EXECUTIVE VITALITY™: WIRED AND TIRED?

All leaders have felt this—wired and tired. Too much coffee, too little sleep. Too much stress, too little energy. Too many hours in an airplane, too little exercise. Et cetera.

What can you do?

- **Proactively manage your business travel**. Do you really have to go? Can you use videoconference, phone; delegate; be the visitee, not the visitor? For a review of the effects of business travel on health from the May 31, 2018 HBR, see *Just How Bad Is Business Travel for Your Health? Here's the Data* (link below). If you travel – know that the best time to drive or be sharp in a meeting is not after a red-eye. Schedule wisely. Work with your assistant or travel agent to ensure you have logical flight patterns with appropriate layover time.

- **Manage your food and drinking regimen**. Fast food is slow death. Order healthy meals in restaurants. No athlete or leader can perform at their best when weighed down with food that is not healthy. What you eat matters. Be especially aware of sugar and other foods that affect your energy levels in dramatic ways (ups and downs).

- **Get adequate sleep whether at home or on the road.** A classic article from the October 2006 issue of HBR is *Sleep Deficit: The Performance Killer*. It is based on an interview with Dr. Charles A. Czeisler, PhD, MD, FRCP, world-renowned Professor of Sleep Medicine, in which he states: "Being 'on' pretty much around the clock induces a level of impairment every bit as risky as intoxication." And, with inadequate sleep "your reaction speed, short-term and long-term memory, ability to focus, decision-making capacity, math processing, cognitive speed, and spatial orientation all start to suffer." None of that will help you lead effectively. And if that is not sobering enough, sleep deprivation also leads to obesity and hypertension.

- **Proactively manage your work hours.** Set some boundaries. Will working till 10 pm tonight get you a better work-product or will tackling it when you are rested and refreshed be a more effective approach? Longer term, getting control of your hours will increase your creative energies, productivity and give you the rest and down-time you need to recharge.

- **Write.** If you wake up with things on your mind, journal. You will be amazed at what you see. Better yet, write *before* you go to sleep. Write about what is bothering you and write down potential solutions as well. Then, those things are much less likely to wake you up.

- **Exercise.** Exercise releases endorphins which, in turn, elevates mood and makes you feel more energetic. It improves strength and endurance — it reduces stress and fatigue. Exercise has been shown to increase mental acuity due to all of the foregoing.

- **Relax/Meditate.** What relaxes you? Time with friends? Exercise? Music? Going for a walk on the beach or in the woods? Challenge yourself to meditating two to five minutes a day.

How often do you feel wired and tired? Are there patterns you can change, e.g., too much travel, too much caffeine, too little sleep… can you think of some other things that you might want to change?

_____

Citations

https://hbr.org/2018/05/just-how-bad-is-business-travel-for-your-health-heres-the-data

https://hbr.org/2006/10/sleep-deficit-the-performance-killer