

# Spirit Leeches

*Learn how to remove them.*



by Chip R. Bell and John R. Patterson

ONE HAZARD OF FISHING SWAMPY rivers is the risk of getting a leech. Unlike many parasites, you cannot feel a leech attaching to your leg. A ritual among river anglers is to always check for the bloodsuckers after emerging from the water. And, the typical way to remove the slimy hitchhiker is with a lighted match or lighter.

*Just as leeches suck the blood from their target, spirit leeches suck the energy and passion from theirs.* Some spirit leeches are dark—they remove optimism, hope and confidence. Mention an opportunity, and they can tell you why it's a mistake. Suggest a new approach to resolve a problem, and they will tell you all the reasons it won't work. Some are transparent, preying on personal accountability. They play the blame game or bring out the excuse use. Some are almost invisible, specializing in putting wet blankets on joy.

Spirit leeches are removed the same way real leeches are—with fire. Not a real match, of course, but with the warmth and energy of spirit. You do not inherit spirit, acquire spirit or bor-

row spirit. You choose spirit much like you choose to introduce yourself to a stranger. Those who opt for an upbeat, positive spirit are happier, healthier and more productive. They are their own best friend. And, they refuse to let spirit leeches attach to them. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your permission."

*Spirited people choose the light over the fog.* Most don't opt for the dark, but tolerate a fog—those boring, eventless moments. It means demonstrating the courage to glow zero tolerance or compliance with the party poopers and spoilsports. Helen Keller advised, "Life is either daring adventure or nothing." Don't be a slave to



ritual. Breaking the norm can provide you enrichment and growth. It can also teach us adaptability and tenacity.

*Spirit leeches are fans of subtraction, not addition.*

And, in this era of hand wringing pessimism and doomsday gloominess, they seem to have plenty of company. Put challenging times in perspective. Loosing your job, position or home is really tough; but you could be jobless in the early 1930's, or homeless living in Iraq. As inhabitants of the richest country in the world in an era of great medical care and relative prosperity, we are too lucky to act yucky—so stop blaming and start aiming.

Show spirit leeches your happy side and watch them disappear! PE

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**ACTION:** *Remove spirit leeches from your life.*