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I provide pragmatic advice and services to entrepreneurs and startups.

# 10 Behavioral Tips To Raise Your Cool Factor At Work

Every business professional needs to stay cool under pressure, to be a top performer, and for the sake of their own health. Yet everyone has a melting point – a critical threshold where pressure causes them to respond irrationally. Many people believe their threshold is permanently set by family genetics, or cultural influences, but I believe anyone can train themselves to stay cool.

In my role as a business advisor, I've seen it happen many times as business leaders mature, and I've felt the change in myself over time. I've always been looking for the specific behaviors required to make the change, so I was pleased to see some real guidance in a new book, "The Melting Point," by Dr. Christian Marcolli, a world-class expert on sustainable high performance.

I like his ten behavioral change recommendations for improving your ability to stay cool under pressure and deliver sustained world-class business performance under massive intensity:

1. **Define and commit to live by your core values.** People who try to be someone they aren't feel constant pressure. Strive to understand your core values and your deeper purpose (personal and professional), and use only these when making fundamental decisions. Get out of, and don't take on roles that force you to compromise your values.
2. **Prepare for your key performance moments.** Some professionals refuse to prepare for known tough issues, with a false belief that they can finesse any challenge, or they refuse to prioritize. Even the best do extra homework to prepare mentally and emotionally to be at their personal best to deliver on key performance meetings and presentations.
3. **Focus on and recognize incremental progress.** The key to sustaining high motivation and a high melting point is feeling that you are making progress on key issues on a daily basis. Sometimes it means reserving daily dedicated time for key issues, to facilitate visible progress. You will then experience satisfaction, instead of increased pressure.
4. **Save 30 percent of your energy for outside activities.** Leaving work every day exhausted leads to burnout and easy meltdowns. Save some energy for your family and friends, and restoring balance and vigor to your body. Professionals who don't manage their diet, exercise, breaks, and sleep, will always find their melting point nearby.
5. **Establish boundaries and say 'no' more often.** The most productive and respected business people know their limits and assertively protect them. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself

and courteously explain to bosses or colleagues why certain requests or expectations may be unreasonable. Do the same in commitments to family and friends.

6. **Plan for performance with a reserve.** Schedule yourself in such a way that you can expect to deliver your top results at 90 to 95 percent of your energy levels. This allows for those all-too-common occasions when things take longer than expected, or your time is pre-empted for higher-priority tasks. Learn to delegate more as well. Never over-commit.
7. **Manage office political relationships.** Time spent building and maintaining key work relationships can dramatically improve your productivity, reduce stress, and raise your melting point. After having assessed your environment, start healthy networking activities, such as lunch, with important people in your professional network on a weekly basis.
8. **Add more inspirational people to your network.** When you reach a certain level or role in an organization, it is difficult to find time to spend with inspiring people who can provide you with insights and new perspectives. Set aside time to seek out experts in your field for ideas, as well as mentoring and coaching. Make this a priority in your private life also.
9. **Mentally transition between work and home.** To raise your melting point, always take a few minutes of silence at the beginning of each day at work to get mentally and emotionally ready to be at your personal best. Do the same 'check-in' with your best side as you transition from work to home. You will connect better with people in both worlds.
10. **Disconnect from work devices in the bedroom.** Diligently protect some private space in your home, preferably your bedroom, where no work devices or conversations can appear. This space must be associated only with rest and recovery, to offset the stress and demands of the office. Only make exceptions if there is a true business emergency.

The stakes are higher than ever in this competitive and rapidly changing world. Businesses have become pressure cookers filled with disruptions and chaos. It's enough to drive the best of us to a meltdown in performance or confidence.

Don't assume that what you can achieve or tolerate is limited by anything or anyone in your present or past. With a new focus on the right habits, you too can be the cool business leader you now only read about in the news.