

The Great Startup Rollercoaster

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<http://blog.eladgil.com/2010/09/are-you-alcoholic-yet-or-great-startup.html>

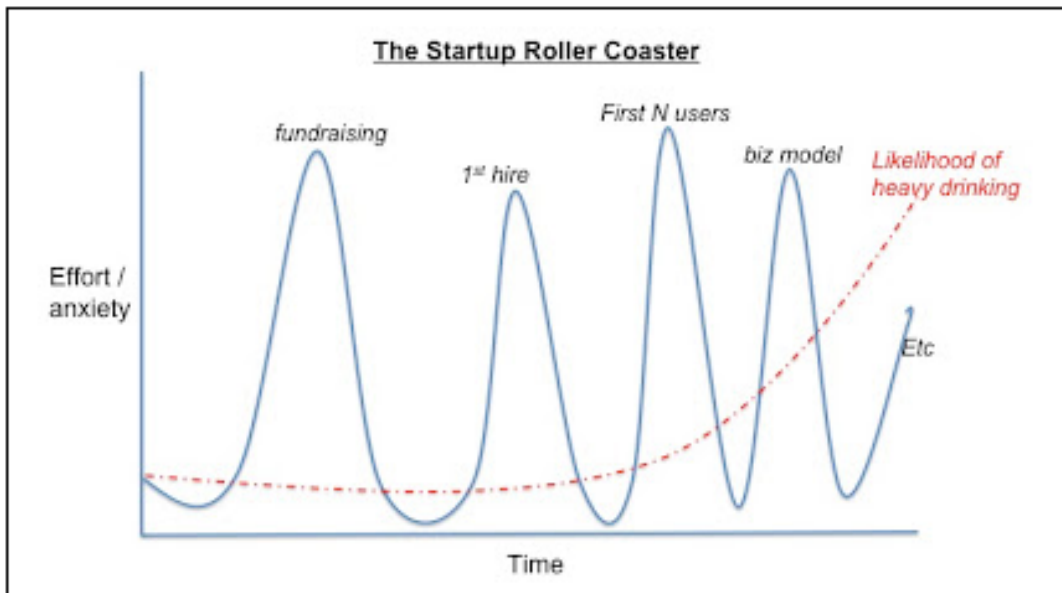
*These are my personal notes. It's **not** a full transcript of the essay/article. It's **not** an official summary. If you like these notes I strongly encourage you to read the original source in the link(s) above.*

Startups are by their nature extremely stressful. At a large company, the company itself has momentum. With a few exceptions, if one person (or team of people) were to suddenly disappear, the company will continue to coast for (potentially) multiple years before the effects may become evident.

In contrast, at a startup as the entrepreneur if **you** stop pushing, everything immediately comes to a halt.

There are times when you need to push much harder than others to get over a hump that reminds me of activation energy from chemistry. Early on these events can be exhilarating, but with time some of these high anxiety / workload moments can really wear you out. They may include things like:

- Hiring the first employee
- Raising money
- Getting the first N users
- Acquisition talks
- Getting sued
- Pivoting
- Getting N users for the new pivot product
- Figuring out a business model
- Etc. etc.



So how to deal with all the stress? At Mixer Labs (a company I started) I tried to do the following:

- **Make it fun for everyone.** Startups are hard work. Find key things to celebrate. We created our own day off in April called Numa Numa day. We did team hikes. We rented out a ski cabin in Tahoe for a week and did half days snowboarding and half days working. Everyone on the team was working really hard, so we wanted to make sure we found simple, cash conservative ways to reward everyone while also creating a fun environment for ourselves.
- **Change context to decompress.** After a while, working 7 days a week is exhausting. Make sure to take a weekend off to go to another city with your significant other.
- **Do your best to maintain key relationships.** I had to cancel a pre-planned family trip with my girlfriend in order to work. She was super understanding (she is amazing in general!), but the startup lifestyle can really stress relationships. Try to find ways to connect with loved ones on a regular basis as their support will help get you through tough times - and will help with decompression! Buy your girlfriend flowers or take your boyfriend to Sausalito. Find a way to connect and be with one another.
- **Get sleep.** This is self explanatory. Try going without caffeine for 30 days - it will make a BIG difference and force you to sleep when tired.
- **Exercise.** This will help you decompress and clear the mind.
- **Have a hobby.** This may be hard if you are working maniacal hours. However, even something you do 20 minutes a day can have a huge positive impact. By making progress on something other than the startup, you can feel like good things are happening in life even if work is especially tough.

Startups are stressful but very rewarding. If you don't find ways to cope with the stress you will burn out or blow up and the work environment will deteriorate rapidly.