The Money Rules.

10 rules I used for 30 years to run 400 people on very little energy.
Out of the boardroom, not the classroom.

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MONEY. HONEY. HEALTH. · beattheburnout.co

Read this first.

For 30 years I ran teams in 18 countries. 400 people. $100M in sales. And a headache that started in my first real job and never left.

I didn't get through it with willpower alone. I got through it with a handful of rules. Not from a book. Not from a coach. From mistakes, mostly my own.

These are the 10 rules I used at work. They won't make the pressure go away. They make sure the pressure stops running you.

Don't try all ten this week. Pick three. Use them, think about them, or notice afterwards where you should have used them. That counts too.

Most leadership stress isn't personal. It's structural. Fix how you manage, and the pile stops growing.

Fons

01

Choose your battles

THE RULE

> **Being right is one thing. Being proven right is another. Don't spend your energy on everything. Spend it only where it's worth it, and where you can actually change something.**

Two questions before every fight:

1. Is this worth it? Does it change the outcome, or only who wins the argument?
2. Can I influence it? Picture two circles: everything you worry about, and everything you can actually change. Stephen Covey called them the circle of concern and the circle of influence. If the fight sits outside your circle of influence: f*ck it. It's no use. Let it go.

Then pick a few battles and go for them. Full blow. Don't challenge everything. Don't argue everything. Pick a few, and do those well.

MY STORY

I once lost my annual bonus for being right. I was right, and I was not proven right. I'd do it again, because that battle was worth it. But for every battle like that one, I fought fifty that weren't. Meetings I had to win. Emails I had to answer, sharper than the last. Arguments about things nobody would remember a month later. I won most of them. And I paid for every one.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

Every time you go into a fight, your body doesn't know it's "just a meeting". It goes into fight-or-flight mode: adrenaline and cortisol up, heart rate up, muscles tense, thinking narrows. Your stress level goes up, every single time, whether the fight matters or not. Ten small fights a day means your body is at war all day. And then you wonder why you can't switch off at night. Be very careful with that energy. It's the only fuel you have.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Look back and write down:

1. Where did I have conflicts this week?
2. Why did I put energy into each one?
3. Did it change anything?

If the energy you put in changed nothing: cross it out, and next time, let it go. Then pick the one or two battles for next week that are worth it and within your influence. Those get everything you've got.

02

KISS: keep it stupidly simple

THE RULE

> **Keep it stupidly simple. It sounds easy. It is easy. That's exactly why so few people do it.**

Complexity is stress in disguise. A plan nobody can explain in one breath is not a plan. It's a hiding place.

The pattern I've seen a hundred times: **if you cannot convince, confuse.** Fifteen priorities. Twelve KPIs. A slide deck so full that nobody can disagree with it, because nobody understands it. It looks like control. It is the opposite.

MY STORY

As a manager I had 10 or 12 KPIs I needed to hit, all at the same time. Impossible. Not because I was lazy, but because twelve priorities means no priority. Every week one of them was red, so every week there was a reason to worry. My teams got the same treatment from me, until I learned to cut. The day I gave a team three priorities instead of fifteen, they started delivering. And the noise on my desk went down.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

Complexity creates confusion. Confusion creates hesitation. Hesitation creates problems, and problems mean stress. Stress means cortisol, and cortisol means your body goes into fight-or-flight mode, over a spreadsheet. Fifteen priorities means fifteen open loops in your head, all day and half the night. Three priorities means you know when you've done enough.

5 MINUTES, ONCE A WEEK

Write down the key priorities, long term and short term, at three levels:

1. What is important for the company?
2. What is important for the team?
3. What is important for me?

Maximum three per level. If you have more, cross out until you don't. Then share the team's three with the team. Keep it very simple. No fifteen priorities, no twelve KPIs.

03

The sailor is the boat

THE RULE

> **You are only as strong as the people around you. Find people who are better than you in the areas where you are weak. Put experts behind you and next to you. Not yes-sayers. Not heroes. People who really add something.**

And one above all: **find a good numbers person.** A good controller. You need to trust the numbers. If you can't, every decision becomes a guess, and every guess keeps you awake.

MY STORY

The best years I had were the years I worked with people who did certain things much better than me. One example: I am not very good at handling aggressive people. I don't like the fight, the screaming, the shouting. So I always had a pit bull next to me. A terrier type who loved a conflict, who enjoyed the fight, and who was very good at it. I didn't have to become someone I'm not. I just had to put the right person in the right place.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

Strategy doesn't burn leaders out. People do. A strong team absorbs pressure; a weak team passes it straight to your desk. And when you do everything yourself, including the things you're bad at, every one of those moments puts your body on alert. The right people take that weight off you.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Look at your team and ask: who brings me problems they could solve themselves?

Next time they do: don't solve it. Ask them: "What would you do?" Then see what happens. Most of the time they already know the answer. They just think they have to ask the boss. They don't.

And once a quarter, ask yourself: where am I weak, and who on my team is strong there? If the answer is nobody, that's your next hire.

04

F*ck it: believe in the vision

THE RULE

> **If we say we go left, we go left. Agree on the direction, then go. Don't allow anyone to change course halfway: not your team, not your own doubts, and certainly not head office.**

No continuous doubt. No continuous discussion. If we agreed on it, we do it. Doubt is contagious. So is conviction.

And stop analysing everything. **Analysis paralysis** is the polite word for being afraid to decide. Just go for it.

MY STORY

I call it seagull management. Babies in a suit fly in from headquarters, do a business review with you, make a lot of noise, tell you what to do, and fly out again. When I ran Asia, 18 countries, we had discussions about Myanmar with people who had no clue. No clue what language they speak there, what the culture is, what the money is. And they wanted to change our direction. My answer, every time: the strategy is we go left. So we go left.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

An open decision is an open alarm. Every time the direction is questioned again, your brain reopens the file, and your body goes back on alert. Your team feels it too: a leader who wobbles creates a team that waits. A decision, even an imperfect one, switches the alarm off. For you and for everybody behind you.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Write down:

1. Which decision did we make, and then discuss again?
2. Who reopened it, and why did I let them?
3. Which decision am I still postponing because of noise?

For the last one: set a date. Then decide, and go left.

05

Ask before you fix

THE RULE

> **Ask before you fix. Use the five W's:**

- **Why** are we doing this?
- **What** are we doing?
- **When** do we do it?
- **Who** is it for, and who does it?
- **Which** option, which problem?

Especially why. And don't stop at the first answer. Ask why again. And again. "Why is that?" "And why is that?" The first answer is usually the symptom. The real problem sits two or three whys behind it.

MY STORY

I once had a country manager who was not selling. So we did what managers do: more pressure, more reporting, more details. Performance got worse. Finally I asked: what is really the problem? The answer had nothing to do with him. It was distribution. Our stock was stuck at customs, because we refused to pay bribes. I had been fixing the wrong problem for months, and I stressed everybody out, including myself. Wrong.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

You are a manager, so you are a fixer. A problem comes in, you solve it. That reflex feels like control. But fixing the wrong problem doubles the stress: the real problem is still there, and now everybody is under pressure for nothing. Assumptions create pressure. Questions create clarity. And clarity is one of the fastest ways to switch the alarm off.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Take the next problem you're about to fix. Before you act:

1. Ask the five W's and write the answers down.
2. Ask why three more times.
3. Only then decide: is this still the problem I was going to fix?

Think and ask first. Action second.

06

Execution beats process

THE RULE

> **Plans don't perform. People do.**

Strategy is relatively easy. Making it happen, that is the job. So don't talk about it: do it, fix it, execute, make it happen. Pick a few things and make those happen. No more strategic discussions without anything moving.

Rule 4 is about holding your direction. This rule is about actually starting to walk.

MY STORY

I have made so many strategic business plans. Five years ahead, ten years ahead. Beautiful documents. I never saw any of them back. They were filed in a drawer. On the day they were presented, they looked great. But the moment you start, reality kicks in, and the whole plan changes anyway. What always worked was the opposite: start, see what happens, adjust, keep moving.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

Spinning wheels are exhausting. Endless meetings, endless versions, and nothing moves. Your brain keeps every unfinished plan open as a threat, so the alarm never goes off. Movement does the opposite. Movement creates feedback. Feedback creates learning. Learning creates confidence. And confidence is the opposite of stress.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Write down:

1. What did we discuss this week without doing anything?
2. Which one thing is stuck in "planning"?
3. What is the first step that can happen next week, and who does it?

Not perfect. Just moving. Make it happen.

07

FIFO: handle toxicity fast

THE RULE

> **FIFO. Fit in or f*** off. This one is tough, and it's meant to be.**

Every team has one: the high performer who is toxic. He delivers. But:

- he comes in late
- he always asks the wrong questions
- he starts inconvenient debates in front of everybody
- he is not always honest
- he doesn't listen to the team
- he has his own rules

He performs, yes. But he's not a team player. He's on his own. He consumes your energy. He eats you alive. And all the stress he creates lands on you, and on everybody around him.

So you take action. Decisively, not emotionally. "Thank you very much. I'll miss you. We'll try it without you. It's going to be tough. Bye-bye."

MY STORY

I tolerated a toxic high performer for far too long. "He delivers." "It's just his style." "We'll deal with it later." Meanwhile sick leave went up, trust went down, and he consumed my energy every single day. By waiting, I didn't protect the team. I passed my stress on to all of them. If you want to be liked as a leader, start selling ice cream.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

One toxic person keeps the whole team on alert, you first. Every meeting with him is a fight your body prepares for in advance. You lie awake rehearsing the next conversation. That's fight-or-flight mode, week after week, for one person. His numbers never make up for what he costs the rest.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Ask yourself one question: is there something, or someone, where I said "we'll deal with that later"?

No. It's not later. Do it now. Fix it.

Write down what it is, and put the conversation in your calendar for Monday.

08

Manage expectations ruthlessly

THE RULE

> **Stress is broken promises. Manage expectations: your own, your people's and your boss's.**

If your boss expects 100, deliver 102. Not 96: that's a broken promise. Not 110 either: that's not smart, because next year your target is 115. 102.

Agree on what is manageable. Agree on what is acceptable. Then go for that. If you say you'll do it, do it. If you say you won't, don't. Be the person people can rely on.

MY STORY

I've seen it again and again: aggressive targets promised to impress head office, because they look good on a slide. Followed by twelve months of firefighting, explanations and pressure. For the manager, and for everybody below him. Every yes that comes too early becomes a year of pressure.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

A promise you can't keep is a threat that runs in the background all year. Every report, every review, every call from your boss sets off the alarm again. Managing expectations is not pessimism. It's professionalism. Clear expectations protect your team, your boss's trust, and your own nervous system.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Look for one promise you made too fast. To your boss, your team, a client, or at home.

Reset it now. Before you regret it.

09

Be predictable

THE RULE

> **Calm leaders create calm systems. Be predictable.**

Everybody should know what to expect from you. Not only what you decide, but how you act and how you work: fixed meetings with fixed people, fixed topics, the same way of running an agenda, the same way of managing time. In chaos especially: set the priorities, stay predictable, and you'll have fewer crises.

You don't need to be liked. You need to be reliable.

MY STORY

I always had a little clock on the table, placed so I could peek at it without anybody noticing. My meetings: one hour maximum. Always on time. And everything that needed to be decided in that meeting was decided in that meeting. Period. People knew it, so they came prepared. I've worked with tough bosses who ran calm companies, because everybody knew what to expect. And with friendly ones who created chaos, because priorities changed every week. The more predictable I became, the fewer crises landed on my desk.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

Predictability is safety. Safety means no alarm: not in your team, and not in you. When nobody knows what tomorrow brings, every person in the team stays on alert, and all that tension flows back to the leader. A predictable week is a week your body doesn't have to defend itself against. Less crisis. Less stress. No burnout.

5 MINUTES, AT THE END OF THE WEEK

Pick one thing you'll do the same way every week from now on:

- the same meeting, same time, same questions
- a fixed one-to-one with the same people, on fixed topics
- meetings of one hour maximum, starting on time, ending with decisions

Announce it to your team. Then stick to it. Put a little clock on the table.

10

BOHICA

THE RULE

> **BOHICA. Bend over, here it comes again. A very familiar one.**

We do business. So there is pressure, and there are problems. Don't expect a world without them. It is simply what it is.

Assume the sh*t will hit the fan. And assume that when it does, it never gets distributed evenly. You'll always get a little more than somebody else. That's what it is. If you want to be liked, just start selling pizzas.

MY STORY

A key client leaves, and the business goes with him. A supplier collapses. Head office changes the strategy overnight. And the baby in a suit from headquarters wants a shelf plan by Friday. It is already Friday. I've seen it all, more than once. And I noticed who suffered most: not the leaders with the biggest problems, but the leaders who expected permanent sunshine.

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR STRESS

The problem itself is rarely what burns you out. The resistance is. "This shouldn't be happening" keeps your body in fight-or-flight long after the problem has arrived. Accept it fast, adapt faster. The sooner you accept, the sooner your body recovers. And recovery speed is what separates the leaders who last from the ones who burn out.

5 MINUTES, THIS WEEK

When something lousy happens, give yourself ten minutes to swear. Out loud if you need to. Then stop, write down the first step, and go for it.

F*ck it. Bend over. Here it comes again.

The weekly scorecard

Every Friday. 5 minutes. For each rule, tick one box:

- **Used it:** I applied the rule this week.
- **Thought about it:** I considered it while deciding.
- **Should have used it:** I only saw it afterwards. That counts too.

3 ticks a week: you're paying attention. **5 ticks:** you're learning.

This is not about being perfect. It's about noticing. Once you start to see the patterns, you stop collecting stress you don't need.

RULE	USED IT	THOUGHT ABOUT IT	SHOULD HAVE USED IT
1. Choose your battles	☐	☐	☐
2. KISS	☐	☐	☐
3. The sailor is the boat	☐	☐	☐
4. F*ck it: believe in the vision	☐	☐	☐
5. Ask before you fix	☐	☐	☐
6. Execution beats process	☐	☐	☐
7. FIFO	☐	☐	☐
8. Manage expectations ruthlessly	☐	☐	☐
9. Be predictable	☐	☐	☐
10. BOHICA	☐	☐	☐

Week of: _____ Total ticks: ___

The rule I'll focus on next week: _____

Work is one arena.
There are three.

These rules took back my day at work. But I was still being lived at home and in my body. My wife noticed long before I did.

This PDF is a list of 10 rules. The Burnout Reset Method is the whole system. More than 20 video modules, over 8 weeks, way more in-depth:

1. Understand your stress. What stress really is. Why you have it and the person next to you, under the same pressure, doesn't. Why your brain treats a deadline like a tiger. And which half of your stress is actually in your hands.

2. Get it out. Years of tension are stored in your body, and your head never stops. You learn how to release both: breathing, TRE, EFT, yoga nidra and more. Short routines that switch the alarm off after work.

3. Take back control in all three arenas:

- **MONEY, work:** these 10 rules, applied week by week, with scorecards
- **HONEY, home:** the 10 patterns that bring work stress through your front door, and how to break them
- **HEALTH, your body:** GRACE, five habits from the people who live to 100

You do the stress check at the start and at the end, so you see the difference in numbers. 8 weeks, online, in your own time. Money back within 14 days, and again if your score isn't down after week 8.

The rules are the map. The method is the drive.

As a Money Rules reader, your €10 comes off the price:

go.beattheburnout.co

Pressure is part of business. Losing control isn't.