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What Burnout Really Is

Burnout isn't just being tired. It's when the energy is gone but the demands keep coming.

It's showing up without presence. It's caring... but not having anything left to give.

“Burnout shows up when the weight we carry is unclear, unsupported, or unrelenting. It's not just ‘too much work.’ It's too little recovery. Too little alignment. Too little clarity.”

Three key signs:

1. Exhaustion – the tank is empty, and not refilling
2. Disengagement – you're showing up, but not really there
3. Doubt – wondering if it's even worth it anymore

Burnout → Demoralization → Depression

- Many researchers argue that burnout is often the gateway to what becomes clinical depression if:
 - There is no social support
 - Recovery doesn't occur
 - A person internalizes the failure to meet expectations

“Burnout left unaddressed doesn't just drain your energy—it starts to dismantle your identity. And when that happens, depression isn't far behind.”

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The Two-Part Burnout Immunity Plan

Burnout prevention takes two fronts:

1. A personal plan to protect your energy and sustain passion.
2. An organizational plan that removes confusion and creates alignment.

Personal Burnout Immunity Plan

It's about restoring alignment, not just wellness.

1. Your Deep & Compelling WHY

“If you lose sight of why you started, you'll forget why you should continue.”

1. This is the fire that sustains you when everything feels heavy.
2. Your “why” must be clear, emotional, and rooted in legacy—not logistics.
3. Ask: Who suffers if I quit? Who wins if I stay?
4. “Write down in 1–2 sentences: Why does this fair, this role, this mission, matter to you? Put it somewhere you'll see it when things get hard.”

2. Non-Negotiable Boundaries

“Burnout happens when everything is negotiable—even your peace.”

- Boundaries aren't selfish—they're stewardship.
- You need hard stops: time, emotional labor, energy.

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Practical Strategies:

- Define “off hours”
- Say “no” without guilt
- Stop picking up tasks that aren’t yours
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“If you don’t draw the lines, burnout will draw them for you—in exhaustion and resentment.”

3. Strategic Self-Care (Not Spa Day Self-Care)

“Self-care isn’t indulgence—it’s insurance.”

- This isn’t about bubble baths or Netflix binges.
- This is about intentional actions that restore:
 - Physical vitality
 - Emotional regulation
 - Mental clarity

Examples:

- Movement: Walk, lift, stretch
- Mind quiet: Prayer, meditation, journaling
- Connection: Honest conversations, laughter
- Name one thing you used to do that made you feel alive... that you’ve stopped doing. How can you bring it back?”

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4. A Battery Recharging System

“You are not a machine. But even machines need a recharge protocol.”

- Create a recharging ritual you can access weekly, not just once a year.

- Think:
 - Sunrise walks with music

 - Hour at the lake alone

 - Morning routine with coffee and no phone

“If your recovery isn’t scheduled, it won’t happen. Protect your recharge like a board meeting.”

1. Know Your WHY

Your mission fuels your energy. Reconnect with the purpose that drives you.

2. Protect Your Boundaries

Your time, energy, and effort must be protected. Say no. Set limits.

3. Strategic Self-Care

Move your body. Still your mind. Connect with people who lift you up.

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4. Recharge Weekly

Build recovery into your calendar. Protect time that restores you.

Organizational Burnout Immunity Plan

The 3 Core Systemic Causes of Burnout:

1. Lack of a compelling impactful goal
2. Unclear Expectations – No shared definition of success
3. Vague Roles – Overlap, overreach, and under-ownership
4. Moving Targets – Goals constantly shifting or undefined

Talking Points:

- “People don’t just burn out from too much work—they burn out from too much uncertainty.”
- “Structure isn’t the enemy of passion. It’s the fuel line that keeps passion flowing.”

Solutions That Work:

- Define clear board expectations
- Document roles & responsibilities
- Set quarterly or seasonal goals
- Develop a volunteer onboarding/offboarding plan

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- Hold alignment meetings, not just operational check-ins

“Great people will walk away if they don’t know how to win. Let’s remove the fog.”

Organizational Burnout Immunity Plan

1. Clarify Expectations

Everyone should know what success looks like in their role.

2. Define Roles & Responsibilities

Prevent confusion and duplication of effort.

3. Set Clear, Achievable Goals

Alignment creates momentum. Aim together, move together.

4. Onboard & Align Consistently

Bring new people in with clarity—and keep veterans engaged with purpose.

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Personal Plan

take 10 seconds right now and type this in the chat—or just say it out loud to yourself:

What's one boundary or one self-care shift you're going to make this week?"

Organizational Plan

What's one thing your board or team needs more clarity on right now—expectations, goals, or roles?

What's the foggiest area you can help clear?"