

Recharging Your Batteries--Staying on Top of Your Game

In the past century, our lives have become more complicated. By comparison, our ancestors led a simpler life, with priorities focused on family and community life. Well, times have certainly changed. We are accessible by beeper, cell phone, text message, voicemail, e-mail and instant message, telephone, and fax--all day or night. Whew!

Add job responsibilities: including two family incomes or single parenting, living single, family and community relationships, and other time commitments. We're so busy operating in hyper-drive (especially in the USA!) that we can forget how to relax and unwind. Is it any wonder we often feel like we have no time to really enjoy our lives because we always have someone or some responsibility to attend to?

"I can't seem to get motivated or focused. I feel stuck, I feel tired, distracted...like I should be doing more and I just don't feel like doing very much." Sound familiar? You might be feeling burned out and in need of recharging.

Symptoms of burnout include:

- Feeling emotionally overreactive, especially with anger
- Depression
- Diminished performance/functioning
- Weight loss/weight gain
- Exhaustion--even if you have rested
- Self-neglect
- Irritability
- Numbing behaviors, including addiction
- Poor concentration
- Sleep disturbances
- Mood swings
- Shift in eating patterns
- Decreased self-confidence and self-esteem

One or two symptoms do not indicate burnout. Prolonged periods of physical, emotional, and mental intensity can normalize the "appearance" of burnout. In other words, we can adapt to being in a state of burnout for extended periods of time, which puts people at greater risk for medical conditions and/or psychological problems to develop. In that way, we forget what peace, calm, and regeneration feel like.

Getting back on track:

1. **Practice extreme self-care.** I use "extreme" because taking the best care of YOU is serious! When needs are not being met, negative thoughts and reactions intensify. Does your life flow when you are neglecting yourself? Being positively self-ish and putting yourself first gives you the vitality and desire to be fully there

for those you love--by choice, not obligation. When you take good care of YOU, the people and situations in your life will get the "best" of you instead of what's left of you! Give yourself permission to make self-care a priority. Practicing self-care will show others how to love and respect you by valuing and appreciating who you are.

2. **Set strong boundaries and keep them.** Practice saying "no" more often, especially when saying "yes" would be dishonest to yourself.
3. **Delegate things that need to be handled.** Superheroes aren't real! If you "have to do it all yourself", it is time to consider help. Be willing to give up some of your control to decrease all the things on your "to-do" list. Recognize when you have a need AND ask for help (when help is available). Remember, the most successful people work with teams--they don't succeed alone. One additional plus is that delegating empowers others to raise their competency and confidence level. That's a win-win for everyone.
4. **Decrease and eliminate energy drains.** Clutter, people, situation, and things that sap your energy. Energy drains include: everything unresolved, undone, incomplete, or avoided. Examples: clutter, unanswered correspondence/phone calls, unfinished business, repairs, unpaid bills, avoided conflicts/confrontations, negative thinking. Get the picture? Clearing out the clutter and energy drains will free up your energy dramatically and open more flow to your life. Have you felt stuck or blocked? Watch what happens when you eliminate clutter and energy drains from your life!
5. **Schedule fun!** I mean it.

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