

## How to Prevent Burnout Like Thor While Saving the Universe



Similar # of suicide annually as # of death in Canada

during SARS—deemed an epidemic

U of T—every 6 years, entire class wiped out by suicide

McMaster's—2.5 years

Maslach Burnout Inventory—validated assessment tool

Used in 93% of publications on burnout--used in Netherlands for diagnosis

1—I feel emotionally drained by my work—Exhaustion

2-I really don't care about what happens to some of my patients--depersonalization

3-I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job—personal achievement

### Pitfalls people face when dealing with burnout

#### **Thinking no one will notice**

It's likely other people are noticing—The exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy

#### **Vacation will make it go away**

It doesn't "cure" burnout.

Burnout levels decrease during vacation ( one distinction with depression), they often return to pre-vacation levels within a week or two after returning to work

#### **Success and money is the ultimate goal**

Chasing high income is a self-defeating effort.

Woodard Rule—no matter what the income, "I'd be happy if I only made 25% more"

Applies whether you make a 5 figure income or 6 figure income—just stop for a minute and do the math on that one....

As long as money is a criterion for success, you will cause themselves unneeded stress.

Rethinking this goal may prove the most difficult trait to remedy, yet the most important.



Let's start with work environment

### **Lack of control**

High job demands along with low control is most detrimental to health.

Nobody tells a carpenter... Or engineer...But everyone tells a doctor how the practice medicine

### **Work overload**

### **Breakdown of community**

Having to work with patronizing colleagues/government, no mechanism for conflict resolution

### **Insufficient rewards**

Being undercompensated, not recognized

A serious mismatch in even one of these areas can put you on path of burnout.

**At present moment, we have very little control over the systemic factors. But the one thing we have is our freedom to choose our attitude.**

## **Individual Personality Characteristic That Lead to Burnout**

### **Neuroticism**

**Type A, perfectionistic**---Doctors are overachievers, forced to practice mediocracy due to lack of resources

**Idealistic professionals** with unrealistic expectations

**Empathic** people who pour too much of themselves into their jobs

## **Individual Traits that Protect from Burnout**

### **Extraversion**

#### **Agreeableness**

Extraversion associated with increased work engagement

Agreeableness—protects from emotional exhaustion

### **Family/Friend Support**

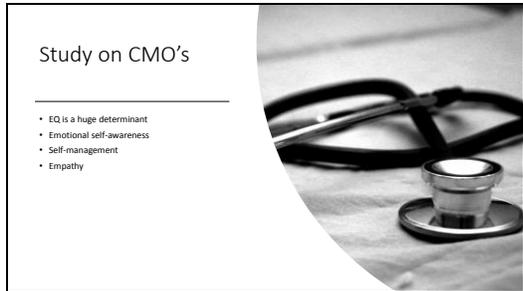
Consistently shows protection from all 3 dimensions of burnout—exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement.

Relates to higher emotional energy

### **Perception**

People who perceive their jobs as stressful and demanding report more burnout

Job stress is only linked to higher burnout rates when they feel like they aren't making a difference



35 CMO's assessed for their level of stress to determine

what they do to deal with burnout

EQ determines if someone experiences burnout—it supports superior coping skills and help deal with chronic stress

Emotional self-awareness and Self-management are both components of EQ

Conflict management skills allow us to channel our anxiety and emotions into problem-solving mode rather than allowing the situation to bother us—(a quality that improves with mindfulness)

## Three Pillars of Optimal Health

### **Social connection**

Activates Oxytocin response—feel good hormone

Higher ROI then helping people eat better

Lack of social connection twice as dangerous as smoking for health

Most people don't have the tribe around them that they need

Feeling of loneliness and isolation, is actually a pain response—same as physical pain



1962—researchers discover:

Rosetans die far less from heart attacks than similar towns elsewhere—almost 1/2 of everyone else around them

Came from village in Italy—Rose of Valley—settled in Pennsylvania  
Similar smoking, drinking, and eating habits  
Worked in toxic environment—slate quarry mines  
Suffered anti-ethnic discrimination

No reported crime rate, few applications for social assistance  
What set them apart were family and community relationships.  
Absence of ostentation among the wealthy  
They don't feel isolated or crushed—do not internalize their stress—no one is isolated

1992—researchers looked at metrics again  
Americanization  
Wearing away of Rosetan values documented decade by decade—almost perfect correlation  
between Americanization and heart attack rates

## **Mindfulness**

Sir Paul McCartney, Arianna Huffington, Oprah  
All credit mindfulness for how they stay steady, sane, and optimistic in their busy lives

Not just about meditation, though that is part of it—meditation is simply a conduit to help  
achieve mindfulness

Practice of being self-aware—“Bringing attention to the present moment, without judgement”

Scientific data

- 1—Lengthening of telomeres on DNA= slowing down aging process
- 2—improve self-control—more apt to respond rather than react
- 3—Increase size of hippocampus= improved memory
- 4-improve immune system—less likely to develop cancer, infections—flu vaccine
- 5-reduced addictions
- 6-improve creativity—mind is more free when not bogged down with worries and anxieties



CEO Mark Bertolini

13,000 participated—1/4 employees

Gathered data—EEG, Blood tests, questionnaires

Results:-20% improvement in quality of sleep  
19% reduction in any pain  
Cortisol levels and HR variability decreased

Other corporations doing same—Goldman Sachs, BlackRock, General Mills, Google

Unmeasured results:--if all the good feeling permeates the workplace and corporations were truly to embrace mindfulness

## **Exercise**

Hippocampus shrinks with aging, but in the exercise group, it increased in size

One factor with the greatest amount of scientific data on benefits in neuroplasticity

- Increase neurotransmitters
- Increases brain neurogenesis
- Alzheimer reduction:  
Fast walking 30 min/d, 5x/wk=33%  
Vigorous exercise 30min/d, 5x/wk=50%