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**Burnout Rx<sup>®</sup>**

# **The Workbook**

**10 things you can do today to  
prevent or recover from burnout**

MD \_\_\_\_\_

**Gideon Strich, M.D.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# BURNOUT<sub>RX</sub><sup>®</sup>

## THE WORKBOOK

Ten things you can do today to  
prevent or recover from burnout

Gideon Strich, M.D.

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# ARE YOU BURNED OUT?

**W**e've all heard the phrase before, but the fact that it's become so widely used doesn't make it any less accurate: more and more people are feeling *burned out*. And, while there has been a lot written in the popular press about burnout in doctors, job burnout can occur in many professions including lawyers, sales people, teachers, peace officers, nurses and any other "people-facing" job. You might be one of these people, but also might be hesitant to use this label for your situation. So how do you truly know if this applies to you? Consider the following three questions; if you can answer yes to any one of the three, you are most likely either burned out or on your way.

1. Do you come home exhausted after work most days and don't feel quite recharged the next day -- even after getting 8 hours of sleep?
2. Do you find yourself making cynical remarks or having negative thoughts about some of your patients, clients or customers?
3. Do you wonder whether what you're doing is actually *helping* anyone, especially yourself?

## **What *is* burnout?**

The concept of occupational related burnout was first described by psychologist Christina Maslach back in 1981. More recently, the World Health Organization added occupational burnout to the ICD-11 (International Classification of Diseases) diagnostic manual. According to the WHO,

*"Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:*

- 1. Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;*
- 2. Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and*
- 3. Reduced professional efficacy.*

*Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life."*

The gold standard objective burnout test is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)—a 22 question, self-scored survey that divides people into categories of low-level, moderate, and high-level burnout. On the next page is an abbreviated version of the MBI so you can measure your burnout now and follow your improvement as you do the other exercises in this book.

Circle each number that applies to you for each question on this worksheet							
	Never	A few times a year	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
I feel emotionally drained from my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Working with people all day is a strain for me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I treat some patients/clients as if they were impersonal objects	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I've become more callous toward people since I took this job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I really don't care what happens to some patients/clients	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I deal very effectively with the problems of my patients/clients	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
I feel I am positively influencing other people's lives through my work	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
I feel exhilarated after working closely with my patients/clients	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

**How to Score:** Add up all the numbers corresponding to your circles. While this survey is not as precise as the full Maslach, you can estimate your risk as follows:

**<10 low risk for burnout**

**10-20 moderate risk for burnout**

**>20 high risk for burnout**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

# GET A COACH

**C**areer and life coaching is a relatively new field which grew out of executive coaching in the 1990s. The International Coaching Federation, the main credentialing body, has surveyed over 20,000 people around the globe and found the following benefits of coaching:

- 70% of people improved work performance
- 61% improved business management
- 57% improved time management
- 80% improved self-confidence
- 73% improved relationships
- 72% improved communication skills
- 67% improved work-life balance
- 68% of individuals made back at least their investment in coaching in increased income
- 86% of companies made back at least their investment in increased revenue

Coaching is different from therapy, consulting, and mentoring in several important ways. Although many coaches come from a psychology or therapy background, not all do. Unlike therapists, coaches spend less time trying to figure out how you got where you are, and more time helping you figure out where you want to go and how to get there.

In a coaching relationship, the coach and client work together in a cooperative arrangement that helps the client to make and achieve goals. The coach may act as a sounding board and an accountability partner, but the client does the actual change work and is responsible for their own results.

Coaching is sometimes a supplement to, not a substitute for therapy if you already have a psychiatric diagnosis, are on psychoactive medications, are severely depressed, or having thoughts of harming yourself or others. **If these conditions are present, it's very important to maintain your therapy treatment plan and medications and to inform your therapist that you're also undergoing a coaching process.**

## The coaching contract

Usually before you proceed with a coaching engagement, there is a coaching contract which specifies both the coach's and the client's obligations in the relationship, as well as the type and timing of scheduled meetings and financial arrangements.

## **How do you know if you're ready to be coached?**

The following agreements are in my coaching contract and spell out our commitment to each other and to the coaching process. In order for you to get the most out of your coaching program, you must be willing to accept the following commitments:

### **Your commitment to the program includes:**

- Reading, signing and returning the coaching contract to me prior to your first session.
- Making the agreed-upon payments in a timely manner
- Attending all coaching calls on time and refraining from multi-tasking during calls
- Being authentic, honest, and speaking up for what you want
- Letting me know about any personal situations that may interfere with your experience in the program.
- Letting me know if there is anything you don't like about how the coaching is going
- Be willing to take risks, try new things and stretch beyond your current experience
- Being responsible for your own results, which includes proactively asking for support, scheduling coaching calls and using your program benefits.
- Honoring the investment you are making in yourself by doing the work, including any assignments that you take on.
- Celebrating your wins, shifts, achievements and excitement throughout the program

### **My commitment to you includes:**

- Seeing you as naturally creative, resourceful and whole, and infinitely capable
- Believing in you and your ability to achieve your vision of success
- Using coaching skills and techniques from a variety of disciplines with you so you can move forward with your goals much more quickly than you would on your own
- Allowing you to be 100% authentic and fully YOU
- Holding you accountable to act from your highest self, even when you may not feel that way
- Acting with integrity and honesty at all times
- Being kind and patient with your progress; know you always have a safe place to express yourself
- Sharing my observations, intuitions and ideas for your consideration
- Coaching you to achieve your highest potential and vision of your highest self
- Caring deeply about you and your success

Your coach may have slightly different agreements, but you should always discuss with your coach your expectations and his/her expectations prior to signing the coaching contract. Even if you don't think you're ready to hire a coach, you can go through the exercises in the following chapters on your own. Even better, find an **accountability buddy** that you can share your short-term and long-term goals with and who will hold you accountable for your progress.

# PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

**W**hat is mindfulness and why is it so important? Simply put, mindfulness is an open state of mind where one observes what arises in the thoughts and in the five senses in the present moment without any filtering or judgment. The practice of mindfulness has been studied scientifically for the last 50 years. It has been shown to decrease stress, increase recovery from physical or mental illness, and to reduce the incidence of work-related burnout. In just 5 or 10 minutes a day, you can increase your focus and concentration in a way that will save you hours at work. You can also cultivate a calm state of mind that allows you to be truly present for your family or children, or other people who are important in your life.

Although mindfulness can be practiced at any moment and in any activity, people most commonly start with a "formal" mindfulness practice. This involves sitting still in a quiet place and paying attention to any sensory or thought object that occurs in the present moment, like breathing or looking at a candle flame, or repeating a word (mantra). This formal practice is called meditation and makes it easy to recognize anything that arises in consciousness that is *not* the object of meditation (like random thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations.)

Most people find it helpful at the beginning to have some kind of guidance while learning to meditate. The simplest form of guidance is a recording which can guide you through the process of achieving and maintaining mindfulness. Many recordings can be downloaded from mindfulness websites or YouTube. There are also many apps that you can use on your cell phone or tablet that guide you in mindfulness. You can find these by searching for mindfulness or meditation in your app store. My personal favorites are "Headspace" and "Calm" but there are many others.

If you choose not to use a guided meditation simply follow the directions below. You can time your meditation session using a guided meditation or one of the many meditation timing apps available such as "Insight Timer" or "Mind Bell."

Mindfulness is considered a "practice" because it gradually improves over time with regular practice. Just like developing a muscle, you don't develop mindfulness with a single session. Rather, the recommendation is to practice 10 to 20 minutes twice a day, although even five minutes once a day will make a noticeable improvement in your life.

### How to Practice Mindful Breathing

1. Sit in a comfortable stable position with a straight spine. You can sit on a meditation cushion or a straight back chair with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Most people practice with eyes closed, but you can keep your eyes open and your gaze downcast and defocused.
3. Bring your attention to the physical sensations of breathing. You may notice coolness in the nose, or movement of air in the throat or the rise and fall of the chest or abdomen.
4. Don't focus too hard; just be gently aware. There is no right or wrong way to breath. Just allow your breath to come and go in its own natural rhythm.
5. When you notice that your attention has drifted away from the breath to some thoughts or feelings, just let go of those thoughts and gently bring your attention back to the breath.
6. It is this process of gently redirecting your attention back to the physical sensations of breathing over and over again that is the essence of training the mind and developing mindfulness.
7. Training the mind is like training your muscles. It works best if you practice every day, even if it's only for 5-10 minutes.
8. Turn it into a habit by making time for mindful breathing in between two habits you already do every day at about the same time.

Another form of mindfulness practice that I use is what I call the **30-second or single breath meditation**. It does not require any special place, position or even eye closure. It is a way of releasing negative energy and calming the mind and **helps bring mindfulness into your workday**. The key to its effectiveness is to use a “**trigger**” that you know will happen multiple times during the day to remind you to do it. For example, you could do it every time you touch the doorknob to enter a patient's room (if you see patients) or whenever the telephone rings, before you answer it. I set the Mind Bell app to chime once every 30 minutes at random from 9 AM to 6 PM, to remind me to stop and do the single breath meditation. Doing the single breath meditation 10 times during the day is the equivalent of at least five minutes of sitting meditation. In the next section you will be keeping track of how many times you do the single breath meditation and how many minutes of sitting meditation you do each day.

### How to do the 30-second or Single Breath Meditation

1. When the trigger event happens, stop whatever you're doing and be still. You may close your eyes or simply look downward without focusing on anything.
2. Take a slow deep breath through the nose deep into the abdomen. As you do so imagine that your gathering up any negative energy and thoughts that are not serving you right now.
3. Breathe all the way out through your mouth as you imagine all that negative energy draining out of your body through your feet.
4. Stop At the bottom of the out breath for about four or five seconds and notice the silence and the space that is present inside and around you.
5. Then, while maintaining awareness of that silence or space, breathe normally and open your eyes and mindfully resume your activity feeling calm and intentional.
6. Start this keystone habit by doing it once in the morning, then gradually increase how often you do it in the day. Notice what happens to your mood and your focus.

# KEEP A JOURNAL

Other than the practice of mindfulness, the single most powerful tool in maintaining your mental and physical health is the practice of journaling, or keeping a journal. The process of journaling has been studied for over 50 years. One of the benefits of journaling supported by scientific evidence is that it's shown to increase your mindfulness in *all* areas of life. In this way, journaling builds on the foundation that you've already developed through your mindfulness practice. Writing about your feelings and experiences can increase your emotional intelligence, a characteristic which is associated with both improved executive abilities at work and enhanced overall communication and quality of relationships.

Task oriented journaling is an effective tool in time management and productivity. One such tool is the “bullet journal” method. This type of journal is best used for setting and accomplishing goals and maintaining accountability. The type of journaling we are covering here is more free-form and consists of writing down your thoughts and feelings in a spontaneous manner. This type of journaling has the most mental and emotional benefits.

Journaling has been shown to increase your creativity and your vocabulary range; over time, it also makes you more articulate and more interesting. It's been shown to reduce stress, especially when combined with mindfulness. It may improve your mood and has been proven in clinical trials to help relieve symptoms of depression.

## **How to begin journaling**

First, decide on a medium for recording your thoughts and feelings. Some studies have shown that handwriting your journal is more effective than typing or speaking and integrates more areas of brain function. There are also many apps available online and on portable devices that make journaling much more convenient. Some people use general note taking apps such as Evernote, Trello or Microsoft One Note. There are many specific journaling apps. Some of the popular ones include Dalio, Diario and Journey. There are literally hundreds more in your app store. I have developed a journaling app specific to my type of mindfulness-based coaching that not only makes journaling easy but gives my clients quantitative feedback on their progress over time.

Regardless of which method you use, the most important thing is to make journaling a consistent habit. Taking only five minutes a day to journal is perfectly acceptable as long as it's five minutes *every day*. Just like with meditation, the best way to make sure that you journal every day is to link the journaling habit

to other activities that you do every day. For example, I sandwich my journaling between two habits I do every evening, brushing my teeth and going to bed. I keep my handwritten journal in my bedside table so that even physically it fits between the two habits of brushing my teeth and going to bed.

What should you write about? You can simply write about whatever you're feeling or thinking in the present moment at whatever level of detail you find comfortable. Since you are making journaling a daily habit you may want to write about the day's events and your feelings about them. Although writing about traumatic events may be therapeutic in some instances, unless you are using journaling in conjunction with therapy it's probably best not to relive past traumas. Since the goal is to form a habit you'll want to repeat, you don't want to engage in any behavior you might start to dread or avoid. A good set of guidelines on how to journal effectively can be found on the website for The Center for Journal Therapy. They use the acronym WRITE, which is explained in detail below.

### The WRITE Process

**W:** What should you write about? You can write about events that are occurring in your life or any thoughts and feelings about past events or future goals and desires.

**R:** Reflect for a few moments before you start writing. This might be a perfect time to do the single-breath or 30-second meditation to bring yourself into mindfulness in the present moment.

**I:** Investigate what you are currently thinking and feeling and just start to put those thoughts and feelings into writing without too much analysis or editing. It helps if you begin sentences with I statements like I feel, I think, I want, and focus on the present moment by using words like right now or today.

**T:** Time yourself so that you write for a set period of time, whether it's 5 minutes or 10 minutes. Make a note of your start time and expected end time and set a timer when you begin. When the timer goes off, simply stop writing wherever you are.

**E:** Exiting the writing session. Take a few moments to reread what you've written and reflect on it. Take another single-breath meditation. Summarize your session and its takeaways in one or two sentences. And then if there are any specific actions that you wish to take in the next day, make a note of those as well.

### The 14 Day Journaling Challenge

For the next 14 days, take a few minutes before you go to bed to keep a journal. You can use the following format, or make up your own:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Today I meditated \_\_\_\_\_ minutes and did the single breath meditation \_\_\_\_\_ times.

One of the things that happened today and how I feel about it or what I learned from it:

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# CULTIVATE POSITIVITY

**M**ost people will tell you that being happy is one of the main goals in their lives. However, most people have a hard time describing what happiness is. In this section we will be exploring what happiness is and how you can intentionally cultivate happiness in your life.

## What is happiness?

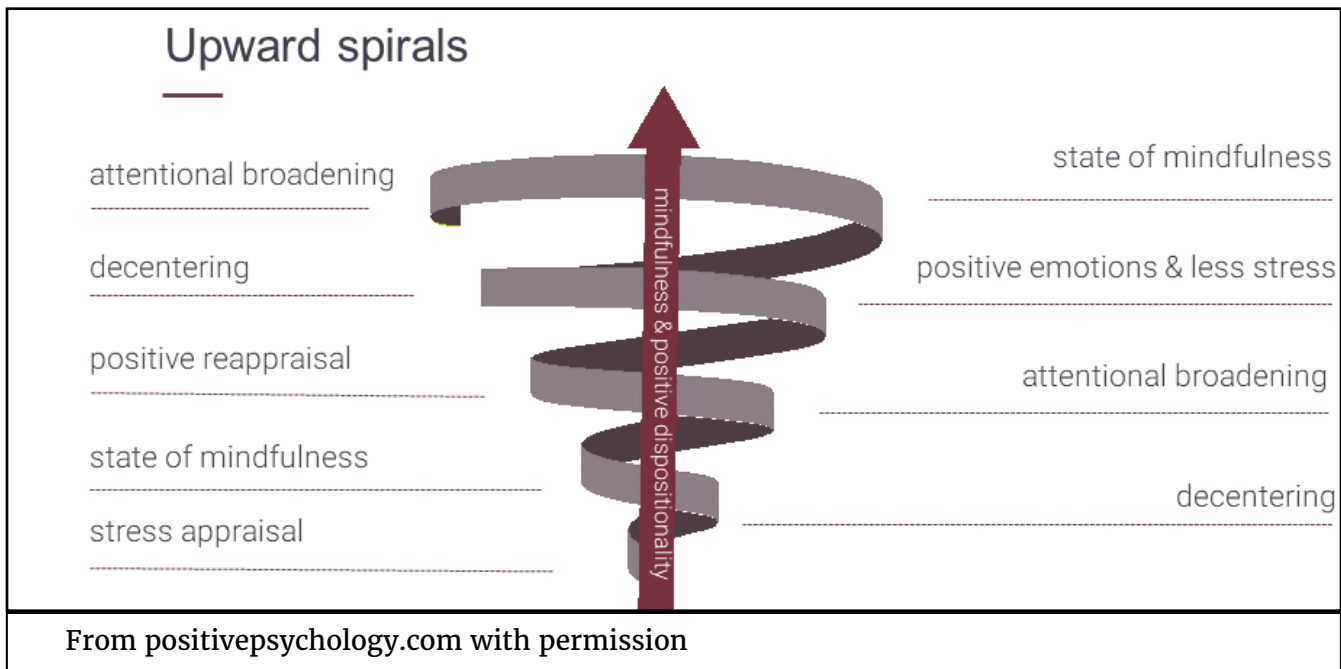
Many research psychologists use the term happiness interchangeably with "subjective wellbeing," which they measure by simply asking people to report how satisfied they feel with their own lives, and how much positive and negative emotion they're experiencing at the time. One researcher, psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky, describes happiness as "the experience of joy, contentment, or positive wellbeing combined with a sense that one's life is good and meaningful and worthwhile." The following is a quote on happiness from the Greater Good website: "Most of us probably don't believe we need a formal definition of happiness. We know it when we feel it and we often use the term to describe a range of positive emotions, including joy, pride, contentment, and gratitude." *How would you describe what happiness is to you?*

One of the most prolific researchers in the field of positive psychology, Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, doesn't even use the word happiness. In her 2009 book *Positivity*, she describes 10 forms of positivity, including joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love. She has proposed a "broaden and build model of positivity." Interestingly, this model is based on the **development of mindfulness**. According to Dr. Fredrickson, the state of mindfulness results in broadening of one's attention beyond the individual self, which leads to a more positive view of your condition, which then leads to more positive emotions and decreased stress. This decreased stress then prompts an increased state of mindfulness, further attentional broadening, and additional positive feelings in a continuing upward spiral of flourishing. An opposite downward spiral of psychopathology occurs when stress results in narrowing of attention and loss of mindfulness. This process results in increased negative emotions and a feeling of threat, which then leads to further narrowing of attention to the self, more negative emotions and increased stress in a downward spiral of depression, and potentially **burnout**. So, in short – more attention “outward” leads to more meaning and positivity, while more attention “inward” (on the self) tends to lead to less meaning and more negativity.

Dr. Fredrickson has done extensive research on the changes that occur at the subconscious level when people are in a positive frame of mind, and she is convinced that positivity actually works to "rewire" the brain in a way that makes it more susceptible to *additional* positive experiences. Other researchers have

found that being in a positive frame of mind results in **improved learning and skill acquisition**, and increased access to inner resources such as creativity and mindfulness. People in a positive frame of mind are more easily able to see the "big picture," and find creative solutions to problems by "thinking outside the box." Positivity has also been shown to increase rapport and communication between individuals. Research in the field of psychoneuroimmunology (the study of how the mind, neurology and immune systems affect each other) demonstrates that positivity by itself decreases stress and inflammation, probably by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system, which causes the heart rate and blood pressure to decrease. Even the blood level of cortisol, a stress hormone, decreases.

One of the most interesting findings in Dr. Fredrickson's work is that happiness or positivity is nonlinear. It has a "tipping point." In her extensive research, she found a "magic ratio" of 3:1, where the upward spiral of flourishing is initiated and maintained with a ratio of three positive experiences for every negative one. This is very encouraging, because it means that positivity and "happiness" can actually be intentionally cultivated. I will show you a simple way to do it in this section.



### **The 14 Day Gratitude Challenge**

One of the most effective ways to cultivate positivity is through the experience of gratitude. For the next 14 days follow these instructions. You can combine this exercise with the journaling exercise from the previous section.

1. Every evening write down one thing or one person for which you felt gratitude during the day.
2. Take a few moments to vividly reimagine the scene including what you saw what you heard and what you felt at the time.
3. Practice this every day and notice how your feelings of positivity increase.
4. Don't forget your mindfulness practice, which also drives the upward spiral of positivity and flourishing.

# KNOW YOUR “WHY”

**W**hy do you get up every day and go to work? What made you choose that particular job in the first place? Why do you even get out of bed in the morning? Why do you love some jobs and hate others? If you don't have an answer to these questions immediately and clearly, that may be one of the reasons that you're burned out.

In the next two sections, we will be exploring your “why” and breaking it down into simple exercises that will bring clarity to your reason for being in your occupation. It will also engender great confidence in your choice to do what you do, where you do it, and with whom you do it. You will find out why you love working in certain jobs and with certain people while you dislike other work environments. This knowledge will empower you to choose the right jobs and work environments and motivate you and those around you to perform at your highest level. This in turn will help to bring satisfaction and even joy into the workplace.

## **Values drive behavior**

Values are our deepest level programming. They determine what you do with your time and how you evaluate the time that you have spent. Other than the most primitive fight or flight reaction, values are the most important driver of your behavior. For this reason, it's important to get to know your values. This can be difficult to do, because values are mostly located in the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind motivates us, determines behavior, and allows us to accomplish the goals we set for ourselves. A problem can arise when the values of our conscious mind, our goal *setter*, conflict with those of our unconscious mind, our goal *getter*.

## **Why knowing your values is so important**

If your work does not support your most important value or tramples on it you will probably quit right away. If any of your top 3 values are not being met, you will be unhappy in the job and eventually leave. If 2 out of your top 3 values are being trampled, you will leave sooner rather than later. Studies have shown that a major driver of burnout is a mismatch between your values and the values of your company.

### Eliciting your unconscious values

Ask yourself or have someone else ask you, "What's important to me about career?" Then, using the worksheet below, make a list of whatever pops into your mind in the first five seconds. Each value should consist of either single word or two or three words-- for example, "integrity" or "having fun". Don't worry about the order; just quickly write down whatever comes to mind in the first five or six seconds. After you have these written down, pause for a few moments before asking yourself, "What *else* is important to me about career?" Then quickly write down the next few things that come to mind in five seconds. And then do a third brain dump: "What else is important to me about career?" And write down the next few things that come to mind. Often, it's easier to do this with someone else asking you the questions and writing down the list.

Once you have all the items written down, look at your list and reorder it in importance, from most to least important. Then rewrite the list in its new order with the most important at the top. If some of the words have similar meanings to you, you can combine them into a single value. For example, if "money" and "financial security" mean the same thing, you can combine them.

Once you have finished putting your values in order of most important to least important, make a third column for each value. Here, write down A) "What does it mean to me?" and B) "Why is it important to me?" You can use the worksheet below as a guide.

Elicited Values	Reordered Values	What does it mean/ Why is it important?
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.

Now that you have elicited and ranked your values, look at them and ponder the following questions over the next few days. For instance, if the area of life you chose was career, ask yourself, "Does my career as it stands now support my top five values? How does my behavior in career reflect those values?"

# MISSION, VISION AND PURPOSE

**A**nyone who's familiar with business knows that most companies have a mission and vision statement, and some have a purpose statement as well. It's just as important for you to have your own *personal* mission, vision and purpose statements. Being able to articulate your mission, vision and purpose is part of developing emotional intelligence—which is a major determinant of your success in career, relationships or in life in general. Clarifying your own mission, vision and purpose in writing, and posting it where you can see it regularly, can help keep your life in perspective and reduce the likelihood of burnout.

A **mission statement** answers the following questions: What do I do? Who do I serve? How do I serve them? You should write it in the present tense; for example, "I coach physicians and other healthcare providers using positive psychology and integrative NLP coaching techniques."

**Now you try it:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
(what you do) (who you serve) (how you do it)

A **vision statement** is more generalized and aspirational and reflects where you hope to be in five to 10 years. This should also be written in the **present tense**, even though it's forward-looking. For example, "I am a recognized leader in health care coaching, empowering doctors, nurses and health care organizations to manage change, stress and burnout."

**Now you try it:**

I am \_\_\_\_\_  
(the most positive vision of who you expect to be or what you expect to do in the next 10 years)



# MAKING GOALS THAT WORK

**N**ow that you've discovered your values, mission, vision and purpose it's time to put them into action. We do that through setting goals and developing action plans. When choosing a goal, first you have to decide what area of your life to work in. You can choose your own areas that define different aspects of your life but for simplicity I'm going to divide life into six areas as shown in the figure below.

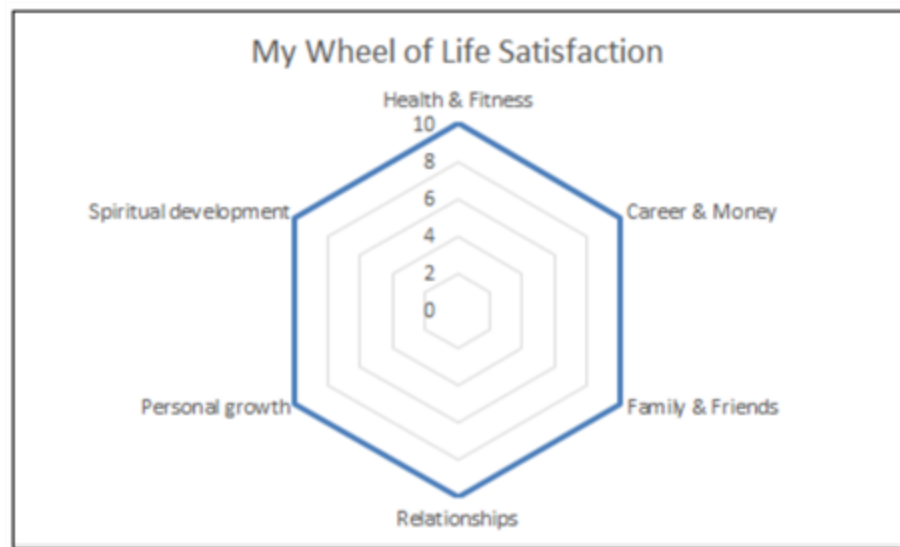


How do you decide with which area of life to begin? One of the easiest ways—and the one which most coaches use—is called the **Wheel of Life** exercise. This exercise has you grade your level of satisfaction in each area on a scale of 0-10 where the higher the number the more satisfied you are with that area of life. You make a mark on the wheel corresponding to the number in each area. Then you connect the dots, which creates a (often lopsided) wheel shape. This visual representation raises your awareness and clarifies which parts of your life are contributing to your well-being and which areas could use improvement.

An example is shown here:



Now you try it:



Look at your completed wheel of life and consider some of the following questions:

1. Does anything surprise you?
2. How do you currently spend time in each area? How would you like to spend time in each area?
3. Which area, if improved, would make the most difference in all the other areas of life? How would you make space in your life for these changes?
4. What internal or external resources or support would you need to make changes in this area?
5. Looking at the above answers, in what area do you want to begin making your first goal and taking action toward that goal?

# S.M.A.R.T. GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

In addition to making sure that your goals are aligned with your values and your purpose, and that your motivation toward the goal is positive, it is important to set goals that are challenging enough that they will stretch your abilities—but not so difficult that they are overwhelming or impossible.

The way that we do that is through the use of S.M.A.R.T. goals. S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym that describes how to put your goal into writing in a way that makes it achievable and leads to an action plan. That's important, since it is said that "a goal without a plan is just a wish."

S.M.A.R.T. goals are always written in the present tense and have a specific timeline. An example would be, "It is now January 31, 2022, and my book is published on Amazon." Let's see how that goal fits into the S.M.A.R.T. goal acronym:

**S:** The goal as written is *simple* and *specific*.

**M:** The goal is *measurable*. This particular goal is binary; that is, either I completed it, or I didn't. Other goals may be measurable in units such as dollars, number of times something is done, distance etc .

**A:** The goal is written *as if now*, and also *achievable* because I know of people in a similar situation who have accomplished similar goals. And finally, it is a goal that could *affect all areas* of life.

**R:** The goal is *realistic* and *results focused*. It is also *responsible*. That is, it is good for self, good for others, and good for the community.

**T:** The goal moves me *toward* my aim and my purpose. It is *time-bound* with a specific completion date that adds a sense of urgency without being overwhelming. Now it's time for you to write your own S.M.A.R.T. goals using the following questionnaire. Decide on an area of life, and keep in mind your purpose and your values in that area of life. Write a S.M.A.R.T. goal for one year from now, three months from now, and one month from now.

## S.M.A.R.T. Goal Questionnaire

**Goal:** It is now (time/date) \_\_\_\_\_  
and I am (doing/being/having) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Simple. Specific.** What will the goal accomplish? How and why will you accomplish it? What will it do for you or allow you to do?

**2. Measurable. Meaningful.** How will you measure whether or not the goal has been reached (list at least two indicators)?

**3. As if now. Achievable. Affect all areas of life.** Is it possible? Have others done it successfully? Do you have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to accomplish the goal? Will meeting the goal challenge you without defeating you?

**4. Results-focused. Realistic. Responsible.** What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing the goal? What is the result (not activities leading up to the result) of the goal? Is it good for self, others and the community?

**5. Time-bound. Toward your Aim.** What is the established completion date and does that completion date create a practical sense of urgency? Does it align with your purpose and your values?

**Make an action plan**

As I said above, “a goal without a plan is just a wish.” After writing your goal, you then need to formulate a plan to achieve it. An action plan can be written in one of two ways: either forward or backward. If you have a fairly good idea about how to get to your goal, it makes sense to write it forward. Ask yourself the question, “What is the very first thing I have to do to move toward my goal?” Then ask yourself, “After that, what is the very *next* thing I have to do to move toward my goal?” And then continue on until you reach the goal.

If the action steps and timeline are not as clear to you, it may be helpful to move backwards from your goal. Ask yourself, “What is the very last thing that has to happen, or I have to do before I reach my goal?” Then ask yourself, “in order for that to happen, what has to happen or what do I have to do just before that?” Then proceed backwards stepwise to the present moment. Choose one of your goals and try making an action plan using the matrix below:

Current State \_\_\_\_\_

	A	B	C	D
1	What has to happen?	What do I need to do?	What resources do I have or need?	Priority
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

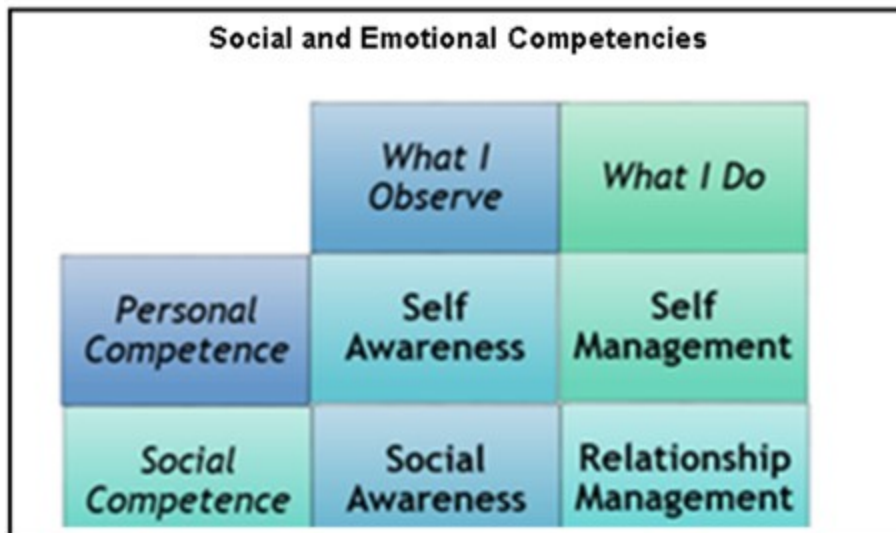
SMART Goal \_\_\_\_\_

# RAISE YOUR E.Q. FOR SUCCESS

**E**motional intelligence, or EQ, is a fundamental or foundational set of competencies and, according to Dr. Travis Bradberry (in his book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*), is "so critical to success that it accounts for 58% of performance in all types of jobs. It is the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence." No longer is job performance based solely on productivity or economic factors, but as Dr. Daniel Goleman puts it, "We are being judged by a new yardstick, not just how smart we are or by our training or expertise, but also how well we handle ourselves and each other."

IQ, or cognitive intelligence, appears to be unrelated to EQ. IQ appears to be fixed at birth, is not flexible and can't be changed by training. In contrast, emotional intelligence is "your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships," and EQ can be built by intent and training. Emotional intelligence is also not the same as personality type, which is also more fixed for an individual and is measured by assessments such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). Personality, like IQ, is considered a trait, not an ability. Although you might expect people with the personality type extroversion to be associated with a higher EQ, this is not the case. EQ tends to be independent both of IQ and personality type.

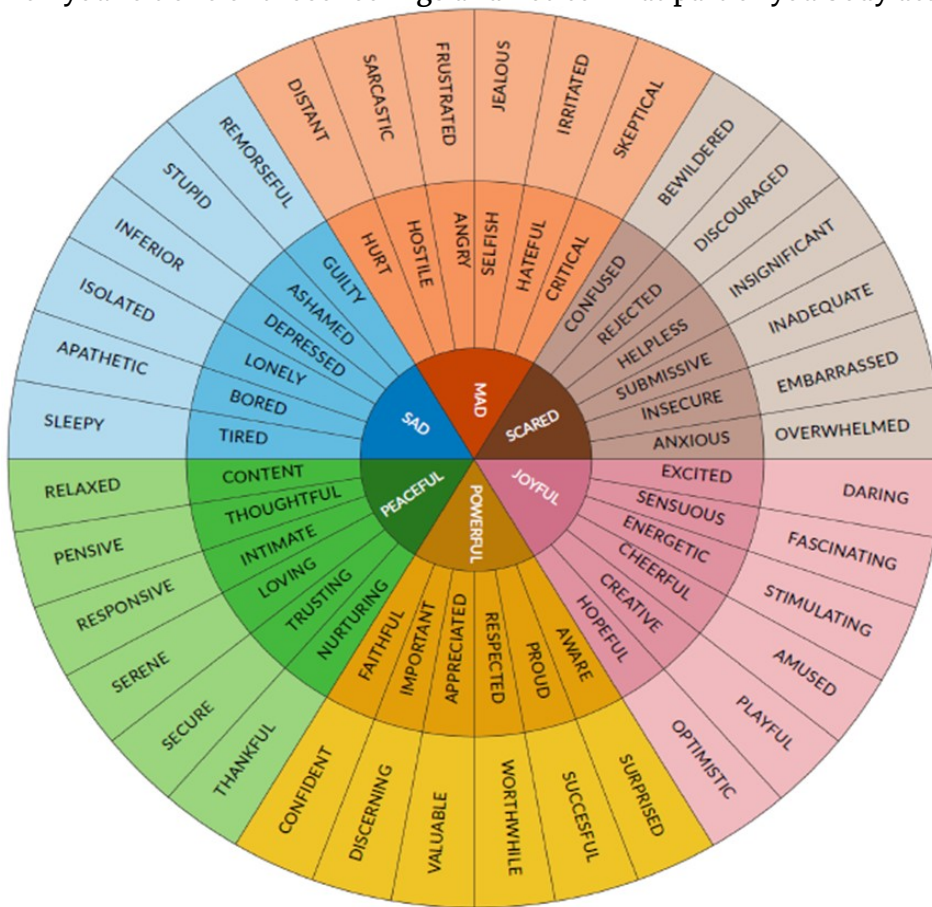
The four skills that are considered parts of emotional intelligence are: **self-awareness** and **self-management**, which make up **personal competence**, and **social awareness** and **relationship management**, which make up **social competence**. The way these elements fit together is shown in this diagram.



Self-awareness refers to your ability to perceive and understand your own emotions in the present moment as they relate to specific events or people. Interestingly, Dr. Bradberry found that only 30% of the people he tested were accurately able to identify their emotions as they happened. Self-awareness is a critical skill; without it, you are the victim of your emotions instead of the master of them. Self-awareness is so important to your success that 83% of people who test high in self-awareness are top performers in their field, and just 2% of the bottom performers test high in self-awareness. Self-awareness is the foundation skill that the other competencies are based on. If you're not aware of your own feelings, it is hard to imagine what someone else would be feeling in a similar situation, which is the key skill to social competence.

**Here is an exercise to improve your self-awareness using the Feeling Wheel:**

1. Looking at the center of the wheel, which of the six core emotions are you feeling now? Moving toward the outside of the wheel, describe that feeling more specifically.
2. What feelings did you experience today? Identify the core feelings in the center of the wheel. Further specify by moving outward in the wheel.
3. What core feelings from the center of the wheel have dominated your life recently? Specify those feelings moving toward the edge of the wheel. What caused those feelings?
4. Where in your body do you feel each emotion, e.g. anger, sadness, fear, powerful, joyful? Remember vividly a time when you felt one of those feelings and notice what part of you body activates or decreases activity.



The Feeling Wheel- Gloria Wilcox, PhD (positivepsychology.com)

# PRACTICE NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

**I**n his book **Nonviolent Communication**, author and psychologist Dr. Marshall Rosenberg says, "While studying the factors that affect our ability to stay compassionate, I was struck by the crucial role of language and our use of words. I've since identified a specific approach to communicating in both speaking and listening that leads us to give from the heart, connecting us with ourselves and with each other in a way that allows our natural compassion to flourish. I call this approach nonviolent communication, using the term nonviolence as Gandhi used it. While we may not consider the way we talk to be violent, words often lead to hurt and pain, whether for others or ourselves."

Consider how most people communicate and why they are often unsatisfied with the quality of their communication:

"You *always* ignore what I say" (generalization; assumes that the other person heard and understood)

"You *make* me so mad!" (does not take responsibility for own feelings and the underlying thought process or assumption.)

"I *wish* you would take me seriously." (does not clearly state a need and the specific action desired). Comments like these are vague and not very helpful, and don't get to the heart of what has bothered this individual – and what they'd prefer instead.

You may want to read his book in its entirety; but I'm going to present an outline of how to use nonviolent communication, **NVC**, to improve your relationships at work and at home. This is important because the quality of those relationships is one of the factors that can either drive or reduce burnout.

There are four components to NVC:

1. **Observation**- When somebody does or says something that affects us in an emotional way, we need to be able to observe our feelings and to articulate to the other person exactly what behavior or statement that they made that triggered these feelings in us.

2. **Feelings**- We need to take responsibility for our own feelings, observing them clearly and stating in a nonjudgmental or evaluative way exactly what we're feeling.

3. **Need**- We state what needs of ours are connected to the feelings that we have identified and are honest in expressing those needs.

4. **Request**- We ask the other person in a polite way to change their behavior or speech in a very specific way that will meet our needs.

The first part of NVC is to make observations in ourselves and to be able to communicate them verbally or by some other means to the other person in a **nonjudgmental** way. The second part of NVC is to **receive** the same four pieces of information from others while remaining mindful and compassionate. We are sensing what they are observing, feeling, and needing **without reacting** ourselves. Finally, we are hearing their request and deciding whether or not we can fulfill it.

To simplify, the template for an interaction using nonviolent communication could sound like this:

When you **say/said** or **do/did** \_\_\_\_\_, I **feel/felt** \_\_\_\_\_ because I **think/thought** \_\_\_\_\_.

I **need** \_\_\_\_\_, so please **say/do** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Here's an example of using NLV:**

“When you *don't respond* to what I'm saying, I *feel sad* because I *think* that you don't value my input. I *need* to feel valued in a relationship, *so please respond* when I'm talking to you.”

You can see in the above example of NVC how the person is making a *simple observation* of their experience, while at the same time *taking responsibility for their own feelings and the thoughts* that triggered those feelings. The second part is *expressing the need that is not being fulfilled and requesting specifically* how the other person could satisfy that need.

Of course, the other person could refuse to take action to fulfill the need you expressed, but it is more likely that they would listen without getting defensive, since they are not being blamed. They may not even be aware of what you're thinking and the feelings those thoughts cause. Most likely, if they care about you at all they will ask how they can act or speak so you don't have those negative perceptions. But at the very least, you will know that you have communicated your needs clearly and set a good example for communicating in the future. Nonviolent communication can result in *increased rapport and better relationships* at home and at work, both of which help reduce the risk of burnout.

# THE FOUR PILLARS OF WELLBEING



**F**our main pillars support our physical and mental well-being and longevity: **sleep**, **nutrition**, **physical activity**, and **community**, or positive interactions with our families, friends, and peers. Without this physical and mental support, none of the previous exercises in this workbook would be effective in preventing burnout.

**Sleep** is perhaps the most important of these pillars. The average American today gets about two hours less sleep per night than they did 50 years ago. This is due to many factors including increased working hours and increased stimulation from television, internet, and smartphone usage. Sleep deprivation doesn't just result in significant cognitive impairment. It also leads to poor nutritional choices such as binge eating or snacking, and also has consequences that affect every area of our health—including decreasing insulin sensitivity, increasing gut permeability, increasing systemic inflammation, and decreasing immune function.

The second major pillar is **nutrition**. What we eat not only determines our physical health and our longevity, but along with sleep is a major factor contributing to our energy, mood, and even cognitive abilities.

The third pillar is **activity** or movement. By this, I don't necessarily mean exercising or working out at the gym. Simply getting up and moving from place to place or being active at work or around the house is critical for maintaining health as well as good mental and emotional functioning. Episodic vigorous physical activity (i.e., daily workouts) alone is not enough to maintain health and longevity if you are sedentary the rest of the time. Studies have shown that people who spend most of their time sitting have a much higher incidence of heart disease and early death.

The fourth pillar is **positive human interaction** or community. This requires communication, positive regard, and emotional supportiveness. Social isolation is a major factor in anxiety, depression, and physical illness.

It is said that “that which gets measured and documented improves.” Fortunately today’s smart phones all have apps to keep track of your physical activity, your sleep and what you eat. Keeping a log and looking at it daily actually motivates you to improve in all areas. You can use one of the note taking apps, one of the daily journaling apps or a form such as the one below. Set realistic and easily achievable goals to start with and gradually increase in each area toward your target goals. If you are in normal health you should aim for 8 hours of sleep per night, 7500-10,000 steps per day or equivalent exercise, 6-8 glasses of water and 4-6 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables per day and at least 30-60 minutes of one-to-one non-work-related personal interaction per day.

### My Four Pillars of Wellbeing

How many hours of sleep did I get last night? \_\_\_\_\_

How much activity did I get today? \_\_\_\_\_ steps or \_\_\_\_\_ active minutes

How many glasses of water did I drink today? \_\_\_\_\_

How many servings of fresh fruit and vegetables did I have today? \_\_\_\_\_

How many minutes did I talk with my friends or family today? \_\_\_\_\_

How energetic did I feel today? \_\_\_\_\_

(on a scale of 1- 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest)

How was my mood today? \_\_\_\_\_

(on a scale of 1- 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest)

# **Burnout** Rx<sup>®</sup> **The Workbook**

## **Your prescription to prevent or recover from burnout**

Are you burned out at work? If you can answer yes to any one or more of the following three questions, you are most likely either burned out or on your way:

- 1. Do you come home exhausted after work most days and don't feel quite recharged the next day, even after getting 8 hours of sleep?*
- 2. Do you find yourself making cynical remarks or having negative thoughts about some of your patients or clients?*
- 3. Do you wonder whether what you're doing is actually helping anyone, especially yourself?*

In this book, Dr. Strich gives you a simple tool to measure your risk for burnout and keep track of your recovery. Using his 30 years of experience in clinical medicine, his own experience with professional burnout, and his experience coaching physicians, and other professionals and executives, he gives you a 10-step program that you can follow on your own or with a coach. This trademarked program will bolster your resilience, increase your job performance and satisfaction, improve your relationships and bring meaning and purpose back into your life.

**Gideon Strich, M.D., F.A.C.R.**, is a diagnostic and interventional radiologist who practiced in both hospital and outpatient settings for almost 30 years before physician burnout ended his career. After recovering from this burnout episode he did a lot of research on the causes of burnout and what could be done to prevent it. Then he discovered the profession of coaching. After training and certification, he has dedicated himself to helping healthcare professionals prevent and recover from burnout. He is author of *BurnoutRx for Healthcare Professionals*. Now, with the Covid pandemic, burnout is affecting all professionals and executives in all fields, so Dr. Strich has updated his program to make it relevant to all businesses and professionals.

He is president and coach at Healthcare Coaching Associates, LLC and is a Clinical Professor of Radiological Sciences at University of California, Irvine.

