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DECODE

YOUR

FATIGUE

by

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Decode Your Fatigue:

A Clinically Proven 12-Step Plan to Increase Your Energy, Heal Your Body and Transform Your Life

Written by Alex Howard

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Do you, or someone you know, struggle daily with fatigue? Not just, “I didn’t sleep well last night, and I am tired”, but bone-tired fatigue? If the answer is yes, this book may be a valuable resource to incorporate into a healing journey.

I was made aware of Alex Howard’s book by one of our members who is struggling with long COVID. They were an early case, and had done considerable reading and research; they probably knew more about the recovery journey than some of the health professionals who laboured to understand long COVID as it evolved. They found this book to be very helpful and structured in approaching their recovery, particularly as it related to fatigue. I went on to suggest this book to others and then, finally, I read it myself. The teachings in the book are relatable, logical, and make difficult concepts so much easier to understand.

Fatigue is extremely complex. As the book explains, fatigue can be associated with many different health conditions, and often comorbid conditions. In his teens, Howard himself was plagued by fatigue. He describes the disabling impact and how, based on a comment and the “tough love” of a family member, he realized that only he could take responsibility and figure out how to recover his energy. The book starts with Chapter 1: Radical Responsibility, which is **Step 1** of the recovery process.

I watched my own mother in the 1970s and 1980s as she struggled with, and pushed through, what was yet to be defined as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. She was regularly told it was ‘in her head’, and was accused of exaggeration. In Chapter 2: Why Conventional Medicine is Baffled by Fatigue, Howard describes how Western medicine has basically failed those with fatigue; I found this to be incredibly insightful and validating for so many who are afflicted, and who have not received the answers and solutions they seek.

The book details, to whatever level of science you choose to absorb, how your body generates energy at a cellular level – it is like an updated Biology 12 course! Understanding this process, and what impacts energy production, reveals an objective, biological and physiological reason why someone may struggle with a sense of fatigue that is marked by both physical and psychological factors.

With this foundation of knowledge, Howard provides a roadmap of steps that explains how recognizing your symptoms can help you to guide your own recovery and gain back your energy. These steps include:

Step 2:
Get an accurate diagnosis

Fatigue is a *symptom*, not a *condition* – often, the process of ‘diagnosis’ as it relates to fatigue is ruling out what it is not, rather than gaining clarity on what it is.

Step 3:
Understand the role of your mitochondria

This is how, at a cellular level, we produce energy, and this Step explores what may impact that process, including our management of stress.

Step 4:
Understand your personality

Howard outlines the five personality patterns of fatigue; if you have one or more of these traits, you will be at a higher risk.

Step 5:
Create an environment for healing

This step looks at the loads on your body, including current and past stressors and traumas, and what you can do to relieve some of these loads in order to create an environment for healing.

Step 6:

Get in a healing state

If creating an environment for healing in Step 5 requires addressing the external environment, Step 6 is all about building an internal environment for healing.

In a healing state, you work on calming your nervous system. Getting into a healing state is a key step in helping regain your energy.

Step 7:

Optimize your digestion

You will learn the fascinating facts of how you digest, and how you can support that process to generate more energy.

Step 8:

Balance your hormones

Howard explains six practical ways to balance your hormones to promote healing.

Step 9:

Support your immune system

As your immune system is a large, demanding operating system in your body, it uses up your energy resources. The less work it has to do, the more energy you will have.

Step 10:

Discover your baseline and learn to pace

Talk to anyone recovering from a concussion or long COVID and they will explain to you that there is a very faint, indiscernible line that they must navigate between trying to expand their energy resources and

causing themselves a huge setback the following day. This chapter discusses the importance of understanding where that line is, and how to pace yourself.

Step 11:

Optimize your food

This chapter explores how food intolerances and the blood sugar roller coaster can impact your fatigue, and how to manage these better.

Step 12:

Manage your team

Howard explains what to look for in a good practitioner (regardless of specialty), defines the red flags, and directs how to maximize your clinical appointment time.

The book concludes with advice on the development of your own personalized recovery plan. As you can imagine, there is no 'silver bullet' or a simple solution to 'cure' your fatigue – if there were, we wouldn't need this book! Howard's roadmap is clear, complemented by tools and specifics.

There was something that really struck me at the end of the book, and I believe that it is worth exploring the book with this point in mind. Fatigue can be multifaceted and hard to diagnose. The real intent of the outlined steps is not a 'cure'. When the conditions are right, the body has an amazing ability to recover. *Decode Your Fatigue* offers the steps that are needed to prepare your body to heal itself.

Dr. Saray Myhill's quote in the book's introduction is resonant: "...*this is not an easy journey, it takes determination and courage. But....you can do it.*"

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