STOP Energy Vampires From Draining You by Judith Orloff, M.D.

STOP Energy Vampires From Draining You!
by Judith Orloff, M.D.

I learned to honor my energy needs the hard way. As a psychiatrist who specializes in intuition, I knew how important it was to listen to my body. Still I'd vacillate between intense weeks of speaking tours to bouts of utter exhaustion at home. I couldn't turn down "irresistible" opportunities. Here was my dilemma--I trusted my intuition, and was committed to living by it. But I had a blind spot: Although I was quite successful at helping others at trusting intuition and leading high energy lives, I was ignoring my own energy crises. Finally, my fatigue was so profound I had to change.

I know first hand how important it is for us to cherish our precious energy so we don't compromise our capacity for passion. I now believe that the most profound transformations can only take place only on an energetic level. I've met many patients who have spent much time and money on talk therapy hoping that intellectual insights will bring emotional freedom, but they're disappointed. As much as I love the linear mind, my approach, which I call "Energy Psychiatry," goes further to also facilitate a conscious rebuilding of a subtle energies, the most basic life force in each of us.

Do You Get Drained By Other People's Energy?
Our bodies are made of flesh and blood, but they're also composed of energy fields--though sadly I wasn't taught this in medical school. Each day we encounter a wide range of energies, both positive and negative. Positive energy includes compassion, courage, forgiveness and faith. Negative energy includes fear, anger, hopelessness and shame. We need to be experts at dealing with energy so we don't get demolished by draining situations or people who are energy vampires.

Like me, you may be an intuitive empath, someone who's so sensitive to energy you pick it up but you're also drained by it. This goes way beyond feeling sympathy for a distraught friend; we actually take on their pain either emotionally or physically. To cope, we take refuge in solitude. We empaths are so attuned to others that we can feel what's going on inside of them. This can put us on energy overload and aggravate everything from chronic fatigue to overeating.

Growing up, my girlfriends couldn't wait to hit the malls, but I dreaded them. I always felt overwhelmed, exhausted around crowds, though I was clueless why. "What's the matter?" friends would say, shooting me the weirdest looks. All I knew was that crowded places and I just didn't mix. I'd go there feeling fine but leave nervous, depressed, or with some new ache or pain. Unsuspectingly, I was a gigantic sponge, absorbing the energy of people around me. Thank goodness, as my intuition matured, I realized I had intuitive empathy. Once I learned to protect my energy, empathy has become a gift enhancing my compassion. Here's how empathy works: the more people per square foot, the more our energy fields intersect--thus the tendency to become overloaded in high-density areas. This aspect of intuition is the most neglected.

Empaths can unintentionally make even a good doctor's life hell. They manifest so many "unexplained" symptoms, that frustrated physicians write them off as hypochondriacs. Empaths are notoriously misdiagnosed. Patients have come to me with obesity who have failed diets because they needed strategies other than eating to protect themselves from negative energy. Others were labeled "agoraphobic" or with "panic disorder," having received only minor relief from traditional treatments. Some were nearly house bound. They'd all say, "I dislike crowded places where there's no quick escape. Forget department stores, busy streets, elevators, tunnels. I just avoid them." This sounded very familiar to me since I suffered the similarly. So, I decided to take a history of how these people processed subtle energy in the world,
something all health professionals must be trained to assess. Voila! I found many were undiagnosed empaths. For me, this changed everything. My job as a physician then became teaching my patients to center themselves and protect their energy.

A Survival Guide to Protect Yourself from Energy Vampires
You don't have to be an empath to experience the fang marks of an energy vampire, though empaths are often hit the hardest. Relationships are always an energy exchange. To stay feeling our best, we must ask ourselves: Who gives us energy? Who saps it? It's important to be surrounded by supportive, heart-centered people who make us feel safe and secure. It's equally important to pinpoint the energy vampires, who, whether they intend to or not, leech our energy.

Positive energy in others can be rejuvenative. For instance, you're nervous about a job interview, but the minute you meet your prospective boss, you relax. He's so calm and welcoming, you calm down too. Or perhaps you have a good friend around whom you always feel loved. These are energy givers, those we must gravitate towards.

In contrast, energy vampires exude negative energy that drains. Vampires range from the intentionally malicious ones to those who are oblivious to their effect. Some are overbearing and obnoxious; others are friendly and charming. For example, you're at a party talking to a perfectly nice person, but suddenly you're nauseous or weak. Or how about the co worker who drones on about how she broke up with her boyfriend for the tenth time? Eventually, she feels better, but you're spent. The bottom line is that on a subtle energy level, these people suck you dry.

Strategies for Dealing With Energy Vampires
1. Take an inventory of people in your life who give energy, and people who drain. Specifically identify the energy vampires and begin to evaluate ones you'd like to limit contact with or eliminate. Plan at least one complete afternoon with people who give off positive energy and avoid drainers. Notice how this beneficially affects your physical and emotional well-being.
2. Set Clear Boundaries. It's crucial to limit the time you spend discussing a vampire's gripes. The difference between being a bitch and setting boundaries for yourself is attitude. Instead of saying, "You're selfish and self-obsessed, I can't take you anymore," which a part of you likely feels, take a breath and become aware of how you are reacting to the situation and where energy is leaving your body.
3. Meditate. Meditating is a life-force enhancing activity that will ground you when you've been struck by an energy vampire. By calming the mind, you can re-align with your essence. Close your eyes. Focus on your breath. Then gently extend your awareness down to the firm foundation of the earth. From the base of your spine begin to feel a continuity with the earth's core. Picture having a long tail that roots in that center. Allow the earth's energy to infuse your body and stabilize you. Meditating is your sacred time.
4. Walk away. If you feel your energy being zapped, don't hesitate to politely excuse yourself from the conversation. Move at least twenty feet from the person, outside the range of his or her energy field. "I have to go to the bathroom" is a foolproof line. Most people are oblivious to how their energy impacts others. For years, reluctant to hurt anyone's feelings, I needlessly endured these types of situations and then suffered physically and emotionally for it.
5. Build an conscious energy shield around you. When you're with vampires you can't get away from, visualize a protective shield of white light surrounding every inch of you, or just set the intention you are creating a protective energy field around you. This lets positive energy in, but keeps negative energy out. I hope I've inspired you to be more aware and empowered when asserting your energy needs. For years, reluctant to hurt anyone's feelings, I needlessly endured these types of situations and then suffered physically and emotionally for it.

Are You an Intuitive Empath? Ask Yourself:
*Have you ever sat next to someone at a dinner who seems pleasant, but suddenly you're nauseous, have a headache, or feel drained?*
*Are you uncomfortable in crowds, even go out of your way to avoid them?*
*Do you get easily over-stimulated by people or prefer being alone?*
*When someone is in pain, do you start feeling it too?*
*Do you overeat around people you're uncomfortable with?*
If you've answered "yes" to one or more questions, it's likely you have experienced intuitive empathy. Responding "yes" to every question indicates that being an empath can actually drain your energy.

Dr. Orloff's Tips for Keeping Your Positive Energy High
1. In crowds or stressful situations, take a few deep breaths to exhale negative energy from your body
2. Meditate daily to center yourself. Visualize roots going through you and planting firmly in the ground.
3. Take daily baths or showers to wash off negative vibes. Water is a potent purifier and can get rid of residual energies that are still affecting you.

4. Burn sage in a room to purify left over negative vibes. Sage is an ancient purifier. Many of my patients who work in the entertainment industry use this technique to clear the energy in the room after back-to-back pitch meetings in their office.

5. Eliminate energy vampires from your life.

Adapted from Dr. Judith Orloff's new book “Positive Energy” (Harmony Books; April; 2004). Judith Orloff, M.D., a psychiatrist and practicing intuitive, is an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA. She is the author of the bestsellers “Dr. Judith Orloff's Guide to Intuitive Healing and Second Sight” and has been featured on NPR, CNN, in USA Today and O, The Oprah Magazine. For more information visit www.drjudithorloff.com.