

BALANCING ENERGY RESOURCES WITH ENERGY DRAINS

After you engage in an activity, do you feel energized? Do you feel more alive? Or do you feel drained, depressed, or less enthusiastic than before? Becoming more aware of what drains us and what energizes us, and then using that awareness to intentionally choose activities, is a way to find more balance in our lives. The following exercise is adapted from Take Time for Your Life by coach Cheryl Richardson.

On a piece of paper, create 2 columns, one titled ENERGY RESOURCES and the other ENERGY DRAINS.

Start with the resources and list the activities, people, circumstances that make you feel more energized. Think about the following areas - **Relationships and People** (for example, having coffee with *****), **Environment** - Home, Office, Car (having a clean and organized desk), **Body, Mind, Spirit** (how you feel after an exercise class, a good night's sleep, a good read and a glass of wine, a night on the town salsa dancing!), **Work** (taking on a new project, taking a lunch break), **Money** (paying credit card in full at the end of the month). What do you do that pays off big for you?

In the next column, list all the activities, people, circumstances that drain you of your energy, considering the same categories. List here everything you've been putting off, procrastinating about - (planning your summer vacation, fixing the toilet), topics that consume your energy (unfinished business with a family member, being overweight), relationships that aren't working, extreme energy drains (working too many hours on a regular basis), minor energy drains (grocery shopping or getting the kids to swimming).

Now imagine yourself as a car. As you go about your life, you're expending energy or using up gas. That's the Energy Drains column. And every now and then (and hopefully each night) you drive into the gas station to refill your tank with energy. The more times you go to the gas station, or do something that energises you, the lighter the ride of life will feel.

Take a good look at that Energy Drains List. The more you can eliminate from your energy drains list, the lighter you'll feel. Be honest

with yourself - sometimes as you're driving along, you make unnecessary detours that cost you time and gas. Eliminate whatever you can (JUST DO IT, hire someone to DO IT, or chuck it/forget about it). Mark everything on the list that's in the ELIMINATE category and just work your way down, doing something about it and sit back and enjoy the ride. This will pay off hugely for you.

However, there's no eliminating your mother from your life, no matter how draining she can sometimes be! Some of your car trips are absolutely necessary, or they're important to you in some way.

There's a few things you can do here:

- ☛ Plan to visit the gas station (an energy resource) before or after the trip, to keep things in balance.
- ☛ Improve your process wherever you can. A few quality minutes spent problem-solving can take care of a problem that's been draining you for months.
- ☛ Change the way you think about the drain. Open yourself to some new perspectives about your mother. Ask yourself, "How do I turn this energy-consuming, frustrating drain into an energizing challenge?"

And sometimes, hey, you're just stuck in the traffic jam - and aren't you glad that you've got a full tank of gas to see you through!