

COACHING

Take Care Of Your Company's Most Valuable Resource – You

by Carol Hartman, M.B.A

The financial rewards of owning your own business will never be enough if you are constantly overwhelmed by stress. Over the long run, stress robs you of your personal effectiveness, damages your health, and takes the joy out of what should be an exciting, rewarding experience. The tension caused by stress can cost you valued employees, important customers, and meaningful relationships.

If unresolved stress is running your business, it's time to learn how to be calm. Here are a few suggestions on how to cope on days when everything seems to be going wrong:

- Stop and take a deep breath through your nose, hold it for a few seconds, then slowly let it out through your mouth.
- Smile even when you don't feel like it. A good mood is every bit as contagious as a bad one.
- Maintain a sense of humor to help keep things in perspective. Don't rehash old stressful situations – let them go.
- Shut your eyes for a few minutes and imagine yourself in your favorite vacation spot. When you re-open your eyes you will "return" with the renewed perspective you bring back to work after a restful vacation.
- Relax to loosen the tight muscles that cause tension headaches and an aching body.
- Set aside time to appropriately react to stress-causing situations. For example, at the end of the day write down stressful events in a journal. This helps you get them out and also provides a useful guide to dealing with these problems the next time they arise.
- Keep a sense of control by staying organized. Get organized for tomorrow before you leave work today.
- Celebrate your successes, no matter how small. Tell yourself specifically how you have done a good job.

Remember that nurturing yourself is an important part of managing your business. Choosing your reaction to any given encounter is strictly *your* choice.



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