

10 Signs You Might Have Burnout

While there are many signs of burnout, and many potential solutions, here are just a few that I have seen most in myself and other authors. But understand that nobody's case is exactly the same, and sometimes the real solution is to just try a few things and see how your body reacts.

Sign #1: You feel a loss of motivation for something that you once found energizing.

Problem: one of the most accurate signs of burnout is that you feel a loss of motivation for something you once found energizing. As a writer, you may find that writing no longer feels enjoyable. It may seem like a chore.

Potential Solution: one solution is to take some time off from work or whatever it is that is causing burnout. Another solution would be to find a new hobby. For authors, the writing used to be a hobby, but now it's a job. Hobbies can be very beneficial for us, so find something that you don't need to be paid to do, but that you enjoy doing and spend some time on that for a change.

Sign #2: You frequently feel irritable and impatient.

Problem: irritability, impatience, and feeling like you're losing control, are common signs that you have burnout. This is especially true if the changes are sudden, or they correlate with a change in your life, such as starting a new job, having a baby, etc.

Potential Solution: this one can be tough, but generally taking good care of yourself will help. Start by saying no to more things, clearing your schedule if you can so that you can prioritize sleep (seriously, sleep is important), exercise, diet, and any other important self-care habits.

Sign #3: You wake up frequently during the night.

Problem: burnout often leads to restless nights because your brain is constantly thinking of what to do next and how you could've solved that problem better. When so much is on your mind, it can be hard for your brain to quiet down, and that impacts your sleep. Lack of sleep further deteriorates your ability to function, and the cycle spirals downward.

Potential Solution: there are key practices to improve your sleep. The number one practice is to engage in a “digital sunset” where you put away all devices at least an hour before bed. DON’T SKIP THIS STEP. Using our phones at night is proven, scientifically, to be one of the most detrimental factors in our sleep. Other tips include wearing blue light blocking glasses, engaging in the exact same routine every night, reading before bed (but not on a backlit device), and not eating at least three hours before bedtime.

Sign #4: You have unexplained physical issues such as headaches, stomach/gut issues, etc.

Problem: when stress gets bad enough, it can have physical effects such as headaches, nausea, diarrhea, and other gut-related issues. When it is getting this bad, it is a little more serious, and it’s time to take a break.

Potential Solution: the best thing you can do for your burnout when you are expressing physical issues is to take a break, but other physical remedies may also help. These include meditation, exercising, and eating a proper diet. Let’s not forget that our physical health is also our mental health, because our brain is part of our body. It is much harder to deal with stress when our body is not taken care of.

Sign #5: You feel like none of what you do is worth it.

Problem: feelings of despair and hopelessness commonly accompany burnout. You feel like none of what you do is worth it, or that you might as well give up. This is entirely normal and know that it will pass.

Potential Solution: first of all, tell your brain to shut up. If you want to work on something, then it is worth it, even if everybody else tells you otherwise. That said, this might be a good chance to examine your purpose in writing. Perhaps you’re spending too much time working on a book because you think it will sell, and not because it’s what you actually want to write.

See my other website, MythicalSelf.com, for a complete breakdown on finding your purpose and meaning in life.

Sign #6: You feel like you're just going through the motions.

Problem: another sign of burnout is that you feel like you are just going through the motions, then nothing feels exciting anymore. You feel like a factory worker, just moving from one project to another.

Potential Solution: a great way to deal with this sign of burnout is to try new things and never stop learning. Whether that's different writing styles, or just exploring techniques and methods you haven't tried before, you can turn burnout into an exciting time for your career. Also, don't be afraid to treat yourself now and then. Rewards can be incredibly motivating and can add some spice to the monotonous tasks that have plagued you so far.

Sign #7: You have more work than you think you can realistically complete.

Problem: this is a great sign that you have burnout, you feel like you are overworked, that you have too much to do in the time you have.

Potential Solution: almost everyone experiences this at some point, but it is particularly true in many cases of burnout. The best solution is to learn how to reduce your workload. Very often, we actually do more work than we need to do. It's our responsibility to figure out what we do best, then find a way to delegate the rest of the work to others. If a superior is responsible for the work we are given, it's possible to talk to them, make sure they know what your strengths are, and how he/she can benefit from allowing you to focus more on those things.

Sign #8: You feel that you need to push yourself harder to keep up.

Problem: this is a common problem for writers. We see the success that other people are having, putting out 12 books a year or more, and we think that if we could do that, we would be just as successful. But the reality is, we can easily get burned out trying.

Potential Solution: we actually *do* want to step out of our comfort zone, because that can be helpful, but what we DON'T want to do is compare ourselves with others. You need to do what you can do, and if you want to write more, you can slowly build to it. I guarantee that none of the people

writing 12 books in the year started out that way. Writing, especially writing fast, takes practice. It's okay to write slower for now.

Sign #9: You turn to unhealthy foods, alcohol, or other substances for relief.

Problem: if you find yourself turning to sugary or fatty foods, alcohol, excessive video game playing, or any form of substance abuse, these are definite signs that you have a problem in your life. All of these substances are coping mechanisms for stress, but they provide a false sense of security and comfort.

Potential Solution: the important solution here is to surround yourself with more habits of true self-care. These include reading, going for a walk, getting a good night's sleep, meditating, eating healthily, practicing good hygiene, engaging in your hobbies, gratitude journaling, taking frequent breaks throughout the day, etc. These self-care habits will do a far better job at helping you recover than any of the abusive substances already listed.

Sign #10: You feel that you've lost your purpose.

Problem: when people feel burnout, they commonly feel like they have lost their purpose in life. They feel aimless, and frequently suffer from shiny object syndrome or other forms of distraction.

Potential Solution: the best thing to do here is to spend some time asking yourself what your purpose actually is. Examine your skills, your passions, ways in which you can benefit the world, and see where they overlap. Living a life of purpose is not only good to avoid burnout, but is also good for your health. Then pick one thing and choose to focus on only that one thing for a while. If it is not in line with your purpose, you will eventually understand this, but not until you have given it your complete focus and attention for a significant amount of time. Focusing on one thing will also reduce your burnout because that means you will be eliminating other potential drains on your time.

*I talk about purpose a lot more over on my other website, MythicalSelf.com, which I highly recommend you check out if you want to find your purpose in life. We've got a **30-day reflection challenge** that you can take, and it's a lot of fun.*