

CHARGE BATTERY BEFORE OPERATING

By Michael Bland

'My battery's low and I want to save it for him.'

This tantalising snippet was blasted out by a young woman sitting next to me on a train, sharing her mobile telephone conversation in a loud voice with the entire carriage.

She had been telling her girlfriend - and the rest of the world - about the hunk she'd met the night before, about her entrapment plans for him, and about how he'd said he might call her this morning so she'd better get off the 'phone now in case he does so.

I don't know about you, but I often feel like that mobile phone. Have you noticed how, when you wake up after a good sleep and the sun is shining and you're feeling great and ready to take on the world, you're also full of *energy*? Or when you've been for a run or a work-out and had a shower, even though you've been expending energy you still seem to have more of the stuff?

And then, when life gets on top of us, or when we're run down, ill or depressed, we also feel low on *energy*?

There does seem to be a direct connection between our energy levels and our ability to handle things - in every walk of life from fighting illness to succeeding at work. A maxim of my stress/motivation workshops is: *'We can't make the problems smaller - but we can make ourselves bigger!'* The more we're pumped up with energy, the easier and smaller the hassles seem.

But how *do* we charge our batteries? Can we actually *choose* to have more or less energy? I believe we can.

For while it is a scientific fact that energy cannot be created or destroyed, it *can* be transferred. It can be harnessed. And when we start to look at energy as a commodity, just like the electricity in our homes or the fuel in our cars, we find that we do indeed have a say in how much energy we have.

What's more, we can choose at what level we want to tap in to that energy, according to our personal world view. In other words, it works at all three levels: body, mind and spirit. Energy runs through everything and is there for us to receive in whatever way we feel most comfortable. Let's look at some of these energy-givers, starting with the body:

Energy and the Body

When it comes to energy and the body I find it relevant, if a little scary, to reflect on what our bodies are actually made of. 'Mostly water,' you say. Yeah, but what's water made of? 'Hydrogen and Oxygen atoms,' you say. Not bad - and what is an atom made of? 'Sub atomic particles.' Brilliant - and what are sub atomic particles made of? 'Er...'

The fact is, there is no such thing as solid matter. At the microcosmic scale, what we regard as solid particles are effectively pulses of electro-magnetic energy in a dynamic relationship with each other. And relatively they are so far apart from each

other that 99.999% of an atom is empty space. A great way to kill the conversation at a party is to point out that in reality our bodies are made up of 99.999% empty space and the rest is energy in motion.

The body works in incredibly complex ways and it is an oversimplification to talk of it receiving and giving out energy the same way as a mobile phone battery. But it's a useful analogy. Our energy levels are the net result of what we take in and what we do with it. It helps if we recognise that the body is a machine – a very complex and miraculous machine, but still a machine in the way that our automobile is a machine. But we wouldn't treat an automobile the way we treat our body!

To function at maximum efficiency a machine needs work, fuel, maintenance and rest. For our bodies this means exercise, diet, therapies, and taking time out to top up the batteries - and all of the right type and in the right amounts! We can have too much or too little exercise, for example. Or an unhealthy diet – too much, too little, or the wrong sort of 'fuel' - leaves us with an energy deficit.

Rest is important, too. We live today on constant afterburners, and then we wonder why we get ill, depressed, inefficient and stressed out! The popular plea is 'I don't have time.' Not so. We get opportunities to take mini breaks several times a day – waiting for a train, at the airport, a delayed meeting – but when we receive these heaven-sent opportunities to do a mini-meditation or even snatch a five minute doze what do we do? We fill this potential re-charging time with phone calls and e-mails!

The fact is: the more time we make to charge up our batteries, the more energy we have. And the more energy we have, the more work we get done and the quicker and better we do it.

Energy and the Mind

The brain accounts for three per cent of our body mass and uses up 20% of our energy – and that's when it's operating normally! Worrying and overdoing things are hugely energy-consuming – as is trying to hold in place the psychological 'screens' that mask our true nature and feelings. There's usually a conflict between the person we're conditioned to believe we should be, and the person we actually are – and keeping up a false front drains energy like nothing else. So does our *attachment* to things – money, relationships, homes, jobs. We wear ourselves out so much trying to get and keep the things that we think will make us happy that we don't have the energy to enjoy them when we've got them!

But, just as our brains and minds can be enormous energy sappers, they also have untold power to *give* us energy.

For example, I mentioned the word 'meditation' back there. Numerous research studies show that people who meditate regularly are more relaxed, more on top of things, healthier and more able to cope than average. Some see this as being 'tuned in' to spiritual guidance, others as just being more spaced out – either way it works.

One of the many benefits of meditation comes from the ability of the mind to stimulate a positive (or negative, of course) response in the body, and the ability of the body to generate feedback responses in the mind – a virtuous (or vicious) circle. To see this at work, just close your eyes and picture yourself biting into a lemon and sucking it. We can't help salivating – yet there's no actual lemon!

Our minds are incredibly complex and fascinating. While we will never fully understand how they work, just the act of learning more about ourselves and how we

are affected by other people and things – and why – can help us be more philosophical, more aware, more on top of life.

And then there's:

Energy and Spirit

People who tune in to 'a bigger picture,' whether they see it as God, Allah, the life force, the Akashic Records, universal consciousness or whatever, usually find it provides a sense of purpose, a rationale for living, and an awareness of a much bigger reality which helps to provide the sense of perspective described earlier.

And whether you see it as a spiritual or a wholly physical phenomenon, there really does appear to be some sort of human energy field, which can act as source of healing, balance and 'personal power.' The concept of Chi energy has been around in philosophy and healing for thousands of years and is expressed in treatments such as acupuncture and Reiki, and seen by psychics in auras.

So, there is a whole spectrum of energy available to us at all levels - from the very physical to the highly metaphysical. And the great news is: energy is a *commodity*. We really can choose to have more of it, to harness it, to work with it.

We can approach this energy business from whatever angle we like – but remember: all the time that we're running round in circles we're like that mobile phone on permanent transmit.

We must remember to plug into the mains occasionally!

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