

Awake!

SEPTEMBER 2014



HOW TO DEAL WITH
BURNOUT



How to Deal With Burnout

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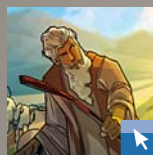
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WORLD

Violence against women

has become a “global public health problem of epidemic proportions,” according to the World Health Organization (WHO). “Some 35% of all women will experience either intimate partner or non-partner violence,” says WHO. “Intimate partner violence is the most common type . . . , affecting 30% of women worldwide.”



BRITAIN

In a poll of 64,303 people, 79 percent thought that “**religion** is a cause of much misery and conflict in the world today.” Moreover, a 2011 census of England and Wales found that only 59 percent of the population profess to be Christian, down from 72 percent in 2001. During the same period, the percentage of people who claimed no religious affiliation rose from 15 to 25.



EUROPE

Criminal gangs are now **counterfeiting** such everyday consumer goods as cosmetics, detergents, and even food. “Just about every single ingredient that has even a moderate economic value is potentially vulnerable to fraud,” says the president of one food-security consultancy. One expert estimates that 10 percent of food items bought in the developed world are adulterated.



CHINA

According to media reports, recently amended legislation requires adult children not only to visit their **aging parents** often but also to tend to their “emotional needs.” The law “does not stipulate any punishments” for children who fail to comply.

HOW TO DEAL WITH BURNOUT

ANIL was beyond exhausted. He had taken on a new job because it promised greater prestige and more income. But now he was working late nights as well as weekends, sometimes up to 80 hours a week. “The work environment was chaotic,” he states, “and all the responsibility fell on me. I said to myself: ‘What have I done? If I don’t make a change, I’m dead.’” Anil was rapidly burning out.

Workplace burnout is more than mere tiredness, and it goes beyond the ordinary stress of everyday work. Burnout is characterized by chronic exhaustion and strong feelings of frustration and powerlessness. Those suffering from burnout tend to withdraw emotionally from their work, lose motivation, and become less productive. Studies also link burnout to numerous emotional and physical health problems.

What causes burnout? Work overload is often a factor. Because of economic pressures, some employers demand that employees work longer hours, at times for less money. Technology now keeps some in constant contact with their job, blurring the lines between work and private life. For some, job insecurity, lack of control over their work, or feelings of being treated unfairly contribute to burnout. So does dealing with unclear priorities or conflicts with coworkers.

Burnout can also be self-inflicted. In the pursuit of career goals and greater income, some try to fit ever more work into their life. Such ones may become over-committed and find themselves on the road to burnout.

If you are experiencing workplace burnout, how can you recover? Granted, change may seem impossible if you feel trapped in circumstances beyond your control. Nevertheless, consider the following four steps for dealing with burnout. You may have more options than you realize.



1. EVALUATE YOUR PRIORITIES.

What is most important to you? Many people would likely put family relationships and good health near the top of their list. These are things that are likely to suffer if you are burned out.

By clarifying your priorities, you prepare yourself to make difficult decisions and accept trade-offs. For example, you may see that your work is leading to burnout. Yet you may reason, 'I cannot change jobs or work less; I need the income!' True, everyone needs income, but how much and at what cost to the things you value most?

Beware of pressure to adopt the priorities of others around you as your own. Your employer's priorities and yours are likely different. Others may choose to put work first in their life, but this does not mean that you must do the same.

BIBLE PRINCIPLE: "EVEN WHEN A PERSON HAS AN ABUNDANCE, HIS LIFE DOES NOT RESULT FROM THE THINGS HE POSSESSES."

—LUKE 12:15

2. SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE.

To reduce stress and gain time for what you truly value, you may consider working fewer hours, you may be able to persuade your employer to reduce your current job demands, or you may determine that you need to change jobs. Whatever you decide to do, you will likely need to adjust your financial situation and make changes in your lifestyle. But this is not impossible and may not be as hard as you might think.

In many lands, a consumer-oriented society sends the message that happiness is linked to income level and possessions. But in reality it is not. A simpler lifestyle can bring greater freedom and satisfaction. To prepare for such a change, reduce expenses and save money. Try to lower or eliminate debt. Discuss the need for change with your family members, and seek their support.

BIBLE PRINCIPLE: "HAVING FOOD AND CLOTHING, WE WILL BE CONTENT WITH THESE THINGS."—1 TIMOTHY 6:8



3. LEARN WHEN TO SAY NO TO WORK.

If you face an unrealistic workload or some other persistent problem in your workplace, discuss your situation with your employer. Whenever possible, offer solutions that meet both your needs and those of your employer. Reassure your employer of your commitment to your work, and explain what you are willing to do; but be clear and firm about what you are not able to do.



Use foresight and be realistic. If you want to work less, your employer may expect you to accept less compensation. Anticipate risks such as the threat of job loss, and be prepared to respond. Remember that your prospects for finding a different job are better while you are still employed.

Even when you have reached a mutually agreeable work arrangement with your employer, you can expect to be pressured again to take on more work. What can help you to remain firm? Keeping to the commitments that you have made. Doing so might give you leverage to ask your employer to do the same in return, including keeping your workload within the agreed limits.

BIBLE PRINCIPLE: “LET YOUR WORD ‘YES’ MEAN YES, YOUR ‘NO,’ NO.”—MATTHEW 5:37

A JOURNEY BACK FROM BURNOUT

Wayne and Marie are a married couple in their early 30's who live in the United States.

What led to your dealing with burnout?

Wayne: We were running multiple businesses and had gone into debt over our heads. I wanted to build our

business to a point where life was more comfortable and I could make money while working less. My goal was to reduce stress, but I got just the opposite.

How were you affected?

Wayne: We realized that the things we were working so hard to get—nicer clothes, a bigger house, and more expensive vacations—were not making us happy. I felt emotionally drained, and I lost all motivation.



4. RENEW YOURSELF.

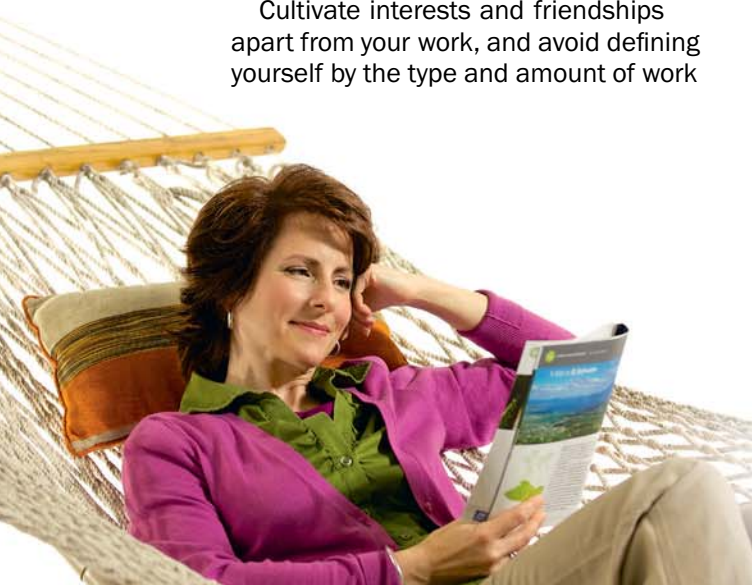
Even when your work is free of major problems, you may still have your share of stresses, difficult people, and unpleasant situations. So make time for sufficient rest and balanced recreation. Remember that recreation does not have to be expensive to be refreshing to you and your family.

Cultivate interests and friendships apart from your work, and avoid defining yourself by the type and amount of work

that you do. Why? The book *Your Money or Your Life* observes: “Who you are is far greater than what you do for money.” If your identity and self-worth come primarily from your work, then you will find it difficult to minimize the role that work plays in your life.

BIBLE PRINCIPLE: “BETTER IS A HANDFUL OF REST THAN TWO HANDFULS OF HARD WORK AND CHASING AFTER THE WIND.”
—ECCLESIASTES 4:6

Can you really make the changes needed to deal successfully with burnout? Yes, you can. Anil, mentioned at the beginning of this article, did so. He says: “I contacted my former employer and asked if he would take me back, and he did. I was embarrassed to face my former coworkers after I had talked about moving on to ‘greener pastures.’ And I took a significant cut in pay. But I gained peace of mind, and I had more time for my family and other things that I truly value.” ■



Marie: My health suffered. Our relationship suffered. We didn’t get along well.

How did you simplify your life?

Wayne: We examined our goals and our life situation. We decreased the overhead of our business. I had a trendy office, and I let it go. I changed the kind of car that I was willing to drive. I built a

one-man business and intentionally kept it small. We worked our bills down and kept our expenses low.

Marie: Simplifying was not as hard as I thought it would be. We reduced our frequency of eating out and ate at home. We went for walks, and we got healthier. Eventually, we began working part-time and doing volunteer work.

What has been the result?

Marie: Our life has stopped being about making money. We adjusted our focus to more important things, and our relationship improved.

Wayne: Life has smoothed out. We are much happier.



PRAYER

Does anyone hear our prayers?

“O Hearer of prayer, to you people of all sorts will come.”—Psalm 65:2.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY It has been said that prayers seem to “rise no higher than the ceiling.” People undergoing suffering may especially be prone to doubt that their prayers are heard.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS “The eyes of Jehovah [God] are on the righteous, and his ears listen to their supplication, but the face of Jehovah is against those doing bad things,” says the Bible. (1 Peter 3:12) Clearly, God does listen to prayers. He is, however, especially inclined to listen to those who follow his precepts. Regarding God’s willingness to hear us when we pray, another scripture states: “This is the confidence that we have toward him, that no matter what we ask according to his will, he hears us.” (1 John 5:14) Hence, sincere supplicants need to understand what types of request are likely to harmonize with God’s will.



How should we pray?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Adherents of various religions—such as Buddhism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Islam—have been taught to use beads to recite and count their prayers.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS Prayers should spring from the heart and be expressed with sincerity; they should not be learned by rote and repeated mechanically. The Scriptures urge us: “*When praying, do not say the same things over and over again* as the people of the nations do, for they imagine they will get a hearing for their use of many words. So do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.”—Matthew 6:7, 8.

“When praying, do not say the same things over and over again.”—Matthew 6:7.

WHY IT MATTERS When prayers are offered in a manner not acceptable to God, the worshipper may well be wasting his time or possibly offending God. The Bible warns that prayers offered by those who refuse to comply with God’s will are “detestable” to him.—Proverbs 28:9.

To whom should we pray?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Some believers pray to Mary or to other entities, such as angels and individuals, who are revered as “saints.” Among these are “Saint” Anthony of Padua, who is said to look after “both spiritual and temporal needs,” and “Saint” Jude, who is considered to be a patron saint of “desperate situations.” Many worshippers pray to such “saints” and to angels in the hope that these entities will intercede for them before God.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS True worshippers should pray to “our Father in the heavens.” (Matthew 6:9) The Bible urges us: “Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God.”—Philippians 4:6. ■

“Search for Jehovah [God] while he may be found. Call to him while he is near.”—Isaiah 55:6.



How to Let Go of Resentment



THE CHALLENGE

You cannot forget the bad things your spouse has said or done; the harsh words and thoughtless acts are indelibly etched in your memory. As a result, the affection you once had has been replaced by resentment. You have no choice, it seems, but to endure a loveless marriage. You resent your spouse for that too.

Be assured that things can improve. First, though, consider a few facts about resentment.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Resentment can destroy a marriage. Why? Because it undermines the very qualities upon which a marriage should be built, including love, trust, and loyalty. In a sense, then, resentment is not the *result* of a marital problem; it *is* a marital problem. For good reason, the Bible says: “Put away from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness.”—Ephesians 4:31.

If you harbor resentment, you are hurting yourself.

Harboring resentment is like slapping yourself and then expecting the *other* person to feel the pain. “The family member who is the focus of your resentment may be feeling just fine, enjoying life, and perhaps not at all troubled by any of this,” writes Mark Sichel in his book *Healing From Family Rifts*. The bottom line? “Resentment hurts you far more than the person you resent,” Sichel says.

Resentment is a choice. Some people might doubt that. They would say, ‘My spouse *made* me resentful.’ The problem is, such thinking puts the emphasis on something that cannot be controlled—the actions of another person. The Bible offers an alternative. It says: “Let each one examine *his own* actions.” (Galatians 6:4) We cannot control what someone else says or does, but we *can* control how we react to it. Resentment is not the only option.

▶ Holding on to resentment creates a burden that keeps your marriage from moving forward



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Take responsibility for your resentment. Granted, it is easy to blame your spouse. But remember, resentment is a choice. So is forgiveness. You can choose to follow the Bible's admonition: "Do not let the sun set while you are still angry." (Ephesians 4:26) A spirit of forgiveness gives you an opportunity to approach your marriage problems with a better mind-set.—*Bible principle: Colossians 3:13.*

Examine yourself honestly. The Bible acknowledges that some people are "prone to anger" and "disposed to rage." (Proverbs 29:22) Does that describe you? Ask yourself: 'Am I inclined toward bitterness? How easily am I offended? Do I tend to make issues over minor matters?' The Bible says that "the one who keeps harping on a matter separates close friends." (Proverbs 17:9; Ecclesiastes 7:9) That can happen in a marriage as well. So if you have a tendency toward resentment, ask yourself, 'Could I be more patient with my spouse?' —*Bible principle: 1 Peter 4:8.*

Decide what is truly important. The Bible says that there is "a time to be silent and a time to speak." (Ecclesiastes 3:7) Not every offense needs to be discussed; sometimes you can simply "have your say in your heart, upon your bed, and keep silent." (Psalm 4:4) When you do need to discuss a grievance, wait until your irritation has passed. "When I feel hurt," says a wife named Beatriz, "I try to calm down first. Sometimes I later realize that the wrong was not that serious anyway, and then I'm more inclined to speak respectfully."—*Bible principle: Proverbs 19:11.*

Understand the meaning of "forgive." In the Bible, the word "forgive" is sometimes translated from an original-language word that suggests the idea of letting go of something. Therefore, to forgive does not require that you minimize the offense or act as if it never occurred; it could mean that you simply let it go, realizing that resentment can do more damage to your health and your marriage than the offense itself. ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

"Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely."—Colossians 3:13.

"Love covers a multitude of sins."
—1 Peter 4:8.

"The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, and it is beauty on his part to overlook an offense."—Proverbs 19:11.

TRY THIS

For the next week, notice three positive traits in your spouse. Write them down at the end of the week, and tell your spouse why you appreciate those traits. Focusing on the positive will help you to fight off resentment.

Harboring resentment is like slapping yourself and then expecting the *other* person to feel the pain

Diabetes

CAN YOU REDUCE YOUR RISK?



THE incidence of diabetes mellitus is increasing so quickly that it has become a global epidemic. There are two major types of diabetes. Type 1 starts mainly in childhood, and presently doctors do not know how to prevent it. This article is about type 2, which accounts for about 90 percent of all diabetes.

While in the past it was seen as exclusive to adults, more recently type 2 diabetes has also been affecting children. Experts claim, however, that the risk of type 2 diabetes can be reduced. A little knowledge of this insidious disease may prove helpful to you.*

What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition that causes a person to have an excessive level of blood sugar. The disease upsets the normal process of transferring sugar from the bloodstream into cells that need it for energy. The result is damage to vital organs and impairment of blood circulation, sometimes leading to toe or foot amputation, blindness, and kidney disease. A large proportion of diabetes patients die of heart attacks or stroke.

Excess body fat can be a major factor in type 2 diabetes. Experts believe that fat accumulated in the belly and waist may indicate a higher risk for diabetes. More specifically, fat in the pancreas and the liver appear to disrupt the body's regulation of blood sugar. What can you do to reduce your risk?

* Awake! does not endorse any particular diet or exercise routine. Each individual should carefully evaluate the options and consult a physician as needed before making health-related decisions.

Three Steps That May Reduce the Risk of Diabetes

1. Have your level of blood sugar tested if you are in a high-risk group. A medical disorder known as prediabetes—a condition in which blood sugar is moderately higher than normal—often precedes type 2 diabetes. Both conditions are unhealthy, but there is a difference: Although diabetes can be controlled, it cannot yet be cured. On the other hand, some prediabetics have been able to bring their blood sugar back to normal levels. Prediabetes may have no obvious symptoms. Hence, this condition may go unnoticed. According to reports, about 316 million people around the world have prediabetes; yet, many of them do not realize it. For instance, in the United States alone, some 90 percent of prediabetes sufferers are unaware of their condition.

Prediabetes is not harmless, however. Besides being a precursor to type 2 diabetes, it has recently been linked to an increased risk of dementia. If you are overweight, not physically active, or have a family history of diabetes, you might already have prediabetes. A blood test can tell you if you do.

2. Choose healthful food. You might benefit from doing the following whenever it is possible and practical: Eat smaller portions than usual. Instead of sugary fruit juice and carbonated beverages, drink water, tea, or coffee. Eat whole-grain bread, rice, and pasta—in moderation—rather than refined foods. Eat leaner meats, fish, nuts, and beans.

3. Stay physically active. Exercise can lower your blood sugar and help you maintain a healthy weight. Swap some TV time for exercise time, recommends one expert.

You cannot change your genes, but you can change your lifestyle. Doing what we can to improve our health is worth the effort. ■

'I Took Action!'

An Interview

How did you realize that you were in danger of developing diabetes?

When I had a medical checkup for a new job, the doctor told me that I would soon be diabetic if I didn't take urgent action. I had four factors against me: I was from a high-risk ethnic group, I had a family history of diabetes, I was overweight, and I didn't exercise. Since I couldn't change the first two factors, I decided to try to change the last two.

What did you do?

I went to a diabetes counselor who explained the relationship between diet, exercise, body weight, and diabetes. I determined to change my lifestyle. I began eating two portions of vegetables before the rest of my meal. That made me less hungry for the less healthful items on my plate. I also became more physically active, something I had neglected for years.

How successful were you?

Within 18 months, I lost a tenth of my body weight, and I feel great. I'm determined not to return to my unhealthy habits. Diabetes is definitely not to be taken lightly!



SPAIN EXPELS THE MORISCOS

It is said that almost every move made by the Spanish in this sad story was influenced by the church. It is a story worth reading.

QUICK FACTS

► In the early eighth century C.E., North African and Arab Muslims conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula, the lands now known as Spain and Portugal.

► Catholic armies began a slow reconquest, completed in 1492, when they took the last Moorish enclave around Granada.

► In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella expelled from their realm any Jews who would not convert to Catholicism. In the 1500's, Muslims who converted, as well as their descendants, were persecuted and relocated. From 1609 to 1614, the Moriscos—the “new Christians” of Muslim descent—were expelled.

► It is estimated that some 300,000 Moriscos were forced to flee Spain amid great suffering. It seems that at least 10,000 died resisting expulsion.

THE Spanish monarchy wanted a Christian State under one set of laws. The Moriscos were considered infidels—so the reasoning went—and hence their presence constituted a grave offense in God’s sight. After many years, a decision was made. The solution? They should be expelled!*

FORCED CONVERSIONS

For hundreds of years, the Moors in Spain—a Muslim minority, called Mudéjar—lived in relative peace in areas under Catholic control. For a time, in certain areas they enjoyed a legal status that allowed them to retain their own laws and customs and to practice their own religion.

But in 1492, the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand II and Isabella conquered Granada, the last part of Iberia still under Muslim control. The terms of its surrender granted the Moorish population there rights similar to those of the Mudéjar. However, Catholic leaders soon increased their persecution and pressure on the Muslim minority within their domain to convert. The Moors protested this violation of prior accords, and in 1499, they

* Moriscos means “Little Moors” in Spanish. Historians use the term in a nonderogatory way to refer to people of Muslim background who converted to Catholicism and stayed in the Iberian Peninsula after the fall of the last Muslim kingdom there in 1492.

It is estimated that some 300,000 Moriscos were forced to flee Spain amid great suffering

revolted. Government troops put down the uprising, but thereafter Muslims in one area after another were made either to convert or to emigrate. Spaniards called those who converted and remained in Spain Moriscos.

“NEITHER GOOD CHRISTIANS NOR LOYAL SUBJECTS”

By 1526, Islam was banned throughout Spain, yet many Moriscos secretly continued to practice their religion. For the most part, as a people, they retained their cultural identity.

At first, the Moriscos' lip service to Catholicism was tolerated. They did, after all, perform a vital function as artisans, craftsmen, laborers, and taxpayers. Still, the Moriscos' general refusal to assimilate was resented, and they suffered discrimination from both the government and the common people. Such prejudice may have been fueled by the growing suspicions in the church regarding the sincerity of their conversion.

Soon, toleration was replaced by coercion. In 1567, the decision of King Philip II to forbid the Moriscos' language, dress, customs, and traditions was published. This measure provoked new rebellion and bloodshed.

Spain's rulers, according to historians, became convinced that “Moriscos were neither good Christians nor loyal subjects.” For that reason, they were accused of conspiring with Spain's enemies—the Barbary pirates, the French Protestants, and the Turks—to favor a foreign invasion. Both prejudice and fears that the Moriscos would eventually turn traitor contributed to the decision of Philip III to expel them in 1609.* In the years that followed, people suspected of being Moriscos were persecuted. By such ignoble means, Spain became fully Catholic. ■

* Historians also speculate that at least one of Spain's rulers stood to profit greatly from confiscation of Morisco estates.

“Pure” Catholicism Throughout the Land!

Spain undoubtedly suffered economically as a result of the loss of its Morisco workforce. Despite that, the country experienced a sense of euphoria after the exodus. For many Spaniards, say the history books, the very presence of Moriscos, whose religion was suspect, had been “a long-standing irritant, and a cause of national shame.” Now, that irritant had been banished. The leaders, the population in general, and the church rejoiced that “pure” Catholicism had at last been restored throughout the land.

Juan de Ribera, archbishop of Valencia, fully supported the expulsion of the Moriscos





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The Locust's Motion-Sensitive Neurons

LOCUSTS migrate in swarms as thick as “80 million locusts per square kilometer [0.4 sq mi].” Yet they avoid colliding with one another. What is their secret?

Consider: Behind each of a locust's two compound eyes is a motion-sensitive neuron called the lobula giant movement detector (LGMD). When a collision appears imminent, these neurons send messages to the wings and legs, prompting the locust to act quickly. In fact, its reaction is five times faster than the blink of an eye.

Inspired by the locust's eyes and neurons, scientists have developed a computerized system that allows a mobile

robot to detect and avoid approaching objects, without the need for complicated radar or infrared detectors. Researchers are applying this technology to vehicles, giving them a fast and accurate warning system that could reduce collisions. “There's so much to learn from such a simple insect as the locust,” says Professor Shigang Yue at the University of Lincoln in the United Kingdom.

What do you think? Did the locust's motion-sensitive neurons come about by evolution? Or were they designed? ■

