



Learn to Recognize and Deal with Energy Drainers

What helps to make our lives happier and more fulfilling? Our lives are composed of many weeks. A week is composed of days and each day is broken down into hours, minutes and seconds. If we look at each minute as a step in life, it is easy to see how many strides we can make each day towards our life-long ambitions.

When there are distractions in life, they can be significant or minor. I like to refer to them as energy drainers. Energy drainers are situations that use our energy in a way that is not helpful to us. They are things that we are tolerating in life. Energy drainers come in two forms. They can be significant life decisions such as disliking our job and not knowing what to do about it or having no time to intimately talk with our spouse. The smaller energy drainers are things like a broken oven, closets that are cluttered, wanting to install a financial program on the computer, or finding a tool that we've needed.

Sometimes, we are not even aware of what is draining our energy as we've subconsciously decided "just to put up with it." In either event, these energy drainers rest in the back of our mind like a nagging child waiting for your attention and in the meantime slowly deplete your zest for life. So, what can you do about energy drainers? The first step is to notice them. Make a list of what you are tolerating at work and at home. Make your list as complete as possible. Then, you have the opportunity to do some creative thinking. Look at what the energy drainer is costing you. For example, it may be costing you time, lack of focus, frustration or inconvenience. Is the cost worth it?

Next, you get to decide what to do with these situations. With the more minor energy drainers, you have the choice to take care of them yourself, delegate that task to someone else, or decide that they are not really important enough to you to do either. Be careful, though, when you conclude that you want to ignore a situation that you are not fooling yourself. If you decide that something is unimportant, that means you are not going to mull it over anymore. Of course, you can always change your mind and re-assess your satisfaction in that area. A life coach can assist you in prioritizing your energy drainers and creating a plan of action to handle them.

With major decisions like not being satisfied in your career or with your relationship with your spouse, the task is more involved. One option is to journal about these issues so that you can "hear yourself think." A life coach can also assist you in looking at your goals, values and life purpose. From the perspective of what really matters in your life, you can then make choices about how to pursue another course of action.

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Needless to say, there are many events in life that we don't get to choose. For example, Joan has an 83 year old mother whose health is failing. This is beyond her control. What she does get to choose, though, is her attitude. She can choose to be grateful for the many years she had with her mother and look at this as an opportunity to learn something about herself. At the same time, she can look at ways to take care of herself while she is going through this situation so that she will not be depleted.

Sometimes, with time being limited, the ways in which she can take care of herself need to become very basic. Reminding herself to take a deep breath and drink water are two examples of things she can do that take very little time and are self nurturing. Other choices may include getting together with friends or taking a walk at some point in the day.

Life is composed of many decisions and actions that we make every day. Each hour presents a choice of how we live our lives. One way to create fulfillment in our lives is to identify what circumstances are standing in the way of our satisfaction.

Assess the cost of these obstacles in terms of time and irritation. Then, you can find effective ways to manage, eliminate or minimize these energy drainers. You may be surprised to find that life can be more fun than you ever imagined!

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