

CHRONIC FATIGUE

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Chronic fatigue is one of the most widespread ills of our age. It is not due to overwork (modern man does not work nearly so hard as his ancestors did), but rather to a scattering of our forces. Ours is not a “focused” age. Countless influences pull us in conflicting directions. We find ourselves trying to do a hundred things hastily, rather than one thing at a time carefully and well. We measure achievement by numbers rather than by excellence. A result is the exhaustion that one finds written on the faces of so many men and women in our bustling cities, where strangers pass one another with never a smile nor even a glance of greeting.

Chronic fatigue is due not only to a scattering of our energies, but also to over-stimulation. Where there is too much stimulation, one’s capacity for response is weakened. One loses his natural enthusiasm. A Hollywood writer once showed a script to a movie producer. The producer, after reading it, said, “It’s stupendous! Colossal!” The writer asked dejectedly, “You mean you don’t like it?” It is difficult in a world in which superlatives form a constant crescendo to take anything seriously—to react with wonder even to a miracle. Our very superlatives become but expressions of ennui.

Fatigue is a direct result of a loss of interest. Our energy supply depends not primarily upon nutritious food and other external causes, but upon our capacity for smiles, for enthusiasm. People lead one-horsepower lives when they forget how to smile, when they over-complicate their daily routine, and clutter their minds with the debris of useless desires and preoccupations. The man who can simplify his life and marshal his energies to do a few things well, instead of scattering his forces restlessly to the winds, will find that he has more than strength enough for whatever he has to do. Be *willing* in everything that you do. Willingness begets energy. “The greater the will,” Yoganandaji used to say, “the greater the flow of energy.” Will in this context means willingness—not physical or mental strain, but a pleasant, steadily increasing focus of the whole attention on a goal.



A technique for drawing energy into the body is to stand facing the sun. Raise your hands above your head. Feel the warmth of the sun striking your forehead at the point between the eyebrows, and the palms of your hands. Feel that you are drawing warmth and energy into your body through those “windows.” After some time, turn your back to the sun, and feel its warmth upon the area of the medulla oblongata (at the base of the brain). Keep your hands raised above the head. Again, draw the sun’s rays into your body.

The next time you feel fatigue, do some deep breathing. Then fill your mind with the sense of wonder that a child feels who sees this world with a fresh outlook. Have nothing to do with the jaded vision of people who live always, as it were, with their eyes to the ground.

Fatigue, finally, is a symptom of self-centeredness. One who can forget himself in helping others and in giving strength to them will find himself rarely exhausted.