

WOO Lesson 4: Your ENERGY is YOUR CHOICE!

Your energy is your ultimate example. It takes movement and energy to seize the WOO!

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1388 words | 6 pages

The Giuliani Solution!

One of the most healing and positive influences that lifted millions of Americans after 9/11 was the inexhaustible energy displayed by former New York City mayor, Rudy Giuliani. Everywhere you turned, there was Mayor Rudy, supporting the fire-fighters and police, rolling up his sleeves in the midst of the dust and debris at Ground Zero, and out among his people every waking moment, encouraging, supporting, and energizing. Many Americans wondered if this man ever slept! This was not about politics. It was about leadership. And the most crucial element in this extraordinary example of leadership was Rudy G's energy.

To live an incredible life, to develop an amazing, connected family, or to build a break-through organization in good times or tough, it is absolutely critical that you consistently demonstrate the same kind of extraordinary energy that Mayor Giuliani and America exemplified following that dark day. Energy does not instantly make you smarter, nor is it a panacea for solving the immense challenges we face. But, with energy you become far more flexible, significantly more alert, and as energy becomes a habit within you, your resiliency and optimism will skyrocket. Possibilities replace fears and limits, and change becomes a desired outcome rather than a dreaded enemy.

The most important truth about energy though, is that to your

***children, teammates, customers,
and friends—to everyone you
want to positively impact—your
energy IS your example.***

Others may not remember much of what you say, but they will remember your energy!

Despite these tremendous positives that come with heightened energy, we have a dangerous energy crisis facing us. The reason is that most of us have been conditioned to look at our own energy in the same way that we think about the weather. Our mental process is something like this: “Gee, I hope the weather’s good for my golf game this Saturday... Hope it doesn’t rain during the family picnic...” We think of our energy the same way, as if it’s up to anyone else but ourselves. “I hope I have enough energy to make it through this crazy week!”

***But let me say again emphatically
- energy is a choice!***

And when we clearly understand wherein that choice resides and how to build energy by choice instead of chance, watch out! A life that embraces the choice of energy is a masterpiece in the making! Perhaps no single decision will help you seize more WOOs than committing to live with extraordinary energy!

***The first and simplest way to
choose energy is to change the
way you move.***

In fact, energy is created by the way that you move. Now, you might be thinking, “If I had more energy I’d move more!” But the choice comes when you reverse that logic— move more and you’ll have more energy. When you picture the most extraordinary leaders throughout history— Jesus, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi, Mother Teresa, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King— the images of these giants are

filled with vitality, alertness, and movement. That's exactly what we saw from Rudy Giuliani after September 11th. The extraordinary leadership exhibited by all of these individuals was activated by their nearly constant motion. They packed more into each day than most people do in a week.

Each of us has that same potential. Our present level of energy is merely a habit. Habits can be replaced with new and better ones. There are four primary "movement centers" which we can consciously change and create a more energized way of living and establish new, empowering habits.

The first is your facial expression.

Consciously smiling more, with brighter, more open eyes activates the dozens of facial muscles. When you smile, you instantly feel more alert and alive with an unmistakable sense of moving forward and upward. Great leaders lighten up when they sense their teams are tightening up and that light spirit is reflected in their facial expressions.

The second movement center is your posture.

As a long-time runner I have always been fascinated how by simply extending my spine upward and elevating my posture I can rejuvenate my energy and spirit when only seconds before I felt like a lead weight. Your light and elongated posture sends a powerful message that you are a motivated, engaged, and spirited person to everyone around you, including yourself.

The third movement center is your breathing.

Anytime you have been in fear, doubt, worry, or stress, the key physical manifestation of those negative emotions is some constriction of your free and full breathing. In fact, by training yourself to breathe more fully when you begin to feel fearful or anxious, the emotion will move from fear to a sensation more akin to excitement. Rich, full breathing helps you center and become more fully present. For example, in martial arts the ability to remain fully centered in the face of attack and chaos is imperative. It is just as crucial in the pressure-packed arenas of business or pivotal moments with your family. Developing the habit of controlling your breathing vastly improves your patience, focus, and balance in the face of challenges. You'll move much more naturally and easily into the window of opportunity.

The fourth movement center is movement itself.

This is the essential leadership energy lesson that Rudy Giuliani demonstrated so vividly. Perhaps the best way to fully understand this key is through your own personal experience. Have you ever been working at your desk, perhaps at your computer, trying with all your cerebral might to figure out a problem, but you became stuck? What did you finally do? You stood up and went for a walk, stepped outside for some fresh air, or made your way over to a friend to chat for a moment. In other words, you moved your *legs*! Finally you came back to the problem that had you completely stumped, and — WHAM — the solution jumped out at you like a jack-in-the-box. This sudden enlightenment wasn't by chance. The instant you moved your legs, you began pumping new biochemical messages to your brain. By the time you came back to your computer you were able to see and think differently.

Every morning before breakfast, Mahatma Gandhi walked a minimum of four miles at a brisk pace. These walks usually started between 4:00 and 5:00 a.m. During those walks he may not have consciously tried to find solutions to the enormous problems facing him, but the vibrant movement itself enabled him to center, to create, and to find possibilities rather than limits. In countless parables and stories from the Bible, we see Jesus in the act of vital and purposeful movement. His movement energized everyone he touched and ignited even stronger faith and hope around him.

More than ever it is important for leaders to get out and walk among their team members, to demonstrate energy and motion.

By doing so you are fostering creativity, alertness, and vitality in those you lead as well as yourself. Remember, just as Rudy Giuliani has shown America, your energy IS your ultimate example. It takes movement and energy to seize the WOO!



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