

Week Four – Conservation

Review

Getting closer to the halfway point of Week Five, we are slowly and continuously building a toolbox of moral and ethical disciplines that, at first glance, may have seemed obvious and commonsensical. By now, however, it is apparent that these weekly themes have deeper sub-contexts. Our practice of **Breath Awareness Meditation** – along with Dispassionate Non-attachment and Introspection – has allowed us to begin exploring the depths of these themes as well and the natural relationship we have with them.

So far, we are able to identify: how our peers, colleagues and others perpetuate (even ourselves) a desired reality that is based on past experiences and socio-cultural teachings; that we all strive for a comfort in life based on these contexts (and a deeper desire to not be hurt or experience pain); that we spend a lot of time detracting from real connections and relationships because of the constant desire to live our own, albeit distorted, truths.

Allowing ourselves to be calm, centered and introspective has given rise to the awareness of a deeply seeded insecurity that we all, until now, unknowingly possessed. Our lives have been harmed by the creation of false expectations and, thusly, a deformed view of whom we really are. The true essence of our being has been muddied and clouded to the point that we believe this falsity and will go through self-harm, harm to others, even lying and stealing to perpetuate a “normal” status quo sense of it. These weekly themes, the 10 Moral and Ethical teachings in the Building Personal Power series, and meditations, give us a starting point to step back, to put aside assumptions and expectations, and open our eyes to a more robust and natural way of living. When we operate and live our lives in a way that is contrary to the natural laws we find discord and disharmony; something does not feel right and blindly we stumble through life and relationships.

COMMONSENSE CONSERVATION

On the surface, conservation can generally be thought of as the mindful use of resources available to us. As we will learn, many resources are finite and need a period of recovery before being available again. With that in mind, as we move through this week, be mindful about your consumption and use of obvious resources like: water, electricity, paper, and food. Try turning lights and appliances off; not letting water run; recycling paper, plastic and foams; or, saving extra food, rather than throwing away. This is the immediate and elementary way to begin conserving.

JOURNAL DAY 1: According to www.endhunger.org - the U.S. wastes up to 1/3, or 33%, of its food. Take [this quiz](#) to learn more about food waste.

IT'S ALL ENERGY, BABY.

This week, we are to focus our attention and awareness on the concept of energy. If we may recall from school, everything is comprised of energy – energy in different forms – the basics being kinetic and potential energy. Scientists have used math equations to formulate different theories about the energies existent at the sub-atomic level. Particle scientists and physicists have built a large laser cannon called the Large Hadron Collider to put these theories to test. We know that cosmic energy radiation and gravitational forces cause galaxies to form. Newton, perhaps one of the most well known scientists, formulated the laws of motion that we still rely on and can see in operation. When we put all of the science and theories together, we cannot deny that all things we observe and experience are an expression of energy.

Often, though, we do not stop to consider the energy that surrounds us. For example, think about the bed you sleep in. The materials that comprise the bed, the foam, fabric, metal and so on, all needed to be created and crafted. The metal in the screws, nails, and frame had to be mined out of the Earth. The fabric, if cotton, needed to be harvested, and finally woven into sheets that would then wrap the mattress and the foam interior needed to be chemically created. Each and every thing has gone through a process to arrive at its present state and even then subtle changes in energy continue. At some point the bed will show its wear and tear and you will have to buy a new one.

JOURNAL DAY 2: Consider an object that you frequently use. List, as best you can, the processes needed for that object to have arrived as it is today.

NATURAL FLOW

There exists a process, or various processes, for objects to come into manifestation. If it is a building, then an architect uses creative energies to design, the financiers use energy in the form of money to exchange physical labor from construction contractors etc. A tree grows from the potential energy of the seed and by way of natural resources in the environment, converts those resources to grow strong. The tree, now mature, bears fruits that animals may eat, whom in turn use the energy stored in the fruit sugars to give energy to them for survival. As we see, there is a process of energy changing forms to be used and reused in various fashions.

In our own lives, we humans come into creation, to grow through childhood, adolescence and adulthood, ultimately to die. The materials and resources that go into creating us are not that different from other animals and they, like us, go through the process of growth and into decay and death. But how attuned are we to the natural rhythms of energy are we? We could certainly learn a few things from the animals, that's for sure.

FINDING YOUR GROOVE

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Although we are all human, and we share many elemental components similar to other species, we are each individually as unique as our fingerprints or the irises in our eyes. That being said, we equally have a unique way of using our energies to survive the day and live our life. In ancient India, the wise men that studied nature and our relationship to it, and developed a science called Ayurveda (AYE – yer – VE – da). According to Ayurveda there are periods of the day that are more natural for us humans to function.

JOURNAL DAY 2 – 5: Finding Daily Balance

Try this daily schedule for 3 days, taking notes on how you feel energetically.

4:30 – 6 a.m. - Wake up – the best time to get ready and feel light going into the day.

6 – 10 a.m. - Exercise. Do heavy concentration work during this time.

10 – 2 p.m. - Eat largest meal during this time; competitive, transformative tasks during this time like cleaning, or sales.

2 – 6 p.m. - Creative thinking, tying up loose ends, multitasking are best saved for this time period.

6 – 10 p.m. Light snack, if needed. Settle down for the day, plan for the next. Exercise, if unable in the morning, at this time. Try to fall asleep before or soon after 10 p.m.

Building Personal Power: Week Four – Conservation**WHO NEEDS A BOOST?**

In the United States, a 2013 FDA report (Caffeine Intake by the U.S. Population) states that the average person consumes around 300mg of caffeine daily – that’s almost 4 cups of coffees (one 8oz cup contains around 95mg caffeine)! With the push for Americans to be productive, it seems only natural that we should push through the day to get our work done. After all, productivity is the key to success in the workplace. But are we really that productive? As we learned last week, 1.5hrs of work daily is wasted at the workplace! So perhaps we are not being that productive, and on top of that, we think we need a boost of caffeine.

INFINITE OR FINITE?

The energy that we have access to in our bodies is limited AND energy in and of itself is FINITE. BUT the unique aspect about energy, however finite it may be, is that it infinitely changes form. This means that there is a constant ebb and flow of transformative energy that we can use. The creative tools we have – our imagination and willpower – are capable of creating masterpieces if we can direct and channel energy to our advantage. The statistic about caffeine above shows that the majority of us are probably not allowing our energies to replenish appropriately and as our Journal Days 2 – 4 point out, we have discordant energy flows throughout the day and probably need those extra cups of coffee.

INVENTORY CONTROL

Where does our energy go and how do we replace it? This is a question I have asked myself and will re-ask from time to time to help me understand more about myself and the delicate balance that life requires, which becomes easier with mindful awareness of energy in general. In order to be successful with our energy usage, we need to be aware in the first place.

JOURNAL DAY 6: Energy flows where attention goes.

Reviewing the day (or week) – make an honest assessment about where you focus your energies (mental, emotional, physical). To make it simple, tally the amount of times in each box.

Productive Tasks (work, creative endeavors etc)	Neutral Tasks (essential duties – eating, etc)	Unproductive Tasks (wasted, mindless, dull)

CONSERVATION

As we have noted, our energies are not often used to support the higher, uplifting and positive ambitions / goals that we have in life. Much of our time, energy, is wasted through erroneous tasks that keep us in the status quo that we feel so comfortable in.

I began my journey into positive self-transformation because there was a constant battle between where I to place my focus and energy. Part of me wanted to maintain certain relationships, while toxic, because they represented a comfortable nostalgia of status quo life. The other part wanted to move beyond the stagnation and depressive nature of them. It was hard to wrangle those desires and the energies that would seemingly push me into the familiar and away from the new. I was scared to limit the energy I gave to people, places and situations I was familiar with in order to give the surplus of that energy to an unknown path of growth. On top of all of this, as we learned, my brain was already conditioned for using creative energy in poor ways – so I needed to carefully and compassionately approach how to use my energy and renew it through inspiration.

It is necessary to learn how to compassionately observe the natural tendency to revert back to old patterns and practice slowly conserving the energy behind those desires and transforming them into creative action towards more constructive relationships and actions.

MASTER COMPOSER and CONDUCTOR

Over the past few weeks to now, we should be pretty aware of how we are spending our time, where we put our energy, and feel a certain energetic rhythm behind how we operate. The ebbs and flows we feel can be likened to the ups and downs we hear during classical masterpieces like Beethoven's Symphony #9. By careful patience, we can slowly direct our energies as the conductor of an orchestra disciplines the various instruments into a talented ensemble fit to play Mr. Beethoven's works. We can introduce a simple concept to allow controlled use of our energy towards higher goals and achievements, making us more like the composer and conductor rather than an audience member at mercy to the sounds of an untrained band. We can become s.m.a.r.t.

S.M.A.R.T.

Project Managers learn how to create great projects that are successful by making them S.M.A.R.T. The acronym stands for SPECIFIC – MEASURABLE – ATTAINABLE – REALISTIC – TIMELY. We can use the same tool to help us reign in our lives by creating more purposeful direction that allows us to conserve, express, and renew our energies.

- 1) Set a SPECIFIC goal – be descriptive. The more details the better. You can always come back and refine this section.
- 2) Define how to MEASURE your progress – DO you need a timeline? A scale? Stopwatch? Knowing how to measure progress will give you encouragement.

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- 3) Define your strengths and weaknesses and you will know if your goal is **ATTAINABLE**. Do you own a rocket? Then perhaps flying solo to the Moon is a bad goal. Can you run a 4-minute mile? With interval training, yes, and setting mini measurable goals, no problem.
- 4) Is it **REALISTIC** to be the secretary-general to the U.N? With no political experience, probably not. More realistic to be president of a local community group. Maybe with time in local positions, more regional or national roles might emerge. Then a global goal like the U.N. might be more realistic.
- 5) What sort of **TIMEFRAME** are we giving ourselves? Without the proper amount of time, it may be difficult to succeed with our goals. Be generous with your time so you can focus appropriately.

STARTING SMALL

When we set goals for ourselves, the best place to build confidence and success is through small ones first. Big, ambitious goals are nice and the reward great but this also comes with great defeat should we fail. And, even if we succeed, sets a dangerous precedent when we set other goals and fail then, because we did not start small and learn how to enjoy success or creatively transform small failure into motivation to try again.

JOURNAL DAY 7: Practice being S.M.A.R.T.

Reviewing Week One – Harmlessness, revisit the 10 goals for incorporating Harmlessness into your daily life. Moving forward, use the S.M.A.R.T. model to make sure you find success.

Example: Good Nights Sleep Goal

Specifically: 8 Hours a night

Measurable: Daily tracking of bedtime and wake up alarm

Attainability: Days 1 – 2 aim for 6 hours, Days 3 – 4, 6.5hrs Days 5-6, 7hrs etc.

Realistic: Yes, if I don't watch certain TV shows.

Timely: 2 weeks practice

Congratulations! We are now done with Week Four – Conservation. Being aware of our energy levels, how and where we focus those energies, and making truthful assessments about our time management allows us to be more productive and positive oriented. We may also be considering the finite nature of the resources around us and begin practicing more conservative habits at home like turning off lights, water faucets, or recycling products.

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Keep up the good work and continue to give yourself credit! Now that we understand more about our energy, make s.m.a.r.t. plans to ensure your continued success with the Building Personal Power program.