It Doesn't Have To Be Crazy At Work Summary
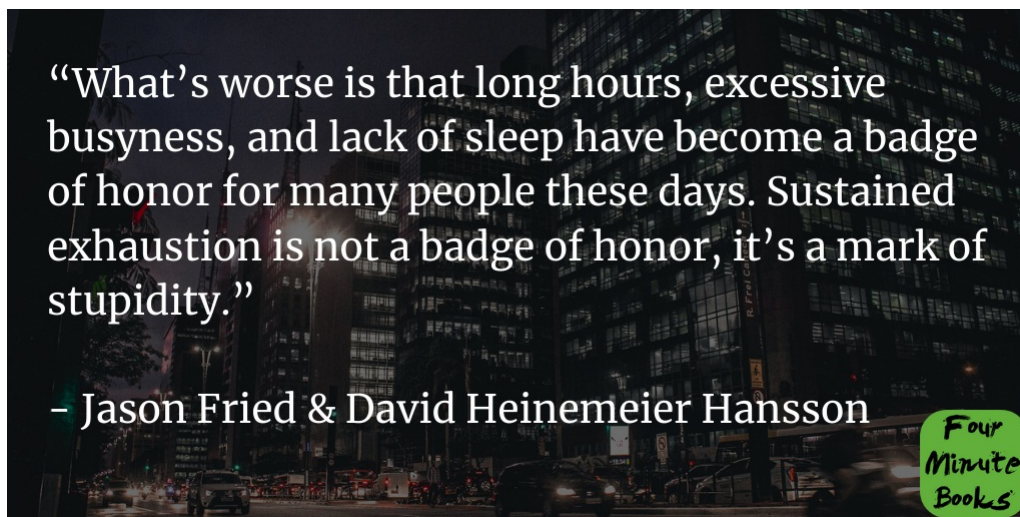
1-Sentence-Summary: _It Doesn't Have To Be Crazy At Work_ helps you relax about the current hurry-up and work yourself to death culture and instead see why getting rid of these stressful mentalities will make you and your company more focused, calm, and productive.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:

> "What's worse is that long hours, excessive busyness, and lack of sleep have become a badge of honor for many people these days. Sustained exhaustion is not a badge of honor, it's a mark of stupidity."
>
> – Jason Fried & David Heinemeier Hansson

When did the world get so crazy about work? It seems like all of a sudden working 70 hours a week is a badge of honor instead of a sign of insanity. Not only that, but companies are starting to call themselves your family, whatever that means.

What we need amid this mess of mixed priorities is a reminder of what really matters. We need a way to get back to rationality. That's what Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, founders of Basecamp are here to do with their book _It Doesn't Have To Be Crazy At Work_.

The excellent advice they teach will help you leave behind the unhealthy habits of working longer, stressing about deadlines, and demonizing your competition. Their simple secret is that truly successful companies prioritize work-life balance over insanity. After this, you're going to know how to really work smart!

Here are 3 of the greatest lessons you can use to relax about work:

1. See your company as if it were a product to help you reduce the craziness.
2. Employers should respect their employee's time better, and they can do this by making meetings more efficient.

3. Take calculated risks to ease the stress, doubt, and indecision that often come with any new venture.

Take a breath. Relax. You don't have to be so stressed about work and we're about to find out how!

Lesson 1: **Work won't be so crazy if you treat your company like it was a product.**

In my old engineering job, I had managers who consistently put in 60 hour weeks or longer. They'd be the first to come in and the last to leave. And most of the time they wore their weariness from it like a badge of honor.

I vowed that I would never do that. Now that I'm out of that job, however, I still often see this dangerous mentality. The average person looks down on working 40 hours a week or less, and this is wrong.

It makes sense when you consider that business owners need to keep their company profitable, but this is the wrong way to do it.

One way to help the added <u>stress</u> that comes from overworking is to look at the similarities between your company and a product. Start by asking yourself some questions to get you thinking.

How easy or difficult is it for employees to "use" your company? In what areas is it efficient and where is it slow? And are there any bugs that you need to fix?

Consider the mindset of any business that sells a product. They're constantly working hard to make sure it's as good as possible, right? In the same way, you can also keep looking for ways to make sure that your business or job is as efficient as it can be.

And don't forget that just like software, companies and individuals will end up crashing if their problems aren't taken care of!

Lesson 2: **You can get more out of the workday if you don't waste so much time in unimportant meetings and other time sinkholes.**

As cofounders of their business, Fried and Hansson have done something radical for their employees. They've let them have an eight-hour workday. Doesn't sound crazy to you? Well in this day, most managers don't think this is enough.

If you think about this, it's kind of insane. Some long flights are eight hours and they feel like an eternity, yet the same amount of time at the office doesn't feel nearly as long. Even with this time, why do we never feel like we can get it all done in just 40 hours a week?

Comparing the flight to a regular workday, it's not got many distractions. When you're in the office, in contrast, you've got a ton of interruptions from all sorts of places. Not to mention a string of meaningless and inefficient meetings that only pull you away from <u>focusing on your work</u>.

With all of this going on it can seem totally normal to work over 40 hours a week. But we know that doesn't work well so how can we get past it? **Similar to our last lesson, companies also need to take care of their employee's time with as much care as they give their products.**

One way that Basecamp, the authors' company, does this is by getting rid of useless status update meetings. Instead, they've set up a system where everyone can put their progress report into the company's software for others to review when they please.

Lesson 3: **Relaxation, confidence, and decisiveness are all results of taking calculated risks.**

Although it's not always a fun thing, risk is absolutely necessary in business. No matter what you do, there will always be some amount of uncertainty involved.

If you take too many uncalculated chances on new ideas, it can be disastrous. But the opposite is also true, that feeling like you have to have everything figured out also brings a lot of stress.

The authors have this balance figured out with their company. They once increased the monthly price of their software from $29 to $99 without any <u>market research</u>!

How was this not a stupid idea that went horribly wrong? Well, they were smart and decided to only increase the cost for new clients, not existing ones.

That meant that they could test this option without diving into expensive and lengthy market research because they could rely on their existing customer base if it failed. And it wouldn't be that hard to just roll back the price increase either.

Often the best way forward is to look for new ways to make testing your product in the real world as safe as possible. This is always better than wasting time endlessly worrying about what might happen!

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It Doesn't Have To Be Crazy At Work Review

I feel like every self-improvement book about work is either saying "go harder" or "be reasonable," and _It Doesn't Have To Be Crazy At Work_ is definitely more of the latter, which I really like. It's great to have ambitions, but this really helps put everything into perspective of what's actually achievable. Now if we could only get more employers to catch on to these reasonable measures!

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Who would I recommend the It Doesn't Have To Be Crazy At Work summary to?

The 38-year-old manager who thinks that his employees aren't as good if they work less than 45 hours a week, the 24-year-old who is just starting her career and wants to make sure to have work-life balance, and anyone that would like to feel less stress about work.