

INSPIRE

On Leadership

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Time for some extreme self care

Work life is stressful, to-do lists are overwhelming, family commitments are demanding, and burnout is real.

I've worked with 1000's of leaders over the years, and while stress has been an ever-present challenge in the lives of most leaders, something feels different today. It's as if the whirlwind has intensified. Daily, I hear stories of fatigue and overwhelmedness.

I have spent more and more time talking with leaders about extreme self-care. It is important that each of you show up at work as your very best self. It is a responsibility, one that is too often left to chance. I encourage you to incorporate extreme self-care into your life.

Self-care is not about massages, manicures and yoga. While these can be part of your self-care routine, self-care is about prioritizing yourself in the midst of too many demands. It is about getting a handle of your exhaustion. Below are some ideas to get you started:

- > **Commit to seven or eight hours of sleep each night.** What is keeping you from going to bed earlier than you do? Is it unavoidable commitments or is it discretionary channel surfing. Early to bed, early to rise.
- > **Drink water.** To get off to a great start, when you go to bed, put a glass of water on your night

stand. When you wake up, start your day off with eight ounces of water.

- > **Exercise.** People who are most consistent with their workouts are those who work out in the morning. Your workout does not have to be an hour. It can be 15 - 30 minutes. And, the number of apps available to support an efficient at-home workout increases by the day.
- > **Join the 5:00 am club.** Do you see how many things are tied to getting to bed early? Here is another one. Wake up early enough to have your own time. During this time, you can read a chapter of a book, capture a few thoughts in a journal, spend some time meditating or gather your thoughts for the day.
- > **Establish boundaries.** I've seen it too many times. People prioritize work over family and wellbeing. The hours are extreme. We say yes to deadlines and no to ourselves. While I'm not advising that you become irresponsible in meeting the needs of your employer, I am advising that you are conscious about the manner in which your work schedule swallows you up.

This list is a fraction of what you can consider. One final tip: As you think about what you can incorporate into your day, you may need to create a list of 'stop-doing' activities to make room for the good stuff.

Aleta Norris provides an ongoing column on developing better leadership skills. She is a leadership expert and Principal at Living as a Leader LLC.

