



On Fire or Burning Out

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+ “Can’t you find something better to do?”

+ The Burnout Syndrome

ICD-11, WHO

Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of **energy depletion** or **exhaustion**;
- increased **mental distance** from one’s job, or feelings of **negativism** or **cynicism** related to one’s job; and
- **reduced professional efficacy**.

+ Outcomes of burnout

Maslach C, Schaufeli WB, Leiter MP. Job burnout. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 2001. 52:397–422

Job performance

- Job withdrawal—absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and actual turnover.
- Lower productivity and effectiveness at work.
- Decreased job satisfaction and a reduced commitment to the job or the organization.
- Negative impact on colleagues, both by causing greater personal conflict and by disrupting job tasks.
- Can be “contagious” and perpetuate itself through informal interactions on the job.
- Negative “spillover” effect on people’s home life.

+ Outcomes of burnout

Health

- Burnout causes mental dysfunction—that is, it precipitates negative effects in terms of mental health, such as anxiety, depression, drops in self-esteem, and so forth (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter 2001).
- Increases the risk for cardiovascular disease as much as such well-known risk factors as body mass index, smoking and lipid levels (Bailey 2006).
 - Specifically, burnout increases people’s likelihood of developing myocardial infarction, ischemic heart disease, stroke and sudden cardiac death.
 - Studies also point to an increased likelihood of type II diabetes, male infertility, sleep disorders and musculoskeletal disorders among those with the extreme physical, mental and emotional fatigue.

+ Engagement versus burnout

Maslach C, Schaufeli WB, Leiter MP. Job burnout. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 2001. 52:397–422

Maslach & Leiter (1997) rephrased burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job.

- What started out as important, meaningful, and challenging work becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless.
- Energy turns into exhaustion, involvement turns into cynicism, and efficacy turns into ineffectiveness.
- Accordingly, engagement is characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy—the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions.

+ Gallup Q¹² EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT Survey

+ Gallup Q¹²

- Q00. (Overall Satisfaction) On a five-point scale, where "5" is extremely satisfied and "1" is extremely dissatisfied, how satisfied are you with (your company) as a place to work?
- Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.
- Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

+ Gallup Q¹²

- Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.
- Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
- Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
- Q10. I have a best friend at work.
- Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

+ External Causes of Burnout

+ Person-job fit: Match or mismatch?

Maslach C, Schaufeli WB, Leiter MP. Job burnout. Annu. Rev. Psychol. 2001. 52:397–422

Burnout arises from **chronic mismatches between people and their work setting** in terms of some or all of these six areas:



+ Person-job fit: Match or mismatch?

Maslach C, Schaufeli WB, Leiter MP. Job burnout. Annu. Rev. Psychol. 2001. 52:397–422

Workload

- A mismatch in workload is generally found as excessive overload, through the simple formula that too many demands exhaust an individual's energy.
- A workload mismatch may also result from the wrong kind of work, as when people lack the skills or inclination for a certain type of work.
- Emotional work is especially draining when the job requires people to display emotions inconsistent with their feelings.
- Workload is most directly related to the exhaustion aspect of burnout.

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Control

- Individuals have
 - insufficient control over the resources needed to do their work, or have
 - insufficient authority to pursue the work in what they believe is the most effective manner.
- Individuals who are overwhelmed by their level of responsibility may experience a crisis in control as well as in workload.



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Reward

- Insufficient financial rewards.
- Lack of social rewards - one's hard work is ignored and not appreciated by others.
- The lack of intrinsic rewards (such as pride in doing something of importance and doing it well) can also be a critical part of this mismatch.



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Community

- The fourth mismatch occurs when people lose a sense of positive connection with others in the workplace.
- People thrive in community and function best when they share praise, comfort, happiness, and humor with people they like and respect.
- Social support reaffirms a person's membership in a group with a shared sense of values.
- What is most destructive of community is chronic and unresolved conflict with others on the job.



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Fairness

- Fairness communicates respect and confirms people's self-worth.
- Mutual respect between people is central to a shared sense of community.
- Unfairness can occur when there is inequity of workload or pay, when there is cheating, or when evaluations and promotions are handled inappropriately.
- The experience of unfair treatment is emotionally upsetting and exhausting.



+ Person-job fit: Match or mismatch?

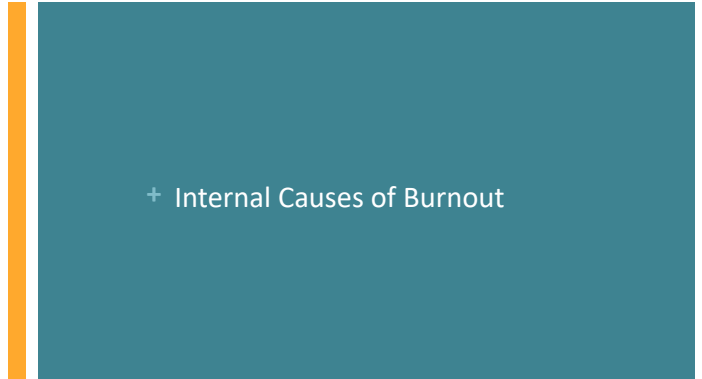
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Values

- The sixth area of mismatch occurs when there is a conflict between values.
- People feel constrained by the job to do things that are unethical and not in accord with their own values.
- Mismatch between their personal aspirations for their career and the values of the organization.
- Being caught between conflicting values of the organization, as when there is a discrepancy between the lofty mission statement and actual practice, or when the values are in conflict (e.g. high quality service and cost containment do not always co-exist).



+ Internal Causes of Burnout



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Josh Cohen, psychoanalyst

<https://www.1843magazine.com/features/minds-turned-to-ash>

The burnt-out case of today belongs to a culture without an off switch.

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Josh Cohen, psychoanalyst

Not Working: Why We Have to Stop. Granta Books; 2019.

In almost all myths of the world's origin, but especially the Genesis narrative, the divine entities not only create but rest.

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Josh Cohen, psychoanalyst

Not Working: Why We Have to Stop. Granta Books; 2019.

The Sabbath, explicitly sanctifying non-work, encourages us to imitate this divine lassitude; its disappearance from contemporary life may have as much to do with the sacralization of work as it does the secularization of society. The elevation of the Sabbath to sacred status hints to us that being is a higher mode of existence than doing.

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Josh Cohen, psychoanalyst

Not Working: Why We Have to Stop. Granta Books; 2019.

Our bodies and minds are overworked by more than work. They are subject to a culture that relates to every moment as an opportunity to produce or consume.

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Josh Cohen, psychoanalyst

<https://www.1843magazine.com/features/minds-turned-to-ash>

Burnout is not simply a symptom of working too hard. It is also the body and mind crying out for an essential human need: a space free from the incessant demands and expectations of the world. [...] The amelioration of burnout begins in finding your own pool of tranquility where you can cool off.

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Three Ways to Beat Burnout

Christopher Gergen and Gregg Vanourek
Harvard Business Review, February 19, 2009
<https://hbr.org/2009/02/three-ways-to-beat-burnout-2>

+ Weapon #1: Managing Your Work

Of course, the first weapon at our disposal to address burnout is managing our work. Here, the battle tends to be fought on the following fronts:

- **Over-commitment:** this often shows up as doing too many things, which often comes from an inability—or lack of resolve—to draw boundaries or say “no,” or from being unrealistic about what it will take to complete projects.
- **Resource issues:** not having enough resources and/or not using them effectively.
- **Perfectionism:** pursuing perfection instead of focusing on what’s “good enough.”
- **Focus problems:** focusing on things that are urgent but not important—and on things that just “come up” (e.g., simply responding to emails coming in versus managing your time according to your priorities); or procrastinating on things that are difficult.

+ Weapon #2: Embracing Renewal

Truth be told, hard work is a critical component of success. So we must find ways to renew, restore, and rejuvenate along the way. Ask yourself these questions:

- **Daily renewal:**
 - How do you start your day?
 - Do you have a morning, mid-day, and evening routine that allows for breaks and reflection, or do you strive to function effectively with the pedal to the metal all the time?
 - Do you exercise, get enough sleep, eat well, and otherwise stay healthy?
- **Long-term renewal:**
 - Do you take the time to travel and rest?
 - Do you actually take your vacation time and fill it with adventure, enjoyment, and rest?
 - Do you take “sabbaticals” or take advantage of the transition periods in between jobs?
- **Sanctuary:**
 - Do you have a place of refuge or a joyful activity you do that allows you to find peace and quiet for deep reflection—whether through prayer, meditation, yoga, hiking in the woods, jogging on a deserted road, listening to music, or whatever else brings you that reprieve?

+ Weapon #3: Doing the Right Work

■ The third weapon is by far the most neglected: doing the right work and infusing our lives and work with meaning, service, and significance. One of the causes of burnout, it turns out, is not filling our lives up with deeper meaning and genuine connection with others.

- Ask yourself this:
 - Is your work and life infused with purpose and fulfillment?
 - Do you have a vision of the good life that you’re working toward?
 - Do you bring your values, strengths, and passions to work or leave them at home?

+ Sustaining Leadership: You Are More Important than Your Ministry

John P. Kotter (2018)

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Ellen G. White

“Come Ye Yourselves Apart, ... and Rest Awhile”. The Review and Herald, November 7, 1893

“Our God is ever merciful, full of compassion, and reasonable in all his requirements. He does not require that we shall pursue a course of action that will result in the loss of our health or the enfeeblement of our powers of mind. He would not have us work under a pressure and strain until exhaustion follows, and prostration of the nerves. The Lord has given us reason, and he expects that we shall exercise reason, and act in harmony with the laws of life implanted within us, obeying them that we may have a well-balanced organization.”