



Burning Bright without Burning Out

By Paul D. Casey

“Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do ‘people work’ of some kind.” -Christina Maslach

Does that quotation ring true for you right now, Leader? You do intense “people work” day-in and day-out, and it can take its toll on your well-being – even if you love your job!

There are a bunch of reasons why a person burns out, and here are just a few if you want to self-evaluate:

- Depression over unmet expectations
- Loss of vision for where you are heading/the goal
- Taking the full load instead of delegating
- Feeling of aloneness – no positive feedback/affirmation
- Going outside your ability/gifting regularly
- Trying to please everyone
- Too many commitments
- Lack of unity in your family
- Not having own emotional tank filled and not recognizing it

See any hot-spots from that list?

Well, this article is not about languishing; it’s about how to flourish, and how to keep your guard up so that you do not head down the burnout path, with consequences rippling out to those you love the most.

5 Burnout prevention tips:

1. *Recognize the danger signs/read your gauges.* Each of us has our own internal gauges that on occasion can run hot. Lower energy than normal. Easier irritation spells. Dropped balls. Know yours so that you can pull back to a place of health when these danger signs emerge in your life.
2. *Schedule a personal retreat to assess who you are, where you are, and where you want to go in your life.* Yes, it's possible to carve out a day somewhere to get some solitude and just think! There are all sorts of personality tests and exercises to take to discover your uniqueness. Some of these things you discover can turn into the development of a personal mission statement or family/marriage mission statement, against which you can weigh your decisions and commitments. Then, begin to form a vision, or snapshot of the future, for yourself in your major roles (spouse, parent, supervisor, citizen, etc.) which gives you something to shoot for, when developing goals.
3. *Delegate as many routine tasks as you can so that you can stay on the most important things.* The spreading out of duties, whenever possible, can relieve your load and give others a feeling of contribution.
4. *Combat stress through establishing recovery time.* Athletes need recovery time between bursts of energy, and so do you at work! Find a way to take one full day off each week from your typical routine. To get some time having debrief time with a friend. To divert your focus to something therapeutic like a hobby. Then you'll re-engage your family with a more fresh presence than if you just kept plugging.
5. *Structure your days strategically. "Busyness does not equal effectiveness." -Doug Fields* There will always be interruptions to your "ideal day," but think-through, as much as possible, a realistic schedule for your day the night before or early in the morning, to chart out how to get your priorities done, and still have some margin (or cushion) in the day to step back and rest.

Only you know best your sharpest times of the day (according to your bio-rhythms) and the pace you can go without red-lining.

“The 10% of time that you take to plan your activities carefully in advance will save you 90% of the effort involved in undertaking and completing the most important tasks in your work day.” -Carol Halsey

Take care of yourself so that you can better help others take care of themselves. You are a model to those eyes that are watching you, whether you like it or not; so that ups the ante for being a good role model of health/wellness/balance!