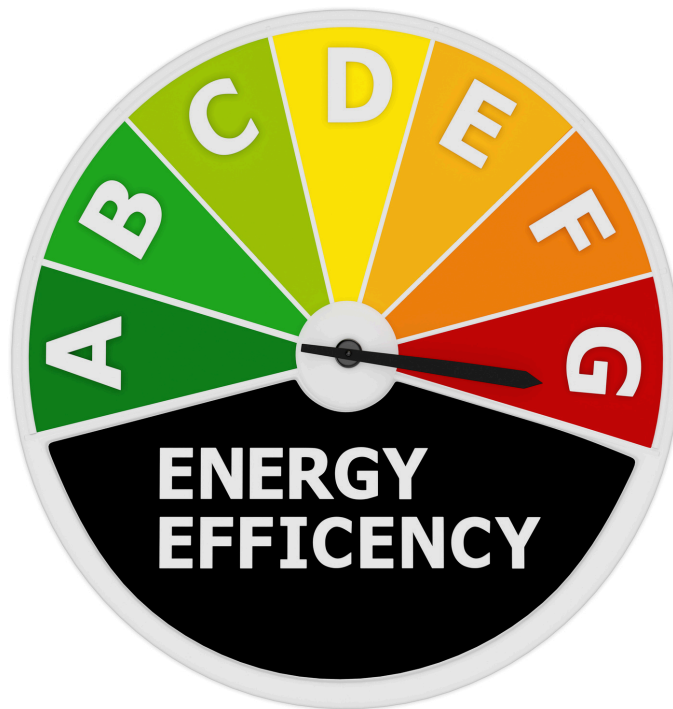


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Inner Energy Gauge

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A long journey's success will be impacted by how well you refuel along the way



In our culture, it is generally accepted mechanical wisdom, that if you want to drive across the country in your car, there is no way to do this successfully without pausing to pull over and refuel. Monitoring the gas gauge and refueling accordingly is essential. Neglect refueling and you end up stuck on the side of the road. While this mechanical wisdom is at times challenged to explore the distance one's vehicle can travel on vapors, it is not questioned. A car requires refueling or recharging in order to sustain progress on the journey.

Can you imagine how your life might be different if you applied this same wisdom to your body? Imagine having an Inner Energy Gauge that monitors not just your physical energy level, but also your emotional energy and your cognitive energy. How might your life be different if you vowed to never go below $\frac{1}{4}$ tank without refueling? If you were to check your own Inner Energy Gauge right now, what would you discover? Are you running low? Do you know how to refuel? Do you know what nourishes and restores you the most effectively? Do you know your own early warning signs?

Over the past 27 years, I have asked these questions of 1000's of dedicated, hard-working health care providers. Not only did they indicate they were on empty more often than not, but many also reported they didn't know how to refuel or couldn't remember how they used to do so. I don't believe this is a coincidence. Instead of self-monitoring and honoring one's own needs, it is common in our culture to click into high gear and stay there intending to just 'push through' in order to bring a mission to fruition. We often walk around with this unconscious assumption that we will somehow automatically just get what we need for ourselves even as we attend to everyone else. This is a problematic and errant assumption. It is imperative that we intentionally, and consciously plan to attend to our own needs along the way.

One of the most debilitating symptoms of depletion is the loss of perspective. Diminished frustration tolerance, lack of empathy, foggy thinking, poor memory, difficulty problem solving are also signs of a depleted energy tank. If you find yourself in this brain state remember this is not an indication of an inadequate person, rather this is a sign of a person low on energy. An optimal response is one that assesses the inner energy gauge and potential refueling needs with grace and self-compassion.

If the goal is to live and work in a healthy and sustainable way, learning to not only recognize signs you are running low on energy but also to respond in ways that effectively nourish and restore you is essential. Rather than just assume or hope you will get what you need, it is WISE to STRATEGIZE. Looking over your calendar to schedule and protect time for refueling at strategic intervals depending upon the pace and amount of energy you are expending will benefit you as well as those for whom you care.