

# **Personal Energy Management**

## **A Human Values Personal and Professional Growth Program**

**Manageable Principles and Practices for Developing Effectiveness,  
Relational Skills, Lifestyle and Workstyle Balance, and Wellness**

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## Preface

I started our organization, Genesis Personal Development Center, and this book, because I was dissatisfied with the materialistic approaches to personal effectiveness that I have encountered in many workshops, self-help books, and electronic media. Their insecurity over the efficacy of their message is reflected in exaggerated claims and promises accompanied by simplistic platitudes and generalizations. Rather than encourage persons to set modest and manageable goals in harmony with their life-situation, values, and belief system, many personal growth authorities spin success stories designed to charm and entice us. The climate of euphoria and ambition that is cultivated can distract us from the fundamental issues of personal and professional development.

While motivational speakers correctly exhort us not to become preoccupied with our impediments and perceived limitations, they often fail to caution us against moving toward the other extreme of denial and avoidance of our problems. The emphasis should be on finding workable ways to live with legitimate limitations while making the best of the wonderful gifts and possibilities God and life offer us.

Perhaps the most common temptation that personal development authors and speakers succumb to is that of oversimplification and excessive use of generalities and prospective rewards for the purpose of motivating their audience. Too often personal growth and motivation seminars lapse into a rah-rah session and materialistic revival meeting in which psychological and pragmatic strategies overshadow fundamental moral, spiritual, and philosophical issues. Confidence, hope, and enthusiasm are essential qualities that must be balanced by sober recognition of the painful aspects of growth and life. We must allow for and be prepared to deal with the uncertainty and perplexing inconsistencies and injustices of life.

Because sincerity and hard work does not guarantee material or tangible results according to our desires and timetables, the individual must learn to enjoy and appreciate the path as well as the destination. Enticing stories, simplistic platitudes, and idealistic promises may arouse and perhaps inspire the individual in

the short run, but the lack of a sturdy, long-term foundation simply plants the seed of disillusionment and frustration --- especially in today's tumultuous economic and social conditions.

Life's bumps and bruises can damage our reputation, self-image, and capacity on various levels to enjoy life, but it can never steal our integrity. We alone can devalue or relinquish our integrity. Even when we compromise our integrity, we can always reclaim it through regret and reparation.

Human beings at their deepest level need to hear the truth. We may not be satisfied with life at any given moment, but we can have some degree of inner peace. To quote Donald X. Burt, "Life is good, but not perfectly so." Too many human potential advocates oversimplify the challenge of coping with the pain and imperfection of life. Rather than promote ambitious life-changing strategies and dramatic personal transformations, I prefer to focus on attaining little victories. Development of mind, body, and spirit is healthiest and most enduring when procured gradually and with understanding of the roots of our dilemmas and weaknesses. If we approach our quest with humor, patience, and humility, we can endure the bumps and enjoy the ride.

## Introduction

Human development is an evolutionary art and science with both recognized and anonymous contributors. All personal effectiveness theories and models build on the efforts of others. I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the countless persons, groups, and institutions known and unknown, past and present, who have influenced the shaping of this book. Its value lies not in its proposition of new truths, but in its affirmation, reformulation, and integration of timeless human values and principles into a cohesive and practical personal growth path.

Many of the values and practices that we will be recommending to the reader begin with the letter 'p.' In our Personal Energy Management workshop, we refer to these as the 'P' parameters. This alliteration can help us remember these building blocks as we immerse ourselves in the daily tasks of working and living.

The book's structure consists of short chapters comprised of essays and practical guidelines and pointers. The book is divided into three parts: Personal Energy Management principles, practices, and mismanagement patterns. The emphasis is on the reader's participation in the text through creative application and synthesis based on their personal needs and situation. To facilitate this, most chapters conclude with exercises or guidelines designed to stimulate reflection and practical responses. Our hope is that by integrating introspection and practical applications, readers will derive helpful insights into their personal and professional situations.

Information on the Personal Energy Management workshop, daily time and activity planner (i.e., Personal Energy Manager), and audiocassettes which complement the book can be obtained by contacting

Genesis Personal Development Center at the following address and telephone number:

Genesis Personal Development Center

152 Oakwood Drive

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## **Part One -Foundations of Personal Energy Management:**

### **The 'P' Principles**

#### **Chapter One -Philosophy: Defining Personal Energy Management**

Personal Energy Management is an approach to living and working that is rooted in traditional and timeless human wisdom. It makes no pretense of providing answers to life's ultimate questions. It is not intended to be a comprehensive theory about the art of living. Personal Energy Management seeks to integrate and harmonize personal and professional development by channeling our efforts, emotions, capabilities, and energies in a creative manner. The word energy is used as a composite term for these controllable factors which God and human circumstances have placed in our hands. Energy works well as a symbol for our creative powers and resources because we instinctively know that we only have so much of it.

Personal Energy Management is rooted in the wisdom of what has come to be known as the Serenity Prayer, composed by Reinhold Niebuhr and now a staple of the various twelve step programs: "God give us the grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish one from the other." Instead of trying to manipulate others, life, and even ourselves, why not simply try to manage what is within our control to the best of our ability? Anything more becomes too complicated and confusing. There are enough perplexing things in life.

What are the controllable variables of self-management? Chief among these are our abilities, emotions, actions, and perhaps most fundamentally, our energy. How easy it is to misdirect our attention and efforts due to misguided thinking, immature choices, and unrealistic expectations! Imagine working towards channeling our energies, abilities, and resources in productive ways. So much waste and heartache (sometimes literally) would be reduced or eliminated.

Personal Energy Management is the practice of managing ourselves and our situations, both at work and at home, within the limitations and possibilities that life presents to us. We direct our energies, abilities, and resources toward goals, values, and principles which are within our influence and realm of responsibility. Personal Energy Management is a straightforward concept grounded in common sense and human experience. The theory is simple, the practice is difficult. In the succeeding chapters of this book, we will discuss different aspects of Personal Energy Management as applied to both personal and professional endeavors and circumstances.

### Affinities with Time and Stress Management

Personal Energy Management borrows many of its concepts from traditional time and stress management, reformulating them based on its distinct philosophy and focus. The problem with time management in both theory and practice is that time is an elusive and relative dimension which is utilized best through the back door. This consists in working and living in fidelity to our core beliefs, values, and principles, and using our resources of circumstance, talent, and treasure (material resources) to the best of our ability. In materialistic philosophies, time, achievement, and production take precedence over people issues. In Personal Energy Management, time is an important pragmatic element that supports rather than supersedes human values.

The more we are preoccupied with time, the less attention and energy we can devote to issues within our control. We value and utilize time prudently without becoming obsessed with efficiency and immediate results. We are interested in effectiveness, not measured solely in production, but in the quality of our being and relating as well. Sometimes this entails involving ourselves in activities and conversations which do not contribute to our immediate ends, but are worthwhile for other reasons.