

Taking care of yourself

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You cannot save everyone; you cannot help everyone. You may be able to save some, but you cannot help anyone if you are dead yourself. Sometimes, the best thing you can do as a manager is make sure you're sane and healthy.

Signs you're overstressed

- Feeling tired most of the time
- Feeling overwhelmed and irritable
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Large shifts in weight
- Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy

Too much stress can be damaging to your health. There's also the law of diminishing returns. The more you deplete yourself, the less effectively, efficiently and intelligently you work.

Steps to control your stress

- Accept help. Not only do you ease your load and improve quality, but it's a chance to develop future leaders on your team
- Don't let yourself be eaten alive by guilt. Those you've lost in the past are gone. You owe it to your future and the future of your current employees to focus on the future.
- Set aside time to take care of tasks you want to get done, that make you feel more in control (such as coming to this workshop or researching Twitter).
- Prioritize; keep breaking crises in perspective. Tomorrow's product is important, but maybe not as important as next month's or next year's.
- Find someone outside of work to spend time with. Too many journalists socialize only with other journalists, making it hard to get a psychological break from work.
- Make it a priority to do something non-work-related for yourself. Be inflexible. Work always takes second place to this (exercising, dinner with family, etc.).
- Be physically active, even if it's just walking around the block.

Identify triggers

Know what sends your blood pressure soaring and have a plan of action that you stick with. Most of us don't make the best decisions in the heat of the moment, so plan not to. For example, do nasty emails drive you nuts? Set a rule that you only respond in email.

Hate getting kitchen-sinked by the boss? Set rule that your response will always be, “Give me a couple hours to think about that and I’ll get you a coherent plan.”

You can’t prevent things from happening, but you can control how they affect you.

Let it go

We spend 80% of our time trying to change things we really have no control over. You can try to influence the economy, but you can’t solve it alone. Accept your limitations and let yourself off the hook.

Your boss is a nutjob. You can’t change that, so stop wasting energy stressing about it. If you’ve got a weak employee who’s taking up too much of your time, then fix that.

Decide what’s most important

Everything can’t be a priority one. It just cannot. Set your priorities: What absolutely has to be done today? What do I want to do today? What can someone else do? What really doesn’t need to be done? And know that you’ll be biased when deciding this so check yourself to make sure you’re not wasting time avoiding what has to be done and spending too much time of stuff that you want to do but doesn’t have to be done.