

Hidden Stress and Exhaustion: evaluating your source of energy outgo and making a course correction.

"I don't know why I am so exhausted" Robin puzzled. I get enough sleep at night." To Robin, sleep meant she should never feel tired. But I inquired of her what her stress was like during the day. She indicated that every day is like every other day" loaded with things to do that are not her choice and that do not work smoothly. She has a job that involves constant problem solving with clients. As a financial manager, she spends nearly every client meeting dealing with their limitations, fears, hesitations and lack of trust before she can go ahead and just deal with the overt problem and it obvious (to her) solution. Then she travels to work with financial advisors who are setting up their businesses. This involves nearly exactly the same proves. She sees the advantages of putting the money in up front to locate in the right part of town where clientele will have more resources, but where initial investment in rents and furnishings and so on will be considerable strain until the business takes hold. Or the advisor who should be partnering with others but does not know how to set that up. In every encounter it seems she must deal with more than applying her business savvy. She must deal with emotional and mental obstacles.

That is not to mention the stress of thinking ahead to plan her life around her travel. She has to deal with the worry of long lines, delayed flights, interruptions to her plan. Uncertainties about whether the rental car will be available or whether she will face traffic delays.

Every part of her life was fraught with stress and she is exhausted. She feels depressed and wonders why nothing in life seems like fun. She wants to isolate herself. And lately she has stayed in more and more, avoiding friends and family who "want her" – now refusing the very source of energy in a desperate attempt to hold on to what little energy she has left.

What Robin needs, clearly, is to revisit her work decisions and to investigate how to relieve stresses that are draining her depression. She will "not know how to live" by the time she actually retires.

Start with one thing that restores you and put it into your life every week, or even every day if you can

Add in some regular time outside" exercise, walking to an appointment

Require yourself to connect with friends and family every day" plan in short calls, short visits. Don't wait for the big open space of a whole weekend.