



## **Anxiety Rich and Time Poor: 5 Tips to Regain Balance**

I have had the honor to coach well over 100 senior executives, each of whom works hard, tries to do what's right, makes very difficult decisions daily, and exerts enormous amounts of energy. But if there's another constant I've noticed—nearly every executive I have worked with has been anxiety rich and time poor.

According to Stress.org, “job stress is far and away the major source of stress for American adults,” and in addition to costing U.S. employers over \$300 billion a year, it's also costing many executives their health, sleep, and mental well-being. Most leaders today are filled with anxiety to the point of exhaustion and worry—typically brought about by time pressures, financial pressures, and/or the stress of the unknown. Additionally, the demand on these executives' time has never been higher. There are work hours, after-work requirements, and community and philanthropic efforts, not to mention family obligations with marriages, children, and aging parents, all of which contribute to heightened stress and anxiety levels.

The good news is, this seemingly endless cycle can be broken. Every now and again, I meet with an executive who has a completely different approach to their day—an attitude that's relaxed; a temperament that's calm; a promptness that's exact. Everything around him or her seems to have simply slowed down, and yet, everything is still getting done.

If you're feeling anxiety rich and time poor, here are 5 tips I have learned that can help you recalibrate and regain balance in your life:

### **Don't wait for an emergency to open your eyes.**

The first step to regaining balance is to become aware of how you are prioritizing your time. Too often, people spend the majority of their time focused on things that don't really matter, and in many cases, it takes a physical, family, or other emergency to open their eyes to the fact that their priorities have been long misaligned. Don't wait until your marriage is falling apart, your children are suffering, or you have a cardiac issue to gain

perspective of what's truly important. If refocusing your time and efforts will help you achieve a more fulfilling life, today is the perfect day to start.

### **Keep perspective of your role as a leader vs. a tactician.**

As a leader, your greatest value is as a strategist, a visionary, and a communicator. You aren't getting paid to spend your whole day in the weeds doing tactical work, and sometimes you don't even need to be the one making decisions. While it's important that you continually develop yourself, it's also critical that you develop your team and let them do more. Delegate not only responsibilities, but authority. Relinquish control where appropriate, back the decisions of your team, and look at mistakes as learning opportunities for next time.

### **Vision success as having more time rather than working harder.**

It's easy to fall into the trap of measuring your success by how hard you work, and many leaders feel that they are demonstrating strong commitments to their organizations by putting in 70-hour work weeks and opting out of vacation days. However, the ability to cleanly break away and become clear of thought not only helps recharge leaders, but is often a catalyst for breakthrough ideas as well. Therefore, to more accurately measure your success, consider not how many hours you are working, but how much time you can confidently be away from the office, knowing the strong leaders you've developed beneath you can be trusted to keep operations running smoothly.

### **Check out your email less, and check in with family more.**

The line between work and home is becoming increasingly blurred, and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 22% of employees do some or all of their work at home. While work-from-home flexibility can be convenient, it also makes it harder for some executives to distinguish between work time and family time. In these cases, it's important to build physical or time-based boundaries (working only from an at-home office, or setting a cut off time each evening, as examples) to ensure you're not just physically at home, but truly present with your family.

### **Decide what's important, and schedule it.**

According to a White House report, 46% of working Americans said their job demands interfered with their family life "sometimes or often", and that doesn't even take into account the toll work takes on friendships, exercise, hobbies, community service commitments, etc. To ensure that you focus your time where you want it, use a calendar system to prioritize. Schedule not just work, but anything you value most—family time, exercise, phone calls with friends, or volunteer work. As explained in *Forbes*, "If you want to have an amazing life, you have to be intentional about it. Your calendar is the plan for your time. And time equals life."

***So what does this all mean?***

While many executives feel that working more demonstrates dedication or increases output, the truth is that working less can actually improve productivity and prevent burn out. As *Forbes* explains, “For most white-collar workers today, our productivity and effectiveness is tied to *the speed of our thinking*. Without enough rest, our thinking slows down considerably.” If you feel like you are anxiety rich and time poor, it may be time to slow down, reflect on your core values, and determine what true success looks like for you. Only when you take the time to identify and articulate your vision can you—and others—understand what is needed to achieve it.

***Have you been feeling high on stress, but short on time recently? At Robinson Resource Group, our certified coaching professionals help leaders to achieve a better work life balance through personalized coaching sessions tailored to their unique needs. To learn more, give us a call today at 708.738.5040, or visit our website at [RRGExec.com](http://RRGExec.com)***