

UNRAVELLING BURNOUT: TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS



Hello to all the busy little bees out there! For those who have buzzed themselves into burnout, this one's for you. We're diving deep into the world of burnout, breaking down what's really going on, and exploring how to regain authority and control over your life, whether it's at home, work, or in business.

Let's begin by examining how burnout is defined by some authoritative sources:

1. **Merriam Webster:** Burnout is described as exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation, often resulting from prolonged stress or frustration.
2. **Mayo Clinic:** Burnout is characterized as a unique form of work-related stress, involving physical or emotional exhaustion, a sense of reduced accomplishment, and a loss of personal identity.
3. **World Health Organization (WHO):** In the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), burnout is classified as an occupational phenomenon, not a medical condition. It's defined as a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress, with three dimensions:
 - Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.
 - Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job
 - Reduced professional efficacy.

All these definitions revolve around feelings, whether it's energy depletion, emotional exhaustion, or negative emotions like cynicism. Burnout, in essence, is rooted in our emotional realm, and it's our thoughts that drive these emotions.

The Power of Our Thoughts

The WHO's definition of burnout points to four key components: mental or cognitive, emotional, physical, and professional efficacy. These components stem from the way we think about our circumstances.

Our thoughts play a pivotal role in shaping our reality. They can either empower us to take control or leave us feeling helpless. Recognizing that thoughts are optional and understanding that we can choose them is the first step to overcoming burnout.

The Model of Reality

Imagine a model of reality where circumstances are the objective, indisputable facts. These circumstances can vary from person to person. However, what truly matters are the thoughts we attach to these circumstances.

When we find ourselves stuck in a contracting mindset, we often believe that our thoughts are facts. We perceive them as unchangeable, like they're set in stone. This illusion of powerlessness is one of the most common traps we fall into.

But once we identify our thoughts as thoughts and not facts, we can start playing with them. We can choose thoughts that empower us, leading to different actions, feelings, and ultimately results. It's about shifting from a contracting mindset to an expanding one, where we explore various ways to think about a situation and align it with how we want to feel and act.

The Impact of Thoughts on Emotions and Actions

Our thoughts trigger emotions, which are like fuel for our actions. Negative thoughts create energy-draining emotions, which, in turn, result in reduced professional efficacy – a key component of burnout.

Take a moment to think about what it feels like to be angry, overwhelmed, or frustrated. These emotions are physically exhausting and are generated by our thoughts.

Recognizing the Pattern

Now, let's explore how this pattern manifests in different situations:

1. **Making Difficult Decisions:** Whether it's firing someone or addressing workplace issues, avoiding these tasks often stems from the desire to dodge uncomfortable emotions. Recognize the thoughts behind these emotions, challenge them, and reframe them to regain your power.
2. **Advocating for Yourself:** Sometimes, you might avoid negotiating for what you need at work due to the fear of rejection or disapproval. Again, identify the thoughts behind these feelings, challenge them, and choose thoughts that empower you.

Empathy and Compassion

In challenging situations like firing someone, empathy and compassion play a crucial role. Understand that delivering tough news triggers fear and survival instincts in others. Show empathy and communicate in a way that preserves their dignity.

Remember that you are not responsible for others' thoughts, feelings, actions, or results in life. The same applies to yourself – outsourcing your emotional well-being to others is disempowering.

Embrace Growth and Evolution

Lastly, view obstacles and challenges as opportunities for growth and evolution. Whether you're a business owner or an employee, focus on adding value. Present your case confidently, and don't be

afraid to ask for what you need.

In the end, it's not about who you are; it's about the value you bring. Embrace the power of choice in assigning meaning to situations, and watch how it transforms your reality.

Navigating Burnout with Mindful Practices

Now that we've delved into the psychology of burnout and the power of our thoughts, let's explore practical ways to navigate this challenging territory.

1. **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Incorporating mindfulness practices into your daily routine can work wonders. These practices help you become more aware of your thoughts and emotions, allowing you to choose and reframe them consciously. Meditation, even if just for a few minutes each day, can help you develop mental resilience.
2. **Journaling:** Keeping a journal can be a powerful tool to identify and challenge negative thoughts. Write down your thoughts, emotions, and the situations that trigger them. Then, reflect on alternative perspectives and empowering thoughts that can reshape your experience.
3. **Self-Compassion:** Practice self-compassion by treating yourself with the same kindness and understanding you'd offer a close friend. Acknowledge that it's okay to have negative thoughts and emotions; what matters is how you respond to them.
4. **Seek Support:** Don't hesitate to reach out for support, whether from friends, family, or professional therapists or coaches. Talking about your thoughts and emotions with someone you trust can provide valuable insights and perspective.
5. **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries in your personal and professional life. This includes setting limits on work hours, avoiding overcommitment, and making time for self-care and relaxation.
6. **Take Breaks:** Regular breaks throughout your workday are essential. Even a short walk or a few moments of deep breathing can refresh your mind and reduce stress.
7. **Focus on Self-Care:** Prioritize self-care activities that recharge your energy and promote emotional well-being. This might include exercise, hobbies, spending time in nature, or indulging in activities that bring you joy.
8. **Mindful Decision-Making:** When faced with tough decisions or challenges, pause and approach them mindfully. Consider the long-term consequences of your choices, and aim for solutions that align with your values and well-being.
9. **Practice Gratitude:** Cultivating a habit of gratitude can shift your focus away from negativity. Each day, take a moment to acknowledge and appreciate the positive aspects of your life.
10. **Learn to Say "No":** It's okay to decline additional responsibilities or commitments when you're already feeling overwhelmed. Learning to say "no" can protect your time and energy.

Embrace Your Power and Transform Burnout

Burnout is not an inescapable fate. By understanding the connection between your thoughts, emotions, and actions, you gain the power to transform your experience. Take control of your inner narrative, challenge negative thought patterns, and choose thoughts that empower you.

Remember that burnout is not a sign of weakness, but rather a signal that it's time to take a step back and reevaluate your mindset and priorities. Through mindful practices, self-compassion, and seeking support when needed, you can break free from the cycle of burnout and reclaim your vitality and fulfillment.

In the grand tapestry of life, you are the weaver of your experiences. Take charge, embrace your

power, and let your journey be one of growth, resilience, and lasting well-being. The path to overcoming burnout starts with a single thought – choose wisely!

Remember, burnout is not an inevitable fate; it's a pattern that can be unravelled by taking control of your thoughts and emotions. So, busy bees, it's time to regain your authority and steer your life toward fulfillment and success!

[Listen to podcast episode 31 - Overcoming Burnout & Overwhelm](#)