

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/elite-performance-is-about-recovery>

Elite performers such as professional athletes and Navy SEALs, observes BetterUp CEO and co-founder Alexi Robichaux, manage short bursts of stress by building in robust recovery mechanisms. Those fields can provide useful models for entrepreneurs. Robichaux advises entrepreneurs to build their own framework of support and recovery.



## Transcript

I've gotten better at it.. But I really do think with entrepreneurship, the best mental model I've come across is, I mean, it's Olympic athletes or elite performers.. It's like, Navy SEALs, whatever you wanna use.. It's like, that is the equivalent of the game we're in in business, is it is about elite performance.. And when you study elite performers, what you find is that stress is okay, if it's in episodic periods and it's well-managed, right? So stress is not universally bad.. In fact, we do really well as humans under short bursts of stress.. We may achieve things we normally would not have achieved.. It's really about periods of recovery, and I think that's what we don't talk about enough, is you are actually pretty resilient and durable, and if you're an entrepreneur, you probably selected into that, because you maybe adrenaline junkies or whatever it may be.. But what you can't avoid, and when you look at and we've been fortunate to work with the sports psychologist from the Navy SEALs, some of these sports teams, Olympians, when you look at these folks, what you find is recovery is equally important and under-talked about in business.. They are not ashamed, a SEAL is not ashamed to tell you that, "I'm not mission fit on this mission..

"I'm not in the right headspace, "and I don't wanna jeopardize these people." They have a protocol for that.. They don't look down on them.. There's no machismo, "Eh, Toby." They may feel bad, but they're like, "This is life or death.. "I'm not gonna go on a mission "and jeopardize the integrity of the mission, "which could be my best friend's life, "because something I'm not managing "or something's going on in my personal life." There's no shame in that.. But in business, we don't have that.. For some reason, business is the only elite endeavor that I've found where we are A, expected to always perform and never practice.. Most elite sports practice 90% of the time and perform 10% of less, and B, if you need help and support, you're worse at the job that at any other elite endeavor, where the better you are, the more help and support you need, right? LeBron James has more coaches than any high school basketball player you've ever met.. Do you say, "Well, "LeBron's getting propped up by all these coaches.. "If he didn't have the coaches, he wouldn't do it." No, you say like, "He has so much potential, "it takes seven people and a million dollars a year "to spend on his body to realize that.. "That's crazy." But we haven't made that map in business..

So my encouragement to entrepreneurs is like, you're starting a new business.. Make the map.. Just be unashamed about it.. Build recovery in.. That's what we do with inner work.. Build that dialog and discipline, you know?..