



Burnout: It's more than just a work problem

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Agenda

- Understanding components of burnout
- What contributes to burnout at work
- Ways to increase job satisfaction
- What is your personal work motivation
- Stress response
- Completing the stress cycle



3 Components of Burnout

- **Emotional Exhaustion**
 - Fatigue from carrying too much too long
- **Depersonalization**
 - Depletion of empathy, caring and compassion
- **Decreased sense of accomplishment**
 - Feeling nothing you do makes a difference

(Herbert Freudenberger, 1975)



Contributors to Work Burnout

- Feeling like you have little or no control over your work
- Lack of meaningful recognition or reward for good work
- Unclear or overly demanding job expectations (“surge capacity” vs. ongoing demands)
- Doing work that’s monotonous or unchallenging
- Working in a chaotic or high-pressure environment
- Extremes of activity
- Lack of social support
- Work-life imbalance
- You work in a helping profession, such as health care, teaching, mental health, etc.
- Perfectionistic tendencies, high-achieving, Type A personality

Burnout Red Flags



- You feel like every day is a bad day
- Caring about your work or home life seems like a total waste of energy
- You feel different, things bother you more
- You get feedback from loved ones that they are concerned
- You feel like nothing you do makes a difference or is appreciated
- You're exhausted all the time

Ways to Increase Job Satisfaction

- Do something that you love every day
- Hang out with positive coworkers/colleagues
- Integrate intentional self-care throughout your day
- Do something you are good at every day
- Develop a supportive relationship with colleagues
- Reflect on accomplishments regularly
- Practice gratitude
- Learn to complete your stress cycle
- Understand your work's significance.
- Help others at work
- Get back in touch with your “why”



Understanding Your “Why”



It's a job.

If you approach work as a job, you focus primarily on the financial rewards. The nature of the work might hold little interest for you. If a job with more pay comes your way, you'll likely move on. Your passion may lie elsewhere.

It's a career.

If you approach work as a career, you're likely interested in advancement. Your current job might be a steppingstone to your ultimate goal. What's important is to be regarded as a success in your field.

It's a calling.

If you approach your job as a calling, you focus on the work itself. You're less interested in financial gain or career advancement, preferring instead to find a sense of fulfillment from the work itself.



Understanding Your “Why”

Whether your work is a job, a career or a calling, you can take steps to restore its meaning

It may help to reflect on questions such as:

- What are your top three priorities in life at this time? How does your work fit into this? What would you miss if you were no longer in your current job?
- What did your social conditioning from your family and community tell you about what to do and where to go in life?
- What relationships in your life let you feel seen? In what ways do you feel seen and valued at work? In what ways is this lacking?
- What are your top three priorities in life at this time? How does your work fit into this?



Burnout

"This book made me cry with gratitude and relief. It is that revolutionary."

—PEGGY ORENSTEIN

Burnout

THE SECRET

Burnout

to UNLOCKING

Burnout

the STRESS CYCLE

Burnout

Emily Nagoski, PhD

New York Times bestselling author of *Burnout*

Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle

Brene' Brown podcast episode
discussing book with authors
<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-emily-and-amelia-nagoski-on-burnout-and-how-to-complete-the-stress-cycle/>



Emotions

- Emotional Exhaustion
 - Most strongly linked to negative impact on health, relationships and work
- Emotions
 - Cycles that happen in your body
 - Neurological events
 - Neurological events have a beginning, middle and end
 - All systems respond (neurological, digestive, cardiovascular, reproductive, etc.)
 - Responses are automatic and instantaneous

Emotions



We want to think we are rational,
thinking beings who sometimes feel.

Instead, we are emotional beings who,
on occasion, think.

Emotions



Fixing a problem doesn't process or "solve" our emotions.

Exhaustion happens when we get stuck in the processing of emotions.

Stress Response



Stressful situations trigger a chemical response

- Production of cortisol, adrenaline, etc.
- Impacts immune system responses, the reproductive system, growth process and suppresses the digestive system

Even when the stressor ends, we may be left in a “stew” of corrosive chemicals in our bodies

Chronic Stress—When We Get Stuck

We can't separate our body from our emotions

Central nervous system only has so much bandwidth

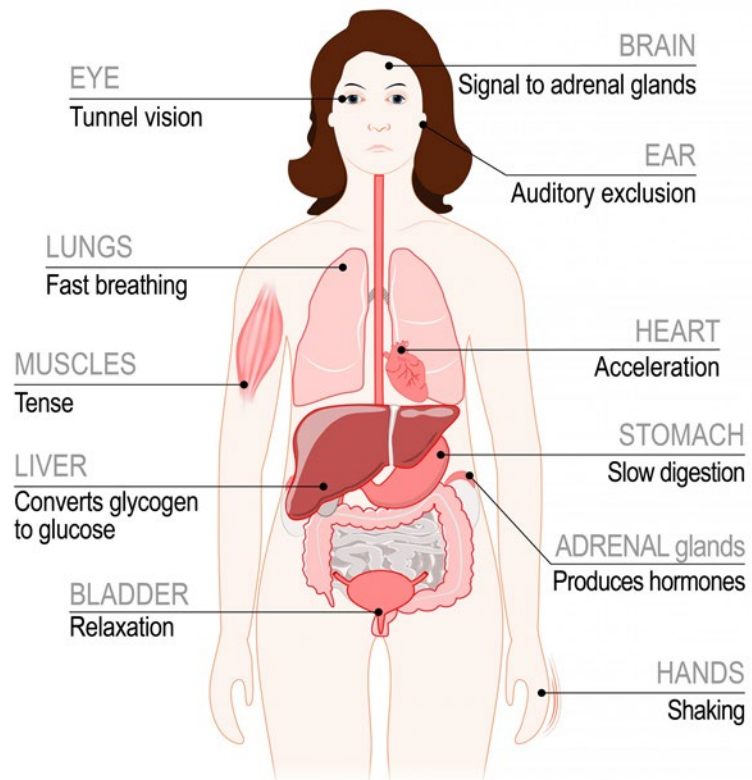
- When things are “noisy”, we tend to ignore symptoms
- When stressor ends, often find ourselves getting sick or noticing illness

Why we get stuck

- When stressors outpace our resources (big projects, tenure, etc)
- Social appropriateness—expectations that emotions are only expressed a certain way, believing we “should” do all the things, finding identity or camaraderie in being stressed
- Safety—we can't always respond to stressors the way we would prefer (examples: catcalling, work obligations, abusive relationships)

Automatic Fight Flight Freeze Response

Fight-or-flight response



- When our brain senses danger, our body moves **AUTOMATICALLY** into survival mode
- Quicker than our rational mind can react
- Sympathetic nervous system activated
- Prolonged stress makes it more difficult for our brain to slow or cancel “false alarms”
- Social hierarchy of which is better, all are neutral

Fight

Confrontational

Irritable

Argumentative

Self-criticism

Feelings of anger, possible self-harm

Grinding teeth, glaring, urge to hit

Flight

Run and hide

Avoid situations

Leaving jobs & relationships

Numbing

Excessive exercising

Restless body, fidgety, feeling trapped

Freeze

Tonic immobility

Shutting down

Withdrawn

Rumination—getting “stuck”

Sense of dread

Feeling heavy, stiff, numb

Stress Response

“You have to do something that signals your body that you are safe or else you’ll stay in that state with neurochemicals and hormones degrading (your body)... but never shifting into relaxation. Your digestive, immune system, cardiovascular system, musculoskeletal system and reproductive system never get the signal that they are safe.”

“Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle Hardcover”,
Nagoski and Nagoski



Ways to Complete Stress Cycle

Physical activity

- Moving your body in any way



Structured breathing

- Down-regulates the nervous system

Belly breathing

Automatically slows the heart rate, helping to relax & calm

The most efficient and relaxed way of getting enough air into your lungs.

Supports the life skill of relaxation

Can boost energy levels with a few minutes of relaxation throughout the day

Emulates breathing during the regenerating processes (sleep, digesting food or resting)

Increased awareness of the breath & its effect on the body



Ways to Complete Stress Cycle

Positive social interaction

- Creates feeling of home, safety



Genuine laughter

- Know what gets you to a deep belly laugh



Ways to Complete Stress Cycle

Hugs

- Warm hug, leaning, 20 seconds
- Changes hormones, lowers bp and heart rate, produces oxytocin



Creative expression

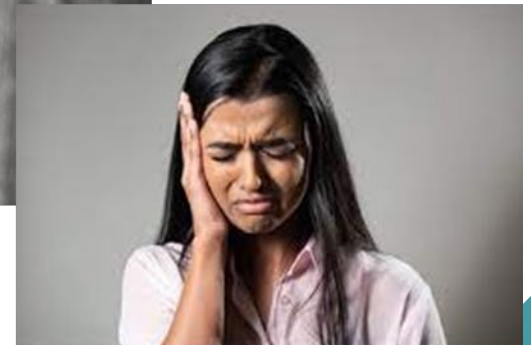
- Take something difficult and put it outside yourself
- “Take your broken heart, make it into art.” Carrie Fisher



Ways to Complete Stress Cycle

Crying

- Difference between dealing stress and dealing with situation that caused stress
- Keeps emotion from getting trapped in body
- Be present to the sensation of crying
- Don't need to feed it more thoughts
- Trust that it will end





Stress Response

“To be well is not to live in a state of perpetual safety and calm but to move fluidly from a state of adversity, risk, adventure or excitement back to safety and calm and out again.

Stress is not bad for you. Being stuck is bad for you.”

“Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle Hardcover”, Nagoski and Nagoski

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