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## **“FULLY ALIVE”**

### **A guide to the personal energy journey**

#### **FIRST LETTER**

Oscar Wilde wrote: *"To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people just exist, that is all"*.

When I read those chilling words, I began to think differently.

Was I just existing? Were my days too full of stress, of low energy and of fear to be able to enjoy life and to really live?

Was I getting wealthier but not richer, older but not wiser?

Was I losing the capacity to dream, imagine and make believe?

Suddenly the painful truth became real for me whilst playing Monopoly with my 9 year old son Steve, in which I resorted to cheating to win!

"Dad, isn't this a game?" he asked, when he saw how low I had stooped.

What I heard him ask was "Isn't life a game?"

From that moment Steve has travelled with me on an amazing, but sometimes tough, journey to discover how to live fully - as my son, my partner, my greatest critic and my best friend.

This is our best effort to share what we have learned, from one another and side by side, and from thousands of wonderfully diverse people over 20 years or more, about the choices that present themselves all the time - and how to make them. So that more and more we leave "just existing" way behind.

Please join us!

We decided to write this GUIDE not as a short book, but as a series of LETTERS which you will receive at regular intervals.

Hopefully the frequency will suit you. No one seems to want to try and complete the whole journey in one sitting. Perhaps we are all too busy exhausting ourselves!

Do try it and see – and complain to us if it isn't working for you.

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## GREETING THE UNIQUE YOU

I'm Colin and I grew up in the old South Africa in which we greeted one another with a mumbled "Morning" mixed with a similar but slightly more guttural "Môre" to show that we were suitably bilingual. Or we just said "Hi". So I greet you. "Morning". "Hi".

And I'm Steve. I came back from a trip to Tibet and Nepal with an absolutely charming greeting. Putting my hands together and with a slight respectful bow I say, "Namaste", to which Dad was expected to respond with a similar bow and a similar greeting. Namaste is an ancient Hindu greeting from Sanskrit, the classical language of India.

We both bow to you with our hands together, bringing both hemispheres of the body together and with all five senses signified by the touching finger tips – we both say to you "Namaste".

There are many ways to translate NAMASTE but essentially it means:

*That which is unique and special in me and the blessing of God, greets in awe and wonder that which is unique, special and the blessing of God in you.*

What a difference! And what a moment to treasure. Learning that each one of us is unique (not better, nor worse than the other) has been such a lovely journey of discovery. For some of us that discovery seemed to take so long!

Later we discovered that not only humans are unique. Every single human, and every apple and every snowflake – and even every grain of sand – is unique!

Take an apple in your hand and look at it differently! Stop and see it as unique, the one and only apple like that. Apples just aren't apples – anymore than humans are just humans. Seek the uniqueness.

Here is an extract from Tao The Pathless Path by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

*To carry the idea of comparison you are carrying the seeds of illness which will create misery and nothing else. Comparison creates hell. Heaven is an inner space where you live a life uncompered. You simply live yourself, it is your life, you are you – just think of the beauty of it, the tremendous purity of it. Just think ... the whole world disappears and you alone are left. God takes away the whole world and only you are left, nobody else. Then what will you be – strong, weak, intelligent, beautiful, ugly? Then who will you be? All comparisons disappear, you will simply be yourself. That is the way to be. Just think of it this way: God has never created anybody else like you and he will never create anybody else like you. God has created only one you, mind – and he is never going to repeat you again. This is your uniqueness. Feel grateful, feel thankful. Once you start comparing you feel ungrateful. Why has he created somebody more beautiful than you, or somebody more intelligent than you? You are only bringing misery upon yourself. He has created only you, he has conferred uniqueness on you. It is a gift. Uniqueness is a gift of God."*

And another from Martin Buber who challenges us to actualise that which makes us unique.

*Every person born in to the world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique .....*

*Every man's foremost task is the actualisation of his unique unprecedented and never-recurring possibilities and not the repetition of something that another, be it even the greatest, has already achieved.*

So now we use “Namaste” joyfully, and we celebrate every step of the journey.

And then in 1994 as we became a new South Africa we discovered that all our indigenous greetings create the same moment of magic. If I say DUMELANG, SANIBONANI, AVUXENI, MOLWENI, THOBELA or NDI MATSHELONE I am saying “I see you” and I can’t say that unless I am really prepared to stop long enough to truly see you. And in truly seeing you I not only see what is unique and special but I start getting to know you. I am invited to start a conversation with you. That’s crucial as we will discover as we go along this road together.

What is even more telling is that it is respectful to greet another in the plural because when I greet you I also greet your family, your mother, your father, your grandparents, your siblings, your partner and any children you may have.

In Kenya the greeting is “Habari” which, literally translated, means “What’s cooking in the stew pot”. “What have you got to tell me?” Surely after asking that question we have to stop long enough to listen to the answer, if not to stay a little and share the generosity of the three-legged cooking pot.

These ways of greeting, this generosity of spirit, is the essence of *UBUNTU* – a fundamental acceptance of our connectedness. That “I am not me except in the context of others” is such wonderful wisdom. It is a wisdom we risk destroying by our linear Western thinking.

So as you pick up this guide we greet you.

NAMASTE  
DUMELANG  
SANIBONANI  
AVUXENI  
MOLWENI  
THOBELA  
NDI MATSHELONE  
HABARI

A warm welcome to you. We see you. We see what makes you unique. We look forward to sharing the journey to understanding human energy. We want to start a conversation with you and build a relationship.

Laurens van der Post describes the journey humans share beautifully in his book “The Hunter and the Whale”. *“The journey makes the stranger at dawn a neighbour beside the fire at night”*.

This is a Guide Book for an exciting journey and all you will need is a pencil and a red pen and a blue pen. Essentially it is a journey to master your own energy ..... and help others to master theirs.

The journey started for both of us as a result of the same experience, though Steve was about 9 years old and I was about 40. When I got home from what was commonly known as “a hard day at the office” he was waiting to play a game with his Dad. The whole experience is deeply etched in my memory. Even now it embarrasses me to write about it.

*It was raining so cricket or soccer were not options, instead he chose Monopoly.*

- *I was a top executive in one of South Africa's largest companies and it had a monopoly on the products it sold to a market it completely dominated so I was a real life monopoly expert.*
- *The game he had chosen was "my game" and I played it with consummate skill .... in real life.*
- *I would win, I would beat him decisively and I would teach him a valuable lesson about life in the process.*

*To be absolutely sure of my superiority and to shorten the game considerably, I changed the rules! And I didn't tell Steve! And I took control of the Bank!*

*Most people would say that is cheating and I am still very embarrassed to tell the story.*

*So whenever his throw of the dice caused him to land on a property I owned I gave him a generous discount for cash. What a wonderful Dad!*

*And when I had to pay him a fine I offered him a substantial premium which I settled with a dated and signed handwritten I.O.U. and I instructed the Bank to pay him interest on what I owed him each time he passed "GO". What an incredibly generous Dad!*

*The same "generosity" was applied when I negotiated to buy a strategically valuable property from him and then to develop it with houses and hotels – his cash; I.O.U.'s from me; and interest from the Bank.*

*As luck would have it he landed on my heavily developed property and the fine was way more than he had the cash to pay – even after a ludicrously generous settlement offer from me.*

*In desperation he sought a Bank loan which I told him, as the Banker, couldn't be arranged. So he turned to the sheaf of I.O.U.'s he had accepted from me in lieu of cash .... and having counted out enough, he offered them to me in settlement.*

*I refused them, pointing out that since they were dated with the next day's date, today they were worthless. Another cheat!*

*So he had lost, hands down, to his generous Dad and he had the tedious task of packing up the game as his penalty for losing.*

*I can still see his head shaking in disbelief. "How could I have lost when Dad had been so generous?" Suddenly the proverbial penny must have dropped and he looked me straight in the eye, in a way I will never forget, and said, "Dad, isn't this a game?"*

*I lost the contents of my stomach into the toilet, sick with the realisation of what I had become. Power had absolutely corrupted me and my life was no longer a game!*

I resolved there and then to resign from the cut and thrust of the corporate world with its endless power games; its command and control mentality and its fierce win-lose/survive-or-die determination and earnestly seek a better way – hopefully a simpler way - to get things done and to live my life more fully. Perhaps even to live my life as a game!

Years later I came across this piece of writing:

*Like all psychopaths, the firm is singularly self-interested: its purpose is to create wealth for its shareholders. And, like all psychopaths, the firm is irresponsible, because it puts others at risk to satisfy its profit-maximising goal, harming employees and customers, and damaging the environment. The corporation manipulates everything. It is grandiose, always insisting that it is the best, or number one. It has no empathy, refuses to accept responsibility for its actions and feels no remorse. It relates to others only superficially, via make-believe versions of itself manufactured by public relations consultants and marketing men. In short, if the metaphor of the firm as a person is a valid one, then the corporation is clinically insane.*

I certainly wouldn't have appreciated it the day before the Monopoly game, but I do now!

It took a long time. It was an arduous journey. But one day it "hit me like a brick", as my mother used to say. I suddenly realised that when my ENERGY went up, when it was positive and high, I could fly – but when it was low, or worse negative, when it slumped, so did I and with me my outcomes. With all my qualifications, competence, skills and experience I could hardly do a thing well when my energy slumped. Sometimes I could do nothing at all!

Steve and I have asked thousands of people from all walks of life about the impact of their energy upon their outcomes, and they all nod in agreement. Do you? Is it your experience too?

ENERGY! Stop reading and reflect upon that word and what it means to you.

ENERGY! Mafolofolo, mahlagahaga, vooma, drive, power (but not power others have over you or you have over others – but rather power you have over yourself, your life and the way you choose to live it). It could be enthusiasm, passion and attitude, but definitely not bubble or hype. Neither of those are real energy. The frantic cavorting of a chicken robbed of its head is not energy!

Can you remember when you didn't have energy? Can you remember when it was low, or even negative? Can you remember when you were filled with high and positive energy? Can you feel it when you think about it? Are you aware of it? How is it now? And does it impact upon everything you do – both positively and negatively?

Is your energy high and climbing .... or is it low and falling? How does it compare today with yesterday; now compared with a year ago? When you wake up does the day welcome you or do you wish you could sleep it away? Have you got enough to keep on doing what you have to do? Have you got enough to lead and inspire others?

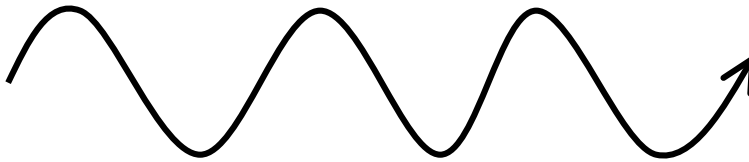
Where is your energy at this moment in your life? What energy trend line are you on?

Draw a line below to track your energy.

Does it look like this?



Or like this?



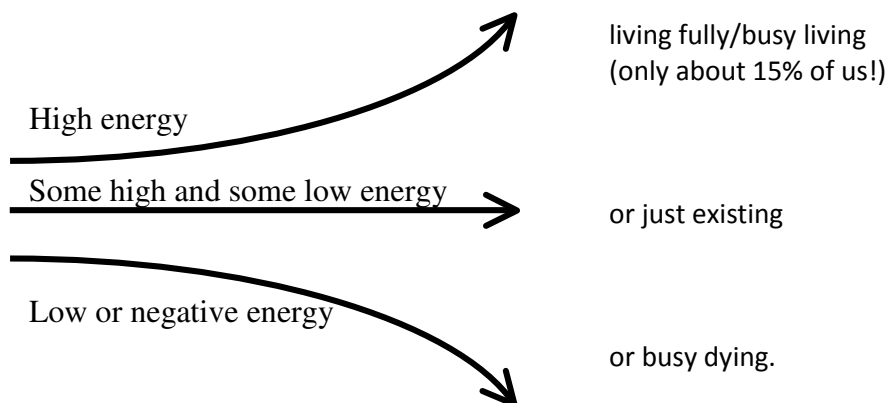
Or like this?



Oscar Wilde defined the top line and the middle line in those profound words: *“To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people just exist, that is all”.*

In the unforgettable film “Shawshank Redemption” Morgan Freeman, in his caring observation of the desperation of Tim Robbins who had been sent to join him serving a life sentence in the Shawshank Penitentiary, defines the top and the bottom lines when he says: *“Son, if you ain’t busy living, you’re sure busy dying”.*

So we can be:



And, sadly, it seems most people are just existing, or worse, busy dying faster than they need. It is interesting that it seems to have little to do with the situations people are in. Some of the most “alive” people are coping with awful problems and desperate living conditions.

To live fully is a choice to which we are entitled and which we, and only we, can make. And we can do it now wherever we are and regardless of our circumstances.

Malidoma Somé, the revered poet from Burkina Faso, said: *“When death finds you, may it find you alive”*. May it find you not just existing, not just alive, but **fully alive and BUSY LIVING!**

### **MY ENERGY AND MY OUTCOMES – THE CRUCIAL LINK**

That challenge, the CHALLENGE TO LIVE MY LIFE FULLY, took on a profound urgency when I discovered along the journey that my energy was the key determinant of my performance – however I described performance or outcomes. When my energy is high I think better, I drive better, I write better, I read better, I listen harder and I played better golf! My imagination is richer, I see better and I taste better. I do more in one high energy day than I do in a low energy week.

Stop again for just a minute and reflect upon the impact your energy has upon your performance and your outcomes.

Is it true for you? Over the years, Steve has found that too!

Do you cook better, plan better, get more done, exercise better and work smarter when your energy is high? Do trackers track better, artists create better and miners work more safely? Do learners learn faster and teachers teach with more joy?

But are you, like us, something of a liability if your energy is low, or worse still, is negative?

Do you get angry quicker, lose things, forget things, drive carelessly, get fewer things done, give up more readily, listen less, get bored, look forward to nothing other than weekends and make silly mistakes?

We certainly do!

It was hard to believe that I had missed the obvious for so long. Surely my competence, qualifications, skills and accumulated experience were my most valuable assets, even essential? But I have them today; I had most, if not all of them last week, even last year; and I will still have them next month. They are all a given. **BUT MY ENERGY LEVELS WILL DETERMINE HOW WELL I USE THEM.**

So, we truly believe, will yours.

The unbreakable link between my energy and my effectiveness – my outcomes – had hit me like a brick, and changed my life. Understanding that link and how to master it will change yours. It is a most exciting journey ..... and we want to share ours with you.

Perhaps this is a good place to stop and think about human outcomes.

- What do you define as “living fully”?
- What are you striving to achieve?
- What is your purpose?
- When “death finds you” will you still be alive? - Malidoma Somé asks.
- Doing what?
- Fulfilling what purpose?

Is it wealth – money capital? Perhaps it’s health – physical capital – and with it a vague promise of longevity? Is it power equity which, if we have enough, will enable us to make others do as we wish for our sakes? Is it intellectual equity that will make us smarter than others? Is it moral capital that will ensure us a good life after death?



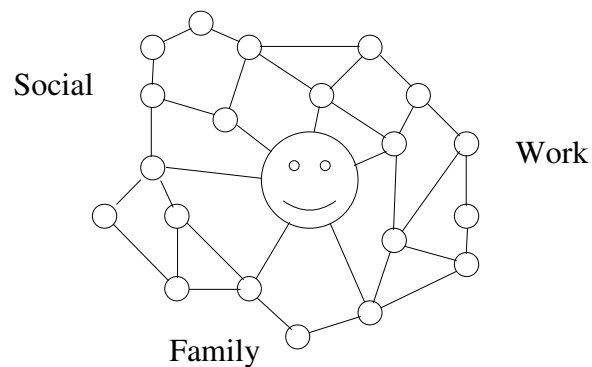
Or is it energy in abundance that creates social or relationship capital? If I have high energy I will create a high energy network of relationships around me and that will surely enable me to enhance my total capital of whatever kind. Why? Because energy is the key determinant of success or failure – and relationships are all there is.

There are many ways to describe outcomes. Success, wealth, happiness, “bottom line”, fame and fortune and long life ..... and they are all useful concepts.

Margaret Wheatley, in her book “Leadership and the New Science” and when I met her here in South Africa, convinced me to look at the world as a vast connected system of relationships and to see that “relationships are all there is”. With that conviction I found it easy to define human outcomes in relationship terms. I have lived fully if I have rich high energy relationships and if I am a high energy part of a high energy network. But if my relationships are low energy or, worse still, negative energy then I am at best just existing.

Where are you?

My network looks like this:



### **Surely it is my “WEALTH MAP”?**

Take a few minutes to draw your network. Draw about 20 key relationships covering your family, your social and your work environments. Then fill the whole page. They are your life!

**DRAW YOUR WEALTH MAP HERE!**

Each one has expectations of you. They need your unique inputs into their lives. They need you to exceed their expectations if you can. For your sake, and for theirs, they want you to be fulfilled so that you can fulfil their needs.

And you have expectations of them. You need them.

So “living fully” in these critical relationships would mean “LIVING FULLY”. Perhaps this is what is meant by what is now called “social capital” – or, in our language, “relationship wealth”.

If I could change my energy levels, master my own energy on a sustainable basis, I could live fully, sharing generously my relationship capital with others important to me. What a challenge. And Steve and I have energised each other for a large part of that journey.

Finding out HOW? is a journey on which we have made personal progress but we are still learning through sharing. But what a journey! That is what this Guide is about.

### **MY ENERGY AND YOURS ..... AND OURS**

Along the way, as we each became more conscious of our own energy, we discovered another blindingly obvious reality: that my energy, positive or negative, affects yours even while you are reading what I have written, and yours affects mine! More so if we are face to face, or in the same room, but even when I think about someone they have an impact upon my energy. My energy makes a crucial impact on the energy of my network .... and beyond.

Human energy is even more infectious than a virus!

Try it. Think about someone you love, picture their face like this 😊 Does your energy lift? Imagine your cell phone rings while you are reading and it's a 😊 Do you stop reading willingly and take the call? Perhaps share what you have been reading and get more out of it? Go back to it with more energy and find more wisdom or joy in it? These are relationships rich in energy.

But Africa teaches us that to know your hand you need to look at your palm as well as the back of it.

So turn it over and imagine that the caller on your cell phone is someone who looks like this 😞 Someone who sends your energy down. Even if you ignore the call your energy, perhaps for the reading, even the day, is spoilt.

Some add, some subtract!

At this stage of our energy journey we caught a glimpse of a quantum or exponential world around us. Not just linear  $1 + 1 = 2$ ,  $2 + 2 = 4$  but a world of  $2 \times 2 = 4 \times 4 = 16 \times 16 = 256 \times 256 = 65536 \times 65536 = 42$  billion! It's a multiplying world!

We became conscious of a few people who multiplied our energy – not just added to it. They spiralled our energy up. Conversely we became conscious of others who divided and sent our energy down, down, down.

We draw multipliers like this 😊 because when we really watched them we realised they had mastered their own energy and could develop the ability to really listen. They cared about our energy more than their own. They were extraordinarily generous with their energy and gave it away in huge helpings. What a lasting impact they have had on our lives. Their wisdom, their caring, their warmth and their energy lasts and lasts. We can feel them perched on our shoulders – always full of energy and always generous.

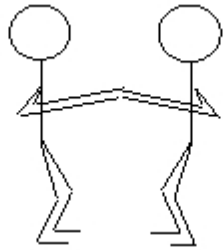
There is always a flipside – we live in a paradoxical world – and the flipside of a multiplier is someone who divides, steals or destroys our energy. They look like this 😞 We call them dividers. And they seemed to us always to have a motive. In no time our energy is destroyed.

We know better now. They aren't bad people at all, nor are those people who subtract. They just haven't mastered their own energy and they need, or even desperately need, more. They have no inner resources from which to draw, so they draw from wherever they can.

Had we been as aware of human energy, negative and positive, as children and animals are, we would both have realised much earlier that human energy is a relationship thing ..... and a quantum thing .... for it has no limits as it spirals upwards or downwards in relationships.

It spirals like a virus even when we are far away and perhaps even when we are fast asleep.

Try this experiment if you need convincing. Ask someone to stand opposite you and extend their arms parallel to the ground.



Place your arms on top of their arms and challenge them to resist you as you try to push their arms down towards their sides.

Take a few seconds to imagine the mask of a divider 😞 on their face – stereotype them, dislike them – and then try to push their arms down. You will not be able to. Your negative energy causes them to respond negatively. As Newton's Third Law of Motion states: *Every force generates an equal and opposite force.*

Ask to try a second time. This time change the stereotype you see to that of a warm generous high energy multiplier 😊 without changing your expression, if you can.

Now press down and nine times out of ten the arms go down with little resistance – almost willingly.

Explain to your surprised partner what happened and forever remember that your energy affects mine, mine yours, and ours all others – positively and negatively. Subliminally.

Perhaps now you can begin to understand what scientists call Chaos Theory which they illustrate with a statement that *“the consistent flapping of a butterfly's wings in the jungles of the Amazon Basin can affect weather patterns as far away as Detroit”*.

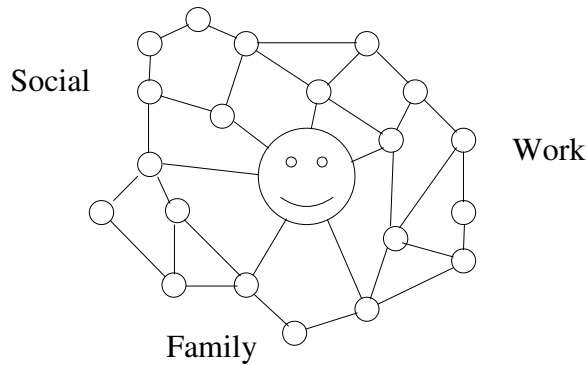
We are all connected in a vast complex system which is not made up of matter but of relationships and these relationships are the conduit of limitless human energy and the energy of all living things, positive and, unfortunately, negative. In Africa we call this reality *UBUNTU*.

The Shona people of Zimbabwe reflect this reality in their way of greeting:

**“Marare hare?”** Did you sleep? **“Ndarare kana mararawo.”** I slept well if you slept well.  
**“Ndarare”** I slept.

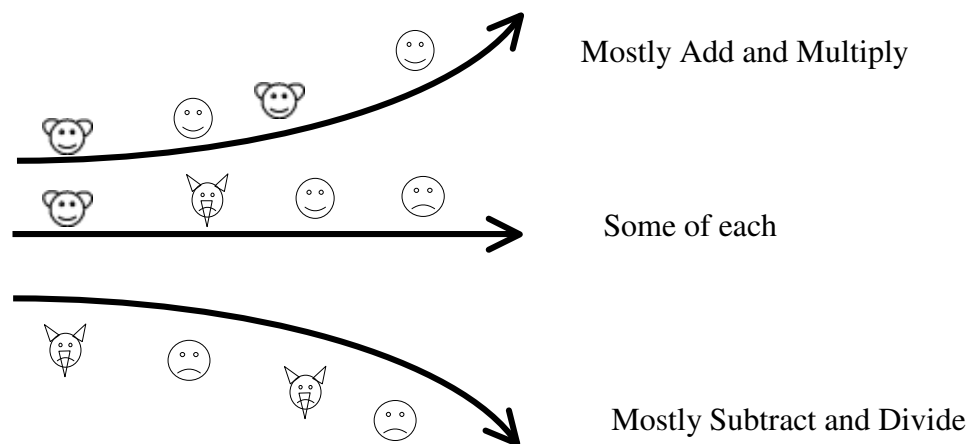
Back to the wisdom of the apple. Put a rotten apple in amongst a box of good apples – what happens?!

Now let’s add what we have learnt to the picture we drew of our network, which defined our choices and success in life. Think about each relationship you drew on your “wealth map”. Fill in the faces. Are they adders, subtracters, multipliers or dividers? Be honest with yourself.



People who have set out to master their energy will surely be surrounded in the main by relationships that add 😊 or better still multiply 😄 Their energy spirals it up. They are rich in relationship capital.

At the other extreme people who are “busy dying” would be in a network of others most of whom subtract 😞 or, worse, divide 😈 They are not necessarily bad people, as we said, but are people who take energy from others to supplement their own. They are poor, perhaps going insolvent, as their relationship capital dwindles.



If you are surrounded by people who Add, or better still, Multiply your energy you will be BUSY LIVING.

But if you are in the middle of a network that is Negative with lots of Subtracters and Dividers, at work and at home, you are probably JUST EXISTING at best.

WHY does energy have such a profound crucial impact on everything we do – even sleep? Yes, apparently high energy people sleep better than low energy people. It is not about tiredness, but about energy for living.

If we understand exactly WHY we might be able to manage our energy better.

The second pressing question is always HOW. How do I change my energy? How do I get out of this trough of despair? How do I get my old energy back when I have lost it for a while?

The answer to **WHY** you'll find fascinating and it fills the third letter. It required a lot of searching into how the human brain works and at last it made simple sense.

The answer to **HOW** – the ideas, the tools and the simple steps, all lie in the rest of the letters.

While you are waiting for the second letter perhaps you could think about your energy, watch the energy of others, become more conscious of your impact upon the energy of others around you, and particularly those whose faces are in your Wealth Map. Do some more work on that precious picture.

Try greeting others differently. Take a little longer to really see what makes them special, unique and never to be repeated. NAMASTE!

Invest in an Energy Journal that you can use to record the highlights (and, sadly, sometimes the lowlights) of the journey towards mastering your own energy and really “living fully”.

Another idea is to take someone on the journey with you – one of those people on your Wealth Map, someone in your family, a friend or a colleague at work. Send them a copy of the first letter and keep in touch.

Whatever you decide, do something that adds to your energy – something small, not expensive – and do it often.

Go well!