

LEADERSHIP

Top Tips for Managing Stress

How to turn a frazzled day into fuel for your business.

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Fatter and dumber. That's literally what you get over time when you don't manage stress effectively. Stress is a fact of life for anyone in the entrepreneurial fast lane, but the good news from the latest research is that it doesn't have to cost you. Framed right, it can actually boost your energy, help you problem solve and increase your memory recall.

There are several reasons poorly managed stress can become a crisis. Stress can cause sleep deprivation, which can lead to an interruption in insulin regulation and weight gain. High stress levels can also have adverse affects on memory and can compromise your immune system. If you're a manager and you're stressed out, then your team most likely is, too. Mirror neurons in our brains detect when our bosses are mad and mirror the emotion. The result? When the boss is upset, everyone in the office becomes anxious. Decision making, common respect and collaboration go out the window. Say goodbye to your best employees.

The key is to not stress too much about stress. There are a few simple that things will help you make sure that the fire in your belly is the fuel you need for your next big idea -- not an ulcer eating away at you.

After four consecutive nights of only four to six hours of sleep, you end up with the same mental acuity as having consumed a six-pack of beer, but without the fun. Imagine going into a meeting with your venture capitalist with a brain like

that. It's different for everyone, but many adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. When you're sleep deprived, negative events and emotions are magnified and recalled with ease, while positive event recall is decreased.

Think Positive. Did you ever notice how some people aren't bothered by things that drive you mad? Take a lesson from meditating Buddhists and strive to see everything as stress-less. The idea is that objects cannot be stressful all by themselves -- you have to interpret them that way. It's worth it to practice reframing stress into something positive. For instance, when you practice seeing a rejection by a client as just another step toward the 'yes' you'll eventually get from another prospect, you don't become paralyzed and stressed from it. You keep moving forward. This is key for sales people.

Laugh. This is one of the quickest stress-busters. It counteracts cortisol and it allows your brain to learn and think about new things. When you're serious, you're most likely in a protection mode; only solving old problems, not creating a new future. Read funny jokes. Find funny people. Watch funny videos on YouTube. Laugh all the way to the bank.

If you're running as hard and fast as most entrepreneurs, stress inevitably will find you. But, with a change of perspective, sleep and space in your day to download, you bring out your best problem-solving, creative-thinking, collaboration-making self. It's wisdom in action.

