

MODULE VI / SECTION 2

FINAL NOTES FOR COACHES

SECTION 2

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|| PERSONAL ATTENTION OVERVIEW

You are an entrepreneur or perhaps you work for an employer. Either way, you must take care of yourself in the stressful, fast-paced world in which you live. Demands upon you each day are high!

An article in *Fortune* magazine (10/02) stated, "Stress in the workplace is skyrocketing." And a study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health indicated that 50% of Americans view job stress as a major problem in their lives.

Cheryl Richardson, author of Take Time for Your Life, advocates extreme self-care. Chapters in her book include 'Get Your Priorities Straight', 'Spiritual Well-being', 'What's Draining You', and 'Put Yourself at the Top of the List.' She recommends de-cluttering your life and work environment.

Thomas J. Leonard says in his book, The Portable Coach, "We should become irresistibly attractive to ourselves." He suggests we should acknowledge ourselves as valuable and follow-through on the personal attention that someone valuable deserves.

Personal attention includes finding time for you! Americans experience fast-paced, constantly moving lives. Some work 50, 70, or even 95 hours a week to ensure their employment and paycheck. Some just are workaholics and like to work many hours (or they don't know how to stop). Stress is seen as pressure, strain, anxiety, constant worry, nervous tension, and hassle. Experts note that many medical conditions evolve from stress, i.e., tension headaches, ulcers, burnout, depression, and breakdowns.

With the advent of the Internet, email, pagers, palm pilots, and cell phones, Americans are tied to their jobs. Sole proprietors, project managers, doctors, and senior executives are especially susceptible to being tied to their positions and clients to ensure high-quality customer service.

Career Coach clients who are stressed and wondering how to make better career choices for better fulfillment in the work place, as well as clients who experience layoff, will benefit from talking about their dilemmas. Career Coaches make wonderful sounding boards for stressed clients (assuming the client is not clinically depressed, in which case they may benefit from a referral to a counselor or medical doctor).

Clinical studies show that stressed workers move towards goal definition, take charge of their careers, and heal quicker if they speak about their problems and

issues. Career Coaches guide clients into discovering for themselves what type(s) of position(s) and company(s) will provide more fulfilling careers. With so much stress consuming work, we need to coach our clients to learn to relax so they can enjoy their jobs and also their family and personal lives.

Personal Attention includes finding time for yourself, looking for fun, eating right (decreasing refined sugar and caffeine), exercising and meditation, adequate rest, and even such things as lotions, massages, holidays, Egyptian cotton sheets, and other personal treats.

|| LEARN TO SAY “NO”

“Knowing when not to work hard is as important as knowing when to.”
–Harvey Mckay, notable entrepreneur and author

As you build your business, you will at times need to focus on special projects or niche clientele. For example, you may need to set aside a week or several days every year to periodically manage taxes, develop new marketing materials, create a seminar, or design résumés for publication. Additionally, if you find your business work overwhelming, you may need to consider hiring help or saying “No” to work and passing along the work as a referral.

It is easy to become overwhelmed at work. Multitask-oriented is a keyword seen on many résumés. Employers want to hire employees who can effectively juggle several projects simultaneously. But in reality, too many tasks send us scattering to catch up. You are busy as résumé writers and Career Coaches and your clients are busy as career search seekers. If you learn to say ‘no’, and manage your activities, you may find a sense of calmness in your careers. When you set boundaries, you work smarter.

Career Coaches Say No

- ❑ **Say no to clients outside of your area of expertise or comfort zone and build alliances to receive a referral fee.** Building alliances is effective when offering a full package of services to a client. Partnerships and alliances build strong businesses and provide opportunities to increase income.
- ❑ **Say no to wearing too many hats as an entrepreneur.** Determine your greatest strengths and recognize your weaknesses.
 - Have you determined your greatest strengths (using the exercises in the manual)?
 - What do you like to do best?
 - How many hours a week are you engaged in wearing other hats?
- ❑ **Say no to being disturbed.** If you work at home, you need to set boundaries so that family and friends do not disturb your work time. Also, you must be disciplined to work so that you do not allow distractions to pull you away from your desk...like the laundry or snacks in the kitchen.

Family and friends often assume that home office workers have plenty of spare time to chitchat or hang out. This misconception is also true of sole business owners. If you receive personal calls during the workday, start screening calls from your home phone and only respond to emergencies. Ask personal contacts to limit their phone calls during your workday and return personal calls during your lunch hour or in the evening. Also, schedule work hours (including time to market, write, interview, maintain books, speaking engagements, and specific projects) and personal hours, so you can enjoy lunch out or other personal activities now and then. Consider posting hours on your home office door for family members.

These suggestions hold true for those who work in offices or professional suites: if you have a client in your office, post a sign that reads, "Interview session in progress. Please do not disturb."

Career Seekers Say No

- ❑ **Say no to too many hours.** There are several questions that need to be answered before a candidate should accept employment with a new employer. One question is hours expected to work on a weekly basis: "How many hours am I expected to work in this new position?" Employment candidates need to be certain of work/time requirements before they sign on the dotted line. If the candidate is willing to work 40-50 hours per week and the employer expects 50-60 hours per week, the candidate needs to negotiate. Moreover, if the candidate was told the position will require 40-45 hours per week and within a few weeks on the new job, the new employee determines that the position actually requires 50-60 hours a week to get things done, the new employee needs to inform the boss early on that the job takes more than the expected 45 hours per week. He might phrase the questioning something like this: "Are you planning to hire another employee to help with the workload?" "Was the workload actually evaluated before I came on board?" "There are a number of unfinished projects left by the employee I replaced; which projects do you see as critical to finish? We can write a priority list and I can tackle each project in order of importance."
- ❑ **Say no to accepting others' work.** Very often employees are asked to take on projects delegated by colleagues. It may even be simple things like running an errand, dropping mail at the post office, checking a computer file, or conducting Internet research. However, a colleague with savvy delegation skills may take advantage of one who does not know how to say no. When an employee says "yes" to everyone's requests, he becomes overwhelmed and feels used, his work hours increase, or he falls behind on his own projects.

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- ❑ **Say no to work that does not satisfy.** Career seekers should be encouraged to find work that pleases them, which they generally enjoy and receive adequate pay for doing. Your clients should explore their strengths, gifts and talents, and accept employment that brings some measure of contentment and satisfaction.
 - ❑ **Say no to low salaries.** Even though the economy is tough and salaries have decreased in some industries – candidates do not need to sell themselves short. Candidates should negotiate for what they are worth, or say no to the position and move on to continuing a career search campaign.
 - ❑ **Say no to the first position offered – maybe.** Candidates often feel they need to accept the first position offered. They are fearful that they won't receive other offers or offers with comparable salary. They feel self-pressured into accepting the first offered position. However, they should feel comfortable with the hiring manager, the position description, the salary, the resources available to complete the job, and the company's services/products. They can say, "Thank you, but no thank you," to any position offered, if their requirements are not met with the offer.

Learning to say "no" can be liberating. We must all learn to control our workdays and work environments. We must prioritize and choose projects wisely and our clients should choose employment to meet their needs and bring career fulfillment.

|| LET A CLIENT GO

"The client is not always right" -Anonymous

Part of learning to say "no" includes firing clients. If you find yourself working with an unreasonable client, you have the right to (and should, to prevent stress) let the client go.

As a sole proprietor, you make the rules for your business – and you are the person-in-charge who also enforces the rules. Your company's Standard Operating Procedures may include guidelines for letting a client go.

When you let a client go, you need to make a decision: Do you retain any fees that were initially collected or do you refund the client all fees and send them on their way? That is your decision based on the individual situation. Often, a little money is not worth a client who causes undue stress to your practice.

In the event you work with a difficult client who refuses to accept your guidance or advice, remember to save copies of emails and make a notation in their file, i.e., "client made changes to résumé, against my best Career Coach guidance, see file page 14." And mark the date. This way, if a client re-contacts you and says your résumé is not working, you can ask to see what version they are circulating; the version you created or the version they revised. Or if they fail at interviews, you can remind them they missed three interview trainings session with you.

Reasons to "let a client go:"

- The client refuses to acknowledge the signed service agreement
- The client nitpicks a résumé to shreds and then does it again with no hope in end for a resolution (client says her husband's secretary's mother's water color group read it and said it was a bad résumé ... you know the type)
- Client fails to accomplish homework assignments
- Client treats you unprofessionally (yells, calls names, consistently misses appointments, uses foul language, etc.)

What reasons do you think you would want to let a client go?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

It is not easy to let a client go, but you can phrase it something like this:

“I am afraid that since you missed so many appointments, I need to fill your space with a client who will benefit from my services. I am canceling your contract and refunding \$xx. Best wishes for future career success!”

“I have marked in your file that you made many changes on your résumé that I do not recommend and are against my better guidance as a Career Coach. Consequently, I can no longer guarantee the effectiveness of the résumé or the career search campaign. I think you would be better served by allowing your spouse/colleague to assist you in finishing your résumé. I’ll be refunding you all but \$xx, which covers the hours I have already invested in your project.”

Write a script that makes you feel comfortable if you have to let a client go

|| MORE TIPS

“Effective executives do not start with their tasks. They start with their time. And they do not start out with planning. They start by finding out where their time actually goes. Then they attempt to manage their time and to cut back unproductive demands on their time. Finally they consolidate their “discretionary” time into the largest possible continuing units. Find out where your time goes by recording, managing, and consolidating your time.” -Peter F. Drucker

Personal Attention for the Career Seeker

Career seekers may benefit from understanding the concepts of personal attention and engaging in personal attention practices to reduce basic stress and anxiety. Here are some additional suggestions for career seekers that may help decrease their stress level and improve their overall confidence. And Career Coach clients who engage in basic personal attention activities will conduct a less stressful career search, leading to a more fulfilling career path:

- Eat healthy
- Exercise regularly (Get an exercise partner for accountability)
- Get at least seven hours of sleep daily (More is better)
- Organize the search process. Use logs to monitor résumé and networking letter circulation, interviews, and thank you letter responses
- Use logs to track job board passwords
- Keep a specific folder, in a specific place, to hold career search materials
- Keep your clean interview wardrobe in a separate place
- Stay accountable to your Career Coach... jot a few thoughts and notes at the end of each week for follow-up
- Check and return email and voice mail messages at appointed times...not sporadically...this will provide focus when responding to potential employers and recruiters
- Learn to say ‘no’
- Accept rejection letters/replies with a positive response
- Use calendars and schedules and stick to it
- Delegate tasks: ask a spouse or other family member to address envelopes or download position postings
- Take a class (Something fun)
- Schedule family time and don’t take a cell phone or palm pilot

Personal Attention for the Résumé Writer/Career Coach

- Hire your own coach (This is important – you deserve encouragement and success!)
- Keep a list of your short- and long- term goals on your desk
- Build alliances (Design a master support and accountability team and rely on them to boost your morale and encourage your efforts as you construct and maintain a thriving business)
- Enter and leave your office at appointed times (If you work at home)
- Put a sign on the door that says ‘open’ or ‘closed’ (Be disciplined)
- Organize your files. Schedule specific times to manage files, administration, and bookkeeping functions
- Schedule your assignments (even writing time) and family time (i.e., personal appointments, kid’s school activities, etc., to prevent conflict)
- Avoid burn-out and learn to say, “No.” (Turn off the phone ringer when you are writing; don’t write for or coach clients who you know will be a Pain in the Neck (PIN); determine your best ROI when accepting engagements or spending money for advertising)
- Maintain priorities...conduct a time management assessment of your work day/week and create a doable schedule (Writing, telephoning, email, coaching, marketing, business needs, and so forth – refer to your business plan)
- Use the e-list for advice and venting...don’t become isolated
- Answer email and phone calls at appointed times throughout the day
- Commit to only working xx hours per week
- Find time for yourself (Schedule a day off)
- Commit to a special project or activity and see it through (Join an organization and attend meetings, join the gym, start jogging, have weekly lunch with a friend, etc.)
- Leave the cell phone and laptop behind on trips (As hard as it sounds, try to relax and enjoy your trip – use your alliances and partnerships to manage your calls while you are away)
- Eat well and exercise regularly (Moderation, portion-control, exercise, and will-power)
- Conduct a Time Management Survey and redesign your schedule to maximize productivity
 - Maintain a journal and log your activities for two weeks. Log how much time you spend writing, when the phone rings, if you switch from writing to peeking at email, marketing, budgeting, advertising, speaking, posting résumés online, coaching sessions on the telephone, homework/prep work, Internet research, lunch, personal phone calls, and so forth.

At the completion, make a list of all activities you engaged in during the two weeks, and mark how long you engaged in any one activity, how often you changed activities, and determine a plan to better schedule your time.

- Then plan to manage your time around time zones (for calling long distance clients), writing, prep work, business management functions, and special projects. Schedule your time on your calendar in sessions. If you mark on your calendar that every Thursday from 1-2 pm, immediately after lunch, you will work on marketing efforts, then make it a standard appointment. And so on. You may want to consider using one whole or half day each week for writing and research activities, where you do not interact with clients.

- ❑ Enjoy chocolate (now and then; ensure the first ingredient is chocolate, not sugar)

Nineteenth-century naturalist Alexander von Humboldt said of cocoa: "Nature has nowhere concentrated such an abundance of the most valuable foods in such a limited space as the cocoa bean."

Chocolate is full of important and energy-giving substances: calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, iron, copper and vitamins A B1, B2, C, D, and E. It contains a small amount of theobromine, which has an invigorating effect. It provides energy, satisfies food cravings between meals, enhances concentration, and boosts stamina.

If you are well-rested and content, your family and clients will benefit. If you are happy, successful, organized, and confident, then others will benefit from your easy-going nature. You need to step back and take control of your life, career, personal activities, and priorities.