

UNDERSTANDING THE BURNOUT EFFECT

(Inspired and Adapted from Justin Milano, Founder and CEO of Abroad)



We, HUMAN BEINGS have an interesting relationship between what **purposeful, passionate, and successful** lives, careers, and relationships are.

When we are on autopilot (not conscious or aware), **these three driving forces can turn against us, lead us, and push us to burnout and, therefore, affect our well-being, creativity, motivation, and morale.**

Here, you will explore the scientifically-evidenced based of **what burnout is, what are the signs, and stages of burnout.**

Burnout was first described by Herbert Freudenberger in the 1970s, and since then many researchers and organizations have picked up and developed further on his work. The following concepts are part of the work that builds on the research of Dr. Christina Maslach and the inspiring Podcast series by Justin Milano, Founder and CEO of Abroad.

1

About Burnout:

Dr. Christina Maslach describes burnout as **"an erosion of the soul caused by a deterioration of one's values, dignity, spirit, and will."** Burnout, she adds, is **"a response to excessive stress at work, a negative and detached response to other people and loss of idealism, and by a decline in feelings of competence and performance at work."**

The neurological effects of burnout include impaired executive functioning, attention control, and working memory; emotional exhaustion and dysregulation; and irritability, anxiousness, and physical fatigue. The physical outcomes of burnout include 35% chance of diagnosed physical illnesses, 20% increase in mortality, and a 50% increase in mental and physical health risks.

Reflection time. How do you relate to the definitions of burnout? Write down what comes to mind. Be honest. Be vulnerable.



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2

The Signs of Burnout:

- Emotional Exhaustion: Feeling physically and emotionally drained, and having a downward spiral of energy levels.
- Depersonalization: Feeling cynical or sarcastic, and needing to vent about your job or patients. This is also known as "compassion fatigue."
- Reduced Personal Accomplishment: Feeling like you're not doing a great job, and doubting the quality and meaning of your work.

Reflection time. How do you relate to the signs of burnout described above? Write down what comes to mind. Be honest. Be vulnerable. Be specific. Cite examples.



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The Stages of Burnout - Self-Assessment:

Read the following stages of burnout and reflect on your life and/or career right now. How are you feeling during this time? What stage do you see yourself most identified with and why? Where do you mostly find yourself now? Mark it with an "X" in the box provided.



1

You have a compulsion to validate yourself through hard work.

- You feel the need to do something extraordinary to prove your worth, leading to exhaustion.
- This can result in psychological symptoms like anxiety and fear.

☐

2

You neglect your basic needs and avoid conflict.

- You shorten lunch breaks to 30 or 15 minutes, eating at your desk.
- You are holding off bathroom breaks due to a heavy workload.
- You avoid important conversations due to exhaustion and busyness.
- This can result in psychological symptoms because you are not eating enough food, not sleeping well.

☐

3

You start to revise your values, create new mindsets, and deny that you have problems.

- You shift focus from work-life balance to managing imbalance.
- You convince yourself to work 60-hour weeks to remain competitive.
- You truly believe that unless you work this hard you won't get the promotion, succeed, or achieve your goals.
- As a result, emotional symptoms like denial and irritability will arise.
- You deny help from others, pretending you don't need it

☐

4

You start to withdrawal and change behaviors due to exhaustion and lack of motivation.

- You distance yourself from the world - friends and family.
- You isolate yourself more and more.
- Your personality starts to shift.
- Your mood is altered
- As a result, you begin to have negative/pessimistic perceptions of self, others, and the world around you.

☐

5

You begin to have deep personalization and inner emptiness.

- Your maladaptive behaviors increase and you distance yourself from others.
- You neglect your basic needs.
- You are not talking to people or getting a sense of community.
- You don't feel connected to yourself.
- You feel like your fire, drive, purpose, and passion are dying.

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6

You start battling with depression, anxiety, and stress.

- You can't be present and experience full burnout.
- You collapse - physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- You feel dysfunctional.
- You just can't show up to work any more.
- Your self-doubt increases.
- You have no energy, desire, or motivation to wake up.
- Major physical symptoms may show up.
- **This is where you need to ask for help.**

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After doing the self-assessment on the stages of burnout, answer the following questions. Be honest. Be vulnerable. Be specific. Cite examples.

How long have you been in this stage of burnout? What behaviors do you see you have in this stage? What are the effects or implications of being in this stage of burnout? What are the costs that you are paying?

What is the underlying belief that drives you to this stage?

What feelings do you have as you reflect on your relation with burnout? Fear, sadness, hurt, or anger and why?

How motivated are you to break through this stage of burnout? What other behaviors or choices can you begin to make to break through that stage? What resources do you have? Whom can you enlist for support? Where do you yearn to be in the next month? Where do you want instead? **Bring your thoughts to your coach.**

