

ENERGY MANAGEMENT EXERCISE

In the midst of busy lives, most people focus their organizational efforts on time management. Books and books have been written about how to help people do this (e.g., *How to Get Control of Your Life and Your Time*, and *The Time Trap*). Many consultants make a nice living advising people how to manage their time. Indeed, whole companies have sprung up and made a profitable existence trying to advise people about how to manage their time (e.g., Franklin-Covey, Inc.). Clearly, time is a critical resource and an important input into our productivity and enjoyment of life. But your productivity and enjoyment do not depend on your time management alone. There are many factors that impact our outputs and satisfactions in life. These include our talents, our choices, and surely, our personal energy level. In fact, the amount of energy we bring to our allotted time on the earth (beginning with the fixed 168 hours per week) may well determine much more how much we give and get in life than our allocation and use of time.

The choices we make about how we eat, how we use our time, how we sleep, how we exercise, and how we manage our relationships all contribute to the amount of energy we have in life. We would probably be better off if we paid more attention to our energy management than to our time management. Consider, for example, the case of physicians. A typical emergency room attending physician or a typical thoracic surgeon might work up to 100 to 110 hours a week. How is it that they have enough energy and stamina to live this kind of life, year after year? How would their energy level compare to that of an assembly line worker who spends 40-45 hours a week on the job? Is it just because physicians are dealing with life and death situations? Are they workaholics? Or are they managing their personal energy levels more effectively?

In fact, I have come to believe that one of the best definitions of leadership is the ability to manage energy, first in yourself and then in those around you. If your interactions with people are building their energy, you are probably leading them. If your interactions are sucking energy out of people, you may be in charge, but you're probably not leading.

This note was prepared by James G. Clawson, Johnson & Higgins Professor of Business Administration and includes some ideas of Dr. Curt Tribble, M.D. of the UMS Thoracic Surgery Department. This note was written as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2012 by the University of Virginia Darden School Foundation, Charlottesville, VA. All rights reserved. *To order copies, send an e-mail to dardencases@virginia.edu. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, used in a spreadsheet, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the permission of the Darden School Foundation.*

The goal of this exercise is to help you begin to clarify those things in your life that energize you and those that de-energize or debilitate you. Use the table below to help clarify how your choices affect your energy level. You may find the references at the end interesting in helping you to learn more about how you might manage your energy on a regular basis.

Energy Management Table

CATEGORY OF ACTIVITIES	THINGS THAT ENERGIZE ME	THINGS THAT DRAIN MY ENERGY
Activities		
Foods		
Sleep		
Relationships		
Entertainment		
Exercise		

Other		

Energy Action Items

Once you have listed as many items as you can under the categories above, reflect on the two columns. Identify one to five things you could do to increase your energy level. Try one or two of these things for the next week, and make daily, written observations about how your daily energy level is affected by them. These self-observations will be important in helping you see the connection between your choices and your energy level.

Energy Management Goals for the coming week:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Reflections

Once you have tried one or two things for a week, make some written inferences about their impact on you and your energy level. Write these down so you can see them and refer to them.

Which ones do you want to continue?

What makes it difficult to continue doing them?

What can you do to insure that these become positive, repeating habits?

Energy and Leadership

If you agree with the notion that leadership is about managing energy, first in yourself and then in those around you, you might ask yourself, “Do people see me as a net energy sucker or a net energy contributor?” And why? This may help you think about how you might raise your energy level when you’re dealing with ... yourself and then others.

References

Stephen Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

Alan Lakein, *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*, New York: Dutton, 1974.

James B. Maas, *Power Sleep*, Harper Collins, New York, 1999.

R. Alec MacKenzie, *The Time Trap*, New York: AMACOM, 1997.

Anthony Robbins, *Unlimited Power*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.