

The PM Newsletter



Living With Founder Guilt: How to Lead Without Losing Yourself

It's late afternoon, and you've just wrapped up another full day. Weeks feel blurred.

But before you can even relax, that nagging feeling creeps in—you know the one.

You feel guilty. For taking a break. For stepping away. For giving yourself permission to breathe.

It's that insidious "founder guilt" that seems to linger in the back of your mind, whispering that if you're not constantly working, you're somehow failing. As if your company, your team, your success hinges entirely on your ability to be "on" 24/7.

In reality, founder guilt doesn't serve anyone. Least of all you.

Why It's Weighing You Down

When you're always on, always giving more than you have, you're building a business on burnout. Your energy tank is running on empty, and yet, you push through, thinking that's what it takes to succeed. But the truth is, your company thrives because of your leadership, not because of your sacrifice.

If you're stuck in the guilt loop, these effects ripple out:

- **Your work suffers:** You're too tired to make the best calls. The quality dips, the ideas dry up, and your creativity stalls.
- **Your team feels it:** When they see you constantly pushing, they push harder—but not always smarter. The burnout culture spreads.
- **Your growth stalls:** You're so deep in the weeds, you miss the bigger picture. Strategy takes a backseat to survival.

So, how do we break the cycle?

3 Simple Shifts to Ease the Burden of Founder Guilt

1. **Embrace Rest Like You Do Strategy** There's no badge of honor in being burnt out. Rest isn't just an option—it's a necessity for being a marathon runner. Schedule time to unplug and take it just as seriously as any meeting or deadline. Your brain needs it to function at its best.
2. **Trust Your Team to Take the Wheel** Delegation isn't weakness; it's empowerment. When you let go of the need to

business will grow without you having to micromanage every move.

3. **Set Boundaries, Not Just Goals** If you're always reachable, always available, you're teaching others (and yourself) that there are no limits. Set clear boundaries for when you work, when you rest, and when you disconnect. It's the only way to maintain your balance without feeling guilty about it.
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You didn't start this to lose yourself in it.

You didn't build this just to be buried by it.

You started with a spark. A clear "why."

But somewhere along the way, *busy* became the baseline, and guilt became the background noise.

You're not letting anyone down by stepping away.

You're just remembering you exist outside of Slack messages and strategy decks.

You're allowed to breathe. To be bored. To not be available.

And there's always a better planned way to do it instead of surrendering to your body's shutdown due to burnout.

How to make it happen?

That's exactly what I am holding conversations around through the week, [follow along](#) the journey!

Until next time,

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