



EXECUTIVE VITALITY: CONQUERING THE CLUTTER DEMON

Halloween will have just passed when you read this. However, as I write this, Halloween is still on the horizon. And that makes me think about “energy vampires,” goblins and ghouls. People are not the only type of energy vampires that leaders have to deal with though; the freaks all come out at Halloween...BUT in the corporate world – some would say – they are ALWAYS there!

We talked about solutions for energy vampires in a June 2013 article ([Executive Vitality: Beware of Energy Vampires](#)). Another area of energy drain is a different villain – the grey, faceless monster that sucks all the fun out of work and makes it impossible to ever feel like you are finished ... the Clutter Demon.

Today’s leaders often have too many priorities, too much stuff on their desk – electronic or otherwise – too many meetings on the calendar, too much physical and mental clutter, perhaps too much stuff at home. From an executive vitality point of view, the goal is to eliminate needless distractions that can be energy sinks that negatively impact your performance.

Here are nine ideas for resisting the Clutter Demon and preserving your energy:

- 1) First of all, as the foundation of what follows, YOU must be on the TOP of your list:
 - Workouts
 - Sleep
 - Relationships
- 2) Declutter your task list. Great leaders know what only they can do. Write a list of the tasks that *only you* can do and do them. Delegate everything else (and I mean *everything*). See [HBR - What Only the CEO Can Do](#) and [Entrepreneur - Lead from the Top: 5 Core Responsibilities of a CEO](#).
- 3) Get organized. See [HBR - What Everyone Needs to Know to Be More Productive](#).
- 4) Review your calendar on Friday for the following week. Don’t do anything that doesn’t:
 - Fit into your personal values
 - Make a difference
 - Add to the bottom line
- 5) Select goals that you want to do, not that you feel you should do. Make your goals your intentions.
- 6) Identify the things you reach for every day. Put them in one place. Put them back in the same place every day.
- 7) Clean out all the things you don’t use – including the piles of stuff. Sell them on eBay or donate them to Goodwill... just get rid of the “stuff.” STUFF takes up energy. See [HBR - Why a Messy Workspace Undermines Your Persistence](#) and [Forbes - Is minimalism the new normal?](#)
- 8) Take care of what you do keep. Keep things clean, organized, fueled, filled... ready to go.
- 9) Whatever in your life makes you tired instead of energetic – stop doing it and find another way. If you aren’t finding joy, you will not find energy. Be aware of what brings you joy at work and do more of that. Clear out the Clutter Demon.

What are your particular energy vampires or energy sinks? What can you get off your desk, off your calendar, out of your office that will give you a huge sigh of relief.