

# EFS SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

“Our life is what our thoughts make it.” Marcus Aurelius

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TOPIC THIS ISSUE:

**HABITS OF A THRIVE MINDSET**



## 4 MENTAL HABITS TO REDUCE STRESS & BURNOUT CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

Are You Stressed or Burnt out?



Too many tasks, too many people, too much stuff. Whether fueled by the roles they want to play or a multitude of obligations, most people are overloaded.

Companies and leaders are waking up to the fact that a relentless focus on doing more and being more is not sustainable. Burnout is both a personal problem and an organizational liability.

**What can be done? Try these strategies to quell your overload:**

**Look to the network.** High performers are good at building networks and also smart about pruning them, according to Rob Cross of UVA who studies personal and organizational networks. They also look for bottlenecks or pinch points in the network, which create overload and frustration for everyone.

Cross suggests that leaders first look at the things that routinely consume too much time and find other ways to get them done. *Are decision-making rules and rights unclear or do they involve too many people? Do certain requests or problems consistently get stuck in one place or with one person?*

The second thing to look at is your own behavior. *Do you insist on going to meetings just to be “in the know?” Do you want to be available to employees and eager to jump in? What is making you your own worst enemy?*

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**Stop ruminating.** The mental process of thinking over and over about something and attaching negative emotions to it — rumination — creates stress symptoms and is the enemy of resilience. Non-ruminators may have plenty of pressure or hardships in their lives, but they aren't stressed by it.

CCL's [Nick Petrie](#) writes about resilience and rumination in the book *Work Without Stress: Building a Resilient Mindset for Lasting Success* and the white paper [Wake Up! The Surprising Truth about What Drives Stress and How Leaders Build Resilience](#). He advises overloaded corporate leaders — and anyone who is feeling overloaded — **to practice 4 mental habits:**



- **Wake up.** Focus on where you are and what you are doing now. Don't let your mind drift into worrying about the past or the future.

- **Control your attention.** Practice consciously putting your attention where you want it to be and holding it there.

- **Detach.** Get appropriate distance from the situations you are facing. This helps you maintain perspective and know the difference between care and worry.

- **Let go.** Ask yourself a simple question: Will continuing to focus on this help me, my people or my organization? If the answer is no, let it go.

**Change your mental model.** Doing it all is a bigger task than it used to be. Deciding what effort to give where may require new thinking. One useful perspective comes from Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram, authors of *5 Gears: How to Be Present and Productive When There is Never Enough Time*.

With the metaphor of driving using a **manual stick-shift**, they help clarify the value of different “modes” of thinking and behaving:

- **1st Gear** — Time to fully rest and recharge. Crashing doesn't count and recharging doesn't happen the same way for everyone.

- **2nd Gear** — Time to connect with family and friends without an agenda or goal of being productive.



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- **3rd Gear** — Time to socialize and engage with a variety of different people — this may be work-related or purely social.
- **4th Gear** — Time to get work done, checking off our to-do lists and multi-tasking.
- **5th Gear** — Time for focused, uninterrupted work. You're "in the zone," working on what matters most, thinking strategically or being singularly productive.

Most of us are stuck in 4th Gear, or unsatisfactorily trying to drive in several gears at once. **To feel less overwhelmed and more effective, we need to know which gears are needed when and how to drive in all 5.**

You won't single-handedly change the nature of work, so stop holding your breath and waiting for things to settle down "someday." **Instead, build some new habits that can make a difference in how you focus, how you feel and the results you get.**

## BEDTIME PROCRASTINATION

BY: BETSY MORAIS

adapted from New Yorker article



Reason, humanity, and genius may not be found in the shadows of your room at bedtime, or past it, when there's nothing left to do but go to sleep, and you find yourself, against your better judgment, not even doing that.

Scientists at the self-regulation lab of Utrecht University, in the Netherlands (which specializes in examining bungled attempts of all kinds), are calling this phenomenon **"bedtime procrastination."** The name was coined by Dr. Joel Anderson, of the school's Practical Philosophy department. "When I started using this term, everybody immediately knew what I was talking about," he told me. The team's initial research, published recently in the journal *Frontiers of Psychology*, defines the problem as **"failing to go to bed at the intended time**, while no external circumstances prevent a person from doing so." Dr. Floor Kroese, who led the study, said, "Funny enough, I do not at all experience bedtime procrastination myself." Her husband, on the other hand, will often tell her that he's coming to bed in fifteen minutes, only to show up an hour and a half later.

To figure out what the trouble was, Anderson, Kroese, and fellow researchers decided to conduct a twenty-minute online survey of a hundred and seventy-seven people, recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk, an online marketplace for workers from a wide array of fields. The



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participants were shown a **“bedtime procrastination scale” containing nine items**—including “I have a regular bedtime which I keep to,” “I easily get distracted by things when I actually would like to go to bed,” and “I want to go to bed on time but I just don’t”—and gave answers ranging from (almost) never to (almost) always. Participants were asked other questions, too, like how good they are at resisting temptations, and how tired they feel during the day.

**Eighty-four per cent reported that they slept too little or felt tired at least once per week; more than forty per cent said that they felt this way at least three or four days per week.** “Bedtime procrastination is just a specific area in which people fail to keep to their good intentions,” Kroese explained. “We find that people who are generally more likely to procrastinate on things are also more likely to procrastinate on going to bed.” Kroese contends that avoiding bedtime involves the same mental process as failing to resist a cookie while you’re trying to diet.

“It’s a longstanding puzzle in philosophy, since Aristotle: why is it that people fail to do what they know is good for them to do,” Anderson said. “People want to improve their health; people want to go to bed on time.” Yet sleeplessness has become a public-health concern, according to the Centers for Disease Control: **around fifty to seventy million American adults have some kind of sleep disorder; a third of adults are not sleeping enough hours; and only a third of high-school students are coming close to a good night’s rest.** Insufficient sleep has been linked to memory problems, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and car accidents.

In another study—whose results will soon be published in *Journal of Health Psychology*—Kroese looked at a representative sample of twenty-four hundred and thirty-one Dutch adults, who responded to an online survey and kept a sleep diary every day for a week. The participants reported what time they wanted to go to bed, what time they actually went to bed, and, if there was a discrepancy between the two, whether that reason was outside of their control (crying baby, sick husband, waiting up for a tardy daughter) or within it (good TV).

Again, her team found that a large number of people got insufficient sleep and that, as the report states, **“people who have low self-regulation skills are more likely to keep watching the late night movie, or play yet another computer game despite knowing they might regret it the next morning when waking up tired.”**

“When you’re in these situations, it’s sort of a foggy state, a foggy inertial state,” Anderson said. “You need to get going, you need something to get you out of that. You need a greased skid to help you.” This might be a timer that switches off your television, or an alarm on your phone—anything to switch off the illicit zombie impulse that makes you keep scrolling through Twitter under the bedcovers. “It’s not magic, but the effect is robust,” he went on. **“If there’s a clear cue, and a clear plan of action lined up, then there are ways of managing yourself.”**

That is, of course, if we really want to manage ourselves, everything in an instant, but “atomic” as in tiny, miniscule clogs of a result-oriented machine:

## 10 CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE

BY: CHRIS HOGAN



Everyone wants to be successful. Nobody writes an essay in third grade about becoming a lousy business owner or mediocre teacher. But what separates an average person from the best in their field? Successful people demonstrate similar traits and behaviors. Identifying them is easy. Putting them

into practice is the challenge. **Here are 10 characteristics to start practicing now:**

**1. No one likes to be around pessimists—except other pessimists. Successful people keep a positive outlook.** They expect good outcomes. They see the possibilities in a situation instead of the problems. They are convinced they deserve to be on the playing field and can come out as the winner.

**2. Successful people are imaginative.** They tinker with projects and ideas. They constantly ask questions. They dream, imagine and have a habit of saying, “What if . . . ?” They are open-minded and eager to discover what’s just over the horizon. This curiosity keeps them from becoming stagnant and complacent, two enemies of success.

**3. Achieving success is tough;** if it weren’t, everybody would do it! **High achievers get back up when they get knocked down.** They shake off the dust and try again. Like Disney, Edison and other history makers, successful people will not be denied.

**4. Hard-working.** Successful leaders keep at it when others go home. They go the extra mile, make that extra call, and tackle that extra step. At the same time, they know how to have fun in the process. They still spend time with family and take care of their emotional, spiritual and physical health.

**5. Emotionally mature.** Few volatile leaders become successful. Those who lead well can stay calm under stress. They understand the value of responding rather than reacting. They recognize when their emotions are getting out of control and practice good strategies for handling them.

**6. People are drawn to highly successful leaders. They are charismatic, warm, respectful, open, and engaging.** They have a knack for making others feel valued and heard. This may be difficult for strong leaders who are focused on getting the job done, but developing this skill is *critical* to success.



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**7. Someone once said, “Your network is your net worth.” Successful people learn to develop business relationships with others.** You don’t have to be the loudest person in the room, but you *can* introduce yourself and exchange information. You never know when that little interaction could pay off big-time!

**8. Successful people own their mistakes.** They don’t shift blame, and they don’t find excuses. They find solutions. They admit what they did wrong, do what they can to correct it, and learn from it. They know they’ll make mistakes, but failure doesn’t have the last word.

**9. It’s easy to get sidetracked by the trivial.** If you’re not careful, you’ll spend valuable time on distractions that don’t help you reach your goals. **Successful people concentrate on those tasks that line up with their mission and vision.**

**10. Successful leaders are willing to try different tactics.** They chart new courses and are willing to change the game plan. They don’t cling to processes or people who aren’t working anymore. They’re okay with letting go.

If you don’t see all of these traits in yourself, don’t worry! Successful people recognize that they don’t know everything, but they are willing to keep growing and developing their skills. **Becoming successful is within your grasp, if you’re willing to put in the hard work to get there. Don’t quit!**

