

## Secrets of True Motivation

This special report is excerpted from "Live Your Gift," weekly leadership and communication coaching tips e-newsletter. To subscribe, visit our website at

<http://www.inspiredleadership.com>

May I suggest that you print this newsletter out for best results? I've included a little extra space in between each inspiration principle for you to write down your own personal application. I strongly recommend that you think of ways to apply each principle as you read, your ability to apply what you learn will increase dramatically.

Special thanks to the subscribers of the "Live Your Gift" newsletter, whose excellent feedback, sharing of ideas, and encouragement have made this ministry...lots of fun!

-Jeff Myers

### INTRODUCTION

Americans are living longer, earning more, experiencing more cultural opportunities and reaping more benefits from technological advancement than ever before. So when did the fun go out of life? Why are we more busy, more tired and less fulfilled? We naturally tend to draw our energy from the external environment. We are motivated by wanting our parents, friends, co-workers, and fellow Christians to see that we are responsible and successful. To maintain this external motivation requires that we find ever new and potent sources of energy, thus the frantic search for new experiences, new strategies, and new techniques.

Yet true motivation comes from the inside out. It is not sucked from the external environment, it is injected into our beings from our God-given reserves of giftedness. These reserves, properly nurtured, are inexhaustible. When you tap into your source of giftedness, you find delight, joy, satisfaction, meaning and fulfillment because you are learning to live in the image of an inexhaustible, creative, merciful, gracious, unchanging God.

"Live Your Gift" assists you, coaches you and encourages you in discovering and living out your God-given gifts. What follows are some highlights from last year's newsletters. Enjoy, and may God breathe new life into your spirit.

### INSPIRATION PRINCIPLE #1:

Planning for two minutes at the beginning of each day can give you focus and energy. Each morning, jot down just one achievable goal; don't try to conquer the world--one goal will get you started. This focuses your action throughout the day.

**Power tip:** I jot my goal in a daily planner. Some folks prefer a PDA, others a white board or an index card. The key is being able to refer to it during the day.

**Action step:** Here is how to PLAN in a common activity, writing a report: Decide how much time you will invest, say 30 minutes.

Plan the 30 minutes: 5 minutes to outline each main point, 10 minutes to collect information, 10 minutes to write, and 5 minutes to edit and print.

The goal is not a perfect report, but the best report you can write in 30 minutes! Invariably, a report that takes one-hour report to produce isn't really any better than one that takes 30 minutes. Planning allows you to focus your energy and accomplish more in less time.

**Making a difference:** Armies use this technique; they plan shrewdly, ESPECIALLY when things aren't going their way. As F. W. Robertson said, "Forget mistakes; organize victories out of mistakes!"

**Personal application strategies:**

### **INSPIRATION PRINCIPLE #2:**

Inspiration, focus and energy come from tackling your tasks with vigor. Each new year we resolve to do things differently, but change is hard. "I need motivation," you tell yourself.

But traditional motivation falls short. It is too easy to get fired-up fast and then fall back into a rut in a few days. Why doesn't motivation work? Because we misunderstand it. Motivation is not a constant state of high energy, but the ability to muster enough energy to carry ONE task through to completion.

Don't worry about your energy level. Don't worry about FEELING motivated. Whether or not you feel energized is not as important as the feeling of satisfaction that comes from completing a task.

**Action step:** Here's what works for me. I taught it to my college students and it worked for them too, raising their energy level and satisfaction. When an army makes a plan, they attack with vigor; no hesitation. Do the same. Make your plan and carry it out. My students and I do this by viewing study as a game.

Take research papers for example. We make a game of "outwitting" the paper by racing against the clock to find three sources of information in the library. When my students started applying this strategy to exam study, their scores went up; the exam became an "enemy" to be beat!

**Personal application strategies:**

### **INSPIRATION PRINCIPLE #3:**

Finishing your work leads to a sense of satisfaction and guilt-free rest. Have you ever stopped working on something just before you finish? When I see the end in sight, I often get a rush of adrenaline and get distracted! Eventually I go back to the task, but not before wasting precious relaxation time.

If you have ever done this, or if you are simply looking for more satisfaction from your work, try the following action step.

**Action step:** Finish the work. Take a few minutes at the end of each day to bring closure to it. How? At the beginning of the day, in your two minute planning period, set a simple, but meaningful goal you **\*\*know\*\*** you can accomplish.

Today, for example, I stopped work 5 minutes early and jotted an encouraging note to a business acquaintance. It was easy, and I felt satisfied because it was meaningful.

The key is to choose something meaningful:

- \*Throw away some old magazines
- \*Clean 10 things off of your desk
- \*Act on a report sitting on your desk
- \*Say a kind word to someone who needs it
- \*Make a quick phone call you've been putting off

Remember: armies don't just plan and attack. They establish their work by making it permanent: building a defense, reorganizing units, re-supplying, and attending to the wounded. They bring closure to task and at the same time prepare for the next one.

### **Personal Application Strategies:**

### **INSPIRATION PRINCIPLE #4:**

Re-energize by building in time to rest at the end of each task. An army loses effectiveness if it must attack continually without rest. Even the strongest soldiers lose focus without time to regroup.

How does this apply to you? When you begin an activity, anticipate what you will do to rest when it is done: games, hobbies, books, chatting, exercise--whatever does it for you. Don't fall

for society's wrong ideas about rest. Lying around watching television actually SAPS energy. Instead, read a good book, go for a walk or pursue a favorite hobby.

**Action steps:** Getting rest is actually simpler than it sounds. Here are some simple strategies:

1. At work, reward yourself with a trip down the hall for a cup of coffee, check e-mail, or spend a few minutes doing something you find interesting.
2. If you commute, rent some books on tape. Here are websites of two audiobook companies: <http://www.booksontape.com> and <http://www.audiobooks.com> There's nothing like an exciting novel or fascinating biography to relax you and make the commute bearable.
3. If you have children, train them to have a 15-30 minute "quiet time" each day. Get a video, a video game, toys, or computer program (that they may only play with during that time). Meanwhile, you sit down with your favorite magazine.

**Personal application strategies:**

#### **INSPIRATION PRINCIPLE #5:**

The way you use your time, not the amount of time you have to use, is the key to being re-energized.

In a major land-clearing effort at our house some months ago, I noticed that my chain saw had become so dull that logs which ordinarily took 10 minutes to cut were now taking 20-30. I invested 15 minutes sharpening the saw and was able to finish the work twice as quickly.

**Action steps:** The key to "sharpening your saw" is using time properly. Here are some of my favorite strategies.

1. Write down what is bothering you. Often stress comes from a vague sense of the unknown. Once you write the problem down, it becomes easier to handle objectively.
2. Define a sunset for each activity. Set a time limit to each activity. If there isn't a defined ending point, set one. Let's say you're asked to teach a Sunday school class. Say, "I'll be happy to teach the class for four weeks."
3. Don't sacrifice sleep. Studies show that most adults need 8 hours of sleep per night. The lack of sleep

accumulates, leading to "sleep debt," a dangerous condition in which your body and mind lack creativity and are prone to error.

4. Attack the afternoon doldrums. Avoid heavy foods for lunch (they take a lot of time to digest, sapping energy). Stand up, stretch, and perhaps drink a sparkling water (the carbonation will give you a boost) and eat an energy-enhancing fruit such as a banana. Schedule your errands for that time if possible.

5. Have a quiet time. Take 10-15 minutes each day to read devotional literature such as the Bible. Pray. Record your thoughts. You'll gain perspective as well as a spiritual boost.

6. Exercise. If your schedule is too busy for regular exercise, try taking the stairs rather than an elevator. Park farther away from the entrance to stores and walk briskly. In fact, walk briskly everywhere you go.

**Personal application strategies:**

**"LIVE YOUR GIFT" SUBSCRIBERS SHARE THEIR TOP 15 IDEAS FOR REGAINING LOST ENERGY**

We asked "Live Your Gift" subscribers to send in their top strategies for retaining energy. Here they are:

**Idea #1:** Sleep! Kevin writes, "My best answer to being worn out is to treat myself to a couple of extra hours of sleep by going to bed earlier." Kevin follows the extra sleep with a time of exercise. Hubert adds that "If it is serious, I will take a few days off just to sleep and recover from complete tiredness."

(Coaching tip: Adults need, on average, 8 hours of sleep a night. When you get less than you need, the debt accumulates, a fact which is both dangerous and depressing. In our family we are brutal in cutting out activities that interfere with normal sleep! Also, studies show that it is more energizing to go to bed early and get up at the same time than to sleep in late!)

**Idea #2:** Short naps. Kayte writes, "I find that if I take a short nap, it actually gives me time to reorganize my mind." The most common suggestion was a 10-20 minute nap--long enough to take the edge off of your tiredness, but not long enough to disrupt night-time sleep patterns.

(Coaching tip: Years ago I learned of a technique to maximize "power naps." Lay down with your head and feet elevated, take a deep breath and hold it in while flexing your muscles. Exhale. Repeat this twice. Set an alarm for 15 minutes and close your eyes. I have found that I wake more energized than if I had slept for an hour!)

**Idea #3:** A relaxing bath or shower. Shelly's ideal is "Soaking in the bathtub with dimmed lights, a cool glass of iced tea, and a headset with some type of worship music or seminar tapes from our home school convention. The headset is sure to drown out any outside sounds -- such as the phone, TV, or children knocking at the bathroom door."

Other subscribers suggested a candle-light bath with classical music or a hot shower with a scented shower gel, followed by a few minutes of reading a favorite book or magazine.

**Idea #4:** Inspirational music. Shilah prefers loud praise music with a beat: "Great for exercising or cleaning!" Others prefer softer inspirational music.

**Idea #5:** Exercise. Gretchen suggests, "Go take a walk in the beauty of God's creation!" Jay, from Minnesota says, "I go for a February walk to breath the freshness of the winter! The cold always is energizing!" Wayne, a doctor, says, "When I really need energy, I try to get some exercise (principle of sowing and reaping), when I give out energy, I get more back."

(Coaching tip: Exercise actually helps improve your sleep as well. A study done at Stanford University found that those who started an exercise program of 30-40 minutes a day, four days a week, slept better. After 16 weeks of study, "the exercise group on average slept nearly an hour longer per night, took less time to fall asleep, spent less time napping and reported an improvement in the overall quality of their nighttime sleep." The study also showed that those who exercised in the afternoon or before supper time slept better and avoided the afternoon doldrums.)

**Idea #6:** Meditating on God. Sharyn describes her favorite spot for prayer: "Sitting in the sunshine, closing my eyes, and focusing on the Lord--His warmth and His light."

Jay writes, "I read the Word and look for verses that specifically reinforce who I really am IN Christ. I focus on those verses that include the phrase x...in Him' or x...in Christ.' Those are a great reinforcement to what I need to believe, rather than how I feel or what someone else has said or done."

**Idea #7:** Prayer. Brenda writes that her most important strategy to re-energize is to "take some time away to PRAY and read God's Word, waiting on the Holy Spirit to renew me and give clear direction and focus. Maybe a change is needed in my schedule. Perhaps I've lost God's vision. Time with Lord is the ultimate!"

**Idea #8:** Do something "off-task." Carol re-energizes by spending time with a friend. Wayne takes five minutes between tasks to read and respond to e-mail for 5 minutes. In addition, he says, "At midday I

purposefully get out of the office to change scenery and read a book that is not professionally related."

David actually plans his vacation times to do this. "I need to get away from home and work and get adequate sleep and spend several hours reading. A day off rarely provides this. So I take a week off every three months."

**Idea #9:** Serve others. Julee, a home school mom, writes, "I usually find that when I am 'worn out' (physically & emotionally) it is because I'm focusing on myself, my family and my problems too much. So I make myself reach out to others who are struggling and get the focus off of me! This results in an attitude correction and renewed strength to forge ahead."

Wayne agrees: "When I feel 'worn out' due to mental stress, I try to find a challenge that someone else needs help with so that I can focus on their problem not mine. That usually clears my head, even though my 'stressor' doesn't go away, my stress does and I can go back and tackle it refreshed."

**Idea #10:** Drink lots of water. I know this sounds simplistic, but many people swear by it. Some subscribers suggested drinking several glasses, up to 8, a day. Much lack of energy, they say, results from dehydration.

**Idea #11:** Nutrition. Most nutritionists recommend unprocessed and low-fat whole foods, and at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

**Idea #12:** A positive attitude. Tammy writes, "I can't help but think that my attitude towards all the things I do helps contribute to my energy level. I believe negative attitudes drains a person's energy levels quicker. So choosing to be content and claiming the joy of the Spirit in our life helps us to use the energy we do have more effectively. I believe the Lord is faithful at feeling our cups once we've poured ourselves out for Him."

**Idea #13:** Reflecting on priorities. John, a family pastor, writes, "Often times our chaotic lifestyle propels us to be more interested in activity instead of accomplishment. I recharge by (1) Working out...recreation, (2) Winding down...relaxation, and (3) Wondering more...reflection."

**Idea #14:** Take a Sabbath. In the creation God provided for one day a week in which we would stop our work and invest the day in resting, renewing relationships, and reflecting on Him. Susan writes, "In knowing that our day of rest is coming at the end of each week, we are relieved of the heavy load we shoulder, holding fast to the Hope of rest that is to meet us."

**Idea #15:** Make a check-off list. Judy writes, "I work from a list which I make daily (usually night before). When I can visually see the tasks completed and checked off, I feel a real sense of accomplishment and become re-energized."

**Now it begins...**

The ideas in this book will start you down the path of organizing your time and regaining lost energy. But true change requires planning. Why not take a few moments and plan out some changes to which you will commit in the next three months?

**In the next week I will...**

**In the next month I will...**

**In the next three months I will...**