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MODERN DAY VAMPIRES

Real-life horror story covers everyone from critical spouses to the clutter in your home

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You can run but you can't hide. Energy sucking vampires are everywhere and we're not just talking the human variety. Along with narcissists and nit-pickers, things like clutter, worry and overscheduling will leave you bleeding, drained and gasping for air.

A bad diet or lousy job can add to the toxic brew. It's a nightmare out there when vampires sink their teeth into you — and not just at Halloween.

Not only will all your positive energy vanish, says author and relationship expert Dr. Judith Orloff, but these relentless energy-sucking zappers can bring on unhealthy behaviors and symptoms, including overeating, isolation, mood swings, or feeling fatigued.

You've been warned: Do damage control by setting limits, stresses says Orloff, author of *Emotional Freedom: Liberate Yourself from Negative Emotions and Transform Your Life*.

Check out how many of these energy drainers are in your life and then take action — if you dare:

CRITICAL SPOUSE:

This partner has a sneaky way of making you feel guilty for not getting things just right and cuts you down by making you feel that nothing you do is good enough, says Orloff. Set firm boundaries and say, "It hurts my feelings when you criticize me about (blank) and it would make me feel better if you didn't do that." Focus on one issue

at a time. Sometimes critical spouses simply aren't aware of what they are doing.

BAD JOB:

Going to a lousy job everyday can suck the life right out of you, says Orloff. "If you are stuck in one, try to be of service to others and kind to others whenever you can so you can spread some positive energy in a bad situation. Ideally you need to keep looking for a better job that will make you happy and energized."

CREEPY BOSS:

This person saps your energy by making you uncomfortable so you want to stay away, says Orloff. "It may be he gives you a strange look or his tone of voice is odd but his mannerisms give you the creeps." She advises keeping your interactions short and sweet. Be very matter of fact and don't waste time trying to analyze or fix him. "Instead, focus on people who make you happy and who you're attracted to."

SOCIAL MEDIA ENSLAVEMENT:

Social media is addictive and can drain your energy by sapping your time, creativity and emotions, says Orloff. "Plus, EM radiation from the computer can deplete you and strain your vision." Set a daily time limit, such as 20 minutes, and make a rule you won't be on social media after 10 p.m. so you can unwind before heading off to bed.

OVERSCHEDULING:

Being constantly on the go depletes your endorphins, the



natural feel-good hormones in our bodies, and increases the stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol, says Orloff. "Take mini breaks and practise meditation.

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CLUTTER:

Too much stuff can kill the thrill of coming home because it's not only messy but it generates negative energy so you don't have room to enjoy your space, says Orloff. "Clear off a small portion of clutter everyday and have small do-able tasks rather than attacking everything at once."

NEGATIVE WORKMATES:

These vampires grate on you with a poor-me attitude,

says Orloff. "People are always against them, and they portray themselves as unfortunates who demand rescuing.

You will become their therapist if you don't watch out." Do not get sucked in to their endless tales of woe, she stress. After listening briefly, smile and say, "I'll keep good thoughts for things to work out. I hope you understand, I'm on deadline and I must return to work."

The less you engage this victim, the better.

WORRY:

Worry, worry and more worry: According to Orloff, this is a toxic form of negative self talk that'll drain all the positive energy out of you. "Concern is natural about certain things but worry takes concern

into the realm of suffering."

When you notice yourself worrying, take a breath, realize what you have done what you can to correct the situation. Counter the worry with kind thoughts about yourself.

POOR DIET:

What's eating you? Well, if it's a lack of energy, it could

be your bad diet.

"Sugar binges and highs cause spikes in blood sugar, and then crashes which exhaust you," says Orloff. Boost energy by eating health whole grain and organic food with adequate protein and healthy fats.

