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Aug 15, 2018 **Issue #14: Funk isn't bunk: looking closer at Burnout**

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"Life is not tried, it is merely survived if you're standing outside the fire." ~ Garth Brooks

'Tis a mighty strange day if I am quoting a Garth Brooks song but the lyric drives home the question, are we checked-in or checking out? Are we zesting for life and work? Are we thinking "oh man, that is going to be awesome, I can't wait to get started"? Are we going through the motions in jobs we thought a few years ago were inspiring? Are we working 12 hour days but still feeling anxious and, at the end of the day, ineffective? Are we hoping to win the lottery to be able to say goodbye to the daily and hello to the swirly? Are we looking for an escape?

Throughout my career, the topic of burnout, exhaustion and being in a funk has come up quite often. While professionally in [behavioral](#) sciences there is a lot of debate around what exactly is burnout, depression, anxiety, or exhaustion, slang-wise most understand it along the [lines](#) of "being in a state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by a prolonged period of stress and frustration." "No control, lack of freedom, no escape, being swallowed-up by responsibilities, too many coinciding demands, lack of recognition or a never getting a break" - those are the things we as HR often hear.

Many of us have been effected by a team member, friend, colleague, employee needing to step-out to reassess, get help and "reset their engines" (*and we are not talking about this type of [burnout](#)*) and it triggers the discussion: what can we do to help support?

The questions that are often asked are:

- What can we do to more proactively create an environment where burnout has a lower probability of occurring?
- How can we recognise the earlier stages - in ourselves or in others - to fend-off a burnout situation?
- How can we best re-integrate and support a teammate after they have been out on leave?

Let's look a bit closer...

General Trends, Signs and Stigmas



Employee burnout is on the rise

A recent Gallup study found that about two-thirds of full-time workers experience burnout on the job. The biggest reasons? Unfair treatment at work, unreasonable deadlines, lack of support from managers and the stress that comes from never being unplugged.

www.cnbc.com

Dr. Burnout - Episode 10 on Sincerely, X by TED Talks

Professional care-giver jobs originally triggered the discussion around burnout. What were the signs? Patients are a series of diseases, symptoms; aspects to be considered but the human being behind the symptoms gets blended out? This doctor says she committed a fatal mistake with a patient, leading her to a disturbing diagnosis: the medical field pushes for professional burnout. She unveils a powerful perspective on how doctors must deepen their self-awareness. The stigma associated with talking about this challenge is evident that the talk is featured on the Sincerely series of TED - which is anonymous. Here is to bringing the issue more into the open.



itunes.apple.com



Workplace Strategies for Mental Health - Burnout Response

Understanding burnout, recognizing workplace factors, and taking pro-active steps for prevention can help reduce the negative impact on employees and workplaces. Interestingly when you look at what can help prevent a negative impact, a lot of the same things we look towards when we talk about empowered workplaces: sense of control, growth, fostering connection.

www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

Proactively Countering: Understanding Capacity



Stefan Sagmeister: The power of time off | TED Talk

You may know the [ribbon-of-life exercise](#): take a ribbon, tie-off a portion for schooling, tie-off another big portion for work, establishing yourself/family/etc., and then tie-off another section for retirement: what do you do with that time? Every seven years, designer Stefan Sagmeister closes his New York studio for a yearlong sabbatical to rejuvenate and refresh their creative outlook. He explains the often overlooked value of time off and shows the innovative projects inspired by his time in Bali. His strategy: carve out the time from retirement and put it into getting inspired for the work you love to do.

While Bali may be on a bucket-list for many of us: the message is the same no matter what financial situation you are in: how do we take time out to recharge our inspiration?

www.ted.com



Dan Gilbert: The surprising science of happiness | TED Talk

Is expectation management getting in our way?

"Freedom is the friend of natural happiness." "We have the capacity to manufacture happiness when we choose to experience." Hmm..Dan Gilbert, author of "Stumbling on Happiness," challenges the idea that we'll be miserable if we don't get what we want. Our "psychological immune system" lets us feel truly happy even when things don't go as planned.

www.ted.com

It is personal: What is your Happy Equation?

How Managers Can Prevent Their Teams from Burning Out

The President of the Business Unit I worked for created a revolution in his team, when he determined that weekends were sacred and unless it was a dire emergency they were protected spaces. Meaning no fly-outs on Sundays, meaning no texting work during a kid's soccer game because you "gotta respond right away." etc. Why was the rule so different? In order to balance our work, life and our batteries is key: how we enable our people and ourselves to do so is our leadership imperative. This article gives some good ideas to cause your own revolution in your teams: may increased inspiration, connection, wellness and innovation be your fruits.

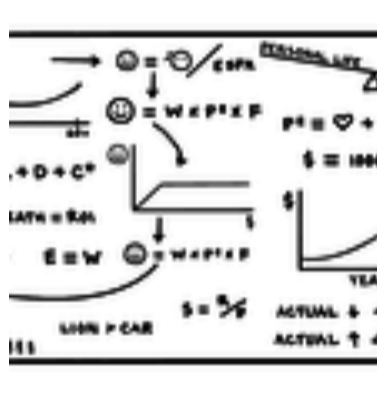


hbr.org

Ways to Conquer Burnout That Will Help You Thrive

Burn the candle at both ends, and you'll end up nothing but a scorched wick. Six business leaders tell how they learned to avoid burnout. Some perspectives to consider.

www.forbes.com



Happiness & the Gorilla | The Daily | Gartner L2

I am including this because I like to think about: what is your happiness equation? How will you reflect on a life well lived? A marketing professor takes inspiration from monkeys as he builds his equation of life. A fun read.

www.l2inc.com

Question of the Week: What charges your batteries?

The subject of work, stress, frustration, exhaustion, burnout is bigger than a newsletter. This week's edition is simply meant to give a few resources to think about as we look to ourselves, our friends, our colleagues and teams in creating a work where there is a sense of control, of capacity and connectedness. Little changes can cause big effects.

Therefore, a special shout out to [Paula Johnson](#), co-creator extraordinaire of the "Building our Foundation" program with which, she caused a revolution on the shop floor (using the time on the ribbon of life effectively and meaningfully). Kudos!

Have a great week everyone!

My best regards,

Liz

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