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Negative Ions Yield Positive Attitudes

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FROM THE EDITOR

We've all heard the familiar adage, "The fresh air will do you good." Just how much good it does might depend on where you are. If you're at the beach or standing in front of a waterfall, you are likely to feel refreshed and energized—maybe even a little euphoric. Why? It's those wonderful negative ions!

I love the ocean and I can recharge my attitude by spending a little time on or near the water. But until now, I've never really understood why the therapy worked. After reading about the lure of seaside retreats and the positive effects of negative ions, I decided to do a little research. Next stop... www.google.com.

I learned that the word "ion" comes from the Greek word meaning "traveler." Ions have been around for eons, but they weren't noticed until the 19th century. Moving water, moving air and sunlight create negative ions, which can stimulate everything from appetite to plant growth to sex drive. Even though ions are odorless, tasteless and invisible, when we inhale these negative ions and they reach our bloodstream and our brain, they can boost our energy, increase our awareness, improve respiratory illnesses, relieve stress and improve our overall attitude. Large bodies of water, wave action or churning waters like those in waterfalls generate massive amounts of negative ions. Thunderstorms can produce similar effects. That's why we feel so invigorated when we breathe in the fresh air after a good rain. Perhaps that's what inspired the famous song and dance "Singing in the Rain."

And now, some statistics for the geeks who like numbers! According to author Tom Williams, "The negative ion count at the base of Niagara Falls can be measured at 34,000 to 100,000 per cubic centimeter." In the article, *Negative Ions, Vitamins of the Air*, Jim Karnstedt and Don Strachan offer this insight: "Normally only about one atom in 100,000,000,000,000,000 is ionized making a total of maybe 1,000–2,000 ions per cubic centimeter....These are usually balanced pretty evenly between positive and negative, with a slight edge towards positive." Fred

Soyka told New Realities, "On the seashore, where water is always falling, you have about 2,000 negative to 1,000 positive [ions]. That seems to be the ratio that human beings respond to most favorably."

So what about those *positive* ions? They are actually the bad guys—and have a *negative* effect on us! Dust storms, car exhausts, cigarette smoke and many other things attack the good negative ions and either neutralize them or positively charge them. Positive ions take away our good moods and feelings of well-being. They can make us tired, irritable, tense and more likely to get sick.

Many in our industry have just finished the busiest time of the year. The craziness of tax season can leave us exhausted. Why? Perhaps it's because we work more hours, which requires us to be cooped up in our offices for extended periods of time. Most offices are full of positive ions, contributing to our tired and depressed feeling. The buildings tend to seal out negative ions while the computers, air conditioning, lighting and other things generate way too many positive ions. Typical offices can have a negative ion count ranging from zero to only a few hundred per cubic centimeter. We would likely be tired anyway this time of year, but the work environment certainly doesn't help the situation. The jury is still out on things that might help to improve the environment (e.g., negative ion air purifiers, internal and external waterfalls, etc.), but those might be worth some research.

So think about this idea to renew your positive energy. Each year after tax season, plan a trip to the coast or take a cruise to recharge your positive attitude. It might be exactly what your body needs. In the meantime, here's some good news. We can all experience the positive effect of negative ions every day. Our homes offer a built-in negative ion factory—the shower! The falling water from your own shower creates thousands of negative ions and can serve as a mood enhancer. So grab a towel (and maybe a glass of wine), turn on the shower and break out in verse. "I'm singing in the rain...what a glorious feeling, I'm happy again!" 