Best Strategies to Keep Yourself from Burning Out

You've got an important job. You love what you do but the demands can become a little much at times. The pressure to perform and be everything to everyone, feels overwhelming. Whether it's a deadline you have to meet, a superior's expectations you have to live up to, or a team of people you can't let down, there's no room for failure.

After a while, you feel stressed. Your hair's on fire at the office. You develop a mild case of road rage on your daily commute. You can't sleep at night...

If any of this sounds familiar, there's a good chance you're suffering burnout. Burnout can have some serious implications for both your career, and your health. This kind of prolonged stress is closely linked to heart attacks, depression, and decreased productivity.

If you find yourself feeling burned out, it's something you need to deal with right away. Next time you sense it coming on, try some of the strategies below.

Look Around

Before you do anything else, take a step back, and look at your surroundings. Are you getting the support you need from the higher-ups at work? Is there little or no value placed on culture? If so, it's time to start seriously considering some other options.

However, if you like where you're at, and feel you have the support you need,

there are some steps you can take to combat that burned out feeling.

Own Your Schedule

The reality is that most people don't have full control over how and where they spend their time in the workplace. With that being said, there are probably pockets of time throughout the day or week that you can block off for yourself. If a particular day is packed, give yourself a small buffer of time between activities or meetings. Even just five minutes goes a long way in helping stay composed mentally and emotionally.

Be Kind to Others

When you're feeling low or burned out, one of the best remedies is helping others. Praise others for a job well done. Encourage them to take a break when they seem overwhelmed. Say something that makes another person laugh or smile. Hold the door for a coworker on the way to lunch.

When you practice even the smallest acts of kindness, it immediately makes you feel better.

Believe it or not, you actually have the power to impact your entire team or organization. It only takes a single person, to spread positive vibes and turn things around when they don't seem to be going well. Be that person. When you are, the results can be astounding.

Be Kind to Yourself

After you start being kind to others, you'll eventually be okay with being kind to yourself.

When you're experiencing burnout, it's all too easy to listen to your inner critic. Negative thoughts and self talk become your language.

The key is recognizing this behavior when it crops up and, having some strategies in place to reverse the trend. Positive affirmations are a great place to start. Write down some traits you're proud of. Even sayings like "I am kind," or "I am capable" will work. Put these notes some place where you're going to see them on a regular basis. Your nightstand or bathroom mirror are good options.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

Because you're in a position of leadership, chances are others come to you for help a lot more often than you seek help yourself. You're human, just like everyone else though. Eventually, there's going to come a point when you just can't handle the stress, depressive thoughts, and lack of sleep anymore.

When you get to this point, do yourself, and everyone else, a favor and ask for help. It might be in the form of a trusted colleague. Perhaps, it's your spouse, or a close friend. Maybe you need the help of a counselor. Whoever you turn to, there's no shame in asking for help. In fact, asking for help is a sign of strength.

Make Sleep a Priority

When you're experiencing burnout, quality sleep can be hard to come by. From the moment you wake up, until you go to bed, your head is spinning with stressful thoughts about work.

There are a few small steps you can take to make getting to sleep easier. The first is going to bed earlier. If you normally go to bed at 10:00, make it a point to have a pillow under your head by 9:00.
Unplug well before you go to sleep. Turn off your computer, silence your phone, and allow yourself some time to be in the moment, and unwind. Meditate. Read a book. Listen to soothing music.
Once you find a routine that works, stick with it. Sleep is the most important ingredient to performing at your best.

The stresses of your job aren't going away anytime soon. You're going to feel stretched thin and overwhelmed to the point that you get burned out. The good news is, there are some simple steps you can take to get through these difficult episodes and come out stronger on the other side. The next time you sense burnout coming on, try some of the strategies above. You just might be surprised with how well you're able cope and, move on to bigger and better things in the future.