

Four Stages of Burnout

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Understanding Stress and Burnout

- Stress is not bad
- Stress can motivate us and pull us into action and give us energy.
- Not protecting ourselves from over-exposure to stress can make us sick physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.
- Cumulative stress

What is Burnout?

Burnout is the gradual process by which a person, in response to prolonged stress and physical, mental and emotional strain, detaches from work and other meaningful relationships. The result is lowered productivity, cynicism, confusion... a feeling of being drained and having nothing more to give.

Factors Leading to Burnout

- External factors
 - People, Places, Focus of Control
- Internal factors
 - Motivations, Reactions, Self-Image
- Organizational dynamics
 - Relations, Authority, Expectations, Control, Support
- Role expectations
 - Restrictive behavior, Excessive hours, Always being appropriate

Burnout Stage 1 – Physical/Mental/Emotional Exhaustion

- Doing more with less
- Having plenty responsibility without authority
- Juggling an unmanageable schedule

- Things start to take a toll on us.

Burnout Stage 2- Shame and Doubt

- The voice inside doesn't agree
- You lose confidence
- This is a psychological process, not a logical process.

Burnout Stage 3- Cynicism and Callousness

- A response to a prolonged feeling of insecurity or vulnerability.
- Develop attitude to look out for #1.
- Accommodator approach – typically means you are too nice of a person!
- Facilitates the hardening of your psyche and can affect your health.

Burnout Stage 4 – Failure, Helplessness, and Crisis

- Burnout is less a sign of failure, and more so a sign that you gave yourself away.
- Being caught in a “Catch 22”
- Psychological defenses have worn down.
- Burnout is not for wimps!
- Burnout can be ego and e-goal driven.

On the Edge

- Jumping syndrome
- Mood swinging – short highs and/or prolonged depressive lows.
- Stage 4 is the crisis point
- Transform a danger into an opportunity.

Mastering Multiple Demands

- Multiple & Simultaneous Demand Situations
- How do we break the cycle?
 - Delegate & Collaborate
 - Urgent v. Important
 - Experiment & Select a Performance Curve

Vital Lesson of the 4 R's

- Results
 - Rewards
 - Recognition
 - Relief
- If these are not forthcoming, it lays the groundwork for apathy, callousness and despair.

We usually need to experience some level of burnout in order to maintain focus on the 4 R's.

Tips for Handling Burnout

- Recognize the symptoms
- Learn to ask for help
- Be aware of limitations of your family, your job and yourself
- Maintain discipline in daily responsibilities and duties
- Take "time out" during the day
- Diversify responsibilities, put more variety in you job and home life
- Take short vacations at least twice a year.
- Try to change little things that gnaw at you and accommodate to those you can't change.
- Organize your time so you can concentrate on vital tasks.
- Admit when burnout is a real problem for you.

Tips for Handling Burnout (cont'd)

- Distinguish between stressful aspect of your job or home life that you can change, and those you can't change.
- If too much time is being taken away from satisfying aspect of your life by unimportant, trivial duties, establish a set of priorities for yourself.
- Make a list of the things you hate the most – dispense with or delegate all you can.
- Alternate major tasks in which results won't be seen for awhile with those that will have immediate productive and gratifying results.
- Reach an awareness of your motivation in dealing with your family or in entering your specific career field.

Ways to Prevent Burnout

- Be informed of the expectations, scope of responsibilities and timeframe/deadlines when accepting a new task.
- Identify goals and evaluate accordingly both at home and on the job.
- Maintain personal growth both at home and on the job.
- Seek out helpful supervision for your work both at home and on the job.
- Develop an active outside life with a variety of interests.
- Personalize your work and home environment with meaningful pictures, objects, colors, etc.

Ways to Prevent Burnout (cont'd)

- Feel comfortable with yourself, set limits for yourself, and know how far to become involved with family and colleagues.
- Encourage and practice good communication skills.
- Provide for flexible working conditions.
- Seek out encouragement for trying new ideas.
- Find your own "decompression techniques" such as activities like meditation or exercise that relieve tension and put you into a more relaxed state.
- Build a support system for yourself with those who can discuss your problems and help look for solutions. Don't just air gripes; look for solutions.
