**Partner confronts majority owner, tries on leadership role and pushes back stress**

David seeks coaching for extreme stress and anxiety due to a difficult transition to a new company. David had been Vice President of Marketing at a large high tech organization and bought into a small software company with two other partners. One of the firm's partners, Steve, unilaterally hired a friend as director of sales despite the fact Steve’s friend had no high tech experience, conducted himself unprofessionally and was not coordinating his efforts with David’s marketing initiatives. Because Steve is the firm's founder and majority owner, he felt emboldened to make this hiring decision despite dissent from David and the third partner, Rick. David disclosed that he felt anxious about challenging Steve because he is the majority owner of the firm. David was also feeling significant stress because he had left a secure position for a start-up which had not brought in any customers after 3 months in the business.

Upon learning David’s challenges, the following recommendations were made:

* To review the partnership agreement to determine the language regarding hiring decisions. Upon reviewing the contract, David was reminded that the partners had agreed that a consensus or majority vote amongst partners was necessary for any management or director positions.
* Encouraged David to align with Rick to remind Steve about the established hiring policy in the partnership agreement. Suggest placing an addendum to the partnership agreement that the firm will not engage in nepotism going forward.
* To propose that the partners run ads in high tech publications as well as engage a couple recruiting firms to locate sales talent with both management and technology/software experience. Also recommended that both David and Rick interview David’s friend to determine whether or not the friend is a fit for a sales position.
* Re-evaluate hiring an HR manager or internal recruiter in 1 year’ time.
* Recommend weekly meetings between sales and marketing departments for continuity purposes.
* Suggested that David practice assertiveness skills by reminding himself of his wants, needs and rights as a partner. Encouraged David to read the book My Perfect Right: Assertiveness and Equality in Your Life and Relationships by Robert Alberti and Michael Emmons and/or watch videos about leadership by John C. Maxwell and Stephen Covey.
* Begin a regular cardiovascular exercise program, balanced diet, adequate sleep regimen and meditation practice to develop the stamina and focus to withstand the long hours and stress that invariably comes with starting a new business.
* Set reasonable boundaries around work and allow for hobbies and socializing with friends and girlfriend.

**Female accountant boosts CFO’s status to partner and friend and is promoted to CFO**

Marissa presents to my office complaining of stress secondary to a strained relationship with her work supervisor. Marissa is an accountant and has been with her company for 15 years and been promoted from a receptionist to an accountant to a supervisor. Over the past 15 years the company has grown from 5 employees to over 100 and during that time Marissa had become known as the jack of all trades in the company, someone the partners would entrust to manage a multitude of problems. Marissa's issues with the company began when the partners hired a new CFO, Barbara, to whom Marissa began to report, and whom Marissa described as “critical, dismissive, demanding and insecure.” Marissa adds that Barbara had become bitter after learning that she would not be promoted to a partner because she lacked the people skills to represent the company externally and as a result directed her anger and disappointment towards Marissa.

To exacerbate matters, the partners would surpass Barbara and go directly to Marissa with problems or concerns. Barbara was also aware that Marissa had been offered a partnership, but had turned the opportunity down because she has three children and had decided that she didn't want to work 70 - 80 hour work weeks which is common for the partners. Marissa is committed to the company and is at a loss in terms of how to deal with Barbara.

These were my recommendations to Marissa:

* First, for Marissa to make it crystal clear to Barbara that Marissa was satisfied with her current position, had no interest in climbing the corporate ladder because her family was her priority. Also, I recommended that Melissa communicate to Barbara that Melissa was eager to not only learn from Barbara, but to help her meet her business objectives.
* Secondly, I suggested that Marissa attempt to bond with Barbara by discussing the roles of wife and mother, roles which were shared by Barbara.
* Thirdly, I suggested Marissa ask Barbara for a formal review to both empower Barbara and to provide Marissa the specific feedback she needed to meet Barbara’s expectations. In the event that Marissa didn't feel like she was being treated fairly or was being provided objective feedback in this evaluation process, I recommended that she request a partner participate in the process or read the evaluation for a second perspective.
* Finally, I suggested that Marissa refer the partners to Barbara with their problems as a way to set appropriate boundaries, adhere to the chain of command and not provide Barbara additional ammunition to use against Melissa.

Marissa reported that the relationship between Barbara and herself improved immensely now that Barbara felt like Marissa was Barbara’s teammate and friend, that Barbara was now recognizing Marissa for her contributions to Barbara's department and the company, the partners were realizing the value Barbara was adding to the firm and Barbara was even confiding in Marissa regarding both business and personal matters. Ironically, Barbara was not only Marissa’s “partner” but she earned partnership with the company and Marissa accepted a final promotion to CFO only after negotiating a work week that would not exceed 45 hours.