



## Beating Burnout

So how do you move away from burnout and towards a feeling of enthusiasm again? Here are some recommendations:

**Make time for yourself.** When you put helping others above everything else, you don't meet your own needs," says Pastor Aaron Varner, 29, of Akron, Ohio. "You're just giving, giving, giving, and you feel guilty if you stop." It took at a pastor's retreat for him to remember that even God rested on the seventh day. "I heard the Lord say 'Aaron, it is okay. The sun will set. The stars will rise. You don't have to do it all.'" Now he reserves Mondays for himself and his family.

**Develop a method to calm yourself.** Some people, like Pastor Varner, choose prayer. Others meditate or breathe deeply. "Do whatever works for you," suggests Goleman, PhD, a psychologist and the author of *Social Intelligence*. "Practice it every day outside the work situation ideally in the morning, and then draw on it during pauses throughout your workday." Simply taking short breaks to close your eyes and clear your mind can re-energize your brain during a frenetic day.

**Analyze what you love and hate about your work.** What has change—the amount of work, the deadlines, the boss, the pay, the company's mission? Once you have identified problem areas, think of specific strategies to resolve them. For instance, you might build an alliance with colleagues and work together to address shared concerns.

**Settle for less than perfect.** "Work at 90 percent rather than 110 percent of maximum," advises Larina Kase, PsyD, author of *Anxious 9 to 5*. "Accept that the dishes may pile up in the sink. Delegate what you can." In addition, do not be available 24/7: Rather than check e-mails and voice messages round the clock, respond at preset times, and know when to turn off the devices and focus on other aspects of your life.

**Take good care of yourself.** Eat healthy foods. Get enough sleep. Exercise every day. "If you think you're too busy, start with two five minutes walks a day," Kase suggests. "Once you see the benefits, you'll want to do more of the things that are really key to keeping you from getting burned out or more burned out."

**Cultivate a support network.** "Find a friend at work you can talk freely with, someone to turn to when things get hard," says Goleman. If you are caring for a family member at home, tap relatives and friends. "Human nature isn't designed for isolation," he notes. "We all need to re-create the support of the extended family through friendships."



**Set limits.** Take 24 hours before agreeing to a new demand on your time. Talk to your spouse or a friend about whether it is something you really want to do. If it is not, do not do it.

**Plan for the future.** If you need to leave a toxic workplace but cannot quit yet, spend 15 minutes every day exploring other options. Go online. Network. Get additional training. Buff your resume. "Most people are within 18 months of being in a better, healthier work situation," says Goleman. The key is to start now. Taking small steps will help you feel more in control and set the stage for a fresh start.