

How to Avoid Career Burnout

Six Simple Rules to Conquer Stress



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The Pursuit of Happiness

For many people, career and the pursuit of success has become the dominant force in their lives. Americans are working longer hours only to end up having less time and energy to spend enjoying the fruits of their labor with family and friends. According to a March 2001 study, over 50% of us do not get enough sleep. The average time we spend stuck in traffic each day, just commuting to work, continues to rise and has almost certainly contributed to the “road rage” phenomenon. The consequences of this pursuit for achievement and success has left many feeling burnt out, sick, and unhappy. Almost 50% of all primary care physician visits are stress related.

Take Care of Yourself First

Despite all our efforts, most of us seem no closer to achieving that goal of financial independence or personal fulfillment. Dale Carnegie once remarked, “Remember happiness doesn’t depend upon who you are or what you have; it depends solely upon what you think.” By focusing inward and developing and practicing a few simple guiding principles, you can avoid being swept up into the rat race and practice a more balanced approach to living in both your personal and professional life that will allow you to have a more pleasant experience on that journey from being to becoming.

1. Your Work is Not the Measure of Your Worth

What you do to earn a living does not define you as a person. How much money you make is not an indicator of your worth or success as a person. It is far better to be a

contented garbage man than an unhappy bank president. There is worth and dignity in all work. If money was the measure of how important someone's job was – Mother Theresa should have been a billionaire. Develop interests that have nothing to do with your work. Volunteering is an excellent way to keep perspective on what is really important in life.

2. Acquire Two Close Friends and See Them Regularly:

Francis Bacon said, "Without friends, life is a wilderness." One of the first signs of overwork is social avoidance and withdrawal from our friends. Close friends are people you can share your thoughts and feelings with openly, without fear of being judged. They accept us and show us caring and love. Force yourself to schedule weekly time with friends the same way you would schedule a business meeting. See them more often, not less often, when things get stressful or tough at work or home. These enriching experiences will help offset the draining ones you experience.

3. Learn to Talk Positively to Yourself

Mark Twain once remarked, "Few people know of the low opinion I have of myself or how little I deserve it." When we make mistakes, most of us speak to ourselves with harsh language. No one grows through self-condemnation. Instead, learn to talk to yourself the way you would talk to a close friend who had made the exact same mistake and learn to practice self-forgiveness and encouragement.

4. Accept That You Will Not Be Liked By Everyone

The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius once said, “There is no man so well loved that on the occasion of his death that someone does not rejoice.” Being an independent, intelligent, and thoughtful person means that you will meet people with opinions and ideas different than your own. The need to be liked by everyone is based on insecurity from within. When we can accept that we can have honest disagreements and that we do not have to befriend all people, then we free ourselves from the tyranny of always worrying about what other people think. Learn to practice civility toward all and let go of the desire to be adored by everyone.

5. Your Choices Will Limit Future Choices

When I was a boy, I was a lad of infinite promise. At this point, I no longer think I am going to grow up to become president. The choices we make today will have an affect on the choices we can make tomorrow. Choice is a balancing act between risk and security. Strive to develop the capacity to tolerate risk if you hope for great gain. One must also learn to know themselves well enough to set limits in order to avoid unacceptable losses. This is why I no longer keep ice cream in my home.

6. Think Willow Tree Strong Instead Of Oak Tree Strong

Oak gets its strength from being inflexible, dense, and rigid. But, in strong winds, the same factors that make the oak strong also make it vulnerable to toppling over. In these



conditions, the soft and flexible willow is the “stronger tree” because of its ability to bend and sway with the wind. Too many of us think that being strong is about being fixed and rigid in our positions like oaks trees. When the winds of change, such as downsizing or merger, began to blow then it’s the oaks among us that soon begin to topple. Those employees who can be flexible in their approach to problem solving stand the best chance of weathering out the storm.

About The Author

President of Skills For Success, Inc., Thomas Haizlip was a clinical psychologist for 14 years before becoming an executive coach and management consultant. He specializes in helping managers and executives learn how to become emotionally intelligent and how to lead others by inspiring people to work together to achieve mutually beneficial goals. He is available for executive coaching, speeches, and workshops and seminars.