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6 Ways To Boost Your Energy

Besides sleeping for two days, which most of us don't have time for, we've got quick ways to refuel (no coffee required). *By Jeanne Muchnick*



Sometimes you can feel like your body is a vending machine, constantly dispensing money, offering advice, helping with homework, dealing with deadlines, and always — providing, giving, doing. There are days when you're literally drained. Depleted. Zonked. But with all your responsibilities and obligations, it's just not possible for to close down for a day or two and sleep it off. So you need to eliminate your energy drains and find a simpler way to recharge. First, look at what's consuming you, say experts. Tops on the list: family commitments, work, aging parents, spousal demands, children, low self-esteem, lack of community, debt, clutter, chronic procrastination, jealousy/envy and constant worry. Here, our pick of the top seven energy drains — and how to solve them.

Energy Drain #1 Over Committing. You know the drill. The PTA president asks you to bake cupcakes on the day you have a presentation due for your boss. Meanwhile, it's your husband's birthday, and you promised him his favorite dinner. Over committing is the good little girl syndrome, explains Debbie Mandel, a life coach and author of *Turn on Your Inner Light*, "Saying yes, when you mean no — you become the martyr because you're the only one who can do it right!"

Antidote: Give up control and delegate, delegate, delegate. "When you say no to others, you say yes to yourself," she stresses. "Begin by saying no to small things, and it will get real easy, real fast." If you need help, practice the fine art of politely yet firmly saying "no" with telemarketers who call during

Releasing Your Energy Drains

You've heard it before, but no doubt you need to hear it again: let go of the little things. They don't matter! Here, some ideas from Tina B. Tessina, PhD, psychotherapist and author of *It Ends with You: Grow up and Out of Dysfunction*:

1: Put things in perspective. Will they be important an hour from now; fifteen

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dinner time.

Energy Drain #2 Clutter. Your desk is overflowing with papers, there are dishes in your kitchen sink and you have a week's worth of laundry calling from the bathroom floor. What's a girl to do? According to Mandel, the answer is simple: Simplify! "Stress is directly proportional to complexity," she says. By clearing your space, you can clear your mind.

Antidote: Get organized! Break large tasks into smaller, more manageable ones. Think of your energy drain as an invitation to recharge. Once you can see the calm after the storm, you yourself can be calmer and have more energy to deal.

Energy Drain #3 Holding Onto Jealousy and Envy. When you compare yourself to others, you sabotage your own individuality.

Antidote: Realize that everyone gets a turn to shine. Today it might be your friend, tomorrow it will be you. Everyone has buried treasure — cultivate your own uniqueness. Know what you specifically contribute to the table of life! Anna Maravelas, a licensed psychologist based in St. Paul, Minnesota and the author of *How to Reduce Workplace Conflict and Stress*, says she turns this one inside out by turning her jealousy into admiration. She says she's made some fabulous friends by practicing this. "Many talented, beautiful people are lonely because others can't cope with their talent. They are grateful to be appreciated by someone who doesn't compare themselves to them and come up short."

Energy Drain #4 Chronic Frustration. Research says we face about thirty "heart hassles" a day; mini-crises that short circuit our goals and increase the time we need to complete a task. Knowing that frustration is an integral part of living helps us respond in ways that maintain our momentum and mood. According to Maravelas, most individuals report having the least energy and the highest demands near 4:30 in the afternoon. That's when most of us face kids returning from school, commutes, day care, food preparation, mail, errands and evening schedules. This is also the peak time for food cravings, particularly chocolate.

Antidote: Plan for this low point. Stock the car or kitchen with water, highquality chocolate and soothing tapes. If children are returning from school, stop everything for half an hour and do nothing but help them transition to home, have a light snack and enjoy an emotional or physical 'cuddle' with mom. Take time to

minutes from now?
Most of them won't be.

2: Give yourself a break. If someone or something upsets you, don't exaggerate the problem by getting on your own case for reacting. Reactions are normal — it's what we do with them that counts.

3: Rise above: If someone frightened you (a driver who cut you off) then give a little prayer of thanks that you survived, bless the other driver (who probably needs it) and you'll feel better.

4: Give the benefit of the doubt. If someone hurt your feelings, acknowledge that your feelings are hurt, then consider that the other person is probably more clumsy than intentionally hurtful. The world is full of emotional klutzes who don't realize the impact of their words and actions, and they create more problems for themselves than for you.

5: Consider the source. A neighbor or associate who is truly nasty may repeatedly hurt your feelings. Consider what must be going on inside that person's head, and be grateful that you're not hearing that. Even the meanest people are far nastier to themselves than they are to others. That person is trying to relieve his or her pain by inflicting some on you.