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Energy Givers vs Energy Robbers

Everyone has positive and negative influences in their life. The important thing is to recognise which people, events or situations fill you up and which ones deplete you. By finding out what is stressful for oneself, changes can be made in the right direction towards a more healthful life.

A helpful exercise is to take a piece of paper and divide it into two columns.

Good for me (gives me energy, happiness, health – energy givers)	Bad for me (drains my energy and health - energy robbers)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

There may be relationships, time commitments, people, work situations, eating patterns that go in one or both columns. You may love a job or commitment (column 1) but not the time commitment associated with it (column 2). By doing this exercise, you can find out what the energy givers are as well as the drainers and can identify the top 5 in each column. In the “bad” column, identify why the top 5 entries are so tough and understand clearly what is going on to have a clear picture of life situations that are negatively affecting your health. See how these prevent you from living a healthy life. Choose the worst one from the “bad” column and make a commitment to eliminate this from your life. Work out a plan to do this. Once this item is eliminated, move onto the next and repeat the exercise.

Looking at circled items from the “good” column, devise a way to do these things more frequently in your life, moving from a life with things that render you powerless to things that make you feel more in control, more empowered in life.

Recognize your “energy robbers”, which are things that make you feel drained. Many energy robbers will show up in the “bad” column. These can be bad foods, commitments, a strong scent, a memory, a room or even a person. As an example, an energy robber could be a friend or family member. If you talk to this friend every day, try minimizing your exposure to this person by talking three times a week or even once a week. If this is someone you are very involved with, you could make a signal to that person to let him or her know you feel your energy draining. If it is someone you do not have open communication with (an energy draining sign) you must do what you can on your own and perhaps rethink this relationship.

If it is work or home conditions, the solution may take a bit of creativity. For instance, at work – only phoning back messages at two time intervals in the day instead of being constantly interrupted on the phone.

If you’re still stuck you can change the situation (eliminate the loud noise – telling people to be quiet), change yourself to the situation (wear earplugs with loud noise) or leave the situation (leave the area of the noise).

Please consult Dr. Bjorndal for additional help in this area if you feel it is necessary. She has training in both Cognitive behavioral therapy and Gestalt psychotherapy and can help you set boundaries in important areas of your life that may be draining you of vital life energy.