



YORK·IE

SURVIVING THE STARTUP

An Entrepreneur's Guide
to Better Mental, Physical
& Emotional Health



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INTRODUCTION



James Avery

CEO, Adzerk

Sunday was a good day. You finally got some time to spend with your family. Went on a hike in the woods and stopped at Five Guys on the way home. You read your kids a story, tucked them into bed, then caught up on “Succession” with your wife (even though the season ended two months ago). It’s been a crazy couple of months at work. The round is finally coming together, though. You got the lead investor who agreed to set terms and now the various angels and smaller firms are finally committing.

A week ago, everything seemed to be going in the wrong direction. A prospect who seemed like a sure thing backed out at the last second. That deal would have really helped the round close. The prospect showed all the right signs, you even flew to their HQ with your VP of Sales, and things were as close as they could get. Then your main contact there let you know that he had just been

laid off. You knew things weren’t going great, but you didn’t expect that. Just like that, the deal was gone.

Things were even worse the week before. A seemingly small change made by one of the engineers caused an issue that dropped customers’ data for over 12 hours. No way to backup or restore. The data was just gone. You credited customers 10% of their monthly bill (you wish you could do more, but you couldn’t afford to), but some customers lost thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars.

BUT NOW IT’S A NEW WEEK.

Monday’s here, and sitting in your inbox is another angel who says she’s in for \$25,000. Another couple hundred thousand and this round will be in the bank. It couldn’t have come at a better time. Cash is running dangerously low and the senior engineer you’ve been courting for two months finally accepted the offer and starts in two weeks. Your VP of Sales stops by your desk to tell you about a big deal that’s really close. You would need to commit to adding a security feature for it to get past their security team, but with the new engineer, that shouldn’t be a problem. You tell him to go ahead and commit. You fist bump, and he walks back to his desk with a big smile.

You keep reading through your email, when one of them jumps out at you. The subject is just “Can we chat today?” It’s from the VP of Revenue at your largest customer. Your heart picks up a beat. You quickly reply, “Sure - call me whenever you have time.” Two seconds after hitting send, your phone starts to ring.

You get up from your desk in the shared office, quickly shove your AirPods into your ears, and walk back to the small conference room in your office and swipe right on your phone to pick it up.

“Hey Josh, what’s up?”

You have worked with Josh for a couple years. He brought you into the fast-growing startup that serves as your anchor customer. Not only do they give you great credibility (half the new investors’ questions were about the relationship with this company), but they represent about 25% of your revenue.

“Hey John, you got a couple minutes?”

“Sure.”

“So, this really sucks, but we have decided we have to move off.”

Your stomach churns. Your heart kicks into overdrive. You don’t say anything.

“I’m really sorry man. After the outage, some of the team went to the CEO and he doesn’t feel like you are ready for our scale. He isn’t willing to take that risk. I tried to fight for you, I know you all can get there, but he is making us move.”

You quickly compose yourself.

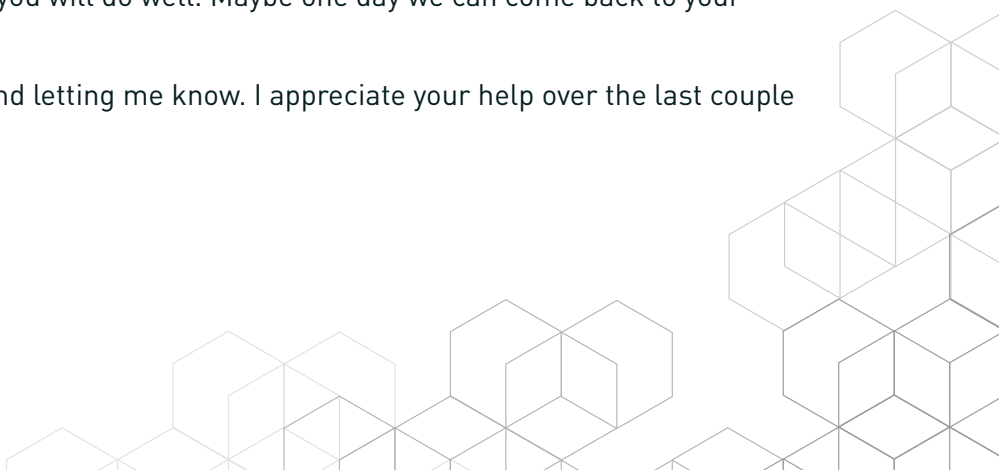
“Hey, thanks for fighting for us. I really appreciate that. Could I talk with the CEO? Perhaps I can convince him that it won’t happen again and that we are ready to handle your scale.”

“Unfortunately, it’s too late, we already signed a deal with Axel Soft and will be off by the end of the month. We will, of course, still pay for this month and any outstanding invoices. We wouldn’t want to leave you high and dry.”

“Thanks Josh. So there isn’t anything I can do to keep you?”

“I’m sorry, but it’s out of my hands. I do really appreciate all the work you have done for us, it really means a lot, and I’m sure you will do well. Maybe one day we can come back to your platform.”

“OK. Thanks for giving me a call and letting me know. I appreciate your help over the last couple of years.”



“No problem, you will get our official termination in email shortly. I’m sorry again and best of luck. Let me know if there is anything I can do to help out.”

“Thanks, Josh.”

You hang up the phone. Your Apple Watch beeps at you.

Your heart rate rose above 120 BPM while you seemed to be inactive for 10 minutes starting at 9:32 a.m.

Well, that’s it. 25% of your revenue is gone in seven days. The main investor in the round is definitely going to pull out, and when they do, all those angels are going to back out too, and it’s back to square one.

The engineer you just sent the offer to won’t be able to start. You’re going to have to call him and pull the offer. Maybe he hasn’t put in his notice at his current job yet.

You’re probably going to have to cut at least two other people. The team is so small and tight, that’s going to really suck.

Then you remember the deal you just agreed to with your VP of Sales. How are you going to get that work done without the new engineer, and with two less people overall?

You sit down in the conference room, lean back in the cheap IKEA office chair, and close your eyes. Maybe this is it. Maybe this company just wasn’t meant to be.

This is the moment. It won’t be the last and probably isn’t the first. This is the moment that will decide whether you will succeed. Everything is against you. Everything has gone wrong. The companies and founders who make it will get up from that table, go back to their desk, and do the things that need to be done to keep the company going. You will fight through the adversity, fight through the worst possible scenarios, and make it work. More than anything, the perseverance to make it through these times will determine your success.

James Avery, CEO, Adzerk

eBOOK INTRODUCTION

“It takes guts” is a sentiment new entrepreneurs know all too well. Though, many may say that’s an understatement. They’ll tell you it takes a lot more. Founding and scaling a startup is unlike any other professional experience. It takes the weight of the world at times. The highs are unlike any other — wildly addicting, so much so that nothing can stop you from reaching the next pinnacle. And the lows can seem like the deepest, most isolated valley.

You rarely get warning when the loneliness begins to settle in. That moment when you feel like you’re in it by yourself. Suddenly you look around and you’re the only one treading water while everyone else is on shore. It’s like running a marathon at a sprinter’s pace — all uphill.

Of course, the payoff of battling through is worth it. Taking your expertise in a given field and creating economic opportunities is topped off with a cherry of validation when customers adopt your product to improve their own business or quality of life.

So how does an entrepreneur navigate this roller coaster ride? How does he or she not only make it out alive and healthy, but enjoy the twists and turns as well?

What better way than by asking the entrepreneurs who have been down this road or are going through it now.

There’s no course to take on how to manage the psychological and physical loads that come with wearing an entrepreneur badge of honor. In this eBook, we hope to share the experiences and insights of those who have walked the path you’re on. You can’t be what you can’t see. If we can turn the lights up a little on the lonely world founders face, then perhaps you’ll be better prepared for the startup journey. This eBook provides tips, tricks and advice from entrepreneurs, for entrepreneurs, on how to better manage their physical, mental and emotional health while building a business.

CHAPTER 1: GET THE MIND RIGHT

One of the key requirements for entrepreneurial success is the ability to develop and offer something unique to the marketplace. That success is a direct result of the creativity and innovation it stems from. They go hand in hand with entrepreneurship preventing a business from halting in its tracks and entering stagnation mode. Creativity is related to nine of the top 10 skills global executives say is essential for 2020 and beyond.

Of course, there's a psychological price tag that comes with being an entrepreneur. Nearly half of all entrepreneurs will develop a mental health issue during their lifetime. To fire on all creative cylinders, your mind needs to be operating at max capacity. Yet, burnout and depression can be all too present in founder life as a result.

It's reported that 30% of founders admit to feeling the effects of depression. And that feeling doesn't discriminate across industries, skill level or years of experience, but it does have a preference. Individuals most likely to suffer from burnout are those who are overly passionate about what they do, work with an element of risk and operate in socially isolated environments. In other words — entrepreneurs.

Figuring out how to be proactive with the mind will help to stay fresh and curb any bad habits if things go awry, which they're apt to do. The vantage point of entrepreneurs causes a mixed bag of emotions and a swirl of risk-reward assessment. Having the right tools to manage the stress and burdens that arise at any stage of the building process will give you gladiator-like strength.

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Dr. Julie Gurner,

Executive performance coach,
host of The Relentless Podcast, and speaker.

“I’ve met founders who spend their entire day putting out fires or in meetings, and spend their evenings into the early morning hours actually doing the work. You have to find a system that works for you, but also a system that both gets work done and also allows you the outlets that fuel an optimal human that can go the distance.”

“Think long and hard about why you want to do this. There is no doubt that it puts more strain on your emotional and mental health than employment. That said, you will be in control, so unlike employment, you decide the priorities. That freedom of choice helps immensely.”



Charlie Casey

CEO, Loyalty Lion





Jindou Lee

CEO, Happy Co

“I think it comes down to expectations. Spending a lot of time upfront understanding what it is you want personally out of life and what your minimum goals are is crucial to how you react to things along the journey. For example, I’ve always maintained I wanted to make \$1M for myself. And everything on top of that is just icing on the cake. And knowing that I have well surpassed my expectations gives me the comfort that it’s just about wants now and not needs.

I also use that perspective with my cofounder. We periodically reflect about how far we have come. How fortunate we are to be in the position we are in, running a growing business with scale and being able to learn new things and be challenged every single day. And ultimately, if we are not happy with what we are doing, we can always quit, sell the company or change things around. It’s a choice and we have the power to make it.

Those are a few things that help me on this long, strenuous journey. It’s all in the mind.”

“In ‘good times’ when you’re not particularly stressed, tired, or anxious, that’s when you should commit to building your practices that help you deal with the hard times, whether it’s mindfulness, exercise, spiritual practice etc. It’s very hard to just start mindfulness practices when you are already in a dark place.”



Ashutosh Priyadarshy

CEO, Sunsama



Rob Simopoulos

Defendify, CEO

“From an early age, I’ve always had a racing mind. Constant thoughts and ideas spinning in and out at random rates during the entire course of the day. As an entrepreneur, most of this mental chatter is about my business with concepts, ideas, solutions, and challenges constantly engaged... nonstop. My mind never rests, and finding calmness has always been unachievable.

A few years back I was sitting on my best friend’s porch and chatting about life. I shared, ‘I have this thing where my mind has constant chatter and never stops. From the moment I wake up it starts, and it runs until the moment I fall asleep.’ His response was immediately, ‘Do you meditate?’ To my surprise, he explained that he learned meditation a couple of years ago with amazing results, and he recommended that I should too.

That moment was life changing for me. I took the meditation class and learned the art of calming and resting the mind so that it can work clearly and efficiently. It was explained during class that resting the mind is like resting a muscle. You can’t use your bicep all day, every day without negative results. By meditating daily, I now enjoy a dramatic reduction in mental chatter, an ability to think clearer, and a significant reduction in stress. For me, simply taking 20 minutes a day to meditate has improved my ability as an entrepreneur and in many aspects of my personal life.”

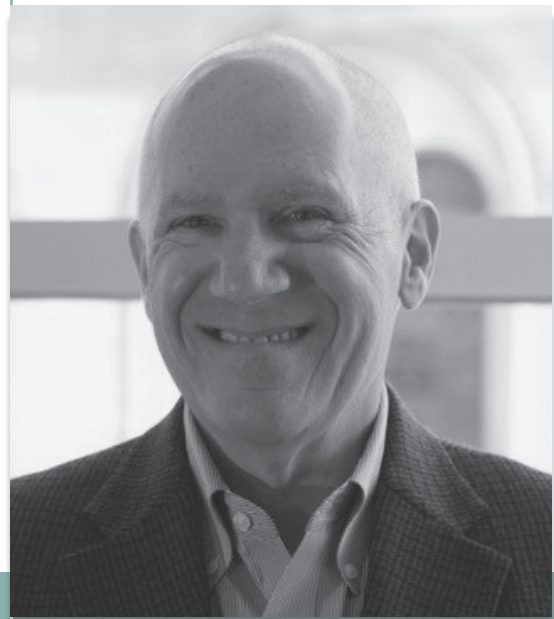


Gemma Sole

co-founder, N.A.bld/Nineteenth Amendment

“Journaling is a must. Especially now that we are socially distanced. It helps to get thoughts, reactions, and memories out on paper (and offline), and gives me a chance to think through what’s going on.”

“Be sure to have a mentor. Someone who’s been there, done that, and can guide you through the challenges, support you when you need to ‘power through,’ and is committed to your success. I’ve continued with the same mentor for 36 years, thanks Frank!”



Ken Rapp

CEO, Blustream





Danielle Owen Whitford

CEO and founder, Pioneera

“It’s very easy to get carried away with what others are doing and comparing yourself to them. Normally that leaves you feeling down and like you’ll never match up to the superstars. So I stopped comparing myself and my business a while ago. We set our own goals and that is what I measure to and focus on. It’s helped my mental health and motivation and enabled me to be happy and supportive for others’ wins, rather than concerned I wasn’t getting the same. It’s also improved my productivity and focus significantly!”

“Having hobbies is essential to creating and maintaining mental wellness. Hobbies allow us time to destress and focus on other things in our lives that we enjoy and can learn from. Hobbies can range from participating in recreational sports to woodworking or knitting. The effect that hobbies can have on our life are multiple. They can keep us connected to friends, to happy memories of our past, and make us feel good about our lives.”



Cindy Coughlin

Mental health counselor,
Catholic Charities New Hampshire

REVIEW

- **Find a Mentor** — Someone who’s walked the walk and can give you that Mickey Goldmill-like pep talk in the corner of the ring between rounds when things get hard. Like yourself, this person is committed to your success. That support becomes invaluable to lean on for advice and wisdom.
- **Meditation** — Press pause on the hamster wheel in your head and quiet the mind. Whether it’s five minutes or 30, meditation will help increase your focus and ability to think with a sense of clarity that leads to better decision-making.
- **Journaling** — A consistent journaling habit can drive the entrepreneurial process, create new and fruitful business ideas, and help entrepreneurs direct their energy.
- **Don’t Compare** — Stop looking over your shoulder and realize there’s more than enough opportunity to build a business that makes an impact, and creates financial freedom and security.
- **Engage in Hobbies** — Detaching from work and doing what you love makes you a more effective boss when you’re at the office by helping to recover from stressful work situations. This is the “soul-filling” stuff that refreshes every part of you!

CONCLUSION

No one said building a company was easy. But it's about time to sweep away the stigma and talk about the real repercussions of the price entrepreneurs pay.

When we spend more time with ourselves (not working), we're able to have better mental clarity, more abundant creativity and an improved ability to make sound business decisions. Acknowledging how the journey will be taxing and preparing yourself with practices to combat the slumps will give you Rocky-esque stamina.



CHAPTER 2: THE ACHES AND PAINS

Our bodies were created to move. Just like stillness enriches the mind, movement enhances the body. When the mind and body are operating together at peak performance, both your business and personal life will reap the benefits.

But with hectic schedules, extensive traveling and long hours hunched at a desk, it's easy to lose track of healthy habits. Maintaining those habits requires discipline. Whether it's nutrition choices, sleep schedules, how you spend your free time, or your circle of influence, these decisions matter to your overall health.

When we think about the value of exercise, we tend to focus on the physical benefits — lower blood pressure, a healthier heart, increased energy and a fitter physique. But over the past decade, social scientists have gathered compelling evidence suggesting there's another, more immediate benefit of regular exercise: its impact on the way we think.

- Enhanced creativity
- Sharper memory
- Improved concentration
- Quicker productivity

In a study showing the relationship between increased physical activity and cancer, JAMA Internal Medicine found that greater levels of leisure-time physical activity (exercise done at one's own discretion) were associated with a lower risk of developing 13 different types of cancer.

"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity." -John F. Kennedy

ENTREPRENEURS



Matt Fornataro

CEO, Kompany39

“For me, it all starts with feeling healthy. If I feel healthy, I feel confident. If I eat like sh*t, I feel like sh*t, I think like sh*t. Good nutrition is really important. Exercising daily is a non-negotiable habit for me. And it isn’t 4-hour workouts or anything crazy. It’s movement every day. Breaking a sweat. Don’t overcomplicate exercise. Exercise is parking a tad bit further at Target. Exercise is taking the stairs. Exercise is going for a 30-minute walk and calling a friend you haven’t talked to in a while. We’re meant to move, to walk, to stretch. I do it daily.

ALL of these more ‘lifestyle’ choices and habits that I have cultivated make me more able to handle the stress and struggle that accompany being an entrepreneur. It’s lonely at times. It’s maddening at times. It’s also the most fulfilling, rewarding experience you can imagine. Perspective is a powerful tool. When I feel ‘in the weeds’ mentally, I return to nature, walk through the woods and think about my kids, my wife, my family, my friends, the sun, the grass, the fact that I am even breathing and can think with a brain and have emotions. This always brings me clarity and peace. It sounds corny and sort of ‘hippy-ish’ but as a hard-charging former pro athlete who never did any of these things, I am certain they have worked for me.”



Heather Margolis

CEO, Spark Your Channel

“Even if it’s just 30 minutes, I do some sort of work out every single day. Working from home has made working out so much easier. I have a Peloton, Pilates reformer, and a 3-mile hike one block from my house. I’ve started challenging myself that anytime someone cancels a call, I hop on the Peloton or the reformer. I’ve come to look forward to the occasional cancellation! I also love my stand up desk and hand weights. While I’m on a call (without video), I can often be found doing bicep curls, triceps presses, or squats.”

“Instead of working out early in the morning, I now start work early by doing a hard workout or run in the middle of the day (usually around lunchtime). It really helps me focus in the afternoon, where I used to crash after lunch.”



Drew D’Agostino

CEO, Crystal



Michele Pesula Kuegler

Editor In Chief, Think Tasty

“Make time every day to do something physical. I find it best to start my day by clearing out any communications received overnight and then working out. My mind is at ease knowing work is fine, and I can focus on my workout. As an added bonus, starting my day with a workout really helps to center me and be more focused when I return to my desk.”

CONCLUSION

When time is of the essence, getting up and moving should be a top priority when you're building a new business.

1. Move whenever, however you can — That may be five minutes of stretching at your desk, taking a break to play outside with your kid, or taking a call while on a walk.
2. Use what you have — A couch, a railing or a chair. No excuses when it comes to equipment. There's plenty of online workouts using your own body's resistance that will get the job done.
3. Map out a food plan ahead of time — You'll be less likely to make impulse decisions based on convenience if you have a plan to stick to.

Exercise plays a pivotal role in managing levels of anxiety, along with your perception of yourself. Applying these practices will reward you with an entrepreneur who's more confident, cool under pressure, decisive, emotionally intelligent, charismatic and more effective at articulating their vision.

The key here is **accountability, reliability and motivation.**



CHAPTER 3: STARTUPS ARE BUILT BY PEOPLE

Entrepreneurs burn the candle at both ends pushing their mind and body to the limit to make their business thrive. Unfortunately, inner health, mental sharpness and emotional well-being get lost in the crossfire. Friends, family, partners and employees feel the heat in their own way as well.

The emotional toll of every high and every low will tire you out. Try to remain stoic, even when it feels like everything is wobbling on a tightrope. When loneliness and isolation creep in, use that as the catalyst to step back, reevaluate and prioritize the areas in your life that could help recharge your battery.

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Jim Pouliopoulos

Founding Director, Professional Sales Program
Bentley University and author

“Entrepreneurs have to wear a lot of hats. If you’re in the zone where you’re doing something you enjoy, but you’re doing it poorly or less than average, then the prescription for you is to focus on mastery. Take some courses, find mentors, get some training, and learn how to do those tasks better. Try to spend more time doing that type of work to advance your skills. Learning how to improve on skills you enjoy using will not feel like ‘work.’”

“Taking a good look at the different areas of your life on a regular basis can be key to staying emotionally and mentally healthy. Take a look at the varying categories that make up your life (e.g., work life, family life, spiritual life) and identify what some of the problems or issues you are facing in each one may be. Write them down or take a mental note. Once you’ve identified some of the issues, consider if there are any small solutions you could work out for yourself or anything you can do differently and begin working towards them. Having a plan and keeping an eye on your life in this manner can be beneficial to overall health.”



Cindy Coughlin

Mental health counselor
Catholic Charities New Hampshire



Matt Walsh

President and co-founder,
Noted Analytics CEO, Loyalty Lion

“I keep reminding myself that building a company is a marathon, not a sprint. Or maybe more accurately, it’s like the Le Mans race from the movie ‘Ford v Ferrari’ (a long, grueling race in adverse conditions). I like the car analogy because working at a startup, you’ll find yourself running with little sleep, lots of caffeine, and a fair amount of stress to deal with. If you were a car, your RPMs would be in the ‘red.’ You can run at this rate for a while but at some point, you’re going to break down.

To keep my mental/physical/emotional health in check, I try to be as aware of my energy, my RPMs, as possible. That means allowing myself to go to bed early some nights if I’m exhausted. Allowing myself to sleep in and skip a workout. Talk 5 minutes after lunch and gaze at a Calm.com screensaver (I love these!). Most importantly, and what I find the hardest thing to do, try to be more present. When you are taking a break with friends and family, focus on them. I find that I need to put my phone in another room otherwise I’ll be checking email, Slack messages, and LinkedIn notifications.”



Heather Margolis

CEO, Spark Your Channel

“I use and love the Panda Planner but any sort of grateful journal would work. I write out what I’m grateful for, what I’m excited about, and a positive affirmation. It makes me stop and think about all of the good things in my life before I start to think about any of the challenges. No matter how stressed, overworked, or lonely I feel in my work-life, life overall is pretty great! In the midst of quarantine, we’ve also started lighting candles on Friday night with my in-laws over Face-Time. It ties my kids to our spirituality as well as their grandparents.”

“I’ve made volunteering a major priority. There are some great organizations in Nashville that serve the homeless and other populations in need. Getting consistently involved with them on a weekly basis keeps me grounded, and helps me get out of my head.”



Drew D’Agostino

CEO, Crystal



Luke Thomas

Founder, Friday App

“I try to finish work at a specific time of day, which gives me time/space to hang out with my family. As an entrepreneur, it’s easy to get into this mode where you feel like everything hinges on you. In reality, that is rarely the case. Build a great team that you can trust, and try to identify and work on the highest leverage activities, but there comes a point of diminishing returns.”

“Yoga and, even better for me, breathing exercises. These really help me destress and breathing exercises are actually very, very good for you.

One of the most difficult things for me is back-to-back meetings, where you don’t have time to gather your thoughts before another meeting. To help combat this, I schedule my meetings at 45 minutes, which gives me time to: note key points/follow-up actions; take a break (maybe a 2-minute walk around my lovely garden); and prepare for the next meeting (major preparation done beforehand of course, but this time is used to review my preparation).



Rav Roberts

CEO & Co-Founder at Pharma Sentinel

CONCLUSION

Not everybody is going to understand why or what you're doing. That's all right. It's your journey. If you choose to build something, know that it comes with some heavy sacrifices. Objectivity and calm, centered thinking will flourish only if you can find ways to recharge the system so you come back focused and able to tackle what comes next. Always take inventory of the habits you're creating to step away from the madness. Those habits will be what you attribute your stamina to when you've reached the top of the incline and look back at the uphill grind you just endured.



CHAPTER 4: STRIKE A BALANCE

Today's society makes us believe we can only be successful when we work impractically long hours and "sacrifice" our health, our personal time and our relationships. But these principles are only applicable to one area of life for an entrepreneur — the business. What is success if everything else around you is deteriorating?

For entrepreneurs, prioritizing the balance of self-care with business needs is the first step to create opportunities to feel better, work better and live better. If health is not high on your priority list, you may find yourself coming up short on decision-making when it comes to healthy living, stress management and more importantly, the growth of your business.

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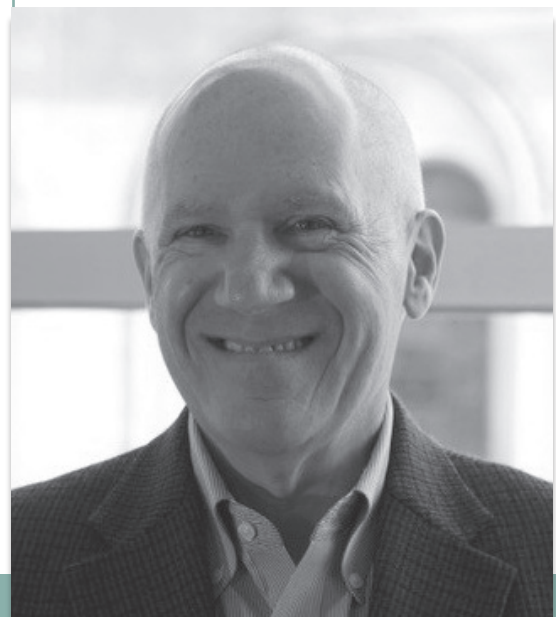


Heather Margolis

CEO, Spark Your Channel

“I don’t know if I believe there is true balance. I think it’s more of an integration. Pre-Covid I was taking my girls to swim weekly then getting to work by 10:30 a.m. I’d often work late that day. Now it can be more of a struggle to find one-on-one time with each of my kids but I think it’s super important. One-on-one time looks more like a hike with one kiddo one morning then baking muffins with the other. Also, it’s super important to find time for your significant other. We have an au pair so even in quarantine she does bedtime once a week and we either go for a hike or take a picnic dinner to a park. With three companies between the two of us, it usually involves talking through a work challenge but at least we’re spending time not talking about potty training or what’s for dinner.”

“Make time. I remember being on the road all week, but still making it home to spend time with my two sons on a weekend camping trip (yes sleeping on the ground then back on airplanes), to support them in basketball and baseball. I also make sure to spend time with my wife every Sunday afternoon/evening, no matter what. P.S. Having the right life partner is the only way to see through the 10 years it takes to build something special.”



Ken Rapp

CEO, Blustream



Luke Thomas

Founder, Friday App

“I try to maintain friendships with friends outside of technology. This helps create balance and remember that everything doesn’t need to be about work.”

“When our kids were in middle school, my husband had an evening phone call every Monday, which prompted a tradition we continue now a dozen years later: Tapas Monday. In the early days the kids ate dinner at a normal time, and then later we had a candlelight dinner for two consisting of Prosecco and tapas dishes. As someone who loves to cook, it gave me a creative outlet after a day of work, and it gave my husband and me guaranteed one-on-one time every week. Even though we are now empty nesters, we still end our Monday with this meal.”



Michele Pesula Kuegler

Editor In Chief, Think Tasty



Kristin Allaben

COO and Life Coach, The Forte Factor

“I always knew that being a working parent is tough, but I didn’t realize how tough it was until I was juggling work and trying to grow my business with home responsibilities and the schedules and needs of five distinctly different people.

I’m typically a very organized person. I was often frequently discouraged from behaving like ‘such a Type A person’ as it would prevent growth in my career. I, however, decided to embrace it because organization is something everyone needs, especially when working and raising a family.

So, here’s my advice for being a working parent:

1. IDENTIFY YOUR CATEGORIES.

These are the areas in your life where you have specific responsibilities. Once you visualize your categories, you can tackle your list more efficiently. Consider these as your possible starting point for your own categories: Work, Kids, House, Me, Spouse.

2. IDENTIFY YOUR ONE THING. You only get 24 hours in a day, and you do need to sleep, so pick one thing that needs to be done in each category. This is the one thing that, if nothing else gets done for that category, you’ll feel accomplished and proud. For example, in the House category, it could be doing one load of laundry (from start to finish. Yep, that means putting it away, not just folding it) and for Kids, it could mean sitting and watching TV with them or playing a favorite game. For Work, it could be spending time with a direct report or spending time to better understand an aspect of the job that isn’t as productive as it could or should be. If you make it a priority, it will happen.

3. BE FLEXIBLE. LIFE HAPPENS.

Sometimes the one thing you want to tackle — or perhaps need to tackle — might have to be priority #2 or #3 that day because a kid got sick, or the car broke down, or the client meeting for Thursday got moved to Tuesday. Learning how to embrace what life shares with you helps you to not get worked up when you lose control of a situation. You’ll start to see new opportunities when life seems to take things out of your hands.”



Cindy Coughlin

Mental health counselor,
Catholic Charities New Hampshire

“I cannot emphasize the importance of boundaries enough. Boundaries are the foundation to a balanced and mentally healthy life. Having boundaries in your life means placing value on your time and saying ‘no’ to that extra bit of work that’s just not your job or within your skill-set. It is telling people you are there for them but you just don’t have the mental space at the moment to engage in a particular discussion. It can also be just knowing when to sign out of Twitter for the day. You will thank yourself in the long run if you consistently focus on keeping boundaries present in your life.”

CONCLUSION

HOW TO FIND BALANCE:

1. Make time on the calendar to designate a spot for personal categories (Family, Work, House, etc.).
2. Develop a daily after-work routine (as best you can) to shut down and create a clear divide between work-life balance.
3. Disconnect and unplug — know when to shut it down and release the natural reflex to pick a phone back up or respond to emails.

It's your responsibility to oversee the balance in your life. Take control by setting realistic goals and boundaries, but with a sense of flexibility that will allow you to pivot and adapt when things don't go as planned. Be sure to schedule your time for each area that's valuable to you and commit to it.

Not only is downtime good for you and your relationships, it's also good for the growth of your business. You'll be happier, more energized and less prone to burnout. Downtime from the usual grind is crucial in the creative process, giving your subconscious time to work its magic.



EBOOK CONCLUSION

How to avoid reaching the brink of entrepreneur collapse and instead take control of your journey:

1. Keep your mental resilience in check. That includes not letting daily setbacks, negative feedback or hectic schedules affect you. Learning what methods work best for you to ease the mental pressures and being able to access them at the right times will help diffuse the pent-up emotion.
2. Keep your physical health in check. This includes healthy eating, exercising and sleeping. You can make small goal gains every day by committing not to miss a daily workout, pledging to eat organic, wholesome foods for a month, or disciplining yourself to shut things down at a set time each day.
3. Keep your emotional well-being in check. This means learning when your cup is going to runneth over and catching it before it does with practices and habits to bring you back to level ground.
4. Keep your external values and personal sense of purpose in check. That includes balanced time with family and friends, and nurturing personal hobbies outside of work.

Think back to the marathon runner. The heartbreak hills of the founder's course won't last forever, but they are part of the race. Entrepreneurs are a special breed. They possess the interior fuel and stamina to overcome challenges, but it takes an allegiance to yourself to make sure you're always running on premium gas. Set yourself up for success in every area of your life, and the business will follow suit.

If you're an entrepreneur with an interesting story or advice for your peers, we want to hear from you for our next eBook. Please reach out to us on Twitter (twitter.com/yorkgrowth) or email us (adam@york.ie).

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