



RUNNING ON EMPTY

How to Beat Burnout

"Remember your to-do list is immortal. It will live on long after you're dead."

- Joan Borysenko

Have you ever worked in an environment that made you feel more like a corporate zombie than a celebrated talent?

Let's face it, our work can sometimes leave us feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious and exhausted. The stress can take a toll on you physically, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. Sometimes that stress can take us to the point where we feel like we're hanging on to a very thin thread and, at any moment, that thread can snap.

When you're experiencing the daily or weekly run-of-the-mill type stress, when the weekend comes you pick your 'recharge remedy' - date night, hanging out with the family, a walk in the woods, a cup of warm tea, a good book, listening to your favorite music - and before you know it you're back to feeling right as rain on Monday morning.

But have you ever experienced long stretches of time when you felt more than merely 'stressed-out'? Times when just getting out of bed can feel like you're being asked to lift twice your weight? Have you struggled with the day-to-day stressors of life to the point where you feel like you just don't care anymore? Perhaps you're experiencing that sense of fatigue, lack of drive, and ineffectiveness right now. Perhaps you're burned out. If so, you're not alone.



"I think that burnout happens because of resentment. That notion that, 'wow, I worked 100 hours last week, and I couldn't even have this thing that I really wanted.'"

*- Marissa Mayer
I.T. Executive and
former CEO of Yahoo!*

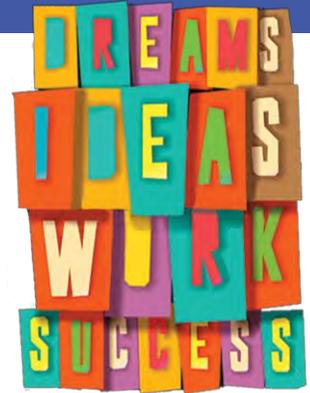
We have a complicated relationship with our jobs and businesses, and that has led to a work-life imbalance skewed in favor of work. You don't have to look far for evidence that people are working longer hours, taking on more responsibilities, skipping holidays and weekends and feeling an overall sense of overwhelm at work.

Perhaps the effects of burnout are staring back at you every time you look in the mirror.



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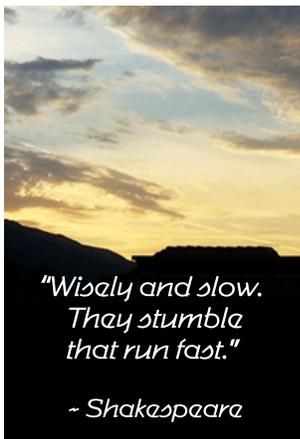
A Gallup report based on a random sample of 30,628 full- and part-time U.S. employees conducted in 2016 showed that only 34% of the American workforce is engaged with work and 16.4% are actively disengaged. That leaves a whopping 53% of employees who are disconnected with the work they do. Let that number sink in for a moment – 53% of employees are stressed, unmotivated, disinterested and basically burned out.

Are you one of them?

Despite these staggering statistics, there is little understanding, support, or sympathy for burnout. Sharing our sense of overwhelm, our deepest fears and stress is often met with such platitudes as:

“suck it up, that’s life, get it together or get out, or keep calm and carry on.”

But ‘sucking it up’ only intensifies the feelings of helplessness that arise from prolonged stress. What’s worse, ignoring chronic burnout can lead to: anxiety, insomnia (sleep disturbances), helplessness, the inability to concentrate, impaired memory, headaches, neck/back pain, gastrointestinal disorders, immune system dysfunction, and depression.



*“Wisely and slow,
They stumble
that run fast.”*

~ Shakespeare

Think your mind is powerful enough to overcome all that stress? It is. But not over the long-term. It turns out that burnout impairs our brain’s ability function. Over time our capacity to process memory, concentrate, and the ability to control our emotions becomes impaired.

If all that wasn’t enough burnout also decreases immune function making us more susceptible to viruses that cause the common cold and flu. It increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease (heart attack and stroke), and Type 2 Diabetes. Basically, burnout can kill us!

But there is good news!

We can reverse the adverse effects of burnout on both our bodies and our brains. But in order to do that we need to better understand what burnout is and what the warning signs are. We need to determine where we are on the burnout continuum and how to prevent it, or how to overcome it if we’re in the middle of it.





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*"Take this job
and shove it
I ain't working
here no more. . . "*

*- From the song,
Take This Job and
Shove It, Johnny
Paycheck*

3 MAIN ELEMENTS of BURNOUT

Can you think of a time you wanted to tell your boss to 'take this job and shove it'? Who hasn't?

What's the source of those feelings?

According to professor of psychology at the University of California and expert on occupational burnout, Christina Maslach, and the author of *Burnout-The Cost of Caring*, burnout is a syndrome characterized by three elements: **exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of personal accomplishment.**



Let's take a closer look at these three elements of burnout:



EXHAUSTION You know what it feels like to be exhausted - when you're drained and your reserves are completely used up. It's a result of being emotionally, intellectually, and/or physically overextended. Exhaustion makes it difficult to concentrate and it can feel as if your brain is lost in a fog.

Do you feel like your 'get up and go' has 'got up and went'?

CYNICISM Have you ever caught yourself believing that people are solely motivated by self-interest? Cynicism can make you feel distant and cause you to withdraw from others. This negatively impacts your relationships and interferes with the ability to get the job done.

Are you experiencing a *sense of depersonalization* and *lack of emotions* towards work, bosses, colleagues, coworkers, or clients?

INEFFECTIVENESS Do you feel as if you don't have the power to produce the results you want? Feeling a sense of low personal accomplishment - which leads to feelings of incompetence is another indicator of burnout. Inefficacy leads to lower self-esteem and self-confidence.

Does it feel like you're constantly *spinning your wheels*, and you never quite *reach the results* you're after?



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COMMON INDICATORS OF BURNOUT

- ▶ Putting little or no effort into projects, tasks, or relationships.
- ▶ Feeling emotionally numb.
- ▶ Feeling helpless and lethargic.
- ▶ Experiencing long-term emotional and psychological pain.
- ▶ Feeling a long-term loss of hope.



"Americans need rest, but do not know it."

- Bartrand Russell

Do any of the above descriptions resonate with you? Maybe you've felt that way at some point in your life. Maybe you're feeling it right now. Or perhaps it describes someone you know.

If so, it may be worthwhile to look more deeply into the syndrome known as **burnout**. With greater insight, finding solutions and taking preventative steps becomes possible.

CAUSES of BURNOUT

*"Workin' 9 to 5, what a way to make a livin'
Barely gettin' by, it's all takin' and no givin'
They just use your mind and they never give you credit
It's enough to drive you crazy if you let it
9 to 5, for service and devotion
You would think that I would deserve a fat promotion
Want to move ahead but the boss won't seem to let me
I swear sometimes that man is out to get me!"*

~ (Lyrics from the song, 9 to 5 by Dolly Parton.)



After surveying more than 10,000 people across a wide range of organizations, Christina Maslach and her associates determined that most workplace burnout fell into one of six areas:



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workplace burnout

- 1 Workload** - too much work, too few resources.
- 2 Control** - accountability without authority, lack of employee input.
- 3 Reward** - discrepancies/incongruities between effort and financial rewards and/or absence of recognition, acknowledgment, appreciation, or credit.
- 4 Community** - suffering isolation, high conflict work environment, and lack of respect for creativity, from bosses, coworkers, or customers.
- 5 Fairness** - experiencing inequality, punitive discipline, preferential treatment, and/or discrimination.
- 6 Values** - facing conflict between personal and business values and ethics clashes.

Is it any wonder so many of us feel like we *'...want to move ahead but the boss won't seem to let me.'*? Dolly Parton's ditty became a rallying cry of sorts to acknowledge the everyday struggles and frustrations employees face. Turns out she may have been on to something.

Since, according to Business Insider, the average person spends somewhere around 90,000 hours of their lives at work, knowing where to find the source of your own workplace burnout makes you better equipped to avert and eventually eliminate it from your life.

Once you know what to look for, and with a little effort, recognizing the signs of burnout and taking measures to avoid it can become second nature. So now that you know what signs to look for from your work environment it's time to get a little more personal and see where you can find the signs of burnout in your life.

ARE YOU BURNING OUT



Here is a short list of things to look for.

Have you noticed changes in yourself over the past 6 months?

- ▶ *Do you have bags under your eyes because you can't sleep?*
- ▶ *Are people annoying you by saying "you don't look so good lately"?*
- ▶ *Are you working harder and harder and accomplishing less?*
- ▶ *Are you often overwhelmed by a sadness you can't explain?*
- ▶ *Are you seeing close friends and family less frequently?*
- ▶ *Have you stopped enjoying sex?*



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"SELF DISCIPLINE
is often disguised as short-term pain, which often leads to long-term gains. The mistake many of us make is the need and want for short-term gains (immediate gratification), which often leads to long-term pain."

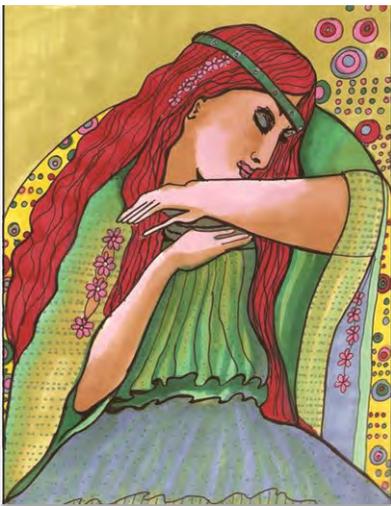
- Charles F Glassman,
*Brain Drain: The Breakthrough
That Will Change Your Life*

HOW TO AVOID BURNOUT

When exploring ways to avoid burnout, let's first address the unhealthy strategies many of us lean on to cope with the burdens, demands and responsibilities of life. That's right, we're looking at you - *instant gratification*. Immediate gratification offers the promise of a quick fix to help us heal from burnout. You know the drill - retail therapy, self-medicating with food (or caffeine, or sugar, or fat), binge watch TV and social media, video games or adrenaline-fueled activities like gambling for example. But those strategies are merely stopgap measures that, over time, actually hurt our chances of recovering from burnout.

- ▶ Know the signs and symptoms of the beginning of burnout
- ▶ Develop a self-care plan that is holistic and individual to you
- ▶ Put your self-care plan into action
- ▶ Monitor your progress
- ▶ Remember self-care is not selfish.

See how I can help. Contact me for a **free DISCOVERY** session now.



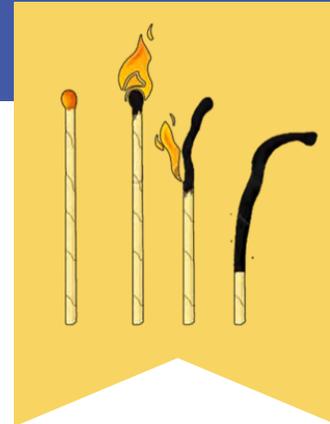
When you reach the bottom of that pint of Ben and Jerry's or that bottle of whiskey do you really feel much better? **Of course you do!** But those good feelings vanish quickly and can actually contribute to the intensity and duration of burnout rather than alleviating it. Who among us hasn't suffered from 'food and alcohol regrets' from time to time? But there are healthier ways of dealing with burnout.

So if 'accomplishments' like binge watching an entire season of Frankie and Grace on Netflix in a weekend or buying that latest widget you don't need aren't cutting it for you anymore, read on.



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BURNOUT WON'T SIMPLY 'RUN IT'S COURSE' !

Turns out, burnout is like a virus.

It's insidious.

It's invisible.

It can knock you off your feet, often before you even realize what hit you. But unlike a virus, burnout must be proactively treated or it will never go away. Luckily there is a way to 'treat' burnout - a way to eliminate it from your life and get back to feeling more yourself.

And the good news is the treatment is simple!

All it takes is a few modest changes in attitude and behavior to help refuel your tank, keep you in the race, and ensure you'll eventually cross the finish line. There is a catch, however: the nature and symptoms of burnout (apathy, fatigue, and hopelessness, for example) can make it challenging to move from inertia to momentum. So, while the solution may be simple, it's not effortless. But the effort you do put into recovery will be worth it in the end - *promise!*



*"Energy and
persistence
conquer all things."*

~ Benjamin Franklin

Ask for help!

Whether you have a case of full-blown burnout or you suspect you are heading in that direction there are strategies to prevent burnout from taking hold of your life.

▶ **Burnout is a serious condition. You may need professional counseling and interventions if you continue to struggle.**

By incorporating self-care activities into your regular routine, such as going for a walk in nature or socializing with friends, taking time to paint, learning something new, you give your body and mind time to rest, reset, and rejuvenate.

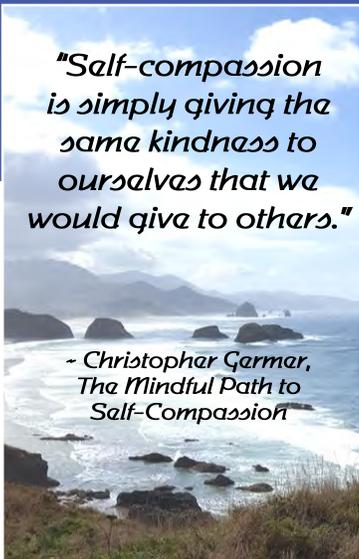
Contact me to brainstorm self-care activities that will keep you **calm, positive, peaceful and productive.**



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"Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others."



- Christopher Garmar, The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion

APPROACHES to ALLEVIATE STRESS & PREVENT BURNOUT

REEVALUATE YOUR PRIORITIES What do you want out of your life and/or work? What's really important to you? Awareness, clarity, knowledge are essential to creating harmony, peace and wellbeing.



SET BOUNDARIES There are many ways to establish healthy boundaries at home and at work. While there's just no escaping certain demands, other responsibilities are 'optional'. Focus on the non-compulsory duties and resist the urge to say 'yes' by practicing saying 'no'. Learning to say "no" is a habit that you have to cultivate. The more you say it, the easier it becomes and the less guilty you feel. Another way to setting boundaries is to use a calendar to establish clear lines between work and personal time and make the promise to yourself you'll stick to it.

TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF We often fill our days with work priorities without a second thought. How would it feel if you were to fill a day (once a week, once a month) to indulge yourself with what you love (massage, scrapbooking, painting, cooking or gardening). If possible turn your phone off, don't respond to emails or texts. If being in nature brings you peace, immerse yourself in it, go to the beach or the botanic gardens, walk in the forest preserve. If you need a break from your family, find a way to make it happen. Go to a hotel for a night, sleep, nourish yourself with healthy food, read books or listen to podcasts. Give yourself permission to do nothing.

COMMIT TO CREATIVE WELLBEING

A foundation of my *All is Well Self Care Plan* are my **THREE** non-negotiable habits:

mindfulness, creative journaling and gratitude.

Researchers have determined that these three practices really help reduce daily stress, become more in tune with your emotions, keeps you present rather than ruminating about the past or the future, and lets you hear what your heart, mind and body are telling you.



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MINDFULNESS PRACTICE Sit down and pay attention to your 5 senses. First, what are hearing? What sound is most prevalent, the train going by, the birds chirping outside the window or the sound of your breath? Then pay attention to what you are smelling, the cookies baking in the oven or the smell of steamed broccoli. What are you tasting in your mouth, toothpaste or the cup of coffee you just had? Notice what you can see, the shadows on the rug, pops of color with your favorite painting or the photograph of your loved ones on your desk? Finally what are you feeling or touching, your sit bones, the fabric of your clothes, the coolness of the leather couch?

CREATIVE JOURNALING Another tool to have in your arsenal is creative journaling. It is an effective tool to process stressful circumstances or events, and work through your feelings. They have found that **45 minutes of creative activity significantly lessens stress in the body, regardless of artistic experience or talent.** Next time you are feeling stressed try scribbles and doodles, coloring in an adult coloring book, or finger painting.



"People are realizing that we are not rats and life is not a race."

- Gair Barthalban

Trauma, such as a car accident, loss of a loved one, stress from a new baby or a reorganization at work - can throw people into turmoil emotionally and physically. Writing about your thoughts and feelings that arise from a traumatic or stressful experience may help you cope with the fallout of such events.

Dr. James W. Pennebaker at the University of Texas, Austin, has conducted much of the research on the health benefits of expressive writing. In one early study, Dr. Pennebaker asked 46 healthy college students to write about either personally traumatic life events or trivial topics for 15 minutes on four consecutive days. For six months afterwards student who wrote were healthier. At the University of Chicago they found that anxious students who wrote briefly about their fears and feelings earned better grades. A Harvard business school study found that writing for 15 minutes at the end of the day, debriefing and reflecting on what went well that day increased productivity and performance over 22.8%.

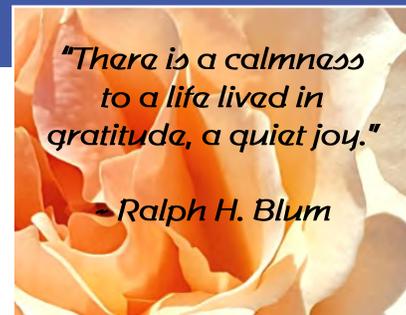




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Exploring your innermost thoughts, writing nonstop for a specified period each day helps you to organize your thoughts and give meaning to a traumatic experience. It also helps to break free from the monkey chatter and brooding. Expressive writing is an easy, low cost, low tech strategy, and well worth exploring.



GRATITUDE In positive psychology research conducted by Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. According to Seligman, gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, focus on what they have not what they lack. It helps people improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. It may feel awkward at first, but with practice it becomes essential and easy.

Here are some ways to cultivate gratitude on a regular basis.

Write a Thank You Note You can make yourself happier and nurture your relationships with mentors, friends, coworkers or clients. Write a thank-you letter expressing appreciation of that person's impact and influence on your life. Tell them very specifically how they made a difference in your life. Send it, or better yet, deliver it in person and have a conversation.

Thank Someone Mentally No time to write? It may help just to think about someone who has done something nice for you, and mentally thank the individual.

Keep a Gratitude Journal Make it a habit to write down or collect images about the gifts you've received each day. Even just asking the question what three things am I grateful for will change your brain. It could be what you learned, who inspired you, or a random act of kindness you received.



Keep A Gratitude Jar in Your Break Room at Work Get a large jar or bowl, keep post it notes close by and have everyone write a note once a week or daily what they are grateful for. It could be a compliment they received from their boss, meeting interesting people at a networking event, the team having a breakthrough or a brilliant idea or coming in under budget.

Count Your Blessing With Family When you sit down to dinner reflect on what went right today and ask everyone to share something that made them happy or feel good.



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ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED AND WANT

The suggestions above can help alleviate stress and help avoid burnout. But what if it's too late to avoid burnout? What if you're in the middle of your own burnout hell right now? Will those solutions help? Perhaps, but if you're suffering from a full-blown case of burnout prioritizing, setting boundaries, journaling or mindfulness, can feel like spitting on a five-alarm fire – sure, you're doing something, but it's not very effective.

"If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete."

Hands down, the best way to deal with burnout is to avoid stress altogether. But let's face it, we live in the real world, who's able to do that?

~ Jack Kornfield

Sure, resigning from work, getting divorced, and quitting school are all options that might immediately eliminate the stressors at the core of our burnout. But those drastic decisions can set us up for a whole new set of stressors. How does being unemployed with bills to pay reduce stress, for example?

While few of us have the luxury of quitting work without a safety net or taking extended leave, there are always ways to carve out time for yourself at work to recover: asking for fewer responsibilities, cutting back on hours, setting more realistic expectations, taking a demotion, and delegating tasks are less drastic options to consider first.

You are worth it! Your health is worth it!

BURNOUT IS A SERIOUS CONDITION

You may need professional counseling and interventions.



Suffering from burnout can impact all aspects of life, but it doesn't need to be a life sentence. Armed with the right mindset, being open to asking yourself some tough questions, and a willingness to feel some (temporary) pain, burnout can provide an opportunity to self-reflect, take stock, and ultimately become more self-aware. It offers a chance for you to turn inward and discover the connection (or disconnection) between your thoughts, feelings, behaviors, values, and the work you've chosen to do. And it can help you determine what steps you need to take to get in alignment with the people and things that matter most in your life.

Once you know the causes and the signs of burnout it can be easy (and even fun!) to implement small, yet significant changes to your lifestyle with a comprehensive **All is Well Self-Care Plan**. With a few small transformations under your belt you'll feel more empowered, more competent, and more confident in making even bigger changes.



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"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

- Marcel Proust

In other words, there is hope. If you're open to it, recovering from burnout can be a springboard into a new, brighter, and more hopeful chapter in your life – an opportunity to rediscover the person you are now and the person you want to become.

The next time you're feeling at the end of your rope ask yourself, what is my burnout trying to tell me? The answers may be the key to permanently eliminating burnout from your life and living life as your truest self.

"wow that is great material but I don't know how to implement this."

This is where I come in. I help you asses where you are, what you need and develop a personalized self-care plan. There is no one size fits all programs. Self-care is a personal matter. It relates to what you do at work and outside of work. It depends on your personality and sensitivities.

My personalized **All is Well Self-Care Plan** includes mental, physical, spiritual and emotional practices which will help you feel rejuvenated and ready for anything. A great self-care plan helps you clarify your values, set priorities and create a vision for wellbeing.

Once you create a self-care plan it is important to ask yourself "what might get in the way" and "what can I do to remove those barriers"? Next you create specific goals and put your plan into action. Let me be your **CREATIVE MINDFULNESS MENTOR** and support as you destress your life and unlock true happiness

You need to take care of yourself before you can care for anyone else. Make a commitment as flight attendants say to put on your oxygen mask first.

Make yourself a priority.

You deserve it.



*Burnout is reversible!
You can bounce back
& **THRIVE**
at any time!*

RAE LUSKIN

*Creative
Mindfulness
Mentor*

