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Could you be an Unhealthy Leader? **By M.J. Clark, APR**

Have you ever worked with someone who you would consider a strong leader who showed signs of being unhealthy? My guess is that you haven't.

Leadership takes energy. It takes ambition. It takes patience. It takes passion. In order to lead others, you must first take care of yourself. You must have the proper amount of sleep, nutrition and exercise to be your best.

Do you take time for yourself? When you become exhausted with work or social activities, it's important to give your body and mind a rest. It's so hard in our busy lives to take this time for ourselves, but it is truly critical. Here are some suggestions for finding time to recharge your batteries so you can lead more effectively:

- Schedule a one-hour appointment on your calendar each week to take a walk in the park, listen to music, read a book, visit an art museum or indulge in something that makes you particularly happy. Do not allow yourself to cancel this appointment. Treat yourself as a very important client.
- Consider meditating. Freeing your mind of your worries and to do lists for even 15 minutes a day can do wonders for centering yourself, which can lead to a more peaceful day.
- If you enjoy writing, start a journal. We don't always have time to discuss our feelings with others throughout the day. Journaling can allow you to release unspoken thoughts that are lingering inside of you.
- Make time to exercise. We all have a list of excuses of why we can't fit it into our day. Think about what's stopping you from exercising and what might make you begin again. Start small, or you may not stick to it. Can you fit in 20 minutes of exercise three times a week? I think you can if you make it a priority.

Many of us would make great sacrifices for those we love, sacrifices that take time and energy. Let's love ourselves by sacrificing some of our precious time to recharge our own batteries. We simply cannot give to others what we don't possess. We must take time on a regular basis to rejuvenate ourselves in order to share our energy, ambition and passion with others. I challenge you to get out your calendar right now and schedule time for yourself each week so you can be a healthy, more effective leader.