

Healthful Energy

By Mike Stewart, CSP



“The key to success,” according to entrepreneur Walter Hailey, “is to do what you need to do, when you need to do it, whether you want to or not.”

That may be the best advice for getting things done that I’ve ever heard – including accomplishing your health and fitness goals. It presumes that you have clearly identified what needs to be done, that you have a sufficient amount of energy available to do it, and that you will apply that energy to the activities which will lead to the achievement of your goals. Want to, can do, and will do.

But you already knew that, didn’t you? As a sales performance consultant, the barrier to getting things done I see with most people is not ignorance of what to do – it’s making excuses why they can’t do it.

One of the excuses I hear all the time is, “If only...” “If only my schedule would let me, I would work out three mornings a week.” “If only I weren’t so busy doing all these other things which are so critical right now, I would have time to really get in shape.” “If only I didn’t have to travel so much, I could eat a healthier diet....” Sound familiar?

Skip Bertman, head baseball coach at Louisiana State University, has spent his life coaching baseball. He has taken the LSU program to the pinnacle of success including two back-to-back NCAA National Championships in the last two years. Skip believes, “America’s favorite pastime is not baseball; America’s favorite pastime is the transfer of blame and responsibility.”

How about you? Have you transferred blame and responsibility lately instead of doing the things you know you should be doing to live a healthier, more energized life?

Here are two qualifying questions you can ask yourself to help you stop making excuses and start taking action to achieve a healthier lifestyle. Answering these questions can change the way you think and change your life.

Qualifying Question # 1 – Am I Actively Pursuing Goals That Truly Excite Me?

Goals that drive us to high achievement are the goals that excite and inspire us, such as accumulating a certain level of wealth, achieving special recognition, or managing to spend two uninterrupted weeks

with our family at a desirable vacation destination. The key is deeply desiring the specific goal and feeling strong excitement and genuine satisfaction at the prospect of achieving it. If you have that desire and excitement, success is possible; without them, success may be very doubtful.

Dave Gardner said, "Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get." Take a few minutes to re-evaluate your goals. Do you intensely desire them? Does the prospect of actually achieving them give you so much satisfaction that it keeps you awake at night visualizing them? Do they excite you so much you can hardly wait to get started every morning? If they do, great! The excitement and inspiration these goals provide will energize you – living healthier and getting into better shape will simply make you more efficient in the pursuit of such goals.

Oops! If your goals aren't exactly setting you on fire right now, you are not alone – and you will need even more energy to get them accomplished! Whoever said, "Life is so daily" was exactly right. Too many of us are constantly fighting the battle of doing the things we have to do day in and day out simply because we really have no choice, struggling against burnout – or boredom – every step of the way. Generating the energy it takes to deal successfully with such reality really does take a lot of hard work and improved time management.

Qualifying Question # 2 – Am I Generating Enough Energy To Achieve My Goals?

Have you ever noticed how a light bulb dims during a power outage? A similar thing happens with a flashlight; it may burn brightly when the batteries are new, but the light just fades away as the batteries run down.

A similar lack of energy can be a major barrier to your success. If the activities required for you to achieve your goals demand high voltage and long endurance you must bring sufficient physical and emotional energy to the task. If your activities require 110 volts of energy and you are only generating 40 volts, your chances of excelling are dim. Similarly, if your energy only lasts five or six hours at a stretch it will be tough to succeed at tasks requiring high performance eight or nine hours a day. The good news is, you can increase the amount of energy you need to achieve your goals.

Chip Mayberry, a client of mine in the health and fitness industry, designed a program to help me lose weight and increase my energy when I was enduring a period of extreme stress. The program involves a twenty-five minute strength training routine followed by a twenty-minute treadmill program three mornings a week. I also made some intelligent diet modifications. I lost nearly twenty-five pounds in less than four months and found that I could work three or four more hours a day without losing concentration. When a friend commented, "Boy, you've lost a *ton!*" all the early morning wake-ups didn't seem so bad and getting back on top of my goals really made the results worth the extra effort. Feeling better, knowing

I look better, and the excitement of being back on track continually inspires me to maintain my renewed lifestyle.

By reviewing your lifestyle and working out your own personalized fitness program with the help of John Breslin and his staff at the DCC Wellness Center, you will almost certainly be able to boost your own energy level considerably. Here's a basic checklist to help you insure that you're bringing the maximum power you are capable of to the pursuit of your goals:

- Complete physical examination within the past year
 - Balanced, reduced-fat, controlled-calorie diet
 - At least 64 ounces of water every day
 - Physician-directed dietary supplements such as vitamins and fiber additives
 - Aerobic and strength training three times a week
 - Sufficient amount of sound sleep every night
 - Mind-body health exercises such as positive self-talk, meditation, and yoga
 - Spiritual affirmation and growth through your personal belief system
 - Maintain the same schedule every day (including most weekends)
 - Intelligent use of alcohol and tobacco
- And this all-important point*
- Goals that are truly anchored in your values and honestly represent what you passionately desire to achieve. Your goals are great motivators.

There are some things you simply have no control over, which makes it even more crucial to control the things you can control, such as your lifestyle and energy. Marilyn Monroe said, "I just believe in doing the best I can with what I've got."

Action is the key. It is much easier to act your way into positive thinking than it is to think your way into positive action.

After my son, Mark, was diagnosed with cancer when he was twenty-six years old, he told me, "Dad, I'm scared to death, but if I act brave nobody can tell the difference – and neither can I." For the next five years he continued to achieve great personal and business success despite the crippling disease which recently took his life. Mark thought like a winner, not like a weenie, and he took action. He didn't intellectualize his challenges or make excuses; he simply focused his thoughts on taking positive action every single day to achieve that day's goal-directed activities. He refused to be a victim. As a result, he had a great attitude and his life was truly rich in every sense of the word.

Are you doing the best you can with what you've got?

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