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# Importance of self-care for hardworking entrepreneurs

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The word Entrepreneurship sounds like a dream, isn't it? Being your boss, deciding your schedule, the freedom to work on your time – I mean, what could be better?

But the reality is very different. Entrepreneurship is not linear nor as smooth sailing as you may want to think. It takes a lot of hard work and determination to succeed with hardly any chance to stop even if you fall sick or are in desperate need of a break. Research suggests that this is one of the reasons why only 58% of small businesses survive beyond three years.

As an entrepreneur, I can say that it is nothing like being an employee. In fact, as an ex-corporate professional, running and growing your own business is very different from working for a corporation.

Why? Because when you run your own business, you need to show your authenticity through marketing, branding and most importantly in conversations with your consumers.

Then there are several issues like cash flow, financial uncertainty, constantly changing economic climate, and the absence of established support structures like sales, marketing, and finance. As an entrepreneur, you juggle between all these and much more even when they may not be your key skills.

**The outcome:** More than 70% of entrepreneurs report stress and mental wellbeing issues leading to various health concerns.

The long days and sleepless nights increase stress levels considerably which in turn impact cognitive functions. This results in deferred decision-making and slowing down of this crucial ability, lack of attention to details, increased risk of heart diseases, diabetes, depression, and various other illnesses.

**Therefore self-care for entrepreneurs is as important as the business itself.** Let me put this very simply, self-care leads to long term business success if you were to look at it like an investment.

You stop investing, the account stops growing, right? Similarly, you stop caring for yourself your growth and well-being will decline. If you are not growing as a person you will soon flounder and not be able to run your own business well enough.

**What is the solution:** The only solution to avoid all this burnout is self-care. Very simply put, self-care is the mandatory downtime you schedule for yourself. It helps you strike a balance between personal and work life.

**By why is self-care needed:** Taking time out to care for yourself reduces stress levels. It also helps you gain better clarity and enhances the crucial decision-making ability.

Contrary to the belief that self-care is complicated, it is very simple to follow. It is a proven technique to boost productivity as a tired mind and weary body cannot function correctly for long. Remember the saying, you cannot pour from an empty cup. So if your 'cup of care' is empty, how do you expect to care for your business?

Last but not the least, self-care contributes to mental health. The time you invest in looking after yourself helps to avoid excessive anxiety which is known to cause various physical and mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, heart diseases and so on.

### **So how do you start?**

From my experience as an entrepreneur and a Certified Happiness Coach, here are my top 5 tips that can help any businessperson to pay attention towards their healthy wellbeing:

1. **Schedule time out:** Working long hours and on weekends is not going to make you effective. In fact, it is going to impact your productivity and possibly burn you out. Take out time to exercise. Exercise has proven benefits in building a happy and a healthy lifestyle. Pick up a form of workout you like: running, gym, yoga, dancing or any other form. But make it mandatory that the time you are exercising, your phone and emails are kept away. Remember, a strong body holds an alert mind.

**a. Make sure you get enough sleep:** Lack of adequate sleep will hamper your judgement and decision-making capability. So sleep well. Before you go to sleep, make time to do something that calms your mind-reading, listening to music, meditating, lighting a relaxing incense or any other activity that helps you relax.

**b. Eat well:** The importance of the right nutrition cannot be undermined. The food you eat is the fuel you give to your body and mind. Eat a balanced, healthy, nutritious diet. Ensure that you enjoy the food you eat, take time to chew well and avoid eating at a hurried pace or when under stress. And yes, do not shy away from your occasional indulgence – you deserve that occasional treat!

- **Make sure you have a good support system:** You don't always have to hire expensive resources. In today's world, technology has advanced enough to bring in various support systems. E.g. use an app that helps you organize your schedule and meetings and sync all your devices. Alternatively, find an app that works best for you and your business needs in communication.

For your day to day accounting, look for someone who can give you a few hours without pinching your pocket! Delegate wherever possible so you can focus on things where your expertise can be utilized better.

- **Learn to say NO:** Entrepreneurs want to be present everywhere and all the time aka FOMO (fear of missing out). Understandably, you want to expand your business but it's just not possible to be everywhere, every time.

Learn to set boundaries and evaluate opportunities that are best for your business. Say "no" to those who don't align with your professional or personal goals. Become selective about opportunities that work well for you. This will help you focus better and thus grow on a sustained basis.

- **Take time off:** Remember, work hard but play harder! Well yes absolutely. With all the stress of running a business, you deserve a DAY OFF. Fix a day every week where you will only spend time with yourself. Do what makes you happy – visiting the library, taking long walks, pampering yourself at a spa or anything else that prioritizes YOU. Remember, you are much better as a calm business owner than a stressed one!



- **Ask for help:** If at any given point, you feel overwhelmed and unable to deal with the stress and anxiety seek professional help. Seek a therapist, a coach, a counsellor or even a support group where you get the support that helps you deal with it. Don't take pride in thinking that you can handle it all yourself. The right professional support will not only help you deal with your situation but also guide you through it. They will help you overcome mental blocks and adopting healthy strategies and techniques to deal with your stressors.

It is popularly said being an entrepreneur is being like an athlete. Any athlete will tell you that rest is as important as training. To be successful in a competition it is equally important to be well-rested as it is to be well trained. Over functioning is not the way to succeed as the human nervous system is not designed to be working all the time.

Attending to your personal need is equally essential to keep you energetic and stimulated for your business as well as for your loved ones and the many lives you will touch with your business.

Work hard but also work smart, and smart working involves unwinding and recuperation.

So my fellow entrepreneurs REST TO BE YOUR BEST....

Article by Pooja Khera, Coach of Happiness, and Wellbeing (Certified by the University of Yale), Internationally certified Relationship Coach and Tarot Expert

Pooja Khera is a Coach of Happiness, and Wellbeing (Certified by the University of Yale), Internationally certified Relationship Coach and Tarot Expert. Today her clients come from every echelon of society, globally. They include Bollywood celebs, wellknown sports personalities, eminent artists from arts and culture and anyone else who is saddled with life's complexities. Pooja supplements their organic growth, steering them in their specific direction to lead a fulfilling life. Pooja primarily focuses on working with dynamic women empowering them to reconnect with their true self and gather back their lost confidence. She emphasizes on 'breaking-up' with negative patterns before they moved on to reboot and relive their 2.0 lives with a new consciousness. Pooja helps you draw up a joy-map of our future that caps all happiness where you blossom in the life of your dreams.