

Five *Other* Reasons You May Be Tired

–Jerry Conrad, CSP

IF YOU ARE LIKE MANY PEOPLE, you've seen numerous reports explaining the five reasons we feel tired. Most, if not all, of these reports suggest it is a medical condition -- maybe even genetic. The reports usually suggest a visit to our doctor is in order.

This is only one possibility. If you want more zip in your life, consider the following and what you can do for yourself.

Posterior Pooling

One common activity here in the USA is sitting: sitting in front of the television set, sitting as we surf the Internet, sitting in our cars, sitting, sitting, sitting. Add gravity to too much sitting and we get posterior pooling. Excess blood builds up in our butts; it does not circulate as designed to and we lose energy.

According to the A.C. Nielsen Co., the average American watches more than 4 hours of TV each day. A 65-year life equals nine years glued to the tube?!

A recent Stanford Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society (SIQSS) research project found the average Internet user spends 3 hours per day online. Now,

while most of us do not consider ourselves "average", if we are honest, we will admit we spend a lot of time in front of the TV and surfing the Internet.

What to do? Several years ago, I had just arrived home from a two-day road trip speaking at a conference. Feeling tired and listless, I walked into the house and plopped on the couch planning to spend the next few hours "resting" in front of the TV.

Luckily, my then seven year old son, Alex, was in the room and said, "Dad, if you're tired, don't sit down, go outside and run around the house. That's how you get energy!"

What followed was amazing. I went outside with Alex and we ran around the house together two or three times. It took maybe three minutes and I was totally energized. Running had pumped the blood pooling in my posterior into other critical parts of my body, nourishing my body, and energizing me.

So, when you are tired, don't plop. Instead, walk, run, dance, hug someone, do something physical. It will energize you.

TL Overload



It's a fact; life has its ups and downs. Things don't always go our way and sometimes life is tragic and painful. Fortunately, our bodies are very resilient; we learn to cope, and life goes on. However, there is a threshold. We can only take so much tragedy and loss before we experience long-term energy loss. This is Tragedy-Loss Overload.

Here the mainstream media plays a key role.

Open almost any daily newspaper or listen to almost any "news" broadcast and what do you get? We see story after story of tragedy and loss – from around the world. It can be depressing, it overloads our capacity to cope, and it saps our energy.

Once, I worked with a television "news team" helping them with their on-camera presentation skills. During a break, their manager explained to me that the main goal of any news broadcast team is to sell nine minutes of advertising for every 30-minute news program. He continued by explaining that their advertising customers were especially happy if a particularly distressing news story aired just before their commercial because viewers feel a sense of pleasure and relief while watching a commercial positioned just after a heart-breaking story. Advertisers believe this translates into an increased positive connection with viewers.

What to do? Simple. First, stop watching "the news" on television. There is nothing

"new" about it and it provides very little real value. Next, if you must read a newspaper, scan the headlines and only read articles relevant to you and might add value to your life. As a result, you will not find much to read. We do not need to be bombarded with tragedy and loss. It overloads us.

Vertical Variation

Sometime during each 24-hour period, most of us lay down to sleep. We become horizontal. That's good! It is a natural way to re-energize our system. The problem is with our decision about when to return to the vertical position – to get up.

Sleep is largely a combination of our biological response to Circadian Rhythms and the need for Rapid Eye Movement (REM) dreaming. If we allow these two important activities to occur naturally, we awaken with new energy that will last throughout the day. If we are out of sync with either, the result is low energy.

According to the Medical College of Wisconsin, "*Circadian rhythms* are regular changes in mental and physical characteristics that occur in the course of a day. Most circadian rhythms are controlled by the body's biological 'clock' which synchronizes with the sleep/wake cycle."

Circadian rhythms like consistency. However, these rhythms are affected to some degree by external time cues such as the beeping of our alarm clock or the clatter



of a garbage truck. When we choose to stimulate our circadian rhythms by getting up (becoming vertical) at inconsistent times, we are constantly resetting our circadian rhythms which can cause a reduction of energy.

We also sleep in cycles. One sleep cycle is roughly 90 minutes long, during which we experience the necessary REM sleep. These cycles like consistency, too.

What to do? Set your alarm for a specific wake time and do not change it. If you need to get up for work at 6:00AM during the week, get up at 6:00AM on the weekends as well. “What?!” you say. Yes, if you want as much personal energy as possible, do not mess with your sleep rhythms. But, if you must sleep in, get up 90 minutes later on the weekends – that’s one sleep cycle. For the best energy results, shoot for four or five 90-minute sleep cycles every night.

Digestive Dilemma

Deepak Chopra refers to the amazing processing our bodies provide for us as “infinite correlation”. It is processing 24/7. The choices we make can help or hinder our body’s ability to process and re-energize itself. If we hinder this ability, we lose energy. The digestive dilemma is an example of how we hinder.

Here is what happens. Just before bedtime, we decide to finish off the ham sandwich in the fridge or maybe we “feel like a pizza”, have a pizza delivered, eat it, and go to bed.

As we fall into our re-energizing sleep, our body must resolve the following dilemma: does it focus on the natural sleep cycles and rhythms or does it focus on digesting our pizza? If the focus is on sleep cycles the pizza is not digested properly which may result in acid-reflux or bowel disorders. Both of these consume energy. If the focus is on properly digesting the pizza, sleep cycles are disturbed and less energy is renewed. Clearly, the wiser choice is proper digestion. The consequence: Our sleep and energy suffer.

What to do? Stop eating at least two hours before bedtime. Often when we think we feel hungry, we are misinterpreting our need for water. So, instead of the pizza, have a glass of water or juice. You also might just be bored; find something physical to do.

Diaphragmatic Disuse

Most medical doctors will tell us a healthy person can live without food for four to six weeks. Mahatma Gandhi survived a three-week fast while in his 70's. Depending on temperature, we can live from two to ten days without water. However, without breathing, our brain begins to die from lack of oxygen in 4-5 minutes. Unfortunately, in the USA oxygen intake is low; we have become a nation of sniffers.

According to respiratory therapists, 70% of US citizens are shallow breathers operating



on adrenalin-style breathing or upper-chest breathing. This is a very inefficient way to obtain oxygen, it does not involve the diaphragm muscle, and it adds to our feeling of fatigue.

Using our diaphragm provides much more oxygen to our system and helps energize us.

What to do? Our lungs operate automatically but we can train them. Place the palm of one hand on your belly button; place your other hand across your chest. Now breathe slowly in a way that causes your lower hand to move in and out while your upper hand remains almost stationary. Once you accomplish this, you are energizing yourself. Practice this until it becomes a habit.

If you want to strengthen your diaphragm, lie comfortably on a flat surface and gently place a five or ten pound weight on your diaphragm (on and just below your belly button). Breathe slowly in and out a few times using your diaphragm. Remove the weight, rest for a moment, and then repeat the process. Stop after two or three minutes. If you repeat this process daily, you will strengthen your diaphragm and give yourself the gift of more energy. After a couple weeks, you can stop this exercise because your new breathing habit will provide the muscle tone you need and put your diaphragm to valuable use.

Jerry Conrad is a professional speaker and business coach, with a successful training business spanning six states. A U.S. Army veteran, his diverse experience includes retail management, college teaching, working with juvenile delinquents, and protecting abused children. He has served as an adjunct faculty member for Baker College and Western Michigan University, and was formerly President of the Michigan National Speaker Association.

As well as delivering professional development training to major corporations and associations, Jerry provides a range of coaching services to small businesses through his Michigan-based company, established in 1986.

He holds the unique honor of being the first person awarded both the highly prestigious Certified Speaking Professional and the Distinguished Toastmaster certifications.

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