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 your 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.