

The Key to High Productivity is Energy Management

One of the issues most often raised by my clients is better time management. People have tried prioritizing tasks, blocking out parts of their day for certain tasks, implementing new systems and getting better at delegation. While all of those things can make a difference, there is something else that will have an even greater impact on your productivity. The key to high productivity is **energy management** more so than time management.

Let me start to explain this concept by way of an example. A couple of years ago, a client was frustrated with his productivity. He had just come back from vacation and wondered to me why he couldn't be as productive on his return as he had been on the day before he left. On the day before his vacation, he was a whirlwind of activity - plowing through the important phone calls that had to be made, responding to all the important emails on his computer, and clearing his desk of all the paperwork that needed his attention. By the end of the day, everything important had been attended to. He had had one of his most productive days. But upon his return, he had fallen back into his routine - productive, but not highly productive. He wanted to know how, or if, he could be highly productive on a daily basis. The answer is yes and no...

The reason for each answer has to do with energy management. Good energy management can allow you to be highly productive on a regular basis and poor energy management can keep you at average productivity or worse. Everything we do - from making sales calls to conducting meetings and presentations to attending little league games - requires energy. Most of us fail to take into account the importance that energy plays in our lives. Without the right amount of energy, properly focused and applied, we simply can't be as productive as we could otherwise be. Certainly, even with a poor level of energy, we can be productive - most everyone is. We're just not *highly* productive. Think about *your* day. Do you get up feeling tired? Do you put yourself on "cruise control" with a steady flow of caffeine throughout the day? Is your mental capacity diminished by mid-afternoon? Are you too tired to be active with family or outside interests in the evening?

Energy management has even greater impact than just physically getting through the day. I don't know about you, but when most people get tired their creativity drops, their persistence abandons them, and they get a bit edgy and less tolerant of people and challenges. A drop in energy impacts virtually every area of our lives.

What affects our energy levels? You already know the answer to that question. Nutrition, sleep, stress, physical fitness, attitude, emotions, and environment are the major influencers of our levels of energy. How do you improve these aspects of your life so you maximize your level of energy throughout the day? Easier said than done. After all, we all pretty much know that these things affect us but haven't done much about them so far. Usually we have a hard time making changes because our motivation is lacking. On the other hand, many of us know people who were out of shape, found out their health was in permanent jeopardy, and then found a way to get fit. It's all a matter of self-motivation. How would your life be different if you were highly productive in your sales efforts on a consistent basis? What difference would it make if you had good levels of energy throughout the day - every day?

How to become highly productive is too much to cover thoroughly in a simple article, but we can touch on some good ways to start improving your energy management.

Nutrition: Most nutritional experts agree that eating a number of modest meals throughout the day is much better than a couple of big ones. Don't forget to include protein with every meal.

Stress: There are no such things as stressful situations. It's our *reaction* to events that causes us to feel stress. You know what works best for you to reduce your feelings of stress. Set time aside to take care of yourself throughout the week. If you don't take time, soon enough you'll have no choice due to health issues.

Physical Fitness: Do I really need to go into this? Doing *something* is better than doing nothing at all.

Attitude: Our attitude colors our view of our past, our present and our future. Most people allow the world to determine what we hear and see, which determines how we see the world in general and how we see our own world specifically. Start to take control of what you mentally and emotionally feed yourself. Cut out the negatives (like the news on TV) and start introducing positives (like listening to personal growth tapes or CDs).

Another critical key to effective energy management is to understand the many positive implications of stretching our abilities and then taking time to recover and rejuvenate. Regular recovery and rejuvenation are essential to becoming highly productive. I can't stress enough the impact that regular rejuvenation can have on your energy, attitude, creativity, enthusiasm, and spirit.

Let me finish by getting back to the client example I started this article with. My client wanted to know how, or if, he could be as highly productive on a daily basis as he was on the day before his vacation, and my answer was yes and no. The yes part of the answer is that you can be highly productive on a regular basis, day after day, by managing your energy and the things that influence it. On the other hand (the "no" part of the answer), it's impossible to be highly productive without allowing your body, mind, emotions and spirit to recover and rejuvenate regularly. Remember, when we're tired we tend to slow down, make more mistakes and have a harder time being creative. After all, the main reason vacations exist is to allow us to recover and rejuvenate. You can accomplish more, with less effort and more creativity by backing off from time to time to recharge. Choosing how and when to recharge throughout the week is another story...

To recap what we've discussed in this article, the key to being highly productive in any endeavor is to manage your energy. By attending to your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs you can accomplish more with greater enthusiasm, greater creative and greater enjoyment than ever before.