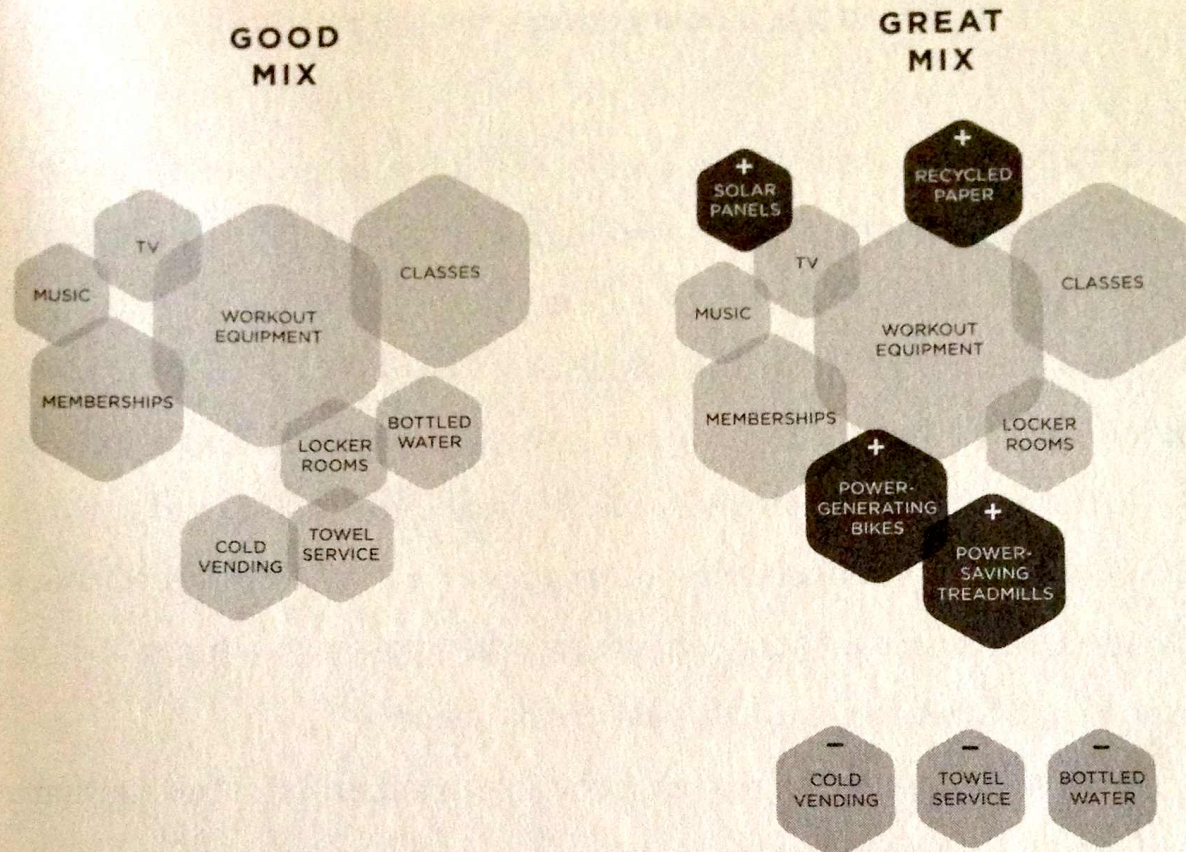
Godin's book *Purple Cow*, looked into all things green, put out his feelers to connect with like minds worldwide, and, in time, worked his mix into the world's first eco-friendly fitness club: the Green Microgym, headquartered in Portland, Oregon.

Adam describes what drove him. "I saw this vision of what could be, and I didn't know how I was going to get there, but I just wanted to go for it. I wanted to make a difference, to give people one more good reason to work out, and to do what I could for the planet."

Adam kept many elements from the good gym mix he started with. His gym still has memberships, workout equipment, music, TVs, and locker rooms. But here's how Adam worked to shape that good mix into a great mix: he added elliptical machines and stationary bikes that produce electricity for the building, treadmills that use 30 percent less electricity, exterior solar panels, eco-friendly building materials, non-VOC (volatile organic compounds) cleaning supplies, and recycled paper products. He also scrapped a few things from the good mix: no towel service, no bottled water sales, and no vending machines that refrigerate.

That's the thing about discovering a mix that lights you up. Once that spark is lit, you have the passion to keep right on working: to keep the stuff that fits, toss the stuff that doesn't, and add new stuff that transforms good into great.

In 2010, Adam conducted a study that he calls "Our Green Advantage." According to the report, compared to other boutique gyms of similar size, the Green Microgym is making a big difference to the environment every day. By combining human power with solar power, the gym is able to generate 35 percent of its own electricity. That's a 60 percent reduc-



Adam's mix

tion in carbon emissions, or 74,000 pounds—an impact equivalent to 15 acres of planted trees or 81,400 miles not driven by cars.

It's important to note that every individual change that Adam made counts as an improvement to the original good that he started with. Even Adam couldn't (and didn't) manage all those changes at once. He added the power-generating elliptical machine (an improvement that people loved), and later the solar panels (another improvement). He worked with and changed the gym mix one or two elements at a time until he got to the composite great mix we chose to illustrate. But was that the end of Adam's great work journey? No. He's out there making new improvements to his gym as we speak.