

YOUR LEADERSHIP

# EDGE

LEAD ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

ED O'MALLEY  
AMANDA CEBULA

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CHAPTER 12  
MANAGE SELF

# *Take Care of Yourself*

Countless pressures drive today's worker (you) toward burnout. Stress may even be damaging your health. We all experience the competing pulls of work, community involvement, family and friends. We know how difficult it can be to attend to your own health and well-being.

But, if you want to respond effectively to the demands of work and community, you need to be at your best: healthy, focused and flexible. If you get sick, lose your passion for the work or make a bad decision when sleep-deprived, everybody loses.

We know from our own experience you can't lead effectively if you are exhausted and irritable. So, we challenge you to imagine how you will take better care of yourself—physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Remember, it's for your own sake and for the good of all who look to you for inspiration.



During his first job after college, Ed remarked to his colleagues that what they needed was a little time to sit in a beanbag and read Life magazine. Enough with the constant movement, crazy schedules, hurried pace. They all needed time to think, distill and rest so they could be at their creative best. To this day, his early colleagues poke fun at Ed for his “beanbag and Life magazine speech.” He was getting at what we now call “take care of yourself,” one of the key ideas under the leadership competency Manage Self. It is all about being at your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual best so you can best exercise leadership and make an impact.

Leadership is risky. When trying to get others to take on difficult challenges, you need your wits, creativity and energy. We’ve all been stressed out. Maybe you are up to your eyeballs right now. When stress happens your quality of work plummets. Relationships are strained. Health suffers. Your ability to rally anyone to do anything outside the norm (e.g., to exercise leadership) is dramatically diminished.

These days, Ed makes it clear that KLC wants employees who are “fully-whelmed,” not overwhelmed and not underwhelmed. The expectation is that team members work a “hard, efficient and fun 40” hours each week.

### **A “take care of yourself” culture helps organizations thrive too!**

Key to our thinking about the “hard, efficient and fun 40” is that embracing it promotes important decisions and innovation. People are forced to prioritize (“Of all the things I could do, what should I do?”). Equally important, the “hard, efficient and fun 40” stimulates innovation that probably would not have occurred otherwise. People find new ways to get things done when time is limited.

*Take care of your body.  
It’s the only place you have to live.*

— JIM ROHN

### HERE IS A MEMO FROM ED TO HIS TEAM.

Several times over the years, staff has heard me describe my aspiration that they are not overwhelmed or underwhelmed, but rather “fully-whelmed.” We aren’t interested in people coasting or being stressed out. I don’t want our people working 60-, 70- or 80-hour weeks. While in some work environments that type of effort is rewarded and even expected, at KLC it is misguided. You won’t be at your best working that much. I believe 40 hours of “your best you” is much better for KLC (and you!) than 60 hours of “stressed-out-you.” In that spirit, let me be clear with the expectations from senior staff.

- **Hard, Efficient and Fun 40 hours.** We expect you to work a hard, efficient and fun 40 hours each week.
- **Family and Friends.** We value family and friendships and believe you are a better employee if you do too.
- **Sleep and Exercise.** We value sleep and exercise and believe you are a better employee if you do too.
- **Outside Interests.** We value being involved in civic life, faith communities and/or hobbies and believe you are a better employee if you do too.

Come talk to your supervisor or me if you are out of whack on one or more of the above. Also, speak up if you see senior staff or others sending mixed messages about those items.

Bottom line: KLC is a place that will allow you to create the best life possible for yourself. Why? Because we care about you and because KLC will be stronger if you are happy and healthy.

*This is beyond work-life balance.  
This is about how to prepare yourself  
to lead. If we don't bring our best selves  
to our work, we're less likely to  
engage in leadership effectively.*

## *Lessons from History*

### TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Prime Minister Winston Churchill read a novel every day during World War II. Recognizing that your challenges are not quite the same as defeating Nazi Germany, shouldn't you be able to find time to take care of yourself?

#### WHAT DOES TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF LOOK LIKE?

- Recognize when you need to care for yourself. See the need coming. Don't let yourself get overwhelmed.
- Find what renews you, such as personal projects, quiet time, physical activity, etc.
- Maintain compassion for yourself.
- Hold to your own purpose. Say "no" often.
- Get back to the basics:
  - Stay home when you're sick.
  - Use your vacation days.
  - Eat well and exercise.

## WHY DON'T WE TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES MORE?

- **Competing values.** We choose to make other commitments more important.
- **It's risky.** We fear job loss, income loss and the perception that we're selfish.
- **It's against the culture.** Caring for ourselves is not valued. (See the beanbag and Life magazine reference earlier in this chapter.)

## WARNING SIGNS

- You are restless, irritable and discontent.
- You no longer have compassion for others. You don't have the patience to start where they are.
- You forget things.
- You become physically ill.
- You take things personally.
- You lose control of your triggers.
- You feel crazy busy with no real progress to show for it.

## WHAT IS THE COST OF NOT TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF?

While only you can answer this question, at its core, the highest cost of not taking care of yourself is losing your ability to make a lasting impact on whatever matters most to you.

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### WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF?

Check out "Crazy Busy" by Kevin DeYoung and "Daring Greatly" by Brené Brown.

Watch Arianna Huffington's four-minute TEDWomen Talk "How to Succeed: Get More Sleep."





If you want to get ahead in my department you are expected to put in 60- to 70-hour weeks. Balance that with my family, church and volunteer obligations, and I know I'm approaching burnout. I've seen some of my friends crash, and I don't want to be them. What should I do?

- BURNED OUT TANISHA

Dear Tanisha,

Your question is about values. What do you value the most? Given the spirit of your question, working 60-70 hours each week in that environment suggests you value how you are perceived day to day by peers and managers more than you value exercising leadership.

Cut your hours back to 40-50. Expect criticism and snide remarks. Hold steady. Don't let it get to you. Channel your energy into discovering new ways to become more efficient. Share your experiment with others. I bet a few will join you. After a few months, one of two things will happen. You will either start a small revolution that will successfully lead to changing the culture of your department or you will discover it is time to find a new job.

Remember, if you want to lead, you must take care of yourself.

Onward!

P.S. Leadership is about taking the road less traveled. Those exercising leadership are usually NOT doing what "everyone" else in the organization, company or community is doing.

