

DEALING WITH STRESS – Circle of everyday life

1) NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

Circle of everyday life

The biggest problem as an entrepreneur is usually not to come up with ideas or take action, one of the reasons why you are an entrepreneur is because you get things done. So, this exercise will help you to put realistic expectations on yourself to ease the potential stress that can appear when your expectations not are align with reality.

2) OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOL

- Define goals for your entrepreneurial journey
- Set a structure of a normal day and try to identify what you would like to change
- Set realistic expectations on yourself

3) CONNECTION OF THE TOOL WITH THE ENEMY

The stress that entrepreneurs generate in their work will affect other spheres of their lives. So being able to handle stress will improve your overall wellbeing.

Within the work context, stress can be understood as "harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when a job's requirements do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, 2014). These physical or emotional responses always depend on a changing environment and the individual's own subjective experience, that's why it is important to set a structure of what is expected, what is realistic and identify what you actually can change.

In the theory part we've talked about role ambiguity, the lack of information and changing circumstances that you can't control (economic, health, financial, or security). The kind of crisis that we all have experienced with the Covid-10 pandemic. Role conflict, not knowing what to delegate if you can delegate to anyone, as an entrepreneur you need to be able to handle a lot of different tasks which can trigger stress since you always can do more which leads to role overload, the risk of wanting to control everything and therefore not delegating tasks.

While in a crisis and while feeling stressed, the easiest thing to do is panic and take action without thinking it through. Studies indicates that complex decisions made under stressful conditions have a tendency to be much more irrational and likely have a negative impact on your business.

If you want to read more about decision-making read this.

(1) (PDF) *Decision-Making under Stress and Its Implications for Managerial Decision-Making: A Review of Literature*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323261783_Dcision-Making_under_Stress_and_Its_Implications_for_Managerial_Decision-Making_A_Review_of_Literature [accessed Mar 25 2021].

This tool will go through steps on how to prevent stress in your role as an entrepreneur, practice on how you



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can get an overview and start building a sustainable structure for you as an entrepreneur.

4) RESOURCES & MATERIALS

(Explain the materials and resources that are needed to develop the tool)

Paper and pen.



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5) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TOOL

Step 1, 15 minutes Free Flow Writing

Step 2, 30 minutes Goals/Obstacles

Step 3, 30 min Circle of everyday life

Step 4, 30 min Modified Circle of everyday life

1. Free Flow Writing

One way to get started in thinking and formulating goals is to use a technique called Free Flow Writing. Flow writing is a good exercise for several reasons:

- It inspires and can lead to good ideas.
- It creates a feeling of freedom and teaches one to "let go".
- It is relaxing and nice to be able to write off.
- It can help with "writing cramps" (you know, when the paper is blank and you can't get a word out).

Do this: Take paper and pen, or sit in front of the computer, set an alarm or timer in 10 minutes and just type and start writing and don't stop, just let the text flow, don't lift your pen or stop typing, write, write, write. You can start just writing about what is important to you, what do you want to do, what feels important... Do not think, just let the words flow. The sentences do not have to be logical or correct (they should not be at all), and you do not even have to put an end to it. Avoid bullet pointing, write sentences. If you get stuck, you just write the last word over and over again. When your mind gets in a flowing state, ideas come without you noticing them. Do not end writing until the alarm sounds.

After the 10 minutes take a break and then read what you have written, underline what feels interesting and relevant. The underlined words / sentences are often a good basis for finding your goals.

2. Write down goals for your entrepreneurial journey

As an entrepreneur goals and a clear vision is important for your entrepreneurial journey; you probably know this already. But to make it clear answer the questions below,

Goals

What do you want to achieve the next 3 months?

6 months?

After one year?

Potential obstacles

What kind of challenges can you identified?

3 months?

6 months?



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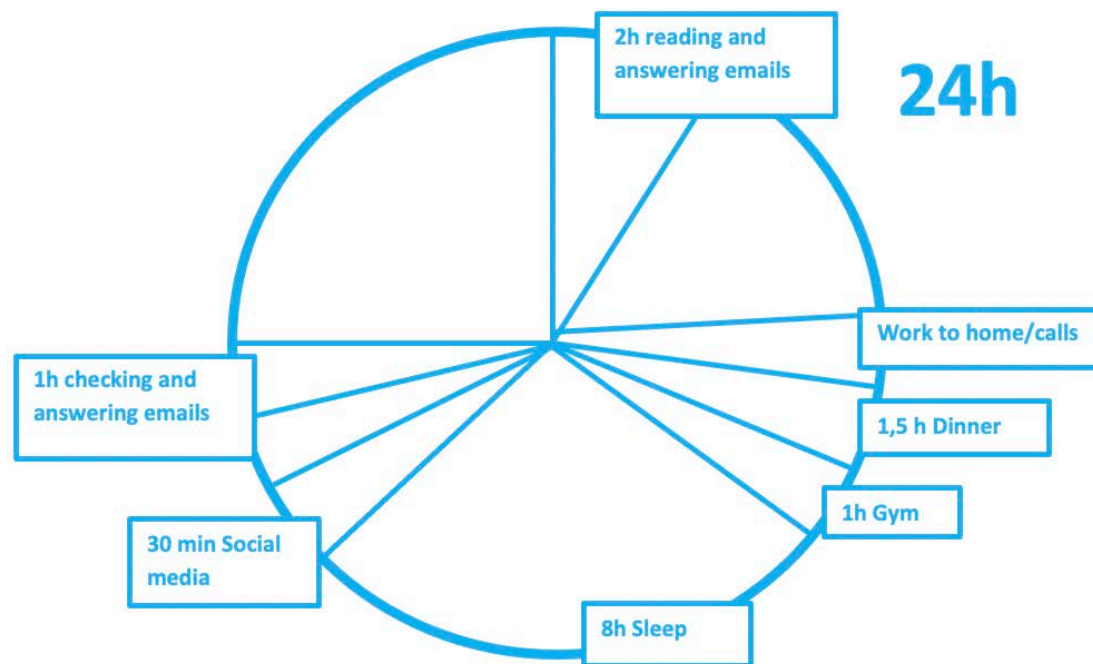
Year?

What would happen if you don't manage to achieve the goals you have set up?

3. Set realistic expectations

The biggest problem as an entrepreneur is usually not to come up with ideas or take action, one of the reasons why you are an entrepreneur is because you get things done. So, this exercise will help you to put realistic expectations on yourself.

Try to break down all of the activities you do during a day. Use paper and pen and draw a circle and then cut different pieces, size depending on how much time you spend on it. Be honest with yourself, remember this is just for yourself. See example.



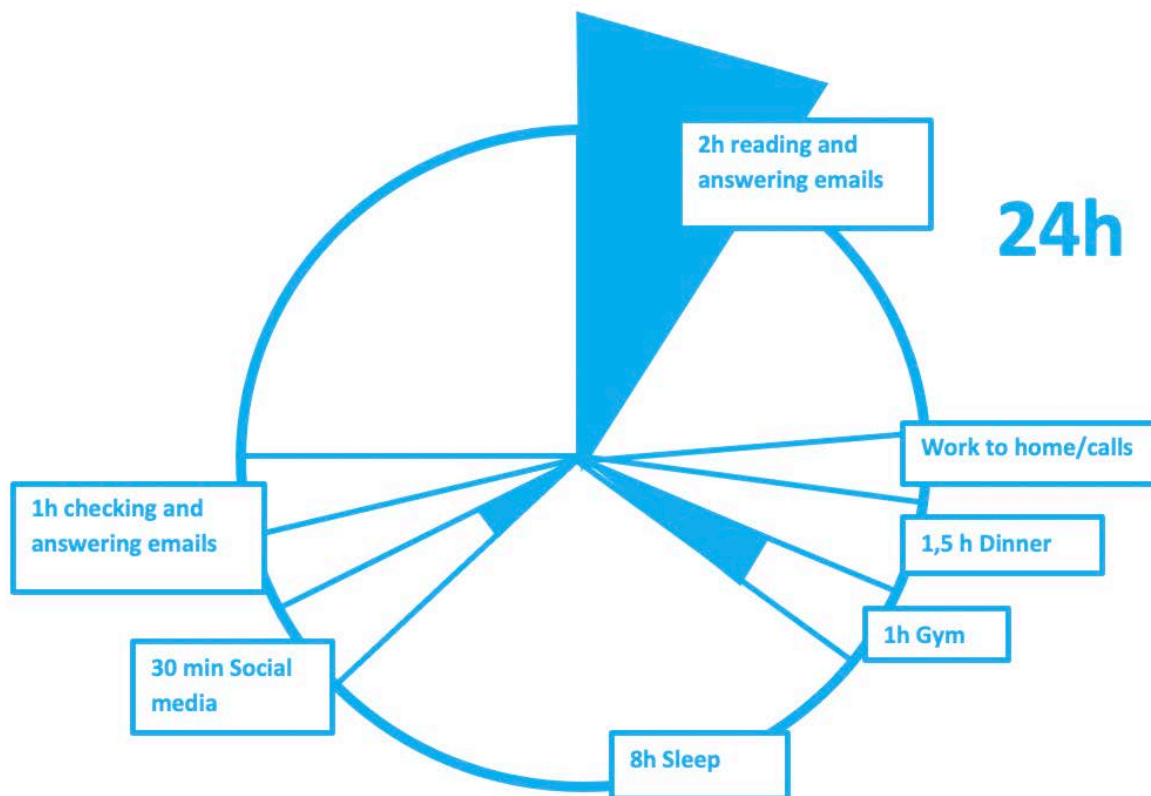
4. How much time do you spend in comparison with what you wish you spent?

Next step is to fill in the different slices with color depending on how much time you wish you spent, to be sustainable and for your wellbeing.



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For example, I spend 3 hours every day on answering emails, I wish I could spend less time on it on the afternoon. So, I fill in the triangle so that it is above the circle. On the other hand, if I'm being honest with myself, I spend less time at the gym, some weeks I even skip it even though I know I feel so much better if I spend an hour every day. So, I fill in half of the slice since I wish to spend more time at the gym. See example below.



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This exercise is for you to get a perspective on what you do, you can break down your activities to the smallest tasks, you decide. When you get an overview, it is easier to be realistic with what you can do during a day, but it also makes it clear that as an entrepreneur you will still need friends, family, partner, and time for reflection/do nothing and exercise to stay healthy. Unhealthy stress usually starts with expectations that doesn't match the reality.

Ask yourself

Can you identify anything that you want to change?

Do your expectations (the goals you set in the first exercise) align with how much time you spend?

What takes a lot of time at work that might not give as much?

Do I sleep enough?

Are you generally happy?

It is possible to have big dreams and still be realistic with your time. And remember you can't compare the result with anyone else since your needs might be very different from another person's needs.

6) WHAT TO LEARN



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This exercise will help you get an overview of what you actually spend time on. It is often very useful to make you realize what you actually can change. When stressed it is easy to get stuck in the feeling of “everything is just overwhelming and important”, to realize that you need to spend less time in meetings or that you need to sleep one more extra hour is key to create a healthy structure for your life that is also sustainable.

