BURNOUT TO BREATHING

The art and science of energy management



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Now more than ever, we are being called on to tap into a deeper state of 'authentic energy' and break out of the cycle of addictive 'adrenalised energy'. Personal growth, consciousness and living a life of meaning requires an upgrade in our software that supports living with authentic energy.

This e-book will show you how to do this with just your breath, an ancient technology that is so simple, easily accessible, always available and relevant for modern times.

Dear Reader

If you've been feeling wired, disconnected, anxious, irritated and stressed lately, this e-book is for you. If you've been feeling like there is more to life than the one you are living, this is for you too.

If you are tired of being tired, you have found the right resource. If you are ready to take charge of your health, energy and upgrade your body-mind software, read on.

For many years, in my general medical practice I have heard a very similar story. It goes something like this:

*I just don't feel myself. Thinking back i've been feeling like this for awhile. I work really long hours and by the time the weekend arrivs. In incapacitated by fulgiou. I've been feeling guite this for awhile. I work really long hours and by the time the weekend arrivs. In incapacitated by fulgiou. I've been feeling guite thirable tailet, I get theraftburn, have constant headaches and my muscles feel tight. I'm needing more and more coffee to keep me going through the day. Even though I'ry to as the haithy, I'm still not losing weight. Sometimes I get so caught up at work that I skip lunch. I wake up at 3am every morning, My mind is always reang. J wake up tind. I feel dogs and inpatient. Lart focus and concentrate. I feel overwhelmed and burdened. Everything makes me anxious. I'm constantly checking my phone. Nothing interests me. I just want to be lift alone. My door are tests and everything cam back clear."

A few years ago, an alarming trend was showing up in my practice. My patients were presenting with a very similar set of symptoms: fatigue, weight gain, insomnia, digestive issues and hormonal imbalances. On an emotional level, anxiety was at the top of the list of symptoms. I also noticed that entrepreneurs, human rights activists, NGO and health care workers, change makers, lawyers, visionarises and artists, morns staying at home to raise future fit childran, people who were passionate about making a difference in the work, were starting to bes their fits. It was showing up in all kinds of ways; emotionally, physiologically, in their relationships and at work. In fact, what was happening is that either they were beginning to discornect from the energy that Luelled their passion or were so consumed by their work that they became addicted to adrenaline, in my opinion, the most dangerous drug of our time.

The world is changing rapidly. As the world speeds up so does our pace. We are facing a global personal and collective energy crisis. Our ability to adapt to the demands of the digital age is being compromised. The evidence is showing up in our individual and collective behaviour, through the physical symptoms we are experiencing and a global narrative that reflects deep fatigue, lack of meaning and a feeling of being overwhelmed. Now more than ever, we are being called on to tap into a deeper state of 'authentic energy' and break out of the cycle of addictive 'adrenalised energy'. Personal growth, consciousness and meaning requires an upgrade in our software that supports living with authentic energy. This in turn, requires that we live in accordance with natural laws that govern energy. If we live in accordance with these principles, we have the best chance at ootimising our optential.

THE 7 LAWS OF AUTHENTIC ENERGY

- 1. Law of Rhythms: Energy moves in a rhythm and cycle.
- 2. Law of StillPoint: We feel the flow of Source Energy when we experience 'StillPoint'.
- 3. Law of Three: Source energy is expressed through Body Intelligence, Mind Intelligence and Heart Intelligence
- 4. Newton's Law: Energy cannot be created nor destroyed, but changes from one form to another.
- 5. Law of Unique You: Every unique person requires an individual 'energy code'.
- 6. Law of Flow: Nature does not resist adversity, but faces it and adapts to flourish.
- 7. Law of Overflow: Living in tune with our authentic selves, source energy 'overflows' from, us and without trying, positively influences everything and everyone around us.



1. LAW OF RHYTHMS

There is a universal patten or rhythm of energy that we see from the microcosm to the macrocosm. We see it in the ebb and flow of occam waves. It is evident in the cycle of seasons; the high energy season of spring and summer and low energy cycle of winter, the time of introspection and hibernation. It's in the lunar cycle; the high energy of full moon and low energy of the waning moon. We feel it in our biorhythms, the circadian hythms and menstrual cycle. We feel it in our hearbeat and breathing and waves of energy with every inhale and exhale. The high energy state of the stress response (adrenalised energy) succumbs to the recovery response when repair of cells; replenishment of energy resources occur. One needs the other, one flows into the other, we experience cycles within cycles. When we can understand our natural and unique energy patterns, we can adjust our lifestyle accordingly. When we can ecogine that we are in a state of adrenalised energy, we can harness and focus it when appropriate and consciously break out of it when its not, through a recovery loop.

Adrenalised energy can be very useful in the short term. It supports great productivity and efficiency if hamessed appropriately. However, it can only be sustained for a short amount of time be-fore it starts to become toxic and create more harm than good.

Behavioural symptoms

- · working all the time without being able to switch off
- · less time with loved ones
- not living in alignment with core values
- self care (eg healthy eating and exercise) gets neglected
- dependency on stimulants and external relaxation aids e.g. coffee and sugar as 'uppers' and alcohol, sleeping pills as 'downers'
- · 'wired' energy or nervous energy
- scattered focus
- · distractibility
- · focus flits from one thing to another
- · inability to relax/sit still
- · can seem almost 'manic'
- impatience

Physical symptoms:

- headaches
- · back pain
- · muscle tension
- digestive niggles (heartburn, bloating, constipation)
- · disrupted sleep patterns
- · breathing feels restricted

If you notice these symptoms, activate a recovery loop, to break out of the cycle and recharge reboot.



WHAT IS A RECOVERY LOOP?

A combination of a thought, posture and breathing pattern can powerfully activate the relaxation response to replenish and gather energy resources for the next high energy cycle.

In order to harness the Law of Rhythms, we need to be consciously and regularly inserting recovery loops into our day. Conscious breathing is an easy and effective way to do this. More about this later.

2. LAW OF STILLPOINT

It is this feeling that we all crave for and in fact, remember. In order to navigate change and the demands of our physical world, we need to be able to anchor to this place inside ourselves, and move outwards into the world from this place. Like the eye in the centre of the storm. This is true resilience. There are moments in time that open us to this place in ourselves. It could be a fleeting moment when we connect to ourselves, nature or another, a moment of knowing, trust and calm.

We tend to have this feeling in nature, while watching a sunrise or sunset, playing with a child or connecting with an animal. The more we experience StillPoint, the more we are able to handle times of adversity and intensity with grace and equanimity. StillPoint also connects us to natural energy, 'Source Energy' or Life Force Energy.

The more we experience StillPoint, the more we can experience the flow of authentic energy physically, mentally and emotionally. Experienced martial artists, master creatives and peak sports performers describe this feeling of being 'in flow' or in 'the zone'. We can channel tremendous power, strength and energy by being connected to source energy.

Make a choice to experience more StillPoint moments by being more fully present and alive all that you do. The more StillPoint moments you experience, the more authentic energy you will experience.

3. LAW OF THREE CHANNELS

Source energy (spiritual energy) gets expressed into our system in three ways.

BI: Source energy expresses itself physically through our **Body's Intelligence**. There is an innate wisdom that governs and coordinates all our physiological processes and functions without us having to think about it. In order to support this mechanism, we simply need to take care of our basic needs and as much as possible live in accordance with natural rhythms.

MI: Mind Intelligence ie focus, concentration, intellectual capacity, innovation, logical thinking and creativity is optimised when we are mindful. Living mindfully moves us out of reactivity and allows us to be more responsive to ourselves, people and situations. We foster greater resilience when we break out of habitual patterns of thinking and behaviour that trigger reactivity and toxic adrenalised energy.

HI: Source energy is most powerfully expressed through Heart Intelligence which is characterised by compassion, gratitude, creativity, capacity to feel and connect with ourselves and others without judgement.

In order to harness this law, we need to be constantly and consciously attending to these three channels each day. All three sources are intricately connected. Tending to one channel will have an effect on all the others. There are times when some channels need more support than others. It is important to have this awareness andtake the necessary action to feed and restore that channel. While our physical form operates on hythms and cycles, at our essence is the part of us that is still, constant and never changing. When we connect with this place inside ourselves we experience joy, peace, acceptance, compossion and expansion.



4. NEWTON'S LAW

Every thought, feeling, emotion that we experience has its own energy pattern. The way that we move, think, feel and breathe has an effect on how we experience energy. When we understand this, we can use this law to transform stress energy or adrenalised energy into something useful. For example, we can transform scattered mental energy or anxiety into authentic energy through physical exercise, or we can transform motional energy into creative energy through writing or painting. Another example is how we can use positive self talk (mental energy) to boost physical energy. When we express our feelings and emotions through laughing, crying, dancing or talking, we are freeing stuck emotional energy in a physical way. Like heat can transform solid water to vapour, the breath can transform adornalised energy to authentic energy through the three channels.

A healthy energy system requires that energy is constantly flowing and moving through one channel to another, supporting BI, MI, and HI.

5. LAW OF UNIQUE YOU

Like everything in nature, each of us has a unique energetic blueprint based on our genes, upbringing, environment, diet, belief systems personality, our unique gifts and talents and our souls purpose. While there are universal principles that govern energy, we all have unique needs and life circumstances. For example, an extrovert might feel energised by being in a crowd, while an introvert would find being in a crowd exhausting. We all have an opportunity and responsibility to craft and design a lifestyle and create an environment that supports and honours our individual needs. This requires introspection, awareness and experimentation!

6. LAW OF FLOW

Every now and again nature faces a radical shift in energy through scarcity, destruction and devastation. This makes way for a burst of energy, a new cycle of life and a time of flourishing that was even better than before. Nature accepts challenges as a stimulus for growth through a process of adaptation and resilience. Likewise, when we can flow with the challenges and difficulties we face without recoiling or building up emotional defences and walls, we tap into our innermost energy re-sources that stimulates even greater growth and flourishing.

7. LAW OF OVERFLOW

This principle relates to the phenomenon of entrainment that we see reflected in nature when birds fly together in unison or when women who live in dose proximity start to synchronise their menstrual cycle. This law of physics states that when two objects of like vibration are in dose proximity, the object of lesser or weaker vibration will begin to match the object of stronger vibration. Thus if each person takes responsibility for living with authentic energy, this energy state overflows and positively influences the environment and others without effort. The more people that interact on this level, the greater the influence of this authentic energy becomes. This is how each person has the capacity to shift teams, organisations, family and societal systems.

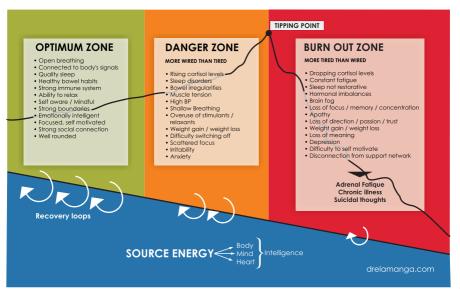


"Energy cannot be created nor destroyed, merely changed from one form to another."

- Newton's Law

ENERGY ZONE MAP©

The following map illustrates the physical and behavioural symptoms that we experience as we move from a state of living in accordance with the energy laws (Optimum Zone) to Danger Zone and eventually to Burnout Zone.



AUTHENTIC ENERGY

We experience 'authentic energy', meaning, purpose and inspiration when we

• Use adrenalised energy wisely and replenish our energy resources through Recovery Loops.

- Tap into source energy through StillPoint moments.
- Tend to all Body Intelligence (sleep, regular healthy meals, movement) Mind Intelligence (mindfulness) and Heart Intelligence (connection with self and others).
- Move and express our energy through the three channels .

Authentic energy is experienced through the qualities listed in the green zone.

The nature of modern digitised life means that we are constantly receiving stress signals from the external and internal environment. Negative thoughts, suppressed emotion and physical tension in the body will all feed the stress response and fuel adrenalised energy until we become locked in it.

We often don't recognise adrenalised energy for what it is as it so easily creeps up on us and the 'wired' energy feels normal. We forget what true relaxation feels like. The functions of healing, digestion, repair of tissues can only occur when the body is in rest and digest mode.

The stress chemicals adrenatine and cortisol (as indicated by the black line on the chart) now get released constantly in a low grade fashion, causing inflammation, a compromised immune system, digestive problems, sleep disturbances and irritable behaviour. It also causes the release of free radicals which eventually leads to progression of disease.

Many of us deal with these low grade symptoms for a while, until it begins to threaten our performance and relationships, or becomes a question of life and death. Only then do we start to pay attention. Until then, we trudge along in denial. In fact we fuel 'adrenalised energy' to get us through the day with the help of caffeine, sugar, alcohol and cigarettes.

If we do not recognise the symptoms in **Danger Zone** for what they are, we are at risk putting great strain on the adrenal glands as they struggle to keep up production of adrenaline and cortisol and we reach tipping point and descend into **Burnout Zone** where we leel constantly, fatigued, depressed and disconnected.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

There are certain personality types who seem to be more prone to burnout.

- The rescuer/helper. This is the person who is always there to support others, is driven by the deep desire
 to make a difference in the world and feels responsible for maintaining a state of peace and harmony. They
 may find it difficult to set boundaries and fears being judged by others. Interestingly, it would seem that the
 more idealistic someone is, the more they are prone to energy depletion.
- The perfectionist. This is the high achiever, driven and ambitious. No matter what she has accomplished, she will always strive to achieve more. Her greatest fear is 'failure' and 'not feeling good enough'.
- . The Type A Rescuer. This individual has a combination of both of the above traits.

WHO ELSE IS AT RISK?

- entrepreneurs
- · leaders and middle management
- · working mothers
- · high school students

- · health professionals
- shift workers
- · jobs that involve frequent travel

The key to managing and mastering your energy and staying in Optimum Zone is the conscious and deliberate activation of recovery loops, which will break the cycle of toxic adrenalised energy and constantly reboot the system through the parasympathetic/rest and digest mode.

WHAT HAPPENS IN REST AND DIGEST MODE?

- · energy and blood is released into the digestive system
- · digestive juices are secreted to aid digestion, absorb nutrients
- · anti-inflammatories are released into the system to mop up free radical and tissue damage
- · cells and tissues are repaired

Long term health and optimum energy is dependent on the natural cyclical activation of this R+D mode, but because we are addicted to and locked into adrenalised energy, we have to consciously and deliberately reprogramme it into our system in a way that will fit into our new modern lifestyles.

RECOVERY LOOPS HAVE TO BE:

quick
easily accessible
universal
effective
tangible

The most powerful and effective Recovery Loop is the breath, the bridge between mind, body and soul.

Our breath is the most exquisite example of innate wisdom in action. It quietly sustains our life force while we get on with the business of our lives. Most of us have never even considered the gift and value of the breath until something comes in the way of its flow.

Our breath moves, flows and adapts itself under the radar of our conscious awareness and yet, when we come alive to it, notice it and harness it, it becomes the very force that shifts us from operating at baseline level to expanding and growing in ways we never imagined possible.

The breathing cycle, the inhale and the exhale, is the perfect expression of the Law of Cycles. With every inhalation, high energy stress response is balanced by the exhalation and relaxation state. This can even be measured in our heart rate. When we inhale, the heart rate increases slightly, and as we exhale it decreases slightly. This elasticity of our heart rate is known as heart rate variability.

Authentic energy is reflected in the heart rate variability. In other words, the more balanced the breathing pattern, the higher the heart rate variability, the more robust our energy system and the less prone we are to the symptoms of adrenalised energy. If we are stuck in **Danger Zone** or **Burnout Zone**, the breath will reflect that with a habitual pattern of breathing that is shallow, fast and restricted. In addition, our breathing pattern, posture and tone of voice is constantly sending feedback signals back to the brain. If the body is sending stress signals to the brain through a shallow breath and tight muscles, the brain will react accordingly by feeding adrenalised energy. Eventually, over time, adrenalised energy becomes a habit and an addiction.

While our breathing is part of this autonomic nervous system (automated energy management system), it is the only function that we are able to consciously override. In just one breath, we can break the cycle of toxic adrenalised energy and shift our energy state.

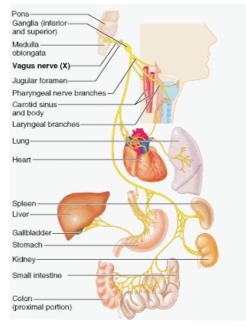
If that can happen with just one breath, imagine what we are able to achieve if we bring conscious breathing into our daily awareness and integrate it into our lifestyle.

But how does this happen? Before I share the techniques with you, it is important to understand the inner workings of the Recovery Loop. The answer resides in a long and winding nerve called the Vagus nerve, the major nerve highway that connects the brain to the body. This interesting nerve unlocks the mystery to the mind body and breath connection.

The vagus nerve is part of the parasympathetic rest and digest mode, so when it is activated, the heart rate slows down, our digestive system is stimulated and we feel rela xed and calm. Basically we go into recovery and healing mode. You might have noticed that when you start to relax your turmy will rumble. Most of the fibres of the vagus are responsible for sending signals from the vocal cords, lungs, heart and digestive system back to the brain.

Fibres from the vagus nerve wrap around the back of the throat and vocal cords, travel down to circle around the heart and deep into the little air sacs or alveoli in the lungs where they receive signals from the stretch receptors. So each time we take a deep breath, fill our air sacs and release the breath slowly, the vagus nerve is being powerfully stimulated to activate a healing Recovery Loop.

The long term aim is to use the breath to strengthen our 'agal tone', so that instead of the breath being reflective of a stuck adrenalised state, the breath is fluid and adaptive and working with the law of rhythms with every inhale and exhale. The aim is also to develop a deeper awareness of our energy state and to consciously use it to change our state so that it is appropriate and responsive to each situation in which we find ourselves. This is true energy mastery.



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ENERGY MASTERY

Five basic breathing techniques that will get you started on the road to energy mastery.

1. FEEL and OBSERVE

Breath awareness is also the foundation of any mindfulness or meditation practice. It is a good practice for the morning to begin your day or as a wind down routine in the evening.

The technique:

Set your timer for 5 to 15 mins. Start with 5 mins and build up to 15. Sit or lie in a comfortable position and without changing your breath simply bring your attention to it. Noticing the gross and subtle details. The movement of your bely, the feeling of the air in your nostrils. Just keep your attention anchored to the breath. As soon as the mind begins to wander (which it very quickly will), gently, without judgement and without entertaining the thoughts, quick your attention back to the breath. Keep doing this until the time is up.

This simple and powerful exercise is literally brain gym. Studies have shown that people who practise this for just 12 minutes a day for 8 weeks show a 30% increase in the grey matter in the pre-frontal cortex in the brain, the part of the brain that is responsible for focus, concentration, decision making and empathy.

This technique builds Mind Intelligence and is the gateway to Heart Intelligence.

Get into the habit of observing your breath in moments throughout the day. You will notice that as soon as you become aware of how you are breathing, you will automatically become aware of your posture, your thoughts, your reactions, habits and patterns. You will begin to develop a relationship with your breath. As soon as you bring awareness to your breathing, it will automatically adapt, open up and slow down.

When to use it:

Use every opportunity to become aware of your breathing; when you are sitting, welking, feeling pain, feeling happy, getting irritated or are sitting in traffic, in a meeting or being provoked in a confrontation. Usually, the breath is the last thing that you will think about in theses situations so this takes practice!

2. NATURAL LOOPS

Yawns and sighs are Body Intelligence in action. They are both natural Recovery Loops and parasympathetic responses. As soon as the body receives feedback that the system needs a reboot, a yawn or sigh is activated. Both these breathing reflexes create an expanded or double inhalation and a release of tension on the exhalation. This serves to support greater oxygenation of all the tissues including the brain and releases built up tension in the muscles through a fascial stretch.

The technique:

Whenever you feel a yawn or sigh coming on, instead of suppressing it, use it as a Recovery Loop. Activate, expand and exaggerate it. In order to boost the vagal response, it is important to get the body, breath and mind to work together. As you expand the inhale, take your shoulders back and feel like you're filling your body with energy. As you exhale, let the breath go along with any tension you've been carrying, allowing yourself to come into the present moment.

When to use it:

Use the double inhale and sigh as many times during the day as possible. Between sentences as you're typing, between meetings and calls, before a meal, after a meal, when you feel tension building up. Use it right now!

3. 365

3 times a day . 6 breaths a minute . 5 mins at a time

This technique is probably one of the most studied and researched of all the thousands of breathing techniques out there and is described by David O'Hare in his book ' Heart Coherence'. It has been proven to increase heart rate variability and vagal tone.

The technique:

Inhale for a count of 5 seconds and exhale slowly for 5 seconds keeping the breaths connected. This connecting of the breaths is called 'coherent breathing'. In other words, there are no gaps or pauses between the breaths. As you inhale, feel like you are filling the belly and then the chest. Try to keep the body relaxed as you breathe in, without using muscular effort to inhale. Feel like you are filling your body with breath.

When to use it:

To get the most benefit from this technique, practice it for 5 mins at a time, 3 times a day. In the morning, it can be used to balance the system before starting the day. In the afternoon it can be used a Recovery Loop as energy starts to wane. In the evening, it can also be used as a wind down routine.

It is also a great stand alone technique for anxiety.

4.478

This is a well known technique popularised by Dr Andrew Weil for aiding restful sleep.

The technique: Breathe in slowly for a count of 4. Hold the breath without straining for a count of 7. Slowly control and release the exhale for a count of 8, emptying the lungs completely.

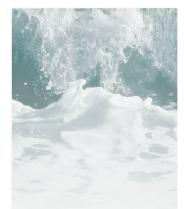
When to use it:

It is a very effective technique if you find that you can't switch off, are going to bed feeling tired and wired or are waking up in the early hours of the morning.

5. 20 WAVES

This is a mini version of one of the most powerful and transformative breathing techniques out there. It is very energising and relaxing at the same time and can easily activate a StillPoint experience. It is also known as 20 connected breaths.

See the technique in box alongside



The wave technique:

This one involves using your mouth to breathe. Take a long deep slow inhalelino filling your lungs right to the top. Imagine that you are sucking the breath through a thick straw. Let the exhale drop out like a sight of relief. Keep breathing in this way with no gaps or pauses between the breaths 20 times. Let every fifth breath be a longer and deeper one. After you have completed 20 breaths, just let yourself enjoy the energy and stillness. Do this technique sitting in a chair or preferably lying down. The trick is to stay relaxed and not force the exhale or drag it out. With his technique you are learning to relax within intensity.

When to use it:

Use this technique whenever you feel like you are holding stress, tension and need a boost of authentic energy.

CRAFTING YOUR OWN ENERGY RECOVERY MANAGEMENT PLAN:

The more you start to use these breathing practices, the more you will start to experience authentic energy and the more you will crave that feeling. Not only will it support greater productivity, but it will also build resilience, compassion and open you up to every thing you need to create the life you deserve.

We want happiness and authentic energy to become a habit, but in order for that to happen, we have to consciously and regularly practice these recovery loops daily, weekly, monthly and seasonally to retrain authentic energy back into our system.

Craft your own energy management programme by implementing this formula:

Daily: Create bookends on either end of your day with the 'feel and observe', '365' or '20 waves' Activate the mini Recovery Loops with many yawns and sighs throughout the day. Bring your awareness to your breath throughout the day and use it to activate and manage your energy states.

Weakly: Take 3-5 hours to unplug from your digital devices and spend time deeply recovering and resting. The more energy you have used in the week, the more time you need to recover. Have a long afternoon sileep, spend time in nature, have a massage, breathel Feed MI, BI and HI and tap into Source energy through StillPoint.

Monthly: A full day of getting out of the city, going for a hike, doing something that nourishes your soul.

Seasonally: Treat yourself to a long weekend, holiday or retreat.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ela Manga is an integrated medical practitioner and writter with 15 years experience in supporting individuals and teams to manage the effects of stress through her unique holistic approach that combines the principles of eastern philosophy, yoga, breathwork practices, mindfulness and western medicine principles.

Her current locus is on energy management and the effects of burnot in today's fast-paced environment. She uses modern medicine as a framework to dive deeper to the rod cause of illness by drawing on safe and natural healing systems. Her passion is to bring mindfulness back to medicine and to inspire conscious living as a way to support wellbeing.

In her individual sessions, she partners with her clients to design individualised and long term health strategies that support the body's self healing capability.

Ela works in the corporate environment as a speaker and facilitator at wellness workshops and events. She also has created a School of Breathwork which offers regular workshops and training courses for practitioners.

Her practice is situated at Woodlands Centre for Conscious Living and Spa on the banks of the Crocodile River in Muldersdrift, just outside Johannesburg, South Africa.



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