5 Ways To Avoid Burnout Working As A Hybrid-Entrepreneur

You can both work at a day job and start your own business by following these tips.

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If you’re someone who not only has a good job, decent benefits and a great salary that you just can’t fathom giving up but also has an entrepreneurial passion for something outside of your job, you’re not alone. When people embrace long-time passions or explore new ones, they often come to the crossroads of giving up the security of a 9-to-5 to explore their passion or tucking away their passions out of practicality. What if you didn’t have to choose?

There’s a group of individuals, which I call hybrid-entrepreneurs, who choose to exist between worlds benefitting from the security of a steady salary and healthcare package during the day while also working on their business aspirations at night. The hybrid-entrepreneur path is not an easy one. You essentially burn the candle at both ends, and although there are benefits to the lifestyle, namely security in income, you can burn out relatively quickly. Here are five ways to avoid burnout working as a hybrid-entrepreneur.

Create and adhere to a schedule

If you work an average 9-to-5 work schedule, it’s important to establish a routine around downtime. Personally, there are days I get out of work and want nothing more than to sink into the cushions of my couch for the rest of the night. Some people find time to exercise in the morning before work, while others make a beeline straight to the gym after they get out. After the gym you’ve still got to prepare dinner and eat, work on your business, possibly socialize and relax before going to bed and repeating the process the next day.

Creating a schedule will help you establish consistency while accounting for the unexpected, be that an emergency phone call from mom or grandma or a spontaneous happy hour gathering with friends. Schedules can vary from hourly (detailing what you’ll be doing each hour of the day) to daily (detailing which days you’ll work on your business and which you’ll leave free). It’s important to be just as diligent in planning your downtime activities that promote rest and relaxation as it is to plan for being productive.

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Establish boundaries between your day job and your business

Some employers will want you to dedicate all of your time and energy into corporate citizenship and might feel threatened by the knowledge that you have aspirations that exist outside of their organization, while others might embrace it. It’s important to know what your employer’s culture is around extracurricular activities, whether or not your projects could be considered a conflict of interest and what your employer’s policy is around disclosing your responsibility as an owner, board member or officer of another organization.

I've had both positive and negative experiences with disclosing and not disclosing my extracurricular projects in various organizations and have learned that in the establishment of my personal brand, it's almost impossible to keep these things from coming up. As I began to establish myself as a speaker and author, I decided to meet with the HR team at my day job so that there was no question around possible conflicts of interest. It's important not to use company time or resources for your outside projects, but it's equally important to establish boundaries so that you can work on your business after hours.

Establish discipline

You might develop a Bruce Wayne/Batman type of existence as a hybrid-entrepreneur (minus the crime-fighting). You'll need to be visible in the workplace and maybe even after hours for company events, then you'll swiftly return to your makeshift batcave to work on your business at night. To ensure you're not spending too much time on these events, you need to remain focused on your goals through discipline and creative scheduling. Learn to politely say no to invitations. Consistency is key to treating your business like a legitimate operation.

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Understand your "why"

Author Simon Sinek has made a name for himself focusing on the principle of understanding your "why." Working around the clock is not for the faint of heart. It requires sacrifice, discipline, learning how and when to say "no" and effectively juggling multiple priorities. If making money is the sole reason behind your ambitions as an entrepreneur, you'll crash and burn – doing harm to yourself, your business and possibly even your performance at your day job.

Understanding your why is what’s going to keep you going on less sleep, more stress and days, weeks or even months of no results. When your why, or purpose, is aligned to what you do, the fuel you run on is more potent than any double shot of espresso or energy drink. It’ll carry you through bad times and good.

Rest

It might seem intuitive that rest be part of your routine, but there are many entrepreneurs who need to be reminded. I get it. There are deadlines you want to meet and goals you have for yourself, and sometimes it just doesn’t feel like there are enough hours in the day. However, if you don’t take adequate time to rest, your body will make you — scheduled or unscheduled. You’ll spend more time recovering from an illness that came on because you were run down than you do resting. Your health should come first whether you work for yourself, someone else or both.

Entrepreneurship isn’t for everyone, but hybrid-entrepreneurship might be more feasible for those with reservations about diving in head-first.

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