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Power Down, Power Up

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Power Down, Power Up

We cannot well carry on our daily activities by trying to remain at a peak energy level all day every day. Besides resting at night, we might have also learned by now to decrease the force of our efforts at times so that we can afterwards give our full and undistracted attention to the rest of the day's activities. We turn down our power output at one or more intervals during the day not primarily to get away from our work, but for the sake of increased efficiency. That is, when we deliberately power down for a few minutes, we can power up at full capacity rather than continuing to work at what we might think is full power, while we are very likely growing tired, slowing down gradually, working with diminishing quality and even making some poor decisions.

A habit of powering down and powering up, in addition to increasing our efficiency, also provides privileged space in our day for the gentle movements of inspiration and creativity which mark the action of the Spirit. During long periods of continuous activity, we might lose contact with the simple truth that we are not totally in control of what we are doing or of the effects of our efforts upon others. Deliberately powering down not only affords a pause from activity both physically and emotionally, but also provides an occasion for becoming more receptive to gratitude and other spontaneous movements that we do not initiate. When we power up again, we do so with renewed purpose. And if, while taking a brief pause from activity we recognize some causes for gratitude, we can expect to find more reasons for thankfulness throughout the rest of our day – an attitude that enhances all that we do.

Our purpose in life has more to do with the qualities we bring to both activity and inactivity, and not the mere accomplishment of tasks, however good they might be. In God's eyes, and in honest reflection upon our lives and the lives of others, the person who is most active does not win the prize. Our value derives from how much each of us chooses to love in either of the states – active or inactive - and everything in between.

We are not machines, and we are not made for anything like a state of perpetual motion. Not only do we need rest, but we also need to be in touch with the source of actual power for making a difference in the world. We cannot discover, enhance or revivify our motivation and our deepest desires without some opportunities for reflection. Of course God inspires us while we are in the midst of action. But to be a contemplative at the same time as when we are in action is a gift and grace that requires reflection. Without taking appropriate pauses, we become merely active, and the quality of our actions drops below the level of our capabilities.

In order to power up we need to occasionally power down.