

Your Core Energy Determines Your Life Potential

Lynn Waldorf, PhD, CPC

Introduction

Physicists often define energy as the potential for action. Everything you do requires energy and has an energetic charge. In the world of professional coaching, a lack of constructive, growth-oriented energy presents as the inability of a client to fully pursue their goals and life dreams.¹ Until recently, there has been little research that considers the mechanisms of how energy influences quality of life. This article presents the results of a quantitative study exploring the relationship between energy, coaching, and life satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to determine if a person's current energy level could predict life satisfaction and whether it was possible to significantly increase one's energy level by employing a specific coaching methodology.

In his book, *Mind: A Journey to the Heart of Being Human*, researcher and psychiatrist Daniel Siegel described energy as constantly flowing through your brain and your body, between yourself and others, and in interaction with the world around you.² Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, called this energy the physical manifestation of human consciousness.³ Learning how to maintain and capitalize on that energy is fundamental to your motivation and performance and underlies your ability to reach your goals. According to Siegel, you have more influence over your energy flow than you may realize. This implies that with conscious effort, you can increase your control over what you experience and achieve in life.

Neuroscientists are now able to map the electrochemical energy flow in the brain. While electrochemical energy is used to initiate action, each of our thoughts, emotional responses, and subsequent behaviors also generate a reaction, or energetic consequence.⁴ Practitioners in the field of positive psychology have found that if we can become aware, or conscious, of the basis for our thoughts and emotional reactions and purposefully shift our perspective to a more optimistic stance, we can transform the energy that is generated and redirect its flow. By doing so, we open ourselves up to increased opportunities to learn and grow.⁵ In the same way, by expanding our thinking and controlling our emotions, we can make more constructive choices and take more effective steps toward whatever goals we set out to accomplish.⁶

The question is, how do we learn to purposely direct our energy, and as a result, become more conscious? Self-reflection is the basis of the process, but it is not usually successful when implemented alone. You have probably experienced how difficult it can be to take a step back and be completely objective about past events in your life, especially if you experienced negative or fearful emotions at the time. Whatever you felt, experienced, or saw probably seemed very real when it was happening. Yet, if you were to ask others who were present to describe those events, you would likely

hear somewhat different versions of what happened. This is because our ability to physically see and interpret events in the present is powerfully influenced by our prior experiences and the beliefs formed around those experiences. Therefore, each of us brings a unique set of filters to bear on how we perceive reality. In large part, the thoughts we hold about our personal experiences, values, prejudices, and even political persuasions determine what we believe to be true. As these beliefs are rooted deep in the subconscious, opening our mind to new ways of thinking about past or present circumstances usually requires the help of an objective, non-judgmental professional trained to assist with the process.

Core Energy™

At the Institute for Personal Excellence in Coaching (iPEC), professional coaches receive training and certification in Core Energy™ Coaching, a methodology that positively influences and supports constructive change in individual perspectives, emotional reactions, and behavior patterns of leaders, workers, and whole organizations. Core Energy Coaching is based on the two-fold understanding that humans are, at the core, energetic beings and that the quality and amount of core energy a person experiences daily will determine his or her overall potential to pursue goals and experience fulfillment. In the business world, when leaders learn to harness their core energy productively and train their employees to do the same, people and companies change for the better. Workplace relationships improve, communication increases, teamwork intensifies, productivity rises, and profits grow.⁷

Leadership is not confined to the boardroom, of course. Parents, therapists, health care providers, solopreneurs, sports coaches, consultants, mentors, partners in relationships, teachers, authors, and others who interact with people on a regular basis also hold leadership roles. In other words, each of us is a leader. Leading is the way we help move people into action, ourselves included. In large part, our core energy determines our leadership ability. It effects how we communicate with others at work and home, how we develop supportive and sustaining relationships, and how we raise our children to pursue productive and satisfying lives. By learning to increase our core energy, we can maximize our effectiveness as leaders at home, in our careers, and in our communities.

Core energy draws from six dimensions of human experience: spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, social, and environmental—each of which may support or obstruct the flow of energy through our bodies and minds at any given moment. In the model created by Bruce D Schneider, MCC, founder of iPEC, there are two types of energy: anabolic and catabolic. Anabolic energy is constructive, expanding, fueling, and creative, and works *for* a person. Conversely, catabolic energy is destructive, draining, or resisting and works *against* a person. The key to achieving physical and emotional well-being and high performance lies in learning to decrease destructive, constricting catabolic energy while releasing the natural flow of expansive, healing anabolic energy. By generating more anabolic energy, you open yourself to experiencing forgiveness, compassion, peace, joy, and passion. You become aware of more opportunities and choices, and gain greater access to creativity, intuition, cooperation, synergy, acceptance, and deep wisdom.

Seven Levels of Consciousness

The Core Energy model, illustrated in Schneider's Energetic Self-Perception chart, provides a multi-level framework for organizing our understanding of how various aspects of energy are integrated in human experience.⁸ The levels represent seven aspects of a person's core energy makeup, or consciousness. These include: (1) apathy, (2) anger, (3) forgiveness, (4) compassion, (5) peace, (6) joy, and (7) absolute passion. The resonating energy at each level manifests in numerous ways and degrees of intensity. Levels 1 and 2 represent catabolic energy states, while Levels 3 through 7 represent increasingly anabolic states. Throughout the day, as you experience and respond to circumstances and events that transpire, your core energy shifts among these seven levels. As you become more aware of the energetic consequences of your thoughts, emotions, and actions, you learn to control your expression of catabolic energy in response to stressors. When you increase your level of anabolic energy, you can wield more influence over the course of your life and positively affect your ability to achieve your dreams.

Energy Leadership Index Assessment

To test this model, Schneider developed a way to measure the seven levels of consciousness through an assessment called the Energy Leadership Index™ (ELI). The ELI assessment measures the amount of anabolic and catabolic energy in a person's core energy makeup, under both ideal and stressful circumstances. It is a seventy-item web-based survey that enables people to rate themselves on beliefs, self-perceptions, emotional reaction tendencies, and behavior patterns that resonate energetically with the levels in the Core Energy framework. Response choices are based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Completely untrue*) to 5 (*Completely true*). Weighted calculations are used to produce the average resonating level, or E-Factor, of a person's energetic profile.

Core Energy Coaching

After completing an ELI assessment, an individualized report is generated, and a Core Energy coach debriefs the results with the client. At that time, the client is introduced to the Core Energy framework and the energetic chain reaction of thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and outcomes. The multi-dimensional aspects of core energy are woven into conversations and solution-seeking activities as a client continues to work with their coach.

Most people do not reach their potential because they don't have enough of the right kind of energy to use when they need it. Core Energy coaches help clients to become more conscious of how they capitalize on, or dissipate, energy in their daily lives. Clients are made aware of steps they can take to better control and maximize the expression of both anabolic and catabolic energy in ways that will ultimately benefit them personally and professionally. By applying the principles and concepts learned through coaching, they increase their ability to shift their core energy as well as the energy of those around them.

Empirical Evidence

In 2017, iPEC sponsored an independent research study to verify the validity of the ELI assessment as a measure of the Core Energy model and to demonstrate the impact of Core Energy Coaching. In addition to the seventy items measuring energy, Version 2.0 of the assessment included fourteen items that measured life satisfaction and eleven demographic items.^a Between March 2013 and June 2017, 29,717 coaching clients from 130 countries around the world completed the assessment. The resulting dataset was unique in its size, global reach, and ability to measure a person's core energy and life satisfaction.

The study used a quantitative analysis to investigate the effects of Core Energy Coaching on a person's core energy makeup, to note shifts in catabolic and anabolic energy states after receiving coaching, and to learn more about the relationship between a person's average resonating level of energy and his or her reported level of life satisfaction. With this information, it was possible to determine whether a person's level of core energy was a reliable predictor of life satisfaction.

Reliability and Validity. As an initial step, Version 2.0 of the ELI assessment was tested for reliability and validity. An internal consistency test of the seventy items associated with the seven levels of consciousness was conducted using split-half comparisons. The analysis produced acceptable Cronbach's alphas above 0.70 for all seven constructs. In a test-retest comparison of 258 cases, the analysis resulted in a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.87. Construct validity was then tested using a principal component analysis. A factor analysis was then conducted, and all seventy items were found to be correlated with their respective levels with acceptable factor loadings between 0.38 and 0.73. The items within each level also loaded onto one construct.^b A reliability test of the fourteen life satisfaction items produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88. These items also loaded onto a single construct. The overall results of the factor analysis demonstrated that the ELI assessment is a valid measure of core energy makeup and life satisfaction and can be expected to produce reliable, consistent results when used with many types of coaching clients.

Demographics. The demographic items on the ELI assessment provided data on the respondents' gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, income level, employment and education. The results revealed that 61.0 percent of the assessment-takers were women and 39.0 percent were men. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents self-identified as being Non-Hispanic White. The assessment was also completed by Hispanics, Black/African Americans, Asian/Asian Americans, Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders, and Native Alaskan/American Indians. Four out of five were between the ages of twenty-six and fifty-five, and a little over half were married.

Approximately three-quarters of the respondents held college or post-graduate degrees. All income ranges were represented in the dataset, with about half of the coaching clients reporting earnings of between \$50,000 and \$150,000. Four out of five were employed full-time and worked in numerous fields: administration, coaching, development, education, finance, management, operations, sales/marketing, support services, or other technical positions. Nearly two-thirds reported their status as C-Suite executive or manager.

Study Design. Measuring a change in core energy makeup required a baseline and follow-up measure. Therefore, the study was designed as a quantitative, pre/post comparative analysis. The investigation was limited to those cases from the original dataset in which an ELI assessment was completed at the beginning of a coaching program and a follow-up, or post-assessment was completed anytime between three and thirty-six months later. There were 695 cases included in the study, of which 447 were women and 248 were men. The ratio of women to men remained consistent with the larger dataset, as did other demographic data.

Research Questions. The study was designed around three principal research questions, as follows:

RQ1. *How does coaching affect a person's core energy?*

Research Question 1 investigated whether clients' average resonating level of energy (E-Factor) increased after working with an iPEC-trained Core Energy coach. The working hypothesis was that, on average, coaching clients would experience a statistically significant increase of core energy. The null hypothesis was that there would be no change in their E-Factor.

RQ2. *How does coaching affect a person's anabolic/catabolic ratio?*

Research Question 2 examined changes in the relationship between catabolic and anabolic energy in a person's core energy makeup, under both ideal circumstances and when under stress. The working hypothesis was that, on average, a client's catabolic energy would decrease by a statistically significant amount after receiving coaching from a Core Energy coach, leading to a proportionate rise in anabolic energy. The null hypothesis was that there would be no change in the anabolic/catabolic ratio.

RQ3. *What is the relationship between a person's core energy and their level of life satisfaction?*

The primary focus of Research Question 3 was how coaching and any resulting change in a client's E-Factor affected his or her reported level of life satisfaction. The working hypothesis was that a significant increase in E-Factor could predict a significant increase in level of life satisfaction. The null hypothesis was that there was no relationship between a person's core energy and their reported level of life satisfaction.

Research Findings. The results of the study are presented in three parts, by order of research question. First, the effects of working with an iPEC-trained Core Energy coach on a person's core energy are noted. Second, evidence on how the ratio of catabolic and anabolic energy changed is reported. Third, the effects of how a shift in core energy impacted various life satisfaction factors are delineated.

Part I. How does coaching affect a person's core energy?

To investigate Research Question 1, a paired-samples t-test analysis was conducted comparing the 695 clients' average resonating level of energy (E-Factor) from the pre-assessment with their E-Factor from the post-assessment to determine whether there had been any change. The average, or mean, E-Factor for the pre-assessment was 3.25 on the seven-level Energy Leadership Index. The mean for the post-assessment was 3.52, revealing a statistically significant increase in core energy ($t = 21.78$,

$p < .001$). Further analysis revealed a significant and positive change in mean E-Factor within every demographic category when compared by gender, age, income, employment, and education level.^c These findings suggest that Core Energy Coaching had a positive and significant impact and that the effect was true for all types of clients, regardless of demographic characteristics.

A supplemental professional practices survey was completed by coaches whose clients were among the 695 in the study. The results of a frequency analysis indicated that 90.5 percent of the responding coaches used the ELI as an element in one-on-one coaching packages ($n=95$). All but eleven had worked with their clients at least once a month between the pre-post assessments. These findings provided further evidence that the post-ELI data reflected the effects of Core Energy Coaching. Therefore, the null hypothesis for this research question was rejected, confirming that working with a Core Energy coach can help a person increase his or her core energy.

Part II. How does coaching affect a person's anabolic/catabolic ratio?

To answer Research Question 2, the 695 clients' percentages of catabolic and anabolic energy from their ELI pre-assessment were compared with the percentages from their post-assessment. Data analysis showed that, after working with a Core Energy coach, the mean percentage of constricting, catabolic energy experienced by the clients when operating under ideal circumstances decreased from 21.0 to 15.6 percent. Conversely, their expansive anabolic energy increased from 79.0 to 84.4 percent. Based on a paired sample analysis, the shifts in energy were statistically significant in both instances (anabolic: $t = 21.11, p < .001$; catabolic: $t = 21.12, p < .001$). When under stress, the clients' mean percentage of catabolic energy decreased from 68.0 to 59.0 percent, while their anabolic energy increased from 32.0 to 41.0 percent. Again, the shifts in energy were statistically significant (catabolic: $t = 20.18, p < .001$; anabolic: $t = 20.19, p < .001$).

The results suggest that clients were more adept at recognizing and countering fear-based emotions and energy-depleting, auto-reactive behaviors after completing their coaching program. This change in behavior increases the flow of more constructive, healing, growth-oriented energy. The expansion of anabolic energy, as evidenced by the increase in mean percent on the post-assessment, was representative of a shift to higher consciousness under both ideal and stressful conditions and meant the null hypothesis could be rejected for this research question as well.

A follow-up analysis was performed to determine how many of the clients who started coaching in a predominantly catabolic energy state shifted to an anabolic energy state in response to coaching. Results varied by gender. A pre/post assessment comparison showed that out of the fifty-four men with a baseline E-Factor under 3.0, thirty-seven shifted to an anabolic level of 3.0 or higher on the post-assessment (68.5%). Of the ninety-nine women who started their coaching program in a catabolic energy state, seventy-four increased their E-Factor to 3.0 or higher on the post-assessment (74.8%). These results suggest that Core Energy Coaching helps individuals equip themselves with the skills to consciously shift out of restrictive energy states. According to the Core Energy model, this occurs as they become more aware of how their thoughts, emotions, and actions are both causal agents and products of their day-to-day experiences.

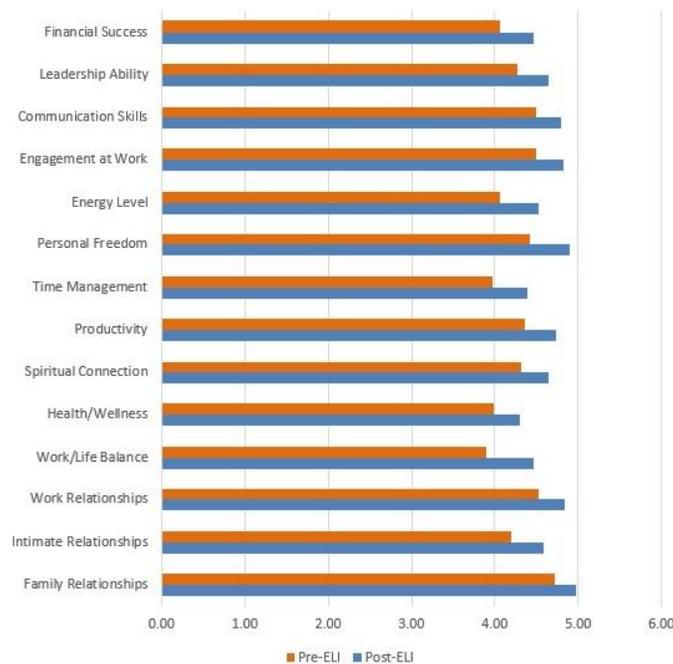
Part III. What is the relationship between a person's core energy and their level of life satisfaction?

For Research Question 3, the client's pre/post-assessment self-ratings on the fourteen life satisfaction factors were compared. Response choices were presented using a 6-point Likert-like scale, ranging from 1 (*Completely dissatisfied*) to 6 (*Completely satisfied*). The life satisfaction factors include *Financial Success, Leadership Ability, Work Relationships, Family Relationships, Intimate Relationships, Engagement at Work, Personal Freedom, Communication Skills, Productivity, Time Management, Work/Life Balance, Health & Wellness, Energy Level, and Spiritual Connection*.

A comparison of the mean rating across all fourteen factors indicated that an increase in overall life satisfaction was reported between the baseline ELI assessment (4.29) and the post-ELI assessment (4.64). The change in the clients' mean self-ratings for each life satisfaction factor was statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level. These results suggest that engagement in Core Energy Coaching resulted in the clients experiencing increased life satisfaction (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Change in Mean Ratings of Life Satisfaction Factors (6 point scale)



The next step was to determine how much of the change in life satisfaction ratings could be attributed to the increase in core energy, as measured by the post-assessment. Before running the analysis, the *Energy Level* factor was removed from the list of life satisfaction variables, given that the goal was to measure the effect of a change in energy on the other factors. A stepwise linear regression was then conducted using the mean change in overall life satisfaction as the outcome variable. A total of five variables were included in the analysis as independent factors to determine which had the most influence on clients' reported levels of life satisfaction. These included the change in core energy (E-Factor), the length of a coaching program (measured in months), the pre-assessment E-Factor, the post-assessment E-Factor and the life satisfaction factor, *Energy level*.

The results of the stepwise regression indicated that the main predictor of the change in life satisfaction ratings on post-ELI assessment was the change in a person's E-Factor ($R^2 = .47$, $F(1,693) = 610.05$, $p < .001$). In fact, 58.7 percent of the reported increase in the life satisfaction ratings was attributed to an increase in core energy. This was evidenced by the previously reported change in mean E-Factors pre/post and a significant increase in the *Energy Level* factor from 4.05 to 4.52, on the 6-point rating scale. While the average timeframe between ELI administrations was twelve months, the results showed that significant growth in consciousness was possible to achieve in as few as ninety days. Finally, the analysis revealed that this shift was possible for clients regardless of their initial E-Factor rating.

The data indicated that it was the effort made to increase one's energy, or level of consciousness, that made the difference, and the time needed to do so varied from client to client. These results provided empirical evidence of the significant and positive relationship between a person's core energy, the impact of Core Energy Coaching, and their level of life satisfaction. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for the third research question.

Conclusion

The ELI assessment study is among the first to use quantitative evidence from a global dataset to measure the relationship between coaching, core energy, and life satisfaction. It bridges a theoretical gap in the literature on coaching by demonstrating that people from vastly different backgrounds and circumstances can learn to achieve better control over their core energy and realize greater rewards in their work and personal lives as a result.

Through strengthening an awareness of how your thoughts and perceptions trigger emotional responses that either manifest in uncontrolled reactive behavior or consciously chosen actions, you realize more options in dealing with everyday stressors and can better direct the outcome of any situation. The study demonstrated that by choosing to shift your consciousness out of catabolic energy states and into the life-enhancing flow of anabolic energy states, you can experience improvements in multiple areas of your life.

Given its purely quantitative design, there were some limitations to the study. The ELI assessment was not designed to collect information on why clients sought coaching, nor did it measure their level of motivation or commitment to making changes in their lives. Information on other circumstances that might have influenced their self-ratings was also not available. To gain a more fine-grained

understanding of how people change through the process of Core Energy Coaching, more studies are needed that employ a qualitative or mixed methods approach to research.

In sum, the ELI assessment study provided clear evidence that a shift in core energy, or consciousness, was a primary driver of positive change in the respondents' lives. The research suggests that becoming more aware of one's core energy leads to gaining more influence over the course and circumstances of one's life. By working with a Core Energy coach, clients learn to harness the power of energy, thus becoming more evolved human beings and more effective leaders with greatly increased chances of achieving satisfaction in life, work, and relationships.

Notes

^a Version 2.0 was adopted for use in 2013.

^b iPEC (2017). Energy Leadership Index™ Report: Version 2.0 Reliability and Validity.

^c Demographic categories containing less than 15 subjects were not included in this analysis because the results were not interpretable with any degree of accuracy.

¹ Schneider, Bruce D (2008). *Energy Leadership: Transforming Your Workplace and Your Life from the Core*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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³ Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

⁴ Loehr, Jim & Schwartz, Tony (2003). *The Full Power of Engagement*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

⁵ Fredrickson, Barbara (2009). *Positivity*. New York: Crown Publishers

⁶ Seligman, Martin (2006). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. New York: Random House.

⁷ Schneider, B. D (2008). *Energy Leadership: Transforming Your Workplace and Your Life from the Core*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

⁸ Schneider, B. D (2008). *Energy Leadership: Transforming Your Workplace and Your Life from the Core*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.