

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.

How To Manage Stress at Work



Have you ever thought how nice it would be to work in Spain where your day starts mid-morning, you take lunch a couple hours later and then enjoy a siesta? Even though that leisurely Monday through Friday routine sounds wonderful, your workday reality is probably quite the opposite. If you're like most Americans, your typical day at the office involves getting there early, eating at your desk, running from one meeting to another and working late. Maybe you're even there on weekends. By the end of the week all the stress leaves you on empty mentally, physically and emotionally. While stress isn't going away anytime soon, there are some simple measures you can take to manage it.

Don't Gossip

Every office has that person that makes it their duty to know about everyone else's business. They know that Bob is going through a nasty divorce, Julie has her eyes on that promotion and Mike has been subject to disciplinary action. Even worse, they make it a habit of sharing all these tidbits with everyone around them. Even though you might be tempted to learn some juicy little nugget, nothing good ever comes of it. Before you know it, you're embroiled in a nasty game of he said she said that can lead to damaged relationships and bring down the morale of everyone in the organization.

Start Your Day Fresh

This goes back to the night before and making sure you get enough sleep. Once you're up and about, give yourself the time you need to properly start your day. Incorporating habits into your morning routine like meditation, journaling and getting some physical exercise help you arrive at the office with a clear head and positive attitude making it easier to handle stress the rest of the day.

Keep Your Desk Clean

How many times have you come into the office knowing where you left off the day before but unable to find the right report buried in the pile of papers on your desk? You go about frantically searching high and low trying to make sense of where everything is at and before you know it, you're stressed out before you get anything done.

All it takes to avoid this type of chaos is a little tidying up when you're done with your day. Not only will this habit reduce your level of stress in the morning, it will increase your productivity as well. It also helps you mentally to start "disconnecting" from work, which can also reduce work related stress.

Avoid Multitasking

The distractions you face at work are untold. Between notifications, email alerts, phone calls and interruptions from colleagues, it's amazing we're able to get anything done at all. And guess what all the constant stimulation does? Increases stress. If you want to maintain your focus throughout and reduce stress, focus on only one project at a time. Everything else will be there when you're done and you'll get a sense of accomplishment instead of feeling like you have several things hanging.

Know What's Expected

One of the biggest contributors to stress in the workplace is not knowing what you're expected to do. This can be as simple as a poorly written job description or inadequate communication from the top. Whatever the case, it's almost

impossible to do your job when you don't know what you don't know. If you find yourself in this position, be proactive and schedule a meeting with your supervisor to discuss what's missing and the problems you're having. If done in a respectful manner, this conversation often lowers stress for both parties and can also save you some time by focusing on what you know needs to be done.

Take Breaks

There's someone you work with that spends the entire day in their office. They only times they get up from their desk are you use the restroom and microwave lunch. You know who this person is. They're probably dead serious 100% of the time, seemed stressed and maybe even unhappy. Now think about the people that get out of the office at lunch and take short breaks throughout the day. It's not that the latter doesn't care about their job. Rather, they realize the importance of staying physically and mentally fresh. You might think that the desk jockey gets a lot more done each day but, it's almost always the opposite.

So, whenever you feel stressed or overwhelmed, take a short break to stand up, leave your office and move around. Getting away from a problem or project for a little bit when you're stressed will help give you a new perspective, which in many cases reduces the stress and may even allow more creativity to finding a solution to the problem. When you come back, you'll find yourself ready to tackle whatever is in front of you with a clear mind.

As much as we'd all love it, stress in the workplace isn't going away anytime soon. It's how you manage and handle the stress that makes all the difference. If you're not careful, stress can affect your productivity, relationships with everyone around you and even your health. But, if you take some actionable steps to manage and reduce stress, you'll find yourself happy, healthy and maximizing your potential day in and day out.

As a Life Sciences recruiter for the pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries, I can help optimize your work place by building an efficient team. A great team will work together well and decrease stress in the workplace. Contact me, Jeff King at jking@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501.

Best Ways to Boost Your Focus on Demand



Some people are doing it. As crazy as it sounds, they're videotaping themselves in the office for a day to see how much time they waste. And what those that have dared to take on this little experiment have found is pretty staggering. Between, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, checking fantasy football scores, email and cell phones, there's a lot of time that is just flat out wasted during the day. It shouldn't come as much of a surprise either. But, in a time when demands in the workplace are at an all-time high, doesn't it reason that you should be as productive as you can?

At the end of the day it all comes down to your ability to focus. So, how do you focus on demand? We've got a couple ideas.

Take a Break

Yep, that's right. Countless studies have proven that taking frequent short breaks is essential for maximizing your productivity. In fact, people that take a five-minute break every hour to leave the office, take a short walk and get away from their desk entirely are much more productive than those that are seated behind a computer screen for hours on end. Try scheduling purposeful breaks throughout the day. You'll find that your ability to focus on a singular task and get things done increases immediately.

No More Multitasking

It happens dozens of times per day. You're working on something and the new email alert shows up in the bottom right corner of your computer screen. You see it, click on it, and before you know it, you're embroiled in responding and have totally lost track of what you were working on before. When you finally return to the task at hand, that email is still on your mind and you have to backtrack to figure out where you left off. Talk about wasted time.

Try time blocking. If you purposefully set time aside for certain tasks each day and stick to it, you'll be shocked at how well you're able to maintain focus and get things done.

Music Anyone?

Maybe it's not for everyone and we're certainly not talking about having the latest Katy Perry single on repeat. But if you find yourself struggling to maintain your focus, you might want to experiment with have some soothing classical or piano music playing in the background while you work. Studies have shown this to be an effective strategy to stay on task.

Get Rid of Clutter

There's nothing worse than coming into the office in the morning and not being able to see your desk. Quality reports on top of company memos buried under those thank you notes you forgot to send yesterday. By the time you've cleaned up the mess, 30 minutes have gone by and you're still not sure where you left off.

If you make a point to stay organized and clean your desk off before you leave every day, you'll be able to get off to a fast start the following morning and maintain that momentum throughout the day.

Breathe

Think about how your body reacts when you're stressed or under the gun. Do you tense up? Does your breath become shallow? Of course, that's the natural reaction when you're uncomfortable. Your mind is racing with 1,000 different

thoughts and your ability to focus becomes greatly diminished. Even though it seems counterintuitive, this is when you should actually slow things down and take some [conscious deep breaths](#). Doing so helps you stay in the present and allows your mind to more clearly process everything that's going on.

The Power of a Nap

It's not likely that it will be possible every day, but if you can carve out 10-30 minutes for a power nap in the early afternoon, it can make all the difference between being worthless the rest of the day and feeling recharged. The body and mind have an amazing ability to bounce back quickly, they just need a little time.

Exercise

We're not talking about doing an entire workout in the gym. But, if you've been sitting behind your desk all morning, your blood circulation slows and it's easy to become tired. If you start feeling lethargic or your mind starts to wander, take a couple minutes to do jumping jacks, go on a walk or any other kind of [quick physical activity](#). Before you know it, you'll feel refreshed and awake.

Ok, you don't have to go to the extreme of filming yourself in the office to conjure up some ways to boost your focus and see just how much time you're wasting throughout the day. Instead, be conscious of distractions like email, your phone and social media. There's nothing wrong with taking mental breaks to indulge these habits, you just don't want to let them get in the way of your productivity. If you implement some of the strategies above when you're feeling tired or distracted, you'll be amazed by just how much more you can get done between 9:00 and 5:00.

As a [Life Sciences recruiter in the Bay Area](#), I have worked with many types of professionals who have specific business processes. I can help you find a high-quality employee that fits in your company culture. Contact me, Jeff King, if you need an employee or are search for a new job in the [pharmaceutical, biotech, or medical device industries](#).

Balancing Work and Parenting Stress



Maybe you're already there. You're married with a stable household income and a couple of kids you take to little league and swim lessons. Heck, maybe you or your spouse find an hour a week to volunteer in their classroom. Good on you! But how much of your time do you spend at work? Answering calls from clients that aren't happy or need to be resupplied? Or maybe you're not in sales and your boss needs you to meet that product release deadline so he can give a presentation to the marketing team. There's no doubt, the demands placed upon you in the 21st century workplace mean that you're always at work, even when you're not.

It's all too easy to become so consumed by your work that you neglect those that you're providing for. Have you said no to attending your son's flag football game or your daughter's acting recital because work got in the way? If so, it's a sign that your work-spouse-family balance might be out of order.

Have a Vision

It's all too easy to toil away your time for dollars in the hope that it will make the lives around you better. It very well could, but only financially speaking. But what about you? What about your role for you, your spouse and the children you created together? Don't they deserve the best you have to offer as a human and not just an ATM?

It's easy to fall into the trap of providing so much that you forget about sharing your time - your most precious commodity. The demands of work will always be there. However, your health, time with your kids and prime years with your loved

ones go by quick. Now. Now is the time to evaluate what is most important in your life. Ask yourself some tough questions about what is most important to you... You might very well find that the relationships with those you love are more important than your bank account balance.

Develop a Game Plan

You do this every day at work. Sales meeting at 9:00, new employee orientation handshakes at 10:30 and budget overview at 2:30. The rest of the day is filled with unanswered emails and voicemails, not to mention the tasks that you set out to accomplish in the first place. So, what can you do to get off the hamster wheel?

Time Block

It's been well documented that the most successful business people structure their day according to what's important, what needs to be done and what their family needs.

In that light, if you make a point to set time aside to answer emails for an hour in the morning (that's when people are most likely to respond), engage the needs of your boss and colleagues in the late morning and early afternoon, and the remaining hours to whatever else needs to be done, you might very well find yourself leaving at closing time with the day's tasks accomplished and excited to catch the last 30 minutes of your child's sports practice.

Delegate

No one is going to question the job you do. Heck, they probably encourage you to take more time for yourself and family away from the office, but you refuse. The bottom line is that as your responsibilities grow, you have less time to get everything done. There comes a point that [you can't do it all on your own](#).

This is when hiring well-qualified help can become your greatest asset. Sure, there is the overhead of hourly wages, additional technology and equipment. But with the right training, this individual can afford you normal hours, quality time with your family and a restful night's sleep. If done right, your bottom line should grow and you'll find yourself with much less chance of an early stress-induced

health scare.

Think Long-Term

It sounds redundant but the fact is that most of the workforce trades hours for dollars at the end of the month and repeats the process until it's the end - whatever that may be. Even if you're not raking in the big checks like your boss, there are still things you can do that matter long-term.

The Commodity of Time

This is something the younger generation of the workforce understands. Sure, millennials get a bad wrap for being entitled and lazy but, those that understand the value of hard work understand that Time is also as an asset that has an expiration date. While it couldn't be more important to care for your family's financial well-being, time is truly priceless. Ask yourself the question of how you can best spend your time with your family while you still have it. The paycheck will always be there.

Whether you're where you want to be in your career or starting at the bottom and working your way up, you have people that depend on you. Your spouse or significant other, your kids and most importantly **YOU**. No one will ever downplay the importance of providing and being responsible so that you and those closest to you can be secure in the future. But there comes a point when you have to evaluate what is most important to you and your loved ones. If you answer some honest questions and set necessary boundaries, your work and life will thank you for it.

If you are working in a job in the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), where you are unable to balance parenting with work, [contact me, Jeff King](#). I am a recruiter for the [pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries](#). I can help find you an employer that gives you the scheduling that you need to find time with your family.

How-To Shift Your Mindset to Be Happier at Work



You've most certainly been there at some point. You become so involved in your job that it starts to affect the rest of your life. Before you know it, you look back at the past year and you haven't done anything but work. Your relationships have suffered, you no longer have any hobbies and your definition of happiness is defined by spread sheets and project goals. No one can blame you for being so dedicated but continuing down this stressful path is a recipe for poor health, failed relationships and unhappiness. It's time to make a change.

This mindset begs the question, what makes you happy? Is it getting a raise or promotion? Is it crushing a project goal and winning that free trip to Hawaii? If your answer is yes to any of these questions, it's a sign that your deriving happiness from external factors instead of from within. If this is the mindset you're in, what happens when you don't get that promotion or you barely miss that goal? Do you become unmotivated and withdrawn? Does your productivity suffer? Does work become the last place you want to be?

In a culture that is so results oriented, it's easy to see how people can fall into the trap of deriving happiness from achievements and material things. Think about your neighbor with the Rolex watch, brand new sports car and membership at the fancy country club. Sure, there's nothing wrong with liking nice things, but are they truly what make someone happy?

If you find yourself in the mindset of measuring your worth and enjoyment in life from what you accomplish, you may want to consider making a change. It's pretty simple. Instead of focusing on the outcome, immerse yourself in the process of doing your job well.

A good place to start is with four simple questions.

Are you enjoying the problems you're solving at work?

What kinds of problem solving challenges you in a positive way?

How many goals have you achieved?

Did achieving goals feel make you more excited than the work it took to get the job done?

When you answer these questions honestly, you should gain a keen sense of whether you're actually enjoying the work you're doing or not. If such is not the case, it's a good idea to look at what is causing you to be disheartened. Is it the physical space in which you work? Is it an over-bearing boss that is quick to hand out criticism yet hardly ever praises a job well done? Do you feel stuck by the proverbial glass ceiling? Or is the work itself just something you simply don't enjoy?

Once you've identified some factors that are keeping you from being your most productive and squelching your happiness, it's time to formulate a plan to improve the situation. The solution might be as simple as getting a standing desk, finding an office with more natural light or making time on your lunch hour to get some fresh air and light exercise.

If making some small environmental changes doesn't seem to be enough, you might want to consider some more significant changes like a different employer or maybe even a different career altogether. If you get to this point, the first thing you should do is identify what types of work will allow you to enjoy the process. Are you a people person that likes a lot of face time? Or are you sick of people and prefer to be left alone to do your job? Is working from home something you've always wanted to do but never had the chance? Or do you thrive in a fast-paced collaborative environment? Whatever you decide, make sure you do plenty of research and ask questions. After all, the reason you're leaving your current job is to be happier somewhere else.

It's a shame that so many people in the modern workforce trade days for dollars in jobs they don't particularly care for. They toil away for years on end always focused on the results of their work without enjoying the process of getting there. If you find yourself in this position, take a step back and look at the situation as objectively as you can. If you come to the conclusion that your happiness is

derived solely from the results of your work, it might be time to make some changes, big or small, to increase your productivity, happiness and health.

Why You Need to Have Hobbies If You Want to Be Successful



While there's no denying that the demands of the modern workplace are higher than ever before, there's been a significant amount of research to suggest that achieving a proper work-life balance not only allows you to be more productive, but be healthier and live longer too. You can't be in work mode all of the time. You need a break both mentally and physically to something unrelated to work to recharge and keep a healthy perspective. If you've ever wondered what the hobbies of some of the most successful people are, read on.

Sailing

Just like running a successful business, sailing involves plotting a course and optimizing your strategy to get from point A to point B. Becoming an accomplished sailor takes time and is full of ups and downs depending on factors that are often out of your control. Many of the skills necessary to be successful in business are paralleled with sailing.

Yoga

Yoga can be a difficult activity to start but once you realize how beneficial it can be for your physical, mental and emotional health, you'll have a hard time stopping. Yoga is widely touted as an activity that brings about balance and the mindset you need to perform at your best both at and away from the office.

Running

You've probably heard people describe runner's high. What they are talking about is the euphoric feeling they get during a run when endorphins are released to the brain. Like sailing, running is also a pursuit that requires discipline, self-motivation, determination and mental toughness. Just as is true in business, running requires skills that almost all successful people possess.

Golf (my favorite)

It's not a coincidence that some of the brightest names in business are avid golfers as well. Not only is golf one of the most mentally challenging games in the world, it's a great venue to network, cultivate relationships and close deals. While there's all sorts of sayings like "you should never beat your boss" and "golf is your grandfather's game," it's a pursuit that affords you opportunity to recreate and do business at the same time.

Songwriting

You probably won't be selling out large venues anytime soon, but songwriting is a wonderful creative outlet. The patience, dedication and creativity it takes to match the right lyrics and melodies are all similar to the skills it takes to run a business. And the best part about songwriting, no one ever said you have to perform in front of someone else to enjoy it.

Chess

It should come as little surprise that the game of chess is a favorite past time for successful people. You could make the argument that you're playing a game of

chess every day when you run your business. You're constantly having to think multiple steps ahead, make decisions based on partial information and adapt on the fly when unexpected challenges present themselves.

Reading

The most successful people know that if you're not always learning and trying to improve, you're getting lapped. Reading is one of the ways successful people wind down at the end of a long day but also keep their minds active and open to new ideas. The libraries of the best and the brightest aren't filled with the *Twilight Series* or *College Humor*. Instead, you'll probably find books from thinkers, philosophers and industry leaders.

Volunteering

Even if you don't have a lot of money to give to your favorite charity, there are countless ways you can help make your community a better place. Whether you volunteer at a local soup kitchen or coach your son's little league, the simple act of helping others is proven to make you feel better mentally and physically as well.

No one's going to question the importance of making money. You have bills to pay, groceries to buy and college funds and retirement plans to save for. If you want to be at your best at work and at home however, maintaining a healthy [work-life balance](#) is a must. If you make it a point to incorporate some hobbies that get you outside, involve physical activity and keep your mind active, you'll be setting yourself up to be more productive and live a longer, happier, healthier life.

My name is Jeff King and I am a [Life Sciences Recruiter in the Bay Area](#). Contact me today if you are interested in finding a job or hiring in the [pharmaceutical, biotech, or medical device industries](#).

The Importance of Starting Your Morning Out the Right Way



There's no denying that we all deal with stress throughout our day. [Managing employees](#), [meeting deadlines](#), getting the kids to school on time - our minds are constantly jumping from one worry to another in a constant juggling act that takes its toll on your health, emotional well-being and relationships with others. While daily stresses and concerns aren't going to disappear anytime soon, the good news is that if you start your day out in a healthy way, you can increase your productivity, have a clearer mind, better health and more meaningful relationships with everyone both inside and outside of the office.

Practice Gratitude

What do you do when you first wake up in the morning? Do you reach for the night stand and immediately check emails for the latest fires? Or do you have conscious thoughts about being thankful for the roof over your head, your family and how lucky you are compared to those less fortunate?

Science has proven time and again that if you start your day by practicing gratitude in some way, you realize the day in front of you is a gift to do with as you please. One of the most effective ways to practice gratitude is to journal. By taking even just a few minutes to make a list of the things you're thankful for you gain clear perspective and put your mind at ease.

Meditating

There are more types of meditation than you can count. Whether you take just a

few minutes or set aside some significant time, practicing meditation every morning goes a long way in helping you feel content. If practiced on a regular basis, meditation's benefits also include increased confidence, self-esteem and presence.

While meditation can be done any time of day, practicing it in the morning is highly effective. If meditation is new to you, start out by finding a quiet space where you can sit just for a couple minutes and close your eyes. From here your options are limitless. You can choose to focus on your breath, do a scan of your entire body to see how you're feeling or repeat a simple mantra. Whatever method you choose, remember this is your time to acknowledge your thoughts and practice self-love.

Affirmations

While it's easy to let the troubles of yesterday linger into the day ahead, happy and productive people see each new day as a fresh start. Affirmations are a great way to put yourself in a positive mindset. Examples of simple affirmations include:

- I am capable of making smart decisions for myself.
- I let go of negative thoughts and am grateful for everything that is good.
- I'm a loving, caring, kind, compassionate, grateful, happy, healthy human being.

These are just a few of an infinite number of positive affirmations that you can say out loud to yourself and even write on post-its and tape to your bathroom mirror so you'll have no choice but to read them every morning.

Make Your Bed

Even though making your bed seems like a menial task that should have little to no affect on your day science says it's quite the opposite.

Taking a couple of minutes to straighten the sheets and comforter each morning gives you an immediate sense of accomplishment that puts you in a positive frame of mind. In this mindset, you're more apt to have the motivation to get the most out of your day and accomplish the things you need to in a timely manner.

Exercise

Physical activity is a great way to begin your day. Whether it's a trip to your personal trainer, a yoga session at home or a leisurely walk around the block, exercise gives your body and mind a chance to wake up and get ready for what lies ahead. By getting your blood flowing and allowing your body to release feel-good chemicals to your brain like serotonin and dopamine, you put yourself in a positive frame of mind that will carry over to the workplace and stay with you throughout the day.

Not everyone is a morning person. Maybe you're a fan of hitting the snooze button a couple of times before you get out of bed. Even if that's the case, when you finally decide to begin your day, incorporating some simple healthy routines can make a world of difference in how the rest of your day goes. If you take a little time to care for yourself in the morning before you jump on a conference call or start replying to emails, you'll quickly find yourself much happier, healthier and experience more fruitful relationships with everyone around you.

Contact Jeff King, [Regulatory and Quality Recruiter](#) in the [Bay Area](#), for more information.

How-To Say No at Work



Do you find yourself not accomplishing everything you set out to do each day in the work place? Does the adage "not enough hours in the day" ring true on a regular basis? Do you constantly put the needs of others before your own? If your

answer is yes to any of these questions you are likely what is commonly referred to as a “people pleaser.” Helping others is a core value and certainly an admirable one but if you’re not careful, it’s one that can be dangerous for your productivity, state of mind and physical health. If you frequently find yourself stressed and burned out at the end of the day, learning to tactfully say NO is a skill worth developing.

Make Yourself a Priority

You probably make it a habit to help others and go the extra mile. But when was the last time you made it a priority to take care of your own needs before someone else’s? In order to be at your best, you have to be in the right spot to do so. Prioritizing things like exercise, getting enough sleep and taking a day off all go a long way in helping you recharge and stay fresh.

Set Healthy Boundaries

By nature, the word “no” carries a negative connotation that most people are afraid to express. However, it has many positive benefits that not only will find you in a healthy frame of mind but being more productive as well. The first step to saying no is setting healthy boundaries and sticking to them. This simply means clearly stating your priorities and limits and communicating them to those around you. If you make this behavior a regular practice, it lets people know that you can’t be taken advantage of and they will respect you for it.

Check Your Schedule

You’re probably inundated with requests to take on more work or help with items outside the scope of what you normally do. While it’s easy to immediately say yes to helping out with something, it’s perfectly acceptable to let someone know you need to look at your schedule and will respond accordingly. If you have the time to fit something extra in great, but if you’re already committed then letting people know is reasonable as well.

What's in it For You?

While asking the question of what potential gain you might receive in return for helping someone out might seem selfish, it's important to consider. There are plenty of people out there that are all too ready to accept help but unwilling to return the favor in the future. Before you commit to taking on work for someone else, ask yourself the question of the likelihood of that favor being reciprocated.

Ask Someone You Trust if You're Unsure

We are all asked to help out from time to time. If you find yourself on the fence of saying yes or no however, take the time to seek the opinion of someone you can confide in. By verbalizing your concerns, you not only gain a valuable outside opinion, but allow yourself to consider all the options more clearly. Even if you don't take the advice, you'll at least have more information to help you make the decision that is best for you.

Delegate

The demands of the modern workplace can be overwhelming. Trying to accomplish every task on your own can lead to burnout in the office and negatively effect your health and relationships outside of work as well. If you work on a team or within a specific department, realize that your colleagues are there to help. By delegating tasks or projects to the people around you, you not only save yourself time, but demonstrate to others that they are valuable and can be trusted. This spells good news for everyone involved.

Provide Context

One of the most critical components of saying no is providing context. If you simply tell someone no you risk coming off as aloof or not caring. But if you make it a point to honestly explain to the person requesting your help that your plate is already full and that you are willing to say yes in the future, you come across as respectful and honest.

Say Yes to the Person and No to the Task

Empathy is a sign of high emotional intelligence. If someone asks for your help and you simply don't have the time or resources to do so, tell them that you understand the situation they are in but that you simply can't this time around. Saying no in this manner makes it clear that you value the person in question and are willing to help in the future.

Saying no is counterintuitive for most people. However, learning to do so in a tactful manner when it makes sense goes a long way toward increasing your own productivity and well-being. If you take the steps necessary to make yourself a priority, set professional boundaries and evaluate all your options before you say yes or no, you'll be in a position to make the best decision for yourself and those around you.

Fitting Self Care Into Your Work Schedule



You've heard the saying about living to work instead of working to live. Sadly, many of us can identify with the former and after a while we become so enslaved to our jobs that we neglect are our own well-being. When was the last time you went on vacation, left early on a Friday or refused to look at email for an entire weekend? What do you eat for lunch everyday? Is it something you grab at a convenience store and throw in a microwave? How many steps do you get a day?

And maybe most importantly, when did you last devote some time to simply writing down your thoughts?

With the demands of the modern-day workplace, it's all too easy to become lost in the rat race. Before you know it, years have flown by and you haven't even blinked. If you're determined to live a long and fruitful life, it's vitally important to take some steps to care for yourself along the way.

Exercise

Maybe you just don't have time to go for that five-mile run or to an hour-long yoga class. That's ok, even short periods of exercise can benefit your physical and even mental health. Studies show that taking just a five-minute break every hour to get up from your desk and stretch your legs is beneficial for your mind and body.

How do you spend your lunch break? The answer for many people is working. Even if it's only for half an hour, leaving your phone at your desk and going for a walk outside while you eat is proven to enhance blood circulation, build strength, improve your mood and make you more productive. If your employer has an onsite gym or fitness program, it's in your best interest to take full advantage.

Being Sick

We all get sick at some point. When it happens, it's important to make recovery your one and only priority. If you let an illness linger and continue to work at full capacity, your productivity decreases both in the short term and long term. Even though it's difficult, taking the time to fully heal from an illness is key to not only to success at work but vitality outside the office as well.

Eating Healthy

Eating properly is something the majority of us overlook. It's easy to grab something that's quick and satisfies your hunger regardless if it's good for you or not. Even though you probably skipped breakfast and that burrito or slice of pizza sounds great for lunch, they could likely do you more harm than good. Eating fatty or greasy food lowers your immune system and can put you in a food coma rendering you useless the rest of the afternoon.

If you're short on time, it might be worth considering a meal delivery service like Door Dash or Uber Eats. The delivery fee is most often minimal and you have plenty of options to choose from. Most delivery menus have vegan and gluten free choices that come in reasonable portions so that you won't eat yourself silly but won't starve either.

Snacking throughout the day is crucial. If you're busy running from one meeting to another, you likely don't realize you're hungry until your blood sugar has reached low levels. If you take the time to cut up fruit and veggies that you can store at work, you'll have healthy snack options at the ready and be able to maintain your energy level throughout the day.

Caring for Your Mind

Being in a positive state of mind is just as important as taking care of your physical well-being. If you aren't in the right mindset, not only is your work in trouble but everything around you might be as well.

One of the ways to get your day off to a positive start is to meditate when you wake up in the morning. Even if it's just for a couple of minutes, practicing a simple meditation on a regular basis allows you stay centered and in the moment even when everything else around you is chaotic.

Starting a gratitude journal is another option to help put your mind at ease and relieve stress. This can be done in the morning or before you go to bed by simply putting a pen to paper and making a short list of everything you're thankful for brings you back to the present and allows you to see the bigger picture. Practicing gratitude in any form helps you put things in perspective and realize that there are other things in life besides work.

No one doubts you want to be successful and make an impact in your job. If you don't take some small steps to take care of yourself along the way however, you not only risk your job performance, but living a long and fulfilled life as well. If you find yourself physically ill, stressed or depressed because of work, implement some of the small routines above into your life and you'll be back on top of your game in no time.

How Finding Your “Why” Leads to Success



Your most basic needs for survival are food, water and shelter. While survival is the bare minimum, humans crave and are capable of much more. You seek to provide for yourself and your loved ones. Making money, learning new things, helping others, pursuing happiness, staying healthy, creating relationships, the list goes on. Without a clear sense of why you seek these things however, you're susceptible to disengagement, despair and shame. To cope, it's easy to turn to drugs, alcohol and other unhealthy habits. It's not surprising that dependence on antidepressant medication, suicide and depression is on the rise.

Disengagement in the workplace is at an all-time high as well. While we're the wealthiest we've ever been, there is a distinct disconnect between being well-off and well-being. Without a clear sense of purpose - or a why - this cycle is sure to continue. The first step to achieving your career aspirations and breaking out of the rut of complacency and indifference is defining your why. Having a why gives you motivation, energy, courage to take risks, and drive to keep going when times get tough.

Five Why Questions

A good place to start when finding your why is having someone you know and trust, and that knows you, ask you the five why questions. Each question in this exercise is based off the answer to the previous and is designed to dig a little

deeper. An example of what this conversation might look like is below.

Q: *“Why do you come to work every day?”*

A: *“So I can make money to support my family.”*

Q: *“Why do you want you support your family?”*

A: *“Because I love and care for them deeply.”*

Q: *“Why do you love and care for them deeply?”*

A: *“Because they enrich my life and bring me joy.”*

Q: *“Why do they enrich your life and bring you joy?”*

A: *“Because seeing them happy and successful make me happy?”*

Q: *“Why does seeing them happy and successful make you happy?”*

A: *“Because I care about others and when I see them doing well it motivates me to pursue my goals and dreams too.”*

As you can see, this simple exercise can quickly get you thinking about what your true motivations are. And the best part is, it is not limited just to just five questions. Keep asking “why” until you have some answers you’re satisfied with. Doing this exercise with someone that knows you pretty well can also give you a different perspective on some of your answers that you might not have even considered.

Now that you’ve entered a mindset that has you thinking about your life beyond the daily grind, Forbes contributor and award-winning author Margie Warrell suggests contemplating four questions that will help you identify the crossroads between your work, talents, expertise, passions and values. It is here that you can truly define your why.

What Makes You Come Alive?

The immediate answers for you might be sailing in Greece, seeing your favorite band in concert or vacationing in New England during the fall. If you think a little deeper however, you’ll probably come up with some different answers. Instead of being about you, these answers will be about something bigger than you. They will let you connect with what you’re passionate about. Writes Warrel, “when you focus your attention on endeavors that put a fire in your belly, you grow your impact and influence in ways that nothing else can.”

What are Your Natural Strengths?

When you're in an environment that lets your strengths shine through, you're bound to find increased personal and professional success. Are you the calming voice amidst chaos? Do you easily inspire or persuade people? Do your problem-solving skills set you apart? Do you find you're most successful going against the grain? By taking the necessary time to identify your strengths, you'll be better positioned to make an actionable plan to achieve your greatest ambitions.

Where do you Add the Most Value?

Maybe you excel at your job. Others come to for help, you get promoted more quickly than your colleagues and your superiors recognize the contributions you make. This is all good and well but if your heart isn't fully committed to what you do, chances are you aren't living out your why.

By knowing in what types of environments you add the most value and are most fulfilled, you're able to identify opportunities and career paths that allow you to make meaningful contributions and afford the greatest sense of accomplishment. Thinking about where you can best solve problems that you enjoy is a great way to focus solely on your strengths instead of eliminating weaknesses.

How Will You Measure your Life?

Here again, your surface-level answers might be divergent from those derived if you think a little deeper. Perhaps making money is your immediate primary goal that you see as a means to an end allowing you to live the life you want. Perhaps a more thoughtful answer might be having an impeccable reputation for honesty or helping as many people as you can become homeowners. As Warrel writes, "the things that matter most are rarely things... deciding how you want to measure your life means making a stand for something and then living your life in alignment with it."

While the reality for most people is that they can't trade in making money for living a life based just on passion. If you look at this reality in the right way however, making money and following your heart don't have to be mutually exclusive. By focusing on how you go about your job instead of what your job is,

you're likely to find more meaningful purpose.

Finding your why personally or professionally isn't something that happens overnight. It takes a lot of work and involves having some tough conversations with yourself. If you're willing to put in the effort though, the rewards can be unimaginable. If you feel like you're stuck in a rut or not progressing toward your goals as quickly as you'd like, asking yourself some of the questions discussed here is a good place to start.