



9 Tips for Feeling More Productive and Less Exhausted in 2018

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Published on www.lorman.com June 2017

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9 Tips for Feeling More Productive and Less Exhausted in 2018

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There's a tendency for leaders to power through tough times in the name of getting work done. We may experience the symptoms of physical and emotional exhaustion, but ignore the signs because we have to make a living, put food on the table, a roof over our heads, and shoes on our feet.

We may also not want to admit that we need the rest, as we fear it's a sign of a weak character, especially in Western Societies.

It's imperative we pay attention to what is happening inside of us so that we don't precipitate the decline of our mental and physical health.

Here are some tips for doing just that:

1. **Let Go of the Guilt Suitcase** - Guilt can be a useful emotion as it informs you that something is off, but it also expends a lot of mental energy. It keeps you self-focused rather than able to proactively deal with a situation head on. Letting go of guilt requires practice. It's not easy. Try visualizing your guilt as a briefcase, dropping it wherever you are, and then walking on. You can throw the briefcase too if you want.

2. **Routinize** - Create positive habits. A routine work uniform (think Zuckerberg and Jobs) and a favorite morning breakfast will be one less decision you have to make, allowing the mental space for more important decisions throughout your day.

3. **Exorcise Emotional Vampires** – Try to distance yourself from those that are consistently stressed out, emotionally overloaded, and generally negative influences if they are not imperative to your work or family life. And drop the guilt suitcase when you do this! Emotional vampires suck the life out of you and we don't have that much time on this earth, so why give it away to people that deplete rather than fulfill you?

4. **Be less self-focused.** Sounds ridiculous, since who isn't self-focused, but the more we can attend to life outside of ourselves the less we'll overwork our own brain. It's the overworked, myopic self-centered thinking that runs you ragged. If your mind is looping about a past or future scenario go out with a friend to hear about their life. It'll take you out of your own orbit for a while so you can return to the task at hand with a fresh perspective.

5. **Exercise.** Release those endorphins. You'll feel better, you'll look better, you'll eat better, and your brain will function better. You can do ten jumping jacks wherever you are. It's hard to think of all your problems while you're exercising. Your mind needs the time-out from problem-solving to rejuvenate. To borrow a well-known phrase: *just do it.*

6. **Take a caffeine nap.** If you can manage to take a 10-15 minute nap after drinking a cup of coffee there is research that shows this gives you an energy boost once you wake up. A little counter-intuitive but give it a go.

7. **Manage Distractions.** Unless your business is placing ads on Facebook cut down on the social media browsing. Every decision and action you make taxes your energy to some extent. Make sure the decisions you're making for how you spend your time are the ones that will grow your business.

8. **Cultivate a Growth Mindset.** Keep a "can do" attitude. It will help propel you forward, focused, and on target. Negativity and self-doubt will tire you out and hinder your progress. Reframe challenges as opportunities. Vigilantly watch your mind to see if you are shutting the door in your own face.

9. **Watch a puppy or kitten video.** Seriously. The reason for this is it zaps you into a completely different world immediately. The brain doesn't know you've tricked it and it doesn't care. All it knows is there's something making it happy and it feels light and good. It's a trick and it's a valid one. If puppies and kittens don't do it for you try to find that go-to thing that makes you laugh and feel light. Maybe your kids or a viral video. Some light laughter will freshen you up.

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