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Are you responsible for leading a stressed-out and overworked team?

Do you want to become a better Leader and create some breathing room? ☐ 🗨

2/20: In these crazy times, everyone seems overwhelmed and way too busy. The pandemic has blurred the lines between work and home. Being “at-home” or “off-the-grid” has become a foreign concept. It’s a challenge to create boundaries and almost impossible to follow them.

3/20: But even when your team members have a lot on their plates, there are ways to reduce their stress. Results matter, but you also need a team that’s not at constant risk of making mistakes or burning out.

Being long-term focused = Operating at a sustainable cadence.

4/20: Common causes of stress can be tackled with focus.

Attempting to take on an overly ambitious set of initiatives generates stress.

Loose decision-making processes generate stress.

And hours and hours of team meetings generates stress.

5/20: Edit the corporate agenda

A common characteristic of ambitious Leaders is that they set bold agendas and expect to deliver against stratospheric goals. The energy and feeling of accomplishment that comes with steep forward progress can be addictive.

6/20: What most top-decile Leaders learn over time is that there’s usually more leverage in focusing the collective talent and resources of an organization against 80% of a super-ambitious plan than in stretching them to deliver everything that’s theoretically possible.

7/20: By editing the master to-do list, a Leader re-frames progress through the lens of “doing things with collective focus.”

Just like a magnifying glass can focus light into a powerful beam, a Leader can focus a team’s

energy to tackle a select set of goals with intentionality

8/20: Encouraging the team to jettison low-priority work whenever possible is the next step in editing. When every team member takes accountability for alignment they question and ultimately shut down work that doesn't align with the declared goals.

9/20: Parallel is not always superior to sequential

A divide and conquer plan is usually better on paper than in the real world because many tasks require overlapping resources and go through the same decision makers. Choke points emerge that crush the benefits of "doing more".

10/20: Doing one thing at a time isn't enough - Don't suffer from the "Tyranny of the Or". But doing more than a handful of things simultaneously will spread your talent like peanut butter and significantly reduce your chances of success.

11/20: A startup should embrace no more than 3 or 4 major initiatives at any given time. An organization solves what it organizes around and a typical startup can't deliver against more than a few goals in parallel. Completing an initiative makes room for a new one.

12/20: Process can be liberating

When people know how decisions are made they can focus on recommendations and solutions rather than worrying about navigating an arcane decision process. Don't underestimate how much energy can be recaptured with a well-designed process.

13/20: Balancing speed and completeness is tricky but healthy cultures get it right. Small and reversible decisions shouldn't march through the same process as large and irreversible decisions. Remember that most people don't mind process as long as it has a purpose.

14/20: Speed starts by framing WHO can make WHICH decisions.

Acceleration happens when the AMOUNT OF PROOF needed to make a decision matches the IMPACT of the decision.

Max speed comes when there's NO LAG between a decision being SURFACED and decision being MADE.

15/20: And a truism is that the anticipation generated by waiting for critical decisions to be made generates stress.

Replacing a "hurry up and wait" culture with "decisions get made when recommendations

are ready" culture generates relief.

16/20: And the last step in many decision-making processes is where many mistakes are made. Clarity around what was decided is important. Memorializing decisions removes confusion and frustration downstream. Precision around permissions and next steps matters.

17/20: Rethink meetings

Meetings can be a huge waste of time and a source of stress. If the default behavior of an organization is to "schedule a meeting" when updates or decisions are needed then it won't be long before "meeting creep" takes over.

18/20: In many cases, an email or memo can efficiently replace a meeting. Making this work requires everyone in an organization to focus on their writing skills, but the time savings and ability to make decisions in an asynchronous fashion are powerful.

19/20: The optionality that comes with being able to conduct well-run meetings and the ability to replace meetings with email/memo based communications is game changing. Having two formats is better than one!

20/20: The reality is that not all stress can be removed from high stress roles. But great Leaders can minimize their team's stress level by focusing on sources of stress generated by sloppy and inefficient processes.

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