

# EAP Newsletter: Supervisor

## Disconnecting From Work Can Make You a Better Manager



Adapted from [Journal of Applied Psychology](#)

**Striking a better work-life balance might make you a more effective manager on the job, according to a new study.**

**A survey of managers and their employees found that bosses who could shut off after-work emails, calls and job-related stress had greater success guiding others to meet work goals.**

### Survey Findings

The survey found that when leaders psychologically detached from work when at home - they did not actively think about work-related issues, but instead engaged in activities that allowed them to disconnect and recharge -- they felt more energized the next day at work, in ways that made them more effective as rated by their direct reports.

Managers who were best able to distinguish between their work life and their home life ended up “rated as more transformational and powerful by their subordinates,” said Lanaj, an associate professor of management at the University of Florida Warrington College of Business. “In contrast, on days when leaders kept ruminating about negative aspects of their work while at home, they felt more drained the next day at work, and were less transformational and powerful,” she added.

Lanaj and her colleagues in 2019 surveyed 73 full-time work managers/leaders, including human resources managers, directors of finance, general managers and/or chief engineers.

## Survey Breakdown

- Nearly 6 in 10 were women, and the majority were white, with an average age of 38. Work was mostly conducted outside the home.
- On average, participants had been on the job for nearly eight years. A team of nine employees was average.
- Surveys were conducted about an hour a day over 10 consecutive workdays, and assessed the degree to which each team leader felt able to mentally detach when the work day ended.
- They were asked how much their jobs affected them emotionally outside of office hours. They were also questioned about their sleep quality and quantity; their at-work energy levels, and how they felt about their own leadership skills and competence.
- The team also surveyed 63 men and women who worked for the managers in question.
- These subordinates were asked how well the manager communicated goals and vision, displayed energy and enthusiasm, and/or challenged their team to think outside the box. Employees also rated how effective their manager was at wielding power and/or getting the team to listen and execute requests.
- These subordinates were asked how well the manager communicated goals and vision, displayed energy and enthusiasm, and/or challenged their team to think outside the box. Employees also rated how effective their manager was at wielding power and/or getting the team to listen and execute requests.

Lanaj acknowledged that the findings may not jive with modern American office culture in which corporate leaders think “that remaining connected to work at all hours -- staying and emailing late -- signals to our colleagues and bosses that we are committed to our work and that we take what we do seriously . . . such signals won't matter much if you don't have the energy to appropriately motivate and guide the work of your team.”

## Practical Steps to De-Stress and Recuperate

- Don't look at your work phone after 9 pm
- Take a leisurely stroll in nature
- Get exercise
- Spend time with loved ones

This is echoed by Dr. Joe Verghese, director of the Montefiore-Einstein Center for the Aging Brain at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City.

He suggested hard-working managers can improve their well-being by “picking up a hobby, meditation and exercise. The idea, is not to turn off your brain when you get home, but make a conscious effort to reduce the stressful aspects of work when not in the workplace.”

### Need help managing stress or employee burnout?

Connect with FCH EAP for  
unlimited, free consultations.

**800-777-4114**

**[www.FirstChoiceEAP.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEAP.com)**