



THE EXHAUSTION

of Performance

There is a kind of tiredness that rest does not fix. It is not physical. Not the kind that comes from a long day or a lack of sleep. It is quieter than that.

More persistent.

A tiredness that lives beneath the surface of your life.

It shows up as:

- a lack of energy for things that once felt manageable
- a resistance to continuing at the same pace
- a sense that something is off, even when nothing is obviously wrong



And often, it is misunderstood.

Labelled as burnout.
Lack of motivation.
A need for better discipline.

But beneath it, there is something else.

The exhaustion of performance.

When Life Becomes Something You Manage

Performance does not always look dramatic. It is not always about achievement or external success.

Sometimes, it is much more subtle.

It is the effort to:

- appear composed
- stay consistent
- meet expectations
- maintain a version of yourself that others recognise

You move through your days doing what needs to be done. Fulfilling responsibilities. Responding to what is required.

From the outside, everything may look steady. But internally, something begins to feel heavy.

Not because the tasks are too much.

But because the version of you completing them no longer feels true.



The Identity Behind *the Effort*

”

Exhaustion is often not a lack of energy — it is the cost of being someone you no longer are.

Performance is rarely about action. It is about identity. The identity of: the capable one, the reliable one, the composed one, the one who holds everything together. These identities are not false. They were built for a reason. They helped you: navigate difficult seasons, maintain stability, meet expectations, create safety. But over time, something changes.

What once felt supportive begins to feel restrictive. The identity that once protected you now requires constant effort to maintain.

And that effort becomes exhausting.

The Cost of Holding It All Together

When performance becomes constant, something important is lost.

Spontaneity.

Ease.

Honesty.

You begin to filter yourself:

- adjusting how much you say
- moderating how you feel
- managing how you appear

Not out of fear. But out of habit. Because this is the version of you that has been reinforced over time. And maintaining it requires energy.

Even when no one is asking for it anymore.



“You don’t have
to prove who
you were to
become who
you’re
becoming.”

The Moment You Notice

At some point, awareness arrives. It may be quiet.

A thought: "I don't want to keep doing this like this."

Not quitting. Not collapsing. Just noticing.

That the effort is no longer aligned. This moment is important. Because it marks the beginning of something many people avoid.

Honesty.

Letting the Performance Drop

Letting go of performance does not happen all at once. It happens in small moments.

Choosing not to explain something unnecessarily. Allowing yourself to be quiet. Not stepping in immediately to fix everything. It feels unfamiliar at first. Because performance created predictability. And without it, there is space.

Space that can feel uncertain.

But also *honest*.

What Remains Without the **Effort**

As performance softens, something else begins to appear. Not a new identity. Something simpler.

Presence.

The ability to:

- respond without over-managing
- speak without over-filtering
- exist without maintaining a version of yourself

This is not a dramatic shift. It is subtle. But it is lighter.

Because it does not require constant *effort*.

The **Grief** of Letting It Go

Even when performance is exhausting, letting it go can bring grief. Because it was not meaningless.

It shaped your life.

It supported you.

It gave you structure.

And releasing it means acknowledging that something has changed. That *you* have changed.

This is not loss in the traditional sense. But it is still an ending.

And endings deserve to be felt.



Closing the Year Differently

December does not need to be about reflection alone. It can be about release.

Not through force. Not through decision. Through recognition.

Seeing clearly:

- what no longer fits
- what requires effort to maintain
- what feels out of alignment

And allowing it to soften.

Without needing to replace it immediately.



Conclusion: You Do Not Have to Carry This Forward

The exhaustion you feel is not something to push through.

It is something to understand.

A signal that something in your life has outgrown the identity holding it. And as this year closes, there is an opportunity.

Not to become someone new.

But to release the version of you that required constant performance to exist.

You do not have to carry that forward.

”

You are allowed to enter the next chapter of your life without performing the last one.

—
Nelia C Pereira