

## 5 Things I Wish Someone Told Me Before I Became a CEO

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1. **It's a lonely job.** Lonelier than you might realize. The reason is you are positioned in the entire organization as peerless. Your bosses have peers, they're the board; your subordinates have peers, they're the executive team. You have no one with whom you can share at a peer level. You walk a very fine line between appearing confident, having the answers, having things under control, and at the same time you don't have anybody that you can easily vent to and commiserate with. You have to be very careful about doing those things outside the organization, too.
2. **It is impossible to over-communicate.** I advise aspiring CEOs to take what you think is going to be a sufficient amount of communication and multiply it by ten. That's the level of communication you need to commit to with people.
3. **Prioritize your own wellbeing.** If you take on at a personal level, too deeply, all of the concerns and stress and frustrations of the board, the company, the customers, the market—you actually diminish your ability to function at a high level. It's good to early on get into a habit of setting some very personal goals on your own—spiritual, mental, physical wellbeing—so you don't get into the trap of suddenly realizing you're trying to be everything to everyone 24/7. You really have to make time for you—for real, it's not a nice to have. The reality is you'll do everyone a disservice if you're not at your best. Yeah, you're going to feel guilty about making time for you, but you have to get over that.
4. **Everything you do is amplified and magnified in its impact to the company.** That cutting comment you make to someone, that good word, that sign of fear—they're all going to be amplified to levels you will never be comfortable understanding. You have to be conscious of this and realize that every little thing you do and say has a huge impact on the company and your employees.
5. **Don't drag your feet on giving feedback.** You should get in the habit of giving feedback quickly and often to your team. Sometimes CEOs want to overcoach for too long, or don't want to hurt someone's feelings, or think they can save or recover someone instead of facing the reality head-on. But then it builds over time and it becomes a dump truck on someone and it's a very bad thing. Give feedback within a few days. As soon as you're sensing something, schedule a meeting and have that conversation and don't let it build up over time. It's also so important to never surprise anyone; don't surprise the board, your team, the company. Operate with a no-surprise philosophy. Nobody likes to be surprised, especially not by the CEO.

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