

5 Ways to Handle Stress

Managing stress doesn't mean simply avoiding or glossing over challenges. Here are five techniques you can use to deal with the pressures that come with a real estate career.

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Because of the independent nature of the work, the travails of the business, and the irregular cash flow, real estate is perhaps one of the more stressful professions to pursue. After 30-plus years of listing and selling real estate, though, I've learned a few ways to effectively deal with stress.

Whether it's a pending real estate transaction that seems like it's about to fall apart, the present economy playing havoc on your closed sales volume, or an unfortunate situation where you dropped the ball for a client, remember these simple tips to help you hold your health, family, and career together.

Remember the Odds

One of the truisms I always remind myself of is the fact that, normally, events work out in some fashion. Think about how many transactions you've had that looked like they would go sour. In most cases, those deals probably worked out, even if they didn't go as perfectly as you might have hoped.

Most transactions will hit a snag here and there, but generally deals do get done.

Constantly stressing out about problems and issues will get you nowhere, and if you ponder the situation too long, it will definitely result in major anxiety. Don't misunderstand—I'm not saying you should avoid problems, but you can remind yourself during rough times that you can still find compromises and solutions in almost any situation.

Eat Your Big Fish First

When faced with a mounting obstacle, don't blow it off until later. Confront it first thing that day. You might be tempted to put off the problem and tackle the easier, smaller stuff first. But this usually winds up prolonging and intensifying the stressful situation.

Instead, go ahead and "eat the bigger fish" on your plate so you can get it out of your way and stop worrying about it.

Be Honest and Take Responsibility When it's Your Fault

Stress can be caused by a wide variety of factors. Sometimes it can be created by our own foibles or when we just drop the ball. It's difficult to tell someone you forgot to put their papers in the mail or misplaced a key. But if you want to avoid further stress, be honest about the situation and take responsibility.

I've found that whenever I've made a mistake and explained to a customer what happened, admitted responsibility, and apologized, it almost always produces a positive outcome. Procrastinating or masking over a problem will not give you any peace of mind, and it certainly won't reassure your clients.

It can be difficult to admit "I made a mistake" or "I'm sorry." But being honest ultimately goes far in winning trust with all the parties involved.

Exercise

When nothing else seems to be going right, try to squeeze in a workout. Going for a walk, run, bike ride, swim, or other exercise is an excellent way to feel better.

Exercise can improve your mood because it releases endorphins in your brain, a hormone that can even trigger feelings of euphoria. Physical exertion can add a wide variety of benefits to your life and is excellent for relieving stress. Be sure to consult your physician before starting any major new exercise program.

Remind yourself that this, too, shall pass.

Often you can be in a stressful situation and feel as though it will never end. For many real estate professionals, the current environment has been incredibly stressful and shows few signs of relief. But our country has always been able to rebound, and the real estate market will once again rise up from record lows.

Rather than thinking the situation will never get better, remind yourself that it eventually will improve. It may not be in the next few months, or even until the next year or two, but the real estate market will recuperate and make lasting progress. Understanding that better days are ahead allows you to keep going a little farther.

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