



IV: ON ENERGY

“What energy are you putting out into the universe? Energy is not just your actions and your speech. Your thoughts are energy. When you are thinking angry thoughts, thoughts of revenge, envy, self-doubt, fear, all of it is manifesting itself as energy whether you realize it or not.”

— Essay III: On The Laws of Thought

Everything in life feels clearer when explained in energy terms.

Here’s what I mean. People give off energy. Some radiate positive energy and optimism, where you feel energized and happy just being around them. Some people radiate negative and toxic energy, where you feel depleted and anxious just being around them.

When you try to put words to this, as in *why* you feel the way you do, you will realize that there are no words for it. Remember, 80% of communication is nonverbal, and 95% of brain activity is subconscious. You're worried about what they'll think of you when you open your mouth, when the truth is that your fate was sealed as soon as you walked in the

door. They already made up their mind about you, and they don't even know it.

A Shield Against Self-Deceit

I spend a lot of time thinking about not just energy but the endless battle between the heart and the brain, because when I think back to all the mistakes I've made in assessing people — the character of men I've been friends with, or women I've been with — energy has never lied.

Men lie, women lie, children lie, and we lie to ourselves...but *energy, my friend, energy never lies.*

There were plenty of times when I felt negative energy with the first impression, where the heart said *no*, followed by the rationalization of the brain saying *yes*, thus going against instinct in deciding who to bring into the mix. And for real, I don't think there is a single time when I've gone against my gut and had it work out for me.

Sometimes it takes years, but you think back to how you felt when you first met the person — and you *still* can't come up with the right words. No words, no actions: the energy told you it was a no.

The reason why we have to be so careful is that after we let someone into our circle, we become less conscious of their energy. We grow accustomed to it through self-deceit. When someone new meets them, picks up on the energy that you originally sensed, and points it out, we rush to that person's defense and make excuses for their behavior.

It's all well and good until the shit hits the fan, true character reveals itself, and the negative energy you picked up on years ago finally manifests itself through action.

Energy didn't lie to you. You lied to yourself.

The Palettes of Energy

The following description of energy is the best I can come up with. Imagine the palette of colors from Microsoft Paint or Excel, the chessboard-shaped one, where you get fewer than 100 colors.

Those colors represent the limitations of language to describe the way we feel. You are given a small array of colors to choose from. Good, bad, warm, cold, positive, negative, generous, mean, kind and cruel, there are only so many words we have available to describe our feelings or to describe the aura that someone generates.

The depths of the soul, the innermost chambers of the human heart, can't be accurately represented by that limited palette. Even with the more detailed color palette on your computer, that hexagon-shaped one, you're still not there.

Again, 80% of communication is nonverbal and 95% of brain activity is subconscious. That's how you perceive the energy someone gives off before they even open their mouth. And before you let their words sway your mind, before the brain overpowers the heart, you must grant an audience to the energy that is coursing up from your spirit and through your arteries. You feel it before you sense it.

I wish I had better words for this phenomenon, but, as I said, the colors of real life are represented only in dizzying levels

of complexity — a problem further compounded by my limited vocabulary, clumsy command of the English language, and limited authorial ceiling.

The poet, philosopher, and philologist Leopardi describes these limitations as follows: “...perhaps no language has enough words and phrases to correspond to and express all the infinite subtleties of thought...for an idea without a word or a way to express it is lost to us, or roams about undefined in our thoughts, and is imperfectly understood by we who have conceived it.”

For the purposes of this discussion on energy, I would like to emphasize that when you sense negativity emanating from someone, trust your instincts.

The Soul’s Indelible Imprints

The next aspect of energy is the kind discussed at the beginning of this essay, which is the energy that *you* are putting off into the world. I’m not referring to the subconscious kind, the vibes, the aura we give off, which is well beyond our control, but the conscious energy that comes billowing off your thoughts, actions and speech like smoke from an old train.

I tried to put words to this notion in a tweet: “Every action you take leaves an indelible imprint on your soul. Meaning, you treat a bad man with cruelty, and tell yourself that it’s okay because he’s bad. But you’re wrong. All this does is say two things about you: you’re someone who treats others with cruelty, and you’re someone who doesn’t take accountability for your actions. Both of those get stamped on your soul, and the imprint deepens with repetition. Your actions become

habits, your habits become your character, and finally, in the words of Heraclitus: *A man's character becomes his fate.*”

This all ties in with James Allen's philosophy, which explores the feedback loop of how thoughts become habits and habits become character. However, what I'm really trying to get at is the excuses people make for the things they say, do, or think.

Every time you say something cruel about someone, regardless of *if they deserve it* or not, you are practicing cruelty. This applies to all gossip, all slander, all types of evil speech that regularly oozes forth from your pestilential maw. You have to unwire the part of your brain that justifies and rationalizes this type of behavior, and pull the tree out at the roots. Because all you are doing is deepening the habit of giving off toxic energy.

All anger is toxic, all vengeance is toxic, all envy is toxic, these are all feelings and behaviors that cultivate in you the character of a man who is slave to his emotions and not master. With every poorly-chosen word, the imprint on your soul deepens in permanence. The same goes for actions, and the same goes for the highest level of the game: your thoughts. Oscar Wilde put this concept succinctly in *De Profundis*: “I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret chamber one has some day to cry aloud on the housetops.”

Perfection of Character

If you are determined to eliminate all your character defects, I have found that viewing everything in energetic terms, and categorizing the contents of your mind into good or bad

energy, is a straightforward path to shedding all the dross. Why energy? Because sometimes there aren't words for it. Oftentimes, we say or do something we shouldn't have, and our spirit reacts by blasting currents of energy throughout our mind and body. You feel it, you feel weak and anxious and shameful and stressed. What happens next is that your brain starts creating rationalizations and justifications for why what you did was okay. The currents of energy weaken and gradually disappear, but in reality, all you have done is repress your true emotions and reinforce the habit of speaking, thinking, and acting incorrectly, further deepening your character defects instead of correcting them.

Ultimately, what you are trying to achieve with all of this rigorous self-examination, self-reproach and self-discipline is to rip out all the wiring, short-circuiting all thought patterns built around rationalization, excuses, blaming and justifying, and then turning all this electricity inwards on yourself.

In doing so, you create a duality long discussed by countless others before this essay. Namely, while it is painful to accept that you are at fault for everything in your past, that pain is offset by the freedom of knowing that you — and only you — are responsible for writing all the future chapters of your life story. This relentless personal accountability is the path not to penance, but to inner peace.

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The third component of energy is the straightforward kind. Energy is what enables you to accomplish things in life. Energy is what allows you to bounce back from failure. Energy is the only limitation to what you can do with each twenty-four-hour block that our Creator allots you.

When you have low or no energy, you cannot accomplish anything. When you are at peak energy, the world is yours. You would think that most people would realize this and do everything they can to maximize their energy, but they don't. They skip out on sleep, eat garbage, don't exercise, lie on the couch, watch television and play with scrollable apps.

All of these things are energy-negative, and the only guarantee we are given in life is that with each year that goes by, you will be 365 days older, you'll be one step slower, you'll have less energy than you do today and it will take you longer to bounce back from the inevitable setbacks.

Think about all the ways you can maximize your energy. Take care of your sleep, diet and training. God granted you this vessel. You only get one, and you might as well treat it with the love and care it deserves.

Surround yourself with people that give you energy. Cut off all the people who steal your energy, who radiate toxic or negative vibrations. Trust your gut and your accumulated life experience, in both directions, with each new person you meet. When the energy is bad, don't feel the need to justify it and don't feel like you have to put words to it — bad energy is bad energy, and all you are doing is wasting time waiting for it to manifest itself through their actions. You owe no explanation to anybody. *Bad energy. I'm out.* Your accumulated life experience is speaking to you in ways that the English language cannot express, the 95% of your brain activity that is subconscious. When everything sends alarm bells, listen.

These are lessons I was forced to learn the hard way. But as you become more mindful of energy, conserving the positive and minimizing the negative, your own energy levels will

continue to rise, and you will grow accustomed to the strange phenomenon of consistently getting what you want out of life.

Put your faith in energy. Why? Because men lie, women lie, children lie, and we lie to ourselves.

But energy? *Energy, my friend, energy never lies.*