



WHAT ENERGY ARE YOU BRINGING?

While you're going through this process of trying to find the satisfaction in your work, pretend you feel satisfied. Tell yourself you had a good day. Walk through the corridors with a smile rather than a scowl. Your positive energy will radiate. If you act like you're having fun, you'll find you are having fun.

—Jean Chatzky

There's an old saying: "Check yourself before you wreck yourself." I'd like to amend the saying: "Check the energy you're bringing to a situation before you wreck the meeting, the birthday party, or the conversation with your family."

What energy are you bringing?

I'll give you an example. I remember a conversation with a coworker years ago that went something like this:

Coworker: "Man, I'm really not looking forward to *that* meeting."

Me: "Why?"

Coworker: "Well, you know, that person—they're *so* negative. They disagree with everything all the time. I'm sick of it."

Me: "Oh, I look forward to disagreement. I'm excited about the meeting!"

Coworker (wearing stunned expression): "Are you nuts?"

Me: "I love having people disagree with me. It's a chance to find a better answer." The coworker rolls his eyes, gives me the "you're freaking crazy" look, and walks away muttering while shaking his head.

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The point is this: Both my coworker and I had a choice about the energy we were going to bring to the meeting. I was excited and anticipating the meeting while my coworker was already suffering in advance. He'd convinced himself the meeting was going to be hard and needed to be endured rather than be something to look forward to. What do you do typically? Think about the number of meetings that you have on a daily basis and how many of them you go to with an excited or anticipatory energy as opposed to an attitude of “ugh, not another meeting.”

By the way, here's the *big* secret about our energy: The energy we send is the energy we receive. If you're displaying confrontational, angry, pissed-off energy, guess what the universe will send right back your way? Yep. Those around you will seem confrontational, angry, and pissed off. On the other hand, if you send curious, patient, inclusive, and collaborative energy, the universe will reflect that back to you. *Our* energy is completely under our control—*every* time. Martin Luther King Jr. knew that, even in the face of unbelievable negativity, he

was still able to choose his own emotion. In other words, maybe you just had a hard conversation at home, or traffic was horrible, or you got a flat tire on your way to work. Maybe you should leave the resulting emotions tied to the flat tire where they belong, in the trunk with the flat, as opposed to dragging them upstairs into your office. Just let them be.

Here's another place where our energy management is so critical: learning something new or taking on a new role or a new project. What comes to mind when I say, "Let's learn a new language!" We're going to use Rosetta Stone, and we're going to learn Chinese, Spanish, or French. Do you bring curiosity? Do you think about it as an interesting challenge? Or do you start talking to yourself this way: "I can't do this. I don't want to sound like a nine-month-old when I'm speaking this new language. I don't want to sound like an idiot!"

The "I can't do this" is the energy of censorship and fear. It's back to the "suffering in advance" my coworker demonstrated about the meeting. Instead, think about bringing the energy of discovery, a beginner's mentality that says I'm willing to stumble

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when it comes to something new. Until we're able to be willing to be vulnerable enough with ourselves to risk looking foolish or to endure potential criticism about our struggles to speak Spanish, we're unlikely to move very far toward "what's right." We're still going to be stuck in "who's right" (ourselves, in this case).

The last area I want to address about our energy is this one: The energy related to our choices is *critical*. Our lives don't so much revolve around what happens to us; our lives are *much* more influenced by the choices we make. Here's an example. (And yes, it's a religious story, but it's a good story because there's a surprising twist in it.)

I'm pretty confident we've all heard the story of the Good Samaritan, but we've trivialized it so much over the years that the *power* of the story has been lost. Back in first-century Judea, to the Jewish people there was *no such thing* as a good Samaritan. In fact, the Samaritans were looked at with such derision and such negativity that today you could take whatever group that's completely on the other side of your belief system, and that would be the

equivalent of a Samaritan. (KKK? Isis? Yep—in-
sert one of *those* groups into your thought process,
and you’ll get the idea of the Jewish feelings toward
Samaritans.)

Here’s where the challenge of the story hits
home. The injured traveler was ignored by two
travelers, a priest and a Levite. On the other hand,
the enemy, the outcast, the “other,” the real nega-
tive, the member of the KKK, the Isis fighter—you
choose—is the one who picked the person up, took
him to an inn, took care of him, and paid in advance
for his stay and care by the host at the inn. That’s
the power of that story; it’s incredibly provocative.
What choices do we make? What’s the energy in
them? How many times do we just “walk by” some-
one instead of bringing the energy of compassion?
We don’t understand the real purpose behind the
Good Samaritan story anymore because it has just
become a brand. We’ve got charities with the name
Good Samaritan.

Let me invite you to think about the energy
that you bring to a setting because you’re going to
get it back. Be curious. Be open. Be positive. Be

anticipatory. Things will change in a significant way for you. I promise.

Questions, Insights, Implications

1. How good are you at choosing the energy you bring into a situation? If it's easy, why? If it's difficult, how come?
2. Are you naturally able to take on a “beginner's mind” when you start to learn something new? Or do your biases and conditioned ways of thinking get in the way?
3. How does the provocative description of the Good Samaritan story make you feel? How likely is it that we might experience a version of that story today?

Again, reflect on these questions, and allow yourself to be wrong and to be open to new perspectives. By doing so, you'll likely find new insights in the most unexpected places.