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Introduction

There is no doubt that technology has certainly made our lives easier, yet as a whole, it has created more stress. People have multi-tasked more now than ever before. We have fallen into instant gratification and barely unplug from it all, creating more demands on ourselves than ever.

As business owners, stress levels exceed over those who work for others. The difference is that you can choose what to do about it. This textbook will provide powerful strategies you can follow *today*.

Use this textbook with your workbook.

Make Every Day Your Best Day Ever

What does stress do to your body? Plenty!

It most certainly:

- Shortens your life
- Compromising your immune system
- Inflammation increases throughout your body
- Increases blood pressure
- Insomnia keeps you on edge
- Risk of heart attack and stroke increases

Prolonged stress will make your health, business and personal life derail.

We will focus on ways you can implement better work habits that are definitely do-able in your business.

The first thing is structuring how you manage time in your business. While it is inevitable that things will show up that may derail you temporarily, you can be proactive when things show up unexpectedly.

To figure out how your perfect day begins, you will ask yourself these questions:

1. What would your perfect work day look like?
2. What would you do?
3. Who would you spend more time with?
4. Where would you be working?
5. What three things could you BEGIN doing today that may bring you closer to living your ideal day in your business?
6. What three things could you STOP doing today that may bring you closer to living your ideal day in your business?
7. What is the one thing you need to have a fulfilling morning?
8. What is the one thing you need to have a restful evening?
9. What do you want to be known for in the world; what is a daily action you can take today that supports that goal?

These are very simple questions, yet if you choose to put them into action, they CAN change your life. See numbers 5 and 6 ~ put serious thought into the responses and take action sooner than later.

Let's go beyond the ideal day and construct your ideal week.

Consider the responses to these questions:

1. What is your favorite day of the week? Why?
2. What is your least favorite day of the week? Why?
3. What do you hate doing on Mondays that could be moved to another day of the week?
4. What is your energy level on Fridays? How can that be utilized?
5. How many days a week are you working? How many days do you WANT to work?
6. What activity during the week do you wish you could get rid of?
7. What activity during the week you really enjoy? What do you wish you could do more?
8. What three things can you BEGIN doing more of during the week?
9. What three things can you STOP doing during the week?

As you ask yourself these questions, put serious consideration to them. All or nothing thinking consists of making blanket responses and tends to not consider alternatives or adjustments. What worked before may not work

today so keep in mind it is important that you are mentally able to be flexible.

That mindset comes at a price. You are putting your health at risk.

Here are a couple of responses you could believe. Instead of saying "I have no choice but to work six days a week – the mortgage has to be paid" into "I'm going to raise my prices so that I can cut back to five days a week". Or "I'm going to repurpose all worksheets and checklists I've already created for clients into well-branded packages and start adding passive income to my coaching business". Or "I'm going to create a course so that MORE people can benefit from my coaching in a DIY format. That way, I can coach four days a week and let the recurring income from my courses, paid workshops or mastermind groups pad my income."

When you shift from solution-oriented instead of problem-oriented, you will look for solutions instead of drowning in stress. Every choice you make are yours. Make one decision and change at a time. You will be amazed of how one simple tweak can make a huge difference in your quality of life.

Best Ways to Stay Focused (and Avoid Client Drama)

Solution-oriented relies on gaining clarity and focus. Self-awareness and assessing your business honestly is key to getting the desired results. If you only 'think' about making changes, yet you do not take action, your situation will never change.

Create new habits and begin implementing them sooner than later. Take specific action.

Below are proven ways to stay focused.

Track Your Time

For hourly or project-based billing (by the way, you should use flat rates over trading hours for dollars), it is imperative that you are accurately aware of how much time you spend performing tasks and projects.

There are a couple of benefits knowing how you are spending your time.

- You will know moving forward how much time you take doing any task or project and can bill clients better, meaning you will not under charge.
- You gain clarity of the 'real time' it takes to do a task or project. Most people tend to think that things take less time than it actually does, so burnout shows up when we take more on than we want. Next thing you know, your schedule is jammed with an endless list of things you have to get done.

Set and Stick to Office Hours

Setting boundaries are vital in order to control potential stressful situations. Let your clients know that your workday ends at 6pm (or whatever you choose) and that you don't work weekends.

Enforce this by not responding to phone calls and emails made outside of your office hours.

Your goal is to be consistent and honor the parameters you place on clients and yourself.

Thursday Reviews

Constantly spinning your wheels to keep up with your workload shows that you need to make some adjustments.

Blocking off time on Thursday afternoons to review what you have coming in the next week will help you maintain control over your business.

Plan to be Early

If you have a deadline on the 15th, intend to have it complete on the 12th. This way, if something does come up unexpectedly, you will have a build in buffer.

Before stress kicks in, you have allowed for last minute emergencies or problems to still make the client deadline.

Minimize Distractions

Your environment should be designed with efficiency in mind. To stay focused, consider what you need in order to minimize distractions.

This could be an office away from your home, turning off notifications for blocks of time or unplugging from social media when you are working on a deadline. You can block off time on your calendar for the projects you know you need a great bit of time to complete.

People will test your limits and boundaries. Stay firm! Don't try to explain your new systems. You owe no explanations. Simply present your new policies and stand strong. If you make exceptions, the next thing you know the client is dictating your schedule and you risk submitting to stress.

Present your new schedule and be prepared for resistance.

For example, if you are moving towards no longer working evenings, a client may respond with "But I work during the day. I have to stay on evenings with you."

Three potential responses could be:

- "I'm no longer offering evenings: However, for clients who can't come during weekdays, I do have limited spots open for Saturday morning. Would you like me to book you in at ten a.m. next Saturday?"

Or if you don't want to go that route, you could say:

- "I can make an exception in your case, but I will have to charge you forty dollars more per hour for evening appointments."

Or you can be really firm and say:

- “That’s no longer an option with me, but I’d be happy to refer you to a business coach who does work evenings.”

You must stand on what you have done to do. If you cave in and say, “Since you are special, I can make an exception for you.” Avoid caving in at all cost! Every client is special and so are you.

When you determine how you will handle resistance ahead of time and stick by your decision, you honor yourself.

Develop Good Work Habits

Establishing good work habits is building your business by creating you schedule that works for you. Schedule all of your time – personal time, client time, self-care – everything.

Properly done, a schedule will give you control over your business and life.

- Creates more free time
- Promotes clarity and focus
- Cuts down on exhaustion, stress and confusion
- Promotes productivity
- Helps you develop good habits and break the bad ones
- Promotes goal-setting success
- Creates structure and framework for your life

You will be more productive when planning what needs to be done in advance. New habits will encourage development of more good habits. You will prioritize everything better, increase self-respect, self-worth and decrease stress since you have chosen to make it happen.

You will avoid scrambling around because a project deadline is rapidly approaching, and you forget to put it on your schedule. You are in control. Image removing stress before it happens.

The more you honor yourself and schedule, everything else in your business will run smoother.

Habits to develop that will help you build a strong schedule – one that keeps you on target:

Use an electronic calendar for every task, not just appointments.

An example of documenting every task is knowing you have a blog post to write. Block off a couple of hours on your calendar to account for that time needed to write. You should begin developing those tasks on a calendar immediately.

- Using color coding to see at a glance what is coming up. (For example, blue is for calls, red for out of office obligations, orange for clients, and so on)
- When a task is added to your list, block off the time needed on your calendar
- Reminder emails and notifications can help you stay on track by reminding you of important details.
- If you have a meeting off-site, add the travel time both ways on your calendar.

You need to document everything that requires time. Soon, it will become second nature to you.

Use the same calendar for business and personal.

If you do not use the same calendar, you run the risk of double booking yourself. Color coding really helps in this scenario.

Staying busy without documentation allows stress and chaos to take charge. Self-care is vital to include on your calendar. Make these official and block them off now. This can include coffee breaks, yoga, lunch with friends, etc.

Check your work-life balance.

Are you getting enough sleep and personal time each week? Do you spend more time on the phone than you can afford? What are the consequences for not allotting your time on a calendar?

Listen, developing your schedule for efficiency as well as helping you stress less will take time and some tweaking along the way to your ideal schedule.

For the first two weeks of implementing these guidelines, but it can be done, and the payoff is huge for you.

You must be thoroughly honest with yourself in order to reap the rewards of having a more balanced, less stressful business.

Track your time completely in the beginning, but the reward is priceless. The reason you are doing this is for YOU. Your ideal schedule versus a more realistic one may require some additional attention. You may need to outsource some tasks in your business in order to free up time.

As noted previously, you may be spending far more time than you realize on different things. Social media is a perfect example of that. If you think you are only looking at Facebook for 10 minutes per day, but in performing your real-time assessment it shows you are spending 90 minutes on social media, you know where you are procrastinating. Self-sabotage is a huge, silent stress factor.

Track your personal time too. This can help you from sliding back into old habits. An example is, did you resolve to eat breakfast away from your office each day? Did you stop doing this after a couple of days...not only did you drop your new habit to return to an old, unhealthy one?

If so, hit 'reset' and begin again. You may find that something is not working out. Figure out why and look for alternative solutions.

Biggest Myth About Saying No to Clients

Think about this when you have to say 'No' to a client: The overall more accommodating you are, the less a client values you and will continue to expect more from you.

Here are some scenarios you may need to get comfortable saying "NO" to:

- **Urgent Requests:** While many business owners feel they should not turn down ANY work, we need to teach people how to treat us. If you get a call or email at 11am that they need something from you by 4pm and you say 'yes', you have set a precedent and a step backward. Say no and hold firm.

A fellow business owner had a habit of telling people projects would take three times as long as she knew it would take – partly because she knew that unexpected hitches could occur. This gave her plenty of lead time which meant stressing over a deadline was no longer an issue.

On the flip side of that, whenever the project was completed earlier, she continued to present the project on the deadline date, not before. Why? She taught them to expect the completed project on the deadline day and not before.

- **Value Your Time:** Saying no may mean by walking away from money, but it also meant valuing your time. Even if you have room on your schedule for a rush project, it's still ok to say no if taking it will mean getting stressed out, frantic and overwhelmed. If it is damaging to your health, it is not worth taking it.

There are ways to say no in a way that is comfortable to you and less disappointing to your client. One of the best and proven ways to add monetary value on outrageous or inconvenient requests. As in, "Yes, I will work evenings, but I have to charge you double for an evening session." Or "Yes, I can do an overnight rush job. I will need payment up front and there is a premium charge for rush service."

Of course, do not state these things if you are not prepared to take the job.

- Give your client an alternative is an effective strategy. An example is, "I am not evaluable on Saturdays, but I can fit your <date>."
- Use Positive Language to reframe your mindset and watch out for overkill, if saying 'no' is new to you. Think positive words and phrases.
- Dark side negative reaction these are words that trigger clients' reaction: can't, won't, never. Get a better reaction simply as saying "I spend time with my family on weekends" or "We don't work weekends" instead of "I never work weekends."
- Instead of saying "I'm not available on Saturdays," try saying, "My hours are ten to six, Monday through Friday."
- Write it down – if you prefer to take the position of saying 'no', have it clearly defined on your website and other online platforms as well as your client intake process.
- People tend to recognize things official when it is written.

Consider your client's expectation. Are they realistic? Or do they center around entitlement? Is she a client you can afford to lose?

Create your own script, checklist or cheat sheet prepared for dealing with unreasonable requests or client objectives.

Remember, any client becomes difficult and unpleasant over a denial is most likely a stressful client that you don't want to keep anyway.

Reason You shouldn't Stay Glued to Your Laptop

Every person is different. Some like doing 12 hours a day for four days a week instead of 8 hours a day for five days a week. Spending too much time on your laptop is unhealthy.

Why?

- You lose creativity and productivity. Notice how you begin to feel on day 3 of working 10 -12-hour days. Most likely you are fuzzy and not producing quality work.
- Force yourself to work long days will increase stress. When stress hormones like cortisol build up in your system, there are negative effects on your health. Go outside into fresh air and sunshine helps you repair damage. Taking a full day off reaps a huge impact.
- Too much laptop time results in losing physical conditioning. You risk developing varicose veins, poor digestion, lack of muscle tone, digestive difficulties and gaining weight. (Your eyesight can suffer also).
- You lose touch with life. You cannot live in the moment when you are living mostly in the virtual world. Life online is a big illusion.

Online interactions are different than interactions in the real world. We miss being around other people, facial expressions, touch, the ability to interact in groups, walking outside and more.

It has been proven that too much time online can affect sleep patterns, causing insomnia, depression and stress. This is observed among men and women.

Plan a technology free day. No computer, laptop, tablet or smart phones. We are multitasking and interacting so much online that we can lose site of the very important friendships and reconnect with the outside world. Schedule something fun. Set up a series of small goals leading up to something you love to do.

How Outsourcing will Preserve Your Sanity

One way to take control over your workload is to outsource some of your day to day tasks. Notice what tasks creates stress and consider outsourcing those as well. A Virtual Assistant can handle many of the daily operations.

When you hire an experienced contractor to support you, you get to do the things you enjoy doing. This will reduce stress and make you happier while keeping your business succeeding.

You can best outsource tasks into your budget when you determine:

- Identify ahead of time the most important task or activity to outsource and begin with one particular task.
- Determine a dollar amount you can afford right now.
- Calculate what your own time is worth – how much you have the potential of earning while the low or no money tasks are managed by someone else.

Outsource contractors are entrepreneur like you! They run their own businesses, set their own rates and hours...and they may outsource too.

When outsourcing, make sure you are hiring specialists for the tasks they are hired to do. Other benefits include bringing in people who have done work with other entrepreneurs and experimented with different workflows. They may see easier ways to improve your strategies or processes that you may have never considered before.

Some things to consider as you think about outsourcing:

- Determine what tasks you need handled
- Set your budget
- Look for a specialist
- Check all references
- Set a trial basis

Before committing yourself right away, take time to review the budget and the expectations that will be met. When you get to the point of not having to do everything, your business can grow. Freelance support helps you gain time and room in your schedule to scale and build.

The Single Best Way to Destress

The most effective tips for destressing may be the hardest:

- Limit communication and social media time at all times (not just during a workday)
- Turn off all notifications. They distract you while you work and clutter your family/relaxation time.
- Remove apps from your phone that pull your attention away from important matters.
- Consider an email cut off time so your mind shifts from work mode when you should be relaxing.
- Never deal with work communications in bed, on the weekend or on vacation.
- Create an autoresponder telling people you are offline to reinforce your boundaries.
- Use client contracts to specifically lay out your hours and conditions – and stick to them!

The best way to destress?

Take action and take control.

Understand: It is not just your business at stake – perhaps your health and life itself may be compromised. Honor yourself, your health and well-being. Put these suggestions into practice today.

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★ **INSIDERS CLUB** ★

Build your team and get all the business training and tools you need now!

MyNAMS Insiders Club is more than a membership! It's a mastermind for serious business people who want to have fun and build the business of their dreams with the support of a like-minded community.

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