

Energy R Us: Self Mastery...Feeling Good!

In our last article we spoke about several action steps to increase energy by working on both your outer and inner landscape. Becoming aware of your false beliefs and how they shape your thought patterns and result in feelings was one of the suggestions. This awareness is an essential first step but by itself it does not generally result in the desired changes. It is also necessary to use methods that erase the problem patterns from our systems and ‘install new operating programs’.

One of the key elements in an energetic approach to living is to FEEL good. Not only is this a goal, it is also a part of the method to achieve the goal. We are so accustomed to working hard, striving, pushing...*efforting* to reach our destination that it never occurs to us that there can be another way. It is not that we are to give up *making* an effort to reach our targets...the point is that we can do so with a lot less angst than most of us generate! The key here is in the attitude and inner state that shapes our approach.

Fortunately the same techniques that are used to help discover our problem patterns can also be part of the solution. Meditation and strategies encouraging healthier patterns of breathing can help heighten awareness of mind-body patterns that have resulted in a depletion of our energy resources. At the same time these methods begin to help develop an easier inner state of being and can be used to coach the mind to create new patterns and healthier ways of thinking and feeling. The enhanced well being that comes **in the practice** eventually spills over into real life!

Numerous studies have shown that these two simple techniques used on a regular basis result in ‘stress hardiness’ and improved health. So even if you have no interest in becoming knowledgeable about energy you can still benefit in very significant ways! In addition to strengthening the nervous and immune systems, these practices also help quiet the mind and body so you can become aware of subtle energies within yourself and in your environment. They are the cornerstones for other methods that can eventually provide you with greater control over your energy.

Meditation & Breathwork

There are many ways of altering the breath and using it to change our state of awareness. However unless you are working with a practitioner who is knowledgeable about these techniques it is best to stay with simple straightforward methods. Most of us breathe very shallowly, so simply deepening the breath and opening the chest fully can go a long way to raising your energy level and helping you to feel more relaxed. Another thing that breathing in this way accomplishes is to slow the mind. You will notice at the start that your mind will wander...A LOT! That’s okay; it’s what the mind does. The point is to notice when this happens and bring your attention back to the breath. The mind needs something to focus on in order to become steady and less busy.

This may seem too simplistic a tool in the overall scheme of things that you are trying to accomplish in your life. Be assured however that if you engage in such a practice, you will actually develop more ability and strength to achieve your goals in a much less effortful way than you may imagine at the outset. The simple approach just described regarding the breath can also become your form of meditation. Meditation techniques in general employ a specific focal point of attention to help quiet the mind and body. We have to breathe; it’s always present and costs nothing so it’s a good choice for a focal point. It is that simple *but not easy*! There are many styles of meditation just as there are techniques of breathwork. The important thing is to choose one that fits for you. We are each unique in how we respond to stress and our lives. The tools we

use should fit our particular temperament, *life & stress style*. There are many books, tapes, classes and videos that can teach you these techniques for self mastery and feeling good. Explore the many alternatives with your needs in mind and discover what fits for you. The effort you make to integrate a twenty minute 'stress break' into your day will bring great returns in the form of increased perception, improved ability to concentrate, enhanced health and an overall increase in your ability to build and use energy for your benefit.

Strengthen Your Core

Paying attention to your breathing on the inside pays significant dividends for you on the outside. You can strengthen your *core*, the center of your *personal power system*, by simply focusing on your breath and bringing your attention to it. Breathe in as deeply as you can. Expand your chest and draw your breath into your abdomen. If you can't do this right away, don't worry. Do a little bit everyday and before you know it, you'll be breathing more deeply and more fully.

When you strengthen your core, you put yourself in control. Begin to notice how you feel and what you are feeling. You will notice different triggers: situations and things that make you feel great as well as conditions under which you feel more stressed. Pay attention to the people and relationships that strengthen and energize you as well as those that deplete you. When you find yourself feeling more stressed, take note and practice breathing consciously for just a few minutes, or even a few complete breaths. Breathe in slowly, fully and deeply. Doing so will slow you down and allow you some thinking time. As you think, you can consciously choose how to handle each situation vs. simply reacting.

Pay attention to your breath at various points throughout the day. Before you get out of bed in the morning take a few deep breaths. Nice, long, slow deep breaths. Expand your chest and breathe all the way down and into your abdomen. Practice deep breathing while you are in the shower. Simply breathe deep, long and slow as the water washes over and cleanses you. If thoughts of your upcoming day rush into your mind, acknowledge them, let them go and return to breathing deeply, slowly and consciously.

Breathe deeply as you are on your way to work. Long, slow, conscious breaths. As you do so, think about what you want to happen. Think about the events in your day flowing easily and effortlessly. Try to hold these thoughts for at least 68 seconds. There is a theory that says holding our thoughts for 68 pure seconds (without self-doubt or sabotage creeping in) helps whatever you are thinking about to manifest. The key is to keep your focus pure and undiluted.

Take a few moments during the day to breathe as deeply and as consciously as you can. If there is a lot going on around you and you find it hard to focus, take three deep breathes. They will only take a little time and you can return to your present situation in a calmer and more directed state of mind. Become aware of what you are thinking and choose thoughts that are supportive.

Also take time to breathe deeply and consciously before you go to bed. Review the events of your day. Focus on what went well and give thanks before you drift off to sleep. Breathe in slowly, deeply and consciously. It's one of the best methods of self-care and it costs you nothing!

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