

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/avoiding-ceo-burnout/>

Founding a startup can be exhausting, co-founder and CEO of Cruz Foam John Felts notes. He encourages CEOs to find outlets to connect with the things that drive them on a personal level.

### Transcript

- There's the technical side, 00:00:03,860 like the right product at the right market, understand the right costing structure, manufacturing, all of that.. Then there's like the mental side of it and that is as important if not more important.. So the question is, Hey John, during those tough times, like when Cruz Foam only had a thousand dollars in the bank, how did you stay focused rather than freak out, spend all your time concocting exit strategies and alternative career paths, and I know like working with you going back four years, like we never talked about an exit strategy.. There's never like career plans, but how did you keep that all together? - Man that's a really good question.. 00:00:38,820 I think, you know, the core of it's definitely support.. I think, you know, either it's a good co-founder, it's, you know, family, it's friends, finding that network of support, a lot of times outside of the business, I think is gonna be really what you need.. For me personally I think a lot of it came down to, as I said, you know, this is something that I really, really saw as a unique opportunity in my life and if I wasn't gonna go till my wits end and see this to the absolute last breath, then I wouldn't have done it from the beginning.. And I think that's kind of something you really have to be honest with yourself before you even start a journey like this is, are you willing to take this to the very, very end of its life, be good or bad? And that if you're working on exit strategies before that point, you've answered that question.. And I think when my biggest struggles was, you know, the nights where we're baking stuff over a steel barbecue, or something, I've just worked eight hours delivering pizzas, I come home, my six month year old daughter's screaming her head off and I'm just exhausted and really it's having outlets that allow you to really clear your mind and really allow you to reconnect with that core, you know, personal spirit vision, you know, drive that helped you and really put you on this path to begin with and that for me was the ocean, and so I don't get back to the ocean as much as I'd love to, but in the early days it was critical, you know, you have certain mediums and you have certain, you know, energies I think that if you can identify those and tap into those, they'd really allow you to regenerate yourself in a way to keep driving 'cause at the end of the day if as a CEO you're feeling you can't bring your best, it's gonna be really hard for your team to wanna do that and I think that's where it starts at the top and having good support, having good, you know, outlets to regenerate and really step away I think is key and that's why, you know, co-founder or founder burnout is, is a real thing and having that separation even at the early days can be really daunting, 'cause you know, how do I step away? If I step away from a day it's all gonna crumble, it's not.. And a lot of times that's gonna be way more beneficial for you and your team...