



STRESS: Develop a contingency plan

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you'll eventually reach a point where you'll want to finish.

Learn to say no. Such a small word—and yet so hard to say. Focusing on your goals may help. Blocking time for important, unscheduled priorities such as family and friends can also help. But first you must be convinced that you and your priorities are important—that is the difficulty in learning how to say no. Once convinced of their importance, saying no to the unimportant things in life gets easier.

Reward yourself. Even for small successes, celebrate the achievement of goals. Promise yourself a reward for completing each task or job. Then keep your promise to yourself and indulge in your reward. Doing so will help you maintain the necessary bal-

ance in life between work and play. As leadership expert Ann McGee-Cooper says, "If we learn to balance excellence in work with excellence in play, fun, and relaxation, our lives become happier, healthier, and a great deal more creative."

Manage your time. Through proper planning and by working systematically, you can perform tasks quickly, efficiently, and in a timely fashion. Try to develop shortcuts to cut down on time when performing routine tasks or activities. Developing a contingency plan will also help you to avoid any pitfalls. Ask "what if?" when making decisions or developing a course of action. Try to think of at least three ways to handle a crisis, and then put those solutions into practice when appropriate. Don't forget to revise your contingency plan as needed.

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