

Have More Energy

By Suzanne Zoglio, Ph.D.

Most of us have days when we feel on top of the world...and days when we're a bit down in the dumps. On days when you could use a lift, try one of these pick-me-ups.

1. Practice "Morning Intent"

Sometimes we feel kind of low because we don't have any reason to get going. To rev up your energy in the morning, start each day by focusing on what is meaningful to you... by planning from the inside out. Try using a practice I call "morning intent." Before you even get out of bed, consider how you will use the gift of a new day by answering three questions:

- What kind of person do I want to be today?
- What 2-3 things do I want to complete today?
- Where can I make a difference in someone else's life?

2. Send "I Can't" Packing

Every time you think or speak, "I can't ____" you lose a little steam. But when you say or think "I can if I____," you lift your confidence and energy. Just for a day, when you catch yourself thinking or saying, "I can't _____," write it down. For example, you might write: *"I can't go to exercise class today because my leg is sore."* Then, rewrite the sentence with confidence. For instance, you might write:

"I can go to exercise class today if I do some stretches first" or "...if I take some Motrin first" or "if I skip the leg lifts." In other words, you focus on what you CAN do, instead of what you CAN'T do. Your energy will rise.

3. Explore New Territory

Doing something out of the ordinary is exhilarating, because as Thoreau wrote, "Change is not necessary for life; change IS life." A little bit of risk or danger perks up our senses and reminds us that we are never too old to grow. And we don't have to go bungee jumping to get a lift. Just shake up your routine a bit. If you usually drink tea, try hot chocolate; if you generally eat meat, try fish for a change. If you watch the news before bed each night, skip it for a week and watch the comedy channel instead. If you've never been to bingo, give it a shot; or sign up for tap dancing lessons just on a whim. If you've never surfed the web, ask someone to take you for a "ride." If you're generally shy, be the first to speak for a day. For an energy lift, have yourself a "how unlike you" day!

4. Stay Plugged In

We all have days when we feel lonely or disconnected. Perhaps our friends are on vacation, or we've had words with someone dear. Maybe we've just been busy and out of the loop. Whatever the reason, there's been a break in the care and feeding of our relationships. But waiting for the phone to ring won't lift you up. Instead, try doing something to reconnect...to get plugged in. You might stop to reflect on a picture of loved ones and let your heart be warmed by the bond you share...even when they are not physically there. Make a call, write a note, or walk down the hall for a visit. Be the first to apologize if you were wrong, and graciously "forget" if someone stepped on your toes. Bring someone a small gift, pay someone a compliment, or give the gift of listening intently. When we connect with others, we open the flow of energy. We give, and in doing so, our hearts fill up as well.

5. Do Something You Love Every Day

For ongoing optimal energy, invest in something you love every day. Just a few minutes spent on something meaningful to you can keep you fueled for hours. Consider an interest that really fills you up. Maybe it's art, gardening, bird watching, your grandchildren, genealogy, bridge, reading, dancing, or playing the piano. Whatever the interest, it should be something that engages you so much that you don't notice time passing. Now make a list of related activities that you'd like to do some day. From as small as interviewing someone with similar interests to as grand as taking a trip to explore it further. Activities might include reading a book, writing an article for a newsletter, or joining a related chat room online. It might involve shopping, travel, audiotapes, or taking a class locally. The WHAT is not important, as long as you love it. Pursuing a passion often makes the difference between *living* your life and *loving* your life!