

**If you haven't got time to read this, then reading it may be your most important task today!**

## Time versus Energy

In my workshops I usually do a little slot on energy management, during *the grave yard shift*, just after lunch when the participants are feeling drowsy. I do this for three reasons: firstly to help them get through the session, secondly to help them cos 'lack of time' is the Biggest Issue out there (how do I know? Check out my web site for details [www.dsabuilding.co.uk/bigissues.php](http://www.dsabuilding.co.uk/bigissues.php) ) and lastly cos I like talking about it – its good crack.

I usually start this little slot on energy management by saying 'the vast majority of people in my 300 and odd workshops over the last seven years are frantically busy, rushing around like headless chickens, fighting fires, never [really] think, haven't got the time'. I get various reactions to this - people laugh, sigh, nod, shuffle awkwardly and crack nervous jokes. Rarely do I get indifference. It connects, people relate to it, seems to be true for them. Then I relate how loads of people go on a time management course only to be hacked off when they get back by their massively expanded inbox and because they still haven't got time to sort it all or even [look at] the great training material just collected. Nothing has changed! *Laughs in the room* ..... People relate to the time they lost on the time management course ....by now eye contact is great. Next I get controversial – 'time management is old hat, 90's technology, the really effective people out there are into energy management. Eh! Quizzical look, *what the flippin heck's he talking about now?*

Well that's what this piece is about .... If you can sustain a good level of personal energy through the day you get more stuff done and the stuff you get done tends to be the right stuff; so time management becomes much less of an issue. Easy to say less so to get to grips with? Well maybe, we [can] make it really hard if you want to.

Here's some stuff to think about.

I am rattling on about energy management, what does that mean to you - petrol, gas, wind farm, loft insulation?

OK [personal] energy management – what does that mean to you - running, having enough physical energy to get through the day or the match, tennis, golf? Yes, it's about physical energy though there is much more to it than that.

We have four levels of energy. Spiritual, Mental, Emotional and Physical.

**Spiritual energy** is about having a sense of *Purpose*, knowing what you are about and where you are going. For me it's not about religion, though I know some people derive great purpose from their religion. **Mental energy** is about how you think and what you think about and your ability to concentrate – focus. **Emotional Energy** is to do with how you are feeling, some days great, bouncing, then some days down in the

dumps. Then finally Physical energy is about being fit. Fit for what? Fit for purpose and that depends on what [your] **Purpose** is.

So, more on this! Your spiritual energy is the driving force – you know how we say he or ‘she is driven, she knows where she’s going’ – well that’s it, precisely, she has a goal or sense of purpose and she’s going for it, she’s on a mission and nothings going to stop her. This drive, this spiritual energy, is the push for her other three levels of energy and without that her efforts would lack direction and meaning. What is your purpose, your goal? What about your company’s purpose? To make money, is that what it’s about? Or for you is there more to it than that?

I raced triathlons for 15 years, trained twice a day, 20 odd hours a week. Why did I do that, what was the point or the purpose – I was younger then, probably something to do with recognition, being special or extraordinary, not completely sure. In the middle of it all my driver was not to be beaten by anyone else, though I was, regularly! Now I don’t race but still do the training. I am really clear on why I do the training now. I do it to stay fit. Fit for myself, my family and for my customers, in that order. Fit for myself and my family cos we are the fit family and fit for my customers because what I do is very demanding and I need loads of energy for it. Also cos when I am not fit I’m certainly not at my best – well grumpy! So when I am out training on a dark, wet night, soaked and cold I am really clear on why I am doing it; I have a bigger purpose than just getting round a 5 mile loop. So how is it for you? Why are you doing what you are doing and when it gets tough and you ponder this, do you have a bigger purpose to drive you on or is it all a bit meaningless. This is a good place to start in your quest for having more ‘energy’ and becoming less hassled by not having ‘enough time’.

Remember that seemingly worthless report (or task) you once spent ages on after having been told to by your boss and without any explanation. What was that all about, how come he asked you to do it, what was the point in doing it, he didn’t even read it! Remember how you felt? Not very energised or motivated – well that’s the opposite of what I am talking about here. Having a purpose and working on stuff that moves towards your purpose is incredibly energising. Again, what’s your purpose?

Check out: Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankl or Drained by Johann Christoph Arnold or All Will Be Well by Michael Meegan to tap into your spirit and explore your bigger purpose.

Now you have got purpose, spiritual energy, it’s your ability to think and focus that is going to keep you on track, moving towards your goal – this is what I mean my mental energy. Many people believe we are either born thinkers or not. I believe thinking is a skill or a muscle that can be exercised and developed. Many people I come across haven’t got time to think, they just ‘do’ and usually what they have always done, no room for innovation there, no room for doing things differently, better, exceptional. Mention something, an idea and the response is don’t be daft, Dave, we have to live in the real world. Well I really get that that is their real world though the actual World is so much bigger and full of interesting possibilities, just waiting to be tried out and the idea might just work and allow them the solution - their current always, always thinking doesn’t seem to be doing it for them.

This mental energy thing is huge for us humans and there are far better people out there to talk about it than me, so I will refer you. A guy called Timothy Gallwey wrote a book called *The Inner Game of Tennis* in 1974. Very little of the book is about tennis; it's more to do with what is going on in the player's head and how that controls his game and the outcome – win or lose. In true 'on to a good thing' style Gallwey has also written books on *Inner Game of Golf* and *Work* plus nowadays CDs, audiotapes and other Inner Game resources. Anyway, his main notion (I think) is that, in our head, we have two inner selves. Inner self 1 and inner self 2. Inner self 1 is the constant non stop barracking I give myself for not doing that well, not quick enough, or oh sh!t look at the flipping speed of that ball coming at me, quick get out of the way never mind trying to get it back, no chance and on and on. Inner self 2 is the calm, unflappable subconscious that gets everything done anyway and would do so, so much better if only that inner self 1 would shut up. Gallwey explains it much better than me, though I am a keen student and practice his tips with, for me anyway, amazing results – though not all the time cos my inner self 1 is regularly way too loud and ever present.

An example of this: when I was younger I seemed to be over promoted. I would be just starting to get on top of my job, get half decent at it and, woof, they promoted me. Even bigger ego, bigger car, more money, bigger empire – I started all over again and tried to develop into the role and get good at it, then bang, again they promoted me and so it went on. To the outside world (or at least some, though definitely not all) I was doing great, was confident and the jobs just about got done, safety, time, money etc. To me I was full of self doubt, bluffing and doing all I could not to get found out, in fact I was amazed they hadn't found me out yet! This constant self doubt (inner self 1) took its toll on my mental energy and I am sure half the time I wasn't thinking straight at all. Could be my boss was thinking the same about himself so he failed to notice me, I got away with it and we both muddled through together or maybe my partial focus was good enough to get enough done to keep above mediocre and get promoted again. Though just how good could my results have been if I was really sharp mentally? So the mental energy level is all about what is going on up there and how to think with greater clarity; focussed on what is really important to progress and not giving way to the myriad of distracting pulses of thought that cause us to wander all over the place and off path, away from our goal.

If mental perfection is 100% I guess I am at 20%, which is 100% on from where I used to be. So how come my magnificent progress? I am clearer on where I am going; purpose is my habitual starting point in absolutely everything I do whether it's a workshop or a telephone call. Also I have various tools and other habits that help me think better. Talane (Paul Fox wife) suggested a great technique – every day to write '3 pages', 'just pick up a pen and start writing'. I have combined this with a Gallwey's S.T.O.P technique – **S**tep back, **T**hink, **O**pportunities and **P**roceed. So at the start of every day I step back for a moment and think, then I brainstorm my opportunities and then decide how I am going to proceed. Writing it all down takes me about 15 minutes, can't believe the stuff I come up with and my focus for the coming day, sometimes I do it again after lunch time when I have lost my way. Another habit I have is to spend 10 minutes at the end of my work day listing and appreciating the progress I have made.

Let's be clear, mental energy is about thinking and focusing on the stuff that is going to move you towards your bigger purpose or goal – the right stuff! Where can you find out more? Amazon – read anything by Tony Buzan, Timothy Gallwey or Edward De Bono.

So! To emotional energy, the tough one especially for us blokes! About 10 years ago I was on a fantastic programme and one of the exercises was to write the names of people that I had issues with on a piece of paper. The coach said 'if you are wondering about a particular person as to whether you have an issue with them or not, then you [have]' and to include their name on the list. I remember looking at that list and thinking all the stuff going on, right there, was just weighing me down, like a big sack of rocks I was carrying round with me in my life. I was pretty hacked off with some people and I guess there were many out there who felt the same way with me. The next part of the challenge was to go sort things out with the people on the list, scary! Looking back I think it took me about two years and there were some real difficult conversations in there. One was with an architect that I had treated particularly shabbily. My behaviour towards him had been in the back of my mind for ages, slowly eating away at me. I called him to arrange a meeting, he seemed shocked. He welcomed me in, made me a cup of tea, we sat and talked, I apologised and he thanked me for doing so and then we shook hands and it was complete between us. I took one boulder out of my sack and things felt just that bit lighter. Many other conversations followed and surprisingly all finished in a similar manner, though some were neither easy nor quick. Now I work on being 'complete' with everyone in my life, it's a habit of mine, and that allows me to be complete with myself. I have a spring in my stride and move much faster without that sack of rocks on my back. Currently the only name on my list belongs to someone who broke an agreement with me, though he may not see it that way. He won't return my calls so I cannot get complete. Paul Fox coaches me to 'let it go' though I am ashamed to say that I won't cos I am well and truly hacked off. Still I never said I had all this sussed. I am probably more hacked off with me than with him (the person on my list, not Paul).

I know that we sometimes cannot control what people do or say to us but we can always be in control of how we react. Someone can say a terrible thing to me but it's up to me as to whether I give them permission to upset me. Most of the time I chose not to be upset, though I have to admit, occasionally I allow myself to be hooked. Also sometimes I just want to be hacked off and to mire in my own stew. Once I growled at a general foreman: 'I am hacked off and I am going to be hacked off' and he responded – 'fine but go home because you are no good to us when you're like that'. I will always remember that, what he said helped me take responsibility for the way I was feeling, it was my feeling and it was for me to do something about it.

When I was at Birse they tried to get compete with their collective past and posted an article (double page, centre spread) in a national Sunday newspaper apologising to everyone, subcontractors, clients etc for how they had been. To me it was a genuine attempt to heal their past so they could move on to a bigger, brighter future. They got calls from irate people and I guess some things were smoothed out and others not. From memory the industry thought they were mad and the press had a field day. Maybe they were 10 or even 20 years ahead of their time? Though at that time many people in the company felt that they had to try to get complete to be able to move on - to improve the corporate emotional energy.

Some days I wake up feeling great and then others not so and for no apparent reason – I try and rationalise it and come up with explanations though often they don't fit. Then I hear so many people rationalising how come such as such is the way she is and they are just guessing too, they don't [really] know. The thing is, we are emotional beings and we use our rationale and reason to explain our emotions – emotion first then logic - in that order! Have you ever tried reasoning with someone who is upset or to get them to do something that they are reluctant to do (what about all the initiatives you are trying to fly in your organisation?) it doesn't really work, you are 'selling' them and they don't like it. So what's the answer to all this emotion? Well, when I wake up and feel down I look to my spiritual energy for drive – I get tuned into my purpose and commitments and focus on what I have to do to make right progress. In my opinion that is also a good place to start with faltering company initiatives – join up the purpose of the initiative (why are we doing this) with 'what's in it for them', your people (their own purpose) and sit back and watch it take off! The alternative is to get them all into a road show event and rationalise and exhort them into action, believe me management by exhortation doesn't work for that many people. Tapping into their emotional energy works – ask them about their fears, what excites them and what they feel confident about.

Apparently the book to read if you want to learn more about emotional energy is Emotional Intelligence by Daniel P. Goleman; not read it myself mainly cos its 350 pages long. Or one that made me cry! The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom (brilliant)

Clarity of purpose, focused and acting on the right stuff, relationships in tact - what else? We need physical energy to make it all happen. If spiritual energy is the drive, mental energy the focus, emotional the quality of our energy, then the physical level is about the quantity of our energy.

So, somehow or other you need to get in shape, get fit for your purpose what ever that might be and to stay healthy. This is what works for me, though I don't expect it will work for everyone, we are all different!

I exercise on average 5 times a week. My training sessions range from about 30 minutes up to about 2 hours duration. My heart rate is usually above 140 beats per minute (my aerobic threshold) and occasionally up to 178 bpm (max heart rate, theoretical value is 220 less age, in my case  $220 - 46 = 174$ ). For me exercise keeps me fit and helps me to loose my 'edge', also sometimes I come up with my best ideas when out there. *Usual health warning! If you are inspired to take up exercise after years of not doing it, go see your doctor first.*

Doing all this exercise makes me tired and really helps me sleep. Getting sufficient sleep is very important for recuperation and sustaining high energy – I regularly sleep for 8 hours and rarely less than 6. I always have breakfast, normally drink 2 litres of water a day and eat loads of fruit and carbohydrates. There is an interesting explanation on energy from fruit, though beyond the scope of this piece but believe me, eating small amounts at frequent intervals throughout the day works. That's my fuelling habit; what about keeping structurally sound? I see a chiropractor every six months to maintain my back alignment (important as your spine carries the central

nervous system – the communications channel between your brain and your organs. If the spine is out of alignment then so is the communication between your brain and organs which can have a damaging effect on your ‘internal doctor’ usually one reason for having to see an ‘external doctor’!) and a reflexologist every 3 weeks. How come a reflexologist? Well, we are a floating stack of bones and cartilage founded on our feet. Most days we take about 10,000 steps and each one sends a force about 8 times our body weight through one foot. If that foot is out of alignment then the effect is multiplied many times ( X 10,000 per day) as it transmits up the body to the point where it manifests as an ache or an illness – quite often in the neck or head!

There are some pretty obvious things, to me at least, to be avoided if you want to have loads of energy: don’t smoke, take it easy on the diesel (beer), watch out for eating too much chocolate, bacon and crisps and nightclubbing till 4 every morning!

Finally one habit I have developed for all four levels of energy is to take a holiday every quarter or more if I can: rest, recuperation and loads more training! – all help me think different thoughts and come up with new and great ideas.

Right! So what do you make of all that? *He’s off his rocker if he thinks I am going to do all that!!*

Frequently I hear people say if only they were more disciplined - to me, there lies the big mistake! We are all absolutely 100% disciplined to our existing habits. The difference between really successful people and those that are not has to do with their habits. Successful people have successful habits! (Fantastic book! – The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey).

Maybe there is one habit in here you would like to develop? If so, then just do it for 21 days and chances are it will become a habit for you. Then, maybe, develop another [successful] habit and so on.

Anyway back to my workshops and the *grave yard shift* and my tips for helping the participants get through to the afternoon teabreak without falling off to sleep:

1. Drink plenty of water – helps with hydration and concentration (mental energy)
2. Be clear on why you are here and what you want to get out of the session (purpose, spiritual energy)
3. Eat fruit, small amounts at regular intervals - tops up the liver which feeds the brain with the right type of fuel – sustains physical energy.
4. Smile – makes me less nervous in front of you and we all feel happier (emotional energy)
5. If you have to watch your clock then focus on the next tea break and not the workshop finish time (its called ‘chunking’ and aids mental energy) and
6. Contribute – throw yourself into doing what ever it is you are doing – life is too short to be a fellow traveller! .

### **Books mentioned:**

Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankl  
Drained by Johann Christoph Arnold  
All Will Be Well by Michael Meegan  
The Inner Game of Tennis in 1974 by Timothy Gallwey  
Anything by Tony Buzan, Edward De Bono or Timothy Gallwey  
Emotional Intelligence by Daniel P. Goleman  
The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom  
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey.

### **My habits mentioned:**

Habit – always ask what is the purpose here?  
Habit – write three pages every day, just pick up my pen and write (combine with STOP)  
Habit – spend 10 minutes at the end of the day reviewing my progress  
Habit – always get ‘complete’ with everyone I know (almost!)  
Habit – have 8 hours sleep every day  
Habit – drink 2 litres of water every day  
Habit – eat small amounts of fruit thro the day  
Habit – see my chiropractor every 6 months  
Habit – see my reflexologist every 3 weeks  
Habit – exercise at least 3 times per week  
Habit – take a holiday once a quarter

© DSA Building Performance Ltd

For further information contact Dave Stitt on 0191 516 6878 mobile 07904 186855 or e-mail [dave@dsabuilding.co.uk](mailto:dave@dsabuilding.co.uk)

Visit web site at [www.dsabuilding.co.uk](http://www.dsabuilding.co.uk)