

Self-Help Tools: The Energy Audit

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Source: Concept appears widely across coaching and management literature; no single traceable author

Most burnout does not arrive all at once. It builds slowly, task by task, meeting by meeting, until one day you are exhausted but cannot explain why. This tool helps you find where the energy is going before it becomes a bigger problem.

Step 1: List your activities

Write down everything you do in a typical week. Work tasks, meetings, personal commitments, social obligations. Do not filter. Just list.

Step 2: Sort into two columns

Gives Energy (things that leave you feeling engaged or alive) vs. Drains Energy (things that leave you feeling flat, resentful, or tired). Go with your gut.

Step 3: Look for patterns

Which column is longer? Are the draining activities concentrated in one area? Are energy-giving activities things you rarely make time for?

A manager goes through this exercise and realizes every draining item on her list involves her inbox and status update meetings. Every energy-giving item involves direct work with her team or solving a hard problem. She is spending 60% of her week on what drains her. That is not a productivity problem. It is a structure problem, and now she can see it clearly enough to do something about it.

Ask yourself:

- What is one draining activity I could reduce, delegate, or eliminate?
- What is one energy-giving activity I could do more of starting this week?