4 Ways You’re Sabotaging Your Top Employee

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Teddy Roosevelt is credited for having said, “If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month." And so it is that we are often our biggest impediment to success, especially as business owners. We spend hours helping customers and often don’t show ourselves the same assistance (Oh, doctor, heal thyself.).

If you’re wondering what this advice has to do with your “top employee,” you need this article more than you realized.

In a time of rising costs and increased concerns over mental health, business owners must see an investment in themselves as one of the most important they can make for the future of their business.

## 4 Ways You Might Be Self-sabotaging Your Business

1. **You Give the Benefit of the Doubt to Everyone Else**. If the customer is always right, and you don’t agree with the customer, it stands to reason you are always wrong. For your sanity, the answer must sometimes be “no.” Sometimes you must be on your own side. You can’t meet the needs of everyone without occasionally impairing yourself. Know when you can help and when you can’t. Then draw the line effectively and with kindness to both you and them.
2. **You fixed the problem but it’s still plaguing your mind**. So, you had a problem with a customer, and you fixed it to everyone’s satisfaction. You issued the apology and made it right. The customer feels heard and understood. But you’re still blaming yourself. No good comes out of this extreme penitence. You’re more likely to repeat the problem in the future because that’s what you’re focusing on.

Adapt a piece of advice that is often bandied around the baseball field to your business—*baseball is a game of forgetting*. When you walk out on the field beating yourself up about your last at-bat or the pop fly you missed, you’ll repeat those errors again and again. A successful player learns from the mistake and forgets everything outside of the lesson. Don’t dwell, just do. Apply this to your business as well.

1. **You think failing makes you a failure**. If you believe that because you failed at something—like launching a new product, hosting an event, etc.—that you are now a failure, you might want to close shop and go back to work for someone else who hasn’t changed their operations since the last century. Innovation and failure go hand in hand. As Thomas Edison said, “I have not failed 10,000 times—I've successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work.” Be thankful that you realized it wouldn’t work when you did and move on to the next thing. All successful [business owners and innovators](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/7-epic-fails-brought-to-you-by-the-genius-mind-of-thomas-edison-180947786/) don’t just start one business and retire or achieve fame. Some go through iterations of ups and downs. Embrace the roller coaster that comes with entrepreneurialism.
2. **You negate self-care or think it’s a manicure**. Self-care is an ongoing investment in your business because it’s an investment in your business’ top employee—you. Secondarily, an occasional splurge, like a manicure, is not self-care. It can be a part of your larger commitment to take care of your needs/desires, but a manicure every six months isn’t self-care. It’s at best a bonus or treat. Self-care is comprised of the things you do to ensure you’re able to continue at the level of energy required in your role.

View self-care as a component of professional development. When you replenish yourself with a commitment to maintaining your optimum or peak level of performance, your business will benefit. Just don’t tell your accountant a trip to Tahiti is professional development (unless you can find an amazing conference there). Self-care is comprised of things you should be doing every day like making sleep a priority, setting aside time in the evening or day to quietly think, or making time for a hobby that feeds you so you return to your business refreshed each day.

Many business gurus see running a business as a balance sheet proposition. You want to bring more revenue in than what’s going out. But it’s more complex than that. If you’re not investing in yourself, the revenue won’t matter because you’re admitting your top employee doesn’t matter either.

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