



## 7 Key Strategies to Protect Yourself from Negative Energy

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I receive many individuals (peacebuilders, local activists, therapists, healers and leaders) struggling trying not to directly absorb others' pain and negative emotions.

Most of those who are in the business of taking care of others, one way or another, tend to function as **emotional sponges or "empaths"**, as they are hyper-attuned to others.

From an energetic standpoint, emotions such as suffering, fear, anger, frustration, anxiety, stuckness also **convey strong energies not only to your mind and heart but also your body**. They can originate from several sources: what you're feeling may be your own; it may be someone else's; or it may be a combination. At times, it is hard to distinguish and this is

part of what [a shamanic session](#) can help with: helping separate what may be yours and what is not.

But you don't need to understand all of it to protect yourself and stop absorbing it all. Here are 7 key strategies that can immediately help you:

1. **Learn to recognize people (and situations) who can bring you down.** People who are particularly difficult for emotional empaths include the criticizer, the victim, the narcissist, and the controller. Judith Orloff terms these people "emotional vampires" (Judith Orloff, *Emotional Freedom: Liberate Yourself From Negative Emotions and Transform Your Life*, Three Rivers Press, 2011). When you know how to spot these behaviors, you can protect yourself against them.
2. **Manage what might constitute an emotional overload for you:** If you know that a situation, a place or a person is at the origin of most of your stress, **avoidance** can be a strategy. **At a minimum, distance yourself**, even in your interactions with them: make sure that you keep a safe distance, cross your arms or put a piece of furniture (like a desk) between them and you. Set **time limits** as well as kind but meaningful boundaries with others who overwhelm you and take too much of your energy. You will be better listeners and supporters if you don't bypass what you know as being your limits.
3. **Shield yourself.** A handy form of protection many people use involves visualizing an envelope of white light (or any color you feel imparts power) around your entire body. Think of it as a shield that blocks out negativity or physical discomfort but allows what's positive to filter in. As many of my clients know, I use different versions of this on a very regular basis, including for myself.
4. **Create and maintain a haven for disengagement:** being at work or at home, make sure that **you have a space, which is yours**, where you can regroup (a room at home, your office or cubicle at work) and put a sign or tell people around you that you cannot be disturbed for a certain amount of time (even if it is only 10 minutes). If they are not used to it, they might be disturbed at first but they will get over it and everybody will be better off because of it. Keep in that space (by your desk or your computer for instance) **a picture** of a waterfall or a lush

forest or a beach... whatever gives you a sense of spaciousness, safety and protection. Look at that picture whenever you feel overwhelmed. **If you are less visual than sensitive to smell, touch or sound, substitute the picture to an essential oil, a stone that you carry with you everywhere, or your favorite music or song.** Very simple things can help. This personal space of retreat will help you switch off your victim mentality and re-connect you with your own energy and power.

5. Whenever you feel overwhelmed, go back to the basics: First, **pause**. Research shows that by the simple act of pausing and observing what is happening, we calm down the alarm system and we activate different parts of the brain. Then, **ground yourself**, i.e. literally imagining roots under your feet and/or at the end of your spinal cord; and allow them to help re-cycle into the earth what is not yours. Then **take a few very deep breaths**. For a few minutes, keep exhaling negativity, inhaling calm. Visualize negativity as a gray fog lifting from your body, and clearing as golden light entering. This can yield quick results, helping you connect back to your essence, the peace within.
6. **Flush out the harm**. Negative emotions frequently get lodged in the body. If you are aware of a particular place in your body where a negative emotion is stuck (for instance your solar plexus or your heart chakra), place your palm on that place and breath in pure light/loving kindness through the front of your body, breath out everything you need to flush out through the back of your body. If you can do this lying down on the ground, it might work even faster. Experiment with different options and see what works best for you. The more you will practice this, the easiest it will become, ensuring that it will be accessible to you in crisis time.
7. **Look for positive people and situations and cultivate positive emotions that boost your inner strength**. If you're surrounded by peace and love, you'll flourish as strongly as negative emotions cause you to wilt.

The important thing to remember is that you always have the choice and can choose what you want to focus on.