

A Quick Guide to Effective Stress Management

Mar. 30, 2021 | Posted by The Alternative Board

Stress is an integral part of many occupations—firefighter, brain surgeon, Major League Baseball relief pitcher—but it's certainly a key element in the lives of CEOs and business leaders. Those who most successfully grapple with stress are keenly aware of their personal “stress triggers” and how these triggers factor into the way they lead.

The rest of us—subjected to stress on a daily basis—can use all the help we can get in effective stress management. Here are some valuable tips to consider:

Never forget what you're doing right.

Stress often grows out of the nagging feeling that things aren't going well or that you're not doing all you can to address a situation. On the other hand, stress can be handled more effectively “by reminding yourself of the things that are going right,” notes *Entrepreneur*. Try writing out a list of “all your accomplishments and any small business milestones you've achieved,” then place this list “somewhere you can easily see it, such as on your desk or the wall.”

In moments of stress, pause and look at your list of accomplishments. It will offer a larger perspective and make you feel better in the process.

Don't neglect caring for yourself.

CEOs and business owners have so much to think about (and get stressed over) that they sometimes neglect caring for their most precious resource—theirself. Stress is difficult enough under normal circumstances but can feel insurmountable when you're not feeling one hundred percent. Remember the basics:

Eat healthy.

Stay hydrated.

Exercise whenever you can (even if it's just a brisk walk).

Get enough sleep.

Without proper self-care, stress can become overwhelming.

Let go of perfectionism.

If you're the type who insists on perfection in the workplace, you're creating unnecessary stress for yourself and others. Obsessing “about every possible outcome of an action or endlessly assessing your options leads to analysis paralysis and a stress spiral,” notes *Small Business Daily*. Instead, enumerate all the pros and cons of a given challenge, then “sleep on it if possible so your gut has time to process the options.” After that, a decision should be easier to make, with less stress involved.

Don't forego vacations or at least brief times away from the workplace.

As we have noted previously, it's imperative that CEOs and business owners avoid "sending the wrong signal (i.e., never stop working) by actively encouraging employees to use their PTO and vacation time" to de-stress. Well, the same ironclad principle applies to those in charge. Without any reasonable time away from the workplace, you face the same potential to burn out and not be up to the enormous task of running a business.

Delegate key responsibilities to trusted team members and find a way to take a break from work in a different setting. You'll see it makes an enormous difference in your life!

Build stronger connections with your peers.

A great deal of stress comes from the sense that, no matter what happens, "it's lonely at the top." The good news is—this isn't true! CEO peer groups and business advisory boards exist for precisely this reason: to demonstrate that business leaders *aren't* alone, and that they can reap huge benefits from being part of a group of high-achieving individuals who share the same challenges and rewards from leadership.

Of such organizations, The Alternative Board (TAB) is among the most successful, with members in peer groups around the world. Learn more about how membership in TAB can help reduce the stress you experience and hear first-hand from TAB members about the value they've received (both professionally and personally) through their participation.