
THE FOUR ENERGIES

AN ENQUIRY

One way of looking at people is to see them as a walking bundle of four energies. With practice you can learn to notice and manage these energies in yourself and others, and as I describe them now consider in which of them you are strong and in which you are not so strong.

They are:

Physical Energy: this is the energy of action, making things happen, of getting things done. This energy is also a key part of our vitality and helps us be alert and maintain concentration and commitment. It is the energy of resilience, stamina and persistence. We know this energy well when it's absent. That's the time when we feel tired, listless, worn out and stressed, particularly if our spirit energy is also low and we have lost sight of *why* we are doing something.

Intellectual Energy: this is the energy of your thinking, your analysis and your logic. It is your rational side and it is used, for example, in debate and argument. It drives curiosity, creativity, planning and you use it to focus your activity. It's also behind criticism and discernment, in judgement and finding fault. It's essential in helping you be organised but too much of it can suppress your passion and enthusiasm.

Emotional Energy: this is the energy of human connection and relationships. When it's strong and positive people feel listened to, valued, cared for, even special. It's the binding energy that comes with belonging to a group and feeling included and is an essential energy for effective teamwork, partnership, alignment and collaboration. When there is a lack of this energy people can feel excluded, frustrated, anxious, upset and angry.

Spirit Energy: this is the energy of vitality, of being alive and of being in touch with what you care about. It's strongly linked to your passion, the future and a sense of possibility. Spirit energy is a crucial leadership energy because it brings hope and optimism to people, and so has them feel more ready and confident to build the future. It's the energy that comes with people knowing the *why* of what they are doing, having a sense of purpose, being inspired and having aspirations.

Noticing what energy you use as a leader is hugely important if you want to act on what you care about in life. And remember, leaders also need to influence the energy of those around them as well as manage their own. So how can you become more conscious of these energies and how they show up both in your organisation and your own life?

The Energies in Your Organisation

Let's build some awareness. What do you notice about the energies in your organisation? Here are some questions which might provoke some insight.

- Which of the energies are most valued?
- Which do you need to bring to get on and get promoted?
- What do you see about the balance of energies?
- How consciously are the energies managed?
- Who are the people who raise others' energies?
- Who are the people who drains others' energies?
- What meetings and situations give people energy?
- Which situations drain the energy?

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- To what extent is it ok in meetings to talk about how you're feeling, not just what you're thinking?
 - How much is people's spirit energy lifted by the purpose and aspirations of your organisation?
 - How strong is the emotional energy of people feeling valued by the organisation?

What these questions point to is 'the sea of energy' you are swimming in. It may be exactly as you want it or it may be something you can see needs to change.

The Energies and You

Now turn your awareness to your own life. What do you notice about your own leadership and the energies?

- What do you notice about your energies when you think about work?
- How do your energies rise and fall at work?
- Which energies do you naturally bring?
- Which energies are not strong for you?
- And crucially, what would others say about you regarding your energy?
- What gives you energy?
- What drains it?
- Who gives you energy?
- Who drains it? And when you think of these people, what do you notice about the size of the relationship with them?
- How do you recharge your energy?
- How smart are you at doing this?
- In particular, how are you at managing your physical energy through your diet, sleep and lifestyle?

FED and the energies

The energies also relate to the key leadership model Future – Engage – Deliver.

Future

You're at your best in Future when you're in touch with 'what you care about', when you can see the big picture, when you have a sense of being 'up to something' and when you're being 'guided by the Future you want. In other words when you're fuelled by your spirit energy and are guided by it.

When your spirit energy is up, you're alive with what's possible. It's easier to see the big picture, the whole. You can quickly connect with 'why' you are doing something. At its deepest, spirit energy is about being connected with your purpose, the meaning you are giving your life - your ultimate big picture!

Spirit energy also powerfully influences other energies. When your spirits are good, it's easier to feel good about yourself – that's your emotional energy - and it's also easier to imagine being the leader you want to be. Your physical energy will be enhanced at such times too; you'll have more of a buzz and be ready to throw yourself into things.

Spirit and intellectual energies can also combine to help you be creative, think new ideas, imagine the way ahead. So strategy and planning work can be uplifted by a sense of what could be.

To grow as a leader you have to practise being conscious about the energies just as much as all the other aspects of Future – and in particular use your support team to help you manage this crucial energy of yours.

Engage

When you're engaging others your focus is mostly on the energy that they bring. This is a shift that many leaders who 'present' and 'transmit' need to understand and practise.

You can do lots to influence how much energy others bring. If they are in resistance or apathy to what you are leading for, they'll not be bringing much positive energy. If they are in grudging or willing compliance, they'll bring some. The question is how do you help manage the energies of others so they become enrolled or committed and want to bring their four energies?

The answer is by building big relationships where people feel connected to you and valued by you. You can also interact with others in order that they see possibilities for themselves, have aspirations, and feel inspired. Here is where co-invention is so powerful. But remember also to talk their language! That is, you should be looking to engage others' intellectual energy with a dash of spirit here so that after speaking with you, your listeners are bursting with ideas on how they can make their future real and are clear about what priorities they can focus on.

Finally, you want people ready to bring their physical energy to bear on the action needed. You engage this energy by making requests. It's easy to miss this step. Leaders sometimes connect with people to engage their emotional, spirit and intellectual energies but then don't ask for action. So be conscious. Make the request that will initiate the physical energy.

Deliver

To be an effective leader in Deliver you have to manage all your energies and those of people around you.

Deliver requires more than a good intellectual plan and targets. To Deliver effectively, you have to first bring the energies needed in the Future and Engage aspects of leading. Then you need to consistently bring that mix of energies that show up as resolve, determination, persistence and focus. If these energies are absent the people you are looking to lead will immediately spot it and will be far less inclined to bring their own energies.