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Procrastination

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Strategy #8: "Energy Management"

If you are like most people, you probably want to manage your finances in the best possible way.

Most likely, you work out a budget in which you allocate a specific amount of money to each item on your list of expenses. Pretty simple. Sure, sometimes you spend more money than you had planned and, because of that, you may cause a negative impact on the balance in your bank account.

Energy works in much the same way.

Using more energy than you have in store is much like using a credit card with no credit.

You can spend away even if you are short of cash, but in the end there will be a large bill to pay. The same goes with energy. If you spend too much energy, more energy than you actually have in your energy-account, then you will get into trouble with your energy-chief-manager.

Your body will let you know that you are off track. It will start to protest because it doesn't like that you over-spend. You may experience this in the form of overwhelm, fatigue, or frustration. This could lead you to forget about the whole thing as you start to lose interest in your goals.

If you don't have a certain level of energy, you are not likely to do a lot.

That's why it makes a lot of sense to watch how you spend your energy in much the same way as you watch the balance of your bank account. You want to find out how you are going to keep the energy-account in your favor.

You may be thinking, "That all sounds well, but how do I actually keep the balance?"

As with everything else, the first step toward getting what you really want is to become aware of what needs to change. In this case, you would want to pay close attention to how you spend your energy and, most importantly, establish daily routines that add to your energy.

Watch how you spend your energy by being an observer.

Being an observer means that you take on a neutral position and don't judge yourself if you find that you are overspending on your "energy budget". You simply observe whatever there is to observe with, "Oh, that's interesting. Let me find out more about that". In other words, be curious; almost like a detective who is determined to find out what your energy-pattern is.

You simply cannot change anything if you aren't aware of what needs to be changed.

You may even want to journal about it and write down your insights. If you find that journaling is a good tool for you, then there are numerous ways to do that. Personally I have found that it works really well for me to add colors and to illustrate my findings.

Another simple, yet very helpful tool is simply to rate your experiences. For example, say you go to meet certain people at an event. Afterward you may want to ask yourself the following question: "On a scale from 0 to 10, how energized does this meeting make me feel? ("0" means zero, "10" means a lot).

After doing that for a while you will be able to see a distinct pattern.

Most likely you will find that you prefer to be around certain people, and/or groups. Even the size of the group can play a huge role. Not everyone is the same. Some people prefer to be around large groups of people, others prefer much smaller groups of people. Find out what works best for you.

In any case, make sure that you don't judge other people if you find that they aren't the right fit for you. Although dropping the judgments could be easier said than done, judging other people will get you nowhere. Even if you find that some people "steal" a lot of energy from you, it is not your call to change them.

Your call is to set healthy boundaries and let other people know what you need. Even though this can be a bit of a challenge, it is worth remembering that your only access to change anything always lies within you. You cannot change anything for the better by blaming other people.

"Yes", this can be a real challenge, but stay with it.

After some time, you may want to track further how you spend your energy. What works for you? What doesn't work for you? By now you are probably already aware that certain people, or events, add to your energy level while others take away from it. Make a mental note of how each person makes you feel (or use the above rating system) and be sure to adjust accordingly.

In some cases you may even want to ask yourself, "Why am I hanging out with these people?"

Most likely it's because there may be some hidden benefits from staying with these people.

However, you may not be aware of those benefits. For example the benefits could be that you get to stay "safe" in the old, familiar comfort zone rather than take on something new and daring. That way you don't have to deal with your own fear of failure. The result is that everything stays the same.

However, to get to where you want to be you've got to try something new.

Someone said that it's insane to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result.

I agree and at the same time it is easy to forget that the power to change anything is first and foremost within us. Not outside of us. A simple way to make a positive change is to begin to surround your self with people and environments that add to your energy level.

You will feel the difference right away.

You will begin to feel empowered. This will encourage you to take more action and soon you will begin to believe in yourself more and understand that your goals are within reach. Even if you cannot surround yourself with supportive peers and environment 100% of the time, do this as much as you possibly can.

Some friendships may have to go. But you never know, you may re-connect with these friends later on. As I mentioned earlier on, I believe there is a certain life cycle for each relationship or friendship. You may find that as you grow, timing will bring you back together later on in life, at a better time.

Top Tips for Using the "Energy Management" Strategy

1. Know Yourself and Your Level of Energy

Knowing your own energy level (not everyone is the same) includes honoring your need for sleep. Yes, sleep is really important to your health and wellbeing. Power naps are also a great way to rejuvenate. Power naps are actually doing something good for your self and there should be no reason to feel guilty for taking the time out for a power nap or two.

On that note I would like to add that you might want to pay close attention to your bedroom environment. The bedroom is often the cause of much clutter, like old computers, or stuffed away books, clothes, or furniture.

You may want to think of your bedroom as a place that needs more of your positive attention. Say you get about 8 hours of sleep per night. This adds up to approximately 2,880 hours of sleep per year. The question then is, "Do you want to hang out for 2,880 hours in a room that is filled with old clutter and dust?

Probably not. It's well worthwhile to make you bedroom an inviting place to rejuvenate.

2. Be Aware of What Adds to Your Energy and What Takes Away From It

This includes specific people, different events, and everything that you come into contact with during the day. Even the food that you eat could be a huge source of energy, or not. Not everyone benefits from the same kind of food. This is individual and you may want to find out more about what kind of food is best for you. There are many ways to do that. For example, there is the Ayurveda medical system and Ayurvedic Diet, a prescriptive path that is developed for your unique body type and can enhance not only your body but your mental and emotional wellbeing as well.

3. Work Out an Energy-Budget

Find out how you are going to get energy into your energy-account in the first place. What kind of people, activities, food, music, etc. adds to your energy level? What should you not do because it takes away too much of your energy? How will you best spend the energy that you've got?

On that note I would like to add that stress could be a very big energy-stealer. In that

case you would want to identify your no 1 "stressor" and work out a strategy to change it. Sometimes we are not even (consciously) aware of what it is that is causing us the most stress. But we have to identify it in order to make profound changes.

4. Figure Out Your "Energy Peak Hours" and Plan Your Work Accordingly

For example, if you find that your brain is best wired in the early morning hours, then that is the time of day when you will benefit most from working on your top priorities. It is amazing what you can accomplish if you use your "energy peak hours" to your own advantage. Then save the less important tasks for later.

For some people it can be very helpful not to open e-mails, or attend to social media such as Twitter and Facebook, during their "energy peak hours". This can be a challenge but you will find that you get more done in less time if you use your "energy peak hours" wisely.

5. Balance is Everything

If you spend too much energy, which we all do at times, then it is really important to make up for it afterwards. That is how nature works too. It's a stressful life out there for the wild animals. Imagine, for example, the zebras. They have to defend themselves against the lions. This causes a lot of stress. However, afterwards they shake it all off and rest. We should do the same after a period of prolonged stress.

6. Mind Your Language

A smile, a friendly gesture, a compliment from someone else can often help shift your energy in a more positive direction in an instant. Likewise, you can make someone else feel much better by using positive language and smiling more often. We frequently forget that the way we interact with others greatly influences our own state of mind.

7. <u>Manage Your Relationships</u>

Studies indicate that the quality of our relationships is a far better predictor of health (energy) than other factors, such as a daily dose of Vitamin D or intake of health food. For that reason managing your relationships in a happy and healthy way can definitely increase your energy level and contribute to your general sense of wellbeing.

8. Manage Your Environment

Sometimes a simple shift of environment will do the trick. You can improve your skills and do all sorts of activities to get better results but if you find yourself in a type of environment that doesn't support you, it can sometimes be too hard to achieve the results that you want.

Read Strategy # 6, to learn more about the power of environment.

Actions Steps (Exercise):

Grab a piece of paper and make the following commitment to yourself:

"As a result of reading this chapter, I will commit to the following action steps to help increase my energy level:

(Write down what ever actions steps you want to take)

I have identified the following stressors that are taking away my energy:

(Write down your top stressors)

I will commit to the following action steps to eliminate the stressors in my life:

(Write down what ever actions steps you want to take)"

<u>Please note</u>: an action step need not be doing something that requires a lot of physical activity.

It could also be learning a new skill set, for example, how to set "healthy boundaries" or learning to say "no thank you" more often. Or it could be to start a daily practice of meditation, or taking the time out to power nap in the afternoon.



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