

Manage your Mind and Body for a Better Career

Rita's Career Corner ...With Rita B. Allen

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We have all heard how important it is to take care of ourselves both physically and mentally in order to live a long and happy life, correct? Do we always make the correlation to a successful and fulfilling career? Taking care of ourselves is not an option... it truly is a requirement and prerequisite for a successful and fulfilling career.

Happiness and positivity play a daily role in our personal and professional decisions and outcomes. I believe it is a choice to be happy and that we are each responsible for our own happiness. We live in a world of constant change, uncertainty and opportunity. How we choose to frame our outlook, show up every day, engage with others and put forth energy in our work and relationships is solely our responsibility and no one else's.

How we nourish our mind has tremendous impact on our bodies as well. It would be foolish to think we can eliminate stress in our lives, however, we can manage it rather than allowing it to manage us. Finding that inner peace is certainly not easy and it is not only possible, but vital to our health, wellness and career success. Create this balance for yourself with the following tips:

Ten Tips for Managing your Mind and Body

1) ***Staying positive*** is the key to empower ourselves to lead a happy, productive and satisfying career regardless of our challenges – always view the cup as half full and look for the positive in every situation and focus on the things that are important. Surround yourself with positive influences and make a choice to stay positive even when we have to interact with people or situations that are negative. Staying positive will energize us, keep us focused on the right things that are most important, bring out our creativity and allow us to see the big picture.

2) ***Manage our emotions*** by maintaining perspective, being aware of our triggers in order to help us gain positive control even in the most difficult of situations. Take over the negative self talk that can derail us from doing our best work, taking some risks and allowing us to push in new ways. Replace it with positive, uplifting and inspiring thoughts and behaviors. Reach out to trusted colleagues, friends, confidants and advisors for support and guidance as needed.

3) **Keep a journal** to identify passions as well as uncover stressors – know what makes us tick in order to manage our thoughts and behaviors more effectively. Awareness can be quite enlightening and it can help us to realize our passions as well as to manage stress more effectively acknowledging patterns we may have created. Once we can identify the source of our stress as well as the things that bring us happiness and passion, we can determine the best ways to proactively manage the stressors and seek out opportunities to fill our passions.

4) **Accept the fact that we cannot change or control other people or situations, only how we react to them.** Our happiness and inner peace is within our control. We make choices every day that determine how we deal with everything in our lives. We have no business trying to change others and need to realize when situations are beyond our control. Rather than wasting energy and time trying to change either, we need to step back and assess the best way to manage our reactions appropriately and effectively.

5) **Practice effective time management** daily, weekly, monthly consistently throughout the year. Finding focus can be the differentiator between effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Time management is often a career derailer for many people holding them back from achieving their best results. It requires discipline and individual accountability as well as the ability to say “no” or “not now” when appropriate. Make adjustments on a daily basis to ensure focus is on the right things at the right time. Get organized and stay organized!

6) **Eat healthy** and make wise choices with our selection of food, beverage and portions. In a world of multi-tasking, 24/7 access, technology overload and high pressure, we are constantly running at an overwhelming pace. Take the time to know your body and what it needs to be properly nourished and recharged. Create many healthy options and make healthy choices. It can make all the difference between being ready and able to manage the first 5 tips!

7) **Be active** and get plenty of exercise. Find ways to be active that appeal to you. Take a dance class, go to the gym, ride your bike, go hiking or incorporate a 10 minute walk into your daily routine. This greatly impacts our stress level and our ability to manage demands that are placed upon us each and every day. Keeping active clears our head, relaxes our mind and body. The result is it helps us to make good life and career choices as well as to manage our time and outlook more effectively. It gives us more energy and drive to achieve better results.

8) **Get enough sleep** to be crisp, aware and alive. Everyone is different requiring varying hours of sleep to be able to function effectively. Know what your level of need is and do not allow yourself to not get what you need. When we have especially demanding weeks, it’s crucial we plan our schedule and sleep accordingly. When we do not allow ourselves to get the required hours of sleep, it will negatively impact our productivity, performance and engagement.

9) **Give back** and help others within your profession and/or community. Volunteering, serving on committees and boards, mentoring others, making a difference in a young person’s life, helping someone who is struggling in their job, and/or a host of other ways you can give back and be of service within your community or profession can be rewarding in a way that truly empowers and inspires you like nothing else. Be generous with your time and talents.

10) **Trust yourself** and pay attention to your instincts. Trust your judgment, your capabilities, your instincts and your dreams. Don’t short-change yourself or minimize your talents, accomplishments and decisions. Take care of yourself emotionally. Our well being and

our balance comes from inside first and if we know our emotional self at the core, that truly makes all the difference in how we are able to be present and fulfilled! Find your passion and allow yourself to experience the things that make you whole both professionally and personally!

Ask Rita...

Question: My to-do list keeps growing and my calendar is booked solid for weeks. I am pulled in many different directions at work with competing deadlines and priorities. I know I have to be more proactive in managing my career but how do I do that when I can't even seem to manage my current workload. I feel so overwhelmed and am always so exhausted. Where do I begin and how do I regain some sense of stability?

Answer: We all have long lists of things we need to accomplish and even when we have great plans to work through our lists, something unexpected comes up that pulls us away and/or distracts us. The reality is that everything on that list does not need to be done today. Prioritize what needs your full attention today, differentiate the big items from the smaller items to determine how much time you need to dedicate to each item on a daily basis. Set realistic expectations for yourself – don't expect to cross everything off that list. It is liberating to acknowledge that life is busy and will always be busy! Expect change every day and in fact, embrace change to help you manage demands and shift priorities more easily and effectively. Avoid being reactive, be sure to be proactive and allow time for you – some personal time to process, reflect and plan your career. Think about your goals and write them down including how you will achieve them. Most importantly, however, begin from a place of inner balance. Eat healthy, be active and get enough sleep. When we don't do all of these things, it greatly impacts our stress level. On the flip side, when we do these things well, it can eliminate stress in our lives because we are much more equipped to think clearly, make good choices and manage our time and outlook more effectively.

Send your questions to: [Rita B. Allen](mailto:rita@ritaballenassociates.com)

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