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EXECUTIVE BURNOUT

Herbert J. Freudenberger, Ph.D. P.C.

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This evening we're pleased to have Herb Freudenberger talk to us on the subject of burnout. Dr. Freudenberger is the author of a best-selling book published by Doubleday and Bantam paperbacks BURN OUT; THE HIGH COST OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT. He has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from NYU, is senior member of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, as well as a consultant to industry. In addition, he is a lecturer and a writer, and has appeared extensively on national television and radio. Coincidentally, today's Wall Street Journal quoted him extensively as a recognized expert on the subject of burnout.

HF: Thank you, Mr. Sutton. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Approximately ten years ago, I had a difficult time having a professional journal accept the first article on burnout in which I described and defined this condition. Since that time, a lot has changed. Burnout has become practically a household buzzword, generating books, articles, discussions and conferences. I would like to explain the concept of burnout this evening for the people who help to run corporations. These are the executives and the managers who ought to familiarize themselves with how this phenomena impacts on business. Burnout is a very selective process and malaise. It mainly strikes the best and the brightest among us. Burnout is a product of unremitting stress and unrelenting demands. Sometimes high achievers learn to live with dysfunction, but many times they fall prey to burnout. It's a tragedy of our times that people, all too often, become ill with or die from burnout.

Very simply, what happens? The victim's emotional circuits become increasingly overloaded from constant excessive demands on his or her energy, strength and resources. After decades of maximum effort, the individual finds himself screeching to an inexplicable halt.

Some Subtle Signs

Let's briefly cover some of the symptoms. Symptoms that I have noticed over 26 years of psychological counselling with burnout individuals include an unnatural lethargy, a reduction in drive and an intolerance for ambiguity. There is often an impatience accompanied by a desire to grab at quick solutions to problems. Many times these symptoms are accompanied by somatic discomfort. I receive referrals from physicians, who find that the men and women that they're working with, are not "ill" with specific medical problems but appear to be suffering from a number of vague complaints. They are sometimes described as exhausted, even depressed. In addition such men and women talk in a cynical manner and tend to withdraw from positive activity. Sometimes this process is subtle, sometimes it is very evident. With executives it may appear as a rigidity in the thinking process. This means that the individual has become inflexible in his thinking. It tends to increase the more burnt-out the individual becomes. There is a weight loss, and they talk of being unable to sleep, or waking up in the morning being as exhausted as the moment they went to sleep. There are minor illnesses that tend to get a bit more serious and we see mild depressions, accompanied by a negative attitude. We hear a lot of bitching, and complaining. Life may become a constant gripe session. The cynicism is sometimes heightened by suspiciousness with the individual feeling very much on the defensive.

During my last few years of dealing with executives I have noticed a tendency toward increased risk taking. This means that as the individual becomes tired and burnt-out, they begin to do things in a "crazy" way. For instance in the stock market or the option or commodities market, a burnt-out individual will take chances and risks that often result in a large loss money. These risks are the by-product of being too tired to expend the energy to think rationally.

By contrast in routine affairs we may see an inability to take any kind of risk. Our burnt-out person is totally jammed up, unable to function and do what he has tended to do best previously. Lately I've had many women executives come into my office saying that they can't concentrate anymore. They're losing their ability to grapple with ideas. I work with attorneys who say that they can't quote law cases that they've learned. Two of them have talked that they don't do the lecture circuit anymore because they jam up in front of audiences. They don't remember their facts. These are examples of what we mean by exhaustion and burnout. Most of us would like the question of burnout to just to go away or be solved quietly and quickly without any intrusions on our own well-ordered world. But the question of burnout intrudes on our working life. It intrudes on our home life, and it very much intrudes on our personality.

Shorting the Self

Now what happens after burnout? Is there life after burnout? Of course. But to know how to cope with this syndrome think of it as a process. Please remember what it is not. It's not a neurosis, it's not a disease, it's not a mental breakdown. It is a process. Let us take a look at the roots of burnout. Those roots are deeply imbedded in our society. American males are predisposed to it, because it's apparently part of our gene pool. Take a look at the American dream. Implicit in that dream is a restless lunge for money, success and power. Oddly enough, this is accompanied by an idealism which cause discomfort and conflict. This archetypical myth, with its emphasis on the pursuit of power, material and personal success, gives short shrift to the behavioral, to the emotional and to the ethical amenities of life. This is a fundamental to my thesis. The ethical components of the dream, or the "Puritan Ethic" posits

material success and hard work as a barometer of salvation. It diminishes the value of self, as well as family.

Some Root Causes

What are some of the facets in society that may ultimately cause burnout? There obviously has been an incredible change in our society in the last few years. Restraints, taboos and traditions about sexual mores, for example, have been practically swept away. In addition to our sexual traditions, we question religious practices. Over the past 6 to 8 years a significant number of men and women who have come to my office are religious exs.. ex-priests, ex-nuns, ex-rabbis, and ex-ministers. Additionally I have seen in the last few years a significant increase of drug abuse. I'm not talking now about the traditional patterns of drug abuse among the young people. I'm talking of a significant increase in drug abuse among the intellectuals, the employed, the so-called stable middle class. In the last two years, in the larger cities there has been an epidemic of cocaine abuse. This epidemic has found its way into the ranks of physicians, attorneys, stockbrokers, managers and executives.

What else has occurred in our society? A subtle shift inside the family unit. The single parent and the divorced family are all too common place. We also see the emergence of new technologies and computers. Many individuals cannot keep up with the knowledge explosion. They respond with frustration or subtle withdrawal. Some burnout. Another phenomena -- our national economic issues become personalized during times of stress. In the past, this was not such a major concern. But now people are wondering how to survive.

I've noticed another recent contributory factor to burnout. This involves the frequent shifts of families from one city to another. Corporations make this demand and employees respond. That is the way you get up the career ladder -- is by moving geographically.

There is really an ignorance about how the corporate transfer impacts on the whole family. The desire to succeed, the desire to make money and the desire to seek the sun are all non-spiritual goals. But the pursuit of these understandable goals has spawned the urban nomad. This wanderer moves from city to city and from job to job, and will not stay put. I was in Houston recently where industrial development has attracted people from all over the country. On my lecture and book promotion trips, I've spoken to many women who are part of the mental health system in various parts of the sunbelt. They've told me there's an incredible increase in drunkenness. There is a huge rise of problem ridden people and families. All of this strains the health care system.

"You Can Run, But You Can't Hide"

In the past, the major support system for many of these individuals was an uncle, an aunt, a grandmother, grandfather, a good friend or a good neighbor. That extended family system is lost when you move to another city and become a stranger. The extended family is a personalized mental support facility. In emergencies it functions as a release valve. But it is no longer there when one moves into a strange neighborhood or a new city. When you have a problem in a strange town, the only support system that is available is the mental health professional. You've got to pay a stranger because there is no one in your extended family to talk to. Because of the corporations's needs or the individual's desire to move ahead, the question of "how healthy is this family in terms of their moving?" is not asked. We are also finding an increased grappling with rootlessness. We've lost that anchor we call the extended family. All of us have a need to know who we are. We need an identity. For many of us, work has become a major source of identity. There is nothing artificial, "plastic", or remote about your work, your place of work and who you work with.

Because so much else has shifted and sometimes failed us in life, many of us define ourselves in terms of our place of employment, the name of our corporation, or our job description. We put a lot of effort into the process of maintaining the identification. But in this search we often tend to lose ourselves. As we lose our sense of self, we tend to lose our perspective. We lose values and we lose priorities. In the relentless pursuit of success and power we tend to go down the road to emotional bankruptcy. That emotional bankruptcy impacts not only on the individual, but also upon our families. Mr. Sutton was kind enough to give me this quote and remind me that Wordsworth observed nearly 180 years ago, 'getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.' Those words are from The World is Too Much With Us. That is really probably one of the more succinct statements regarding the definition of burnout. It's very relevant as a way to put the concept of burnout in the context of the corporate world. Burnout, as far as I'm concerned, can strike any high achiever in any field; a professor, a dentist, a doctor, a teacher, a psychologist or an artist. But it has a very special affinity for the corporate executive-type. Personal needs and corporate value can clash dramatically in the work place. In this kind of battle it's the individual who often loses. We want to excel, we want to succeed, and we have quite a bit of justification. But in part, what we are really seeking is emotional gratification. We're looking for an occasional pat on the back, in the form of promotions, raises, perks, praises and a good review. When it comes to seeking emotional gratification we are all a rather needy bunch of people but I think unfortunately we work so hard to satisfy those needs, that we're willing to give too much of ourselves in the process. I can tell you that this has certainly happened to me. Some years ago I did quite a bit of work in free clinics with young people who had severe drug problems. I burned myself out by giving too much of myself. What tends to happen quite subtly is the more you want to do, the more you get sucked in and the more gratification you expect. In time you pay less and less attention to what is happening to you.

What is Happening to You?

You know that you're doing great work, but you do not recognize what's happening to yourself. I think that corporate individual, needs to recognize that his organization itself has highly demanding needs. Those needs are profit and growth. Those sound objectives must however blend into and with our individual personalities. The human being, needs recognition, a sense of accomplishment and power. Our own human needs have an emotional component which by its very nature may be alien to the blowing and sometimes consuming forces that drive a corporation. Unfortunately, as time passes and promotions accrue we identify ourselves so thoroughly with the corporation, that we get a blurring of distinction between who we are and who they are. Meaning who we are, and where the boundaries of the corporation start and stop. All too often we subordinate our emotional needs to the values and the objectives of the company. Take the word called workacholism. What I think is sad about this word is that workacholism is beginning to become a merit badge for some individuals. Once upon a time people bragged that they had ulcers. They were proud of it. An ulcer means that you're hard working son-of-a-bitch and you're really out there driving and pushing. When the going gets tough you've got your pills or alcohol to get you through it all. That means that you really are in there slugging away and slugging away. So now workacholism has become a badge of honor. I'm sad to say is that for some, the word burnout has become another merit badge that we're starting to wear. The object of the whole game, of course, is never to show weakness. This means we refrain from showing our true feeling or true emotions because the corporation feels that such a display might be unprofessional or weak. So when things are not going well with us, we do not verbalize our problems. Rather we may subvert ourselves by working harder, longer and deny even more that we are burning out.

Our Own Productivity Crisis

Productivity lags as desire wanes. No one talks very much about this waning interest of course. But what is really happening to us that our own unacceptability for promotion and success has started to dawn upon us. So what happens as this realization grows, as we move along, we further delude ourselves, with a sense of independence. We're really rather dependent on the corporation. We're dependent on the pension plans, free lunches, stock options, expense accounts, all sorts of perks that come through. Of course, all these privileges bind us umbilically to the company in a very subtle manner. Although we think we're very independent, we're not. I find this even with my own colleagues who have been trained to be highly dedicated professionals. After a while, some become tired of all that dedication. We were taught to implicitly believe that hard work and dedication will get us to the top. But that may be a con and a piece of the great American folk myth. What really happens is a bit of incredible self-deception. The corporate hierarchy is a pyramid, not a square. You are finding as you get higher and higher up, there are fewer and fewer spots available. And we still believe that if you just work hard enough Tom, Jane, Mary you're going to make it to the top. I think what happens is that the amount of square inch space on top becomes less and pressure increases as you approach the apex. The number of available positions become fewer and fewer. But we're Darwinians at heart so we believe that the best and the fittest will survive and therefore we push and slug. The trouble is however, very few of us really make it to the pinnacle — and that's sad because for many of us the pinnacle is within our view, but not our reach. This reality becomes a shattering concept for many individuals. It becomes shattering in terms of, the growing realization of the dream not to be fulfilled. The consequences of this sometimes are severe let-downs. Severe let-downs that manifest themselves when the individual is years into the corporate hierarchy.

People find that they are not moving as quickly as they're supposed to or going in the right direction. In time there is a subtle shift as to what's happening to a person. And that's when the process of burnout really begins. That is when you can't miss the symptoms of a burnout individual. The lifelong drive, that push begins to slowly peter out. The individual is less involved. The juices just don't seem to flow in the same way. Sales persons don't find such a kick anymore selling. It's a drag, it's a bore. Who cares anyway. Attitudes change, the challenge is gone. Then, tensions begin to develop not only within yourself but tensions that you bring home to your family or friends. These tensions and stresses manifest themselves in all kinds of subtle ways, ranging sometimes from a blatant outburst, to a simmering unverbilized anger and resentment. Some trusting individuals become not so trusting anymore. They feel they're being done in. They strongly suspect sometimes that people really are not for them anymore. People are hurting them people are conspiring against them. Sometimes it reaches a kind of serious paranoia. We really feel that we're not capable of doing what we can do best any longer. We become suspicious of people, sometimes even our assistants. Sometimes it reaches to the point to where we feel that our job is on the line. We tend to withdraw at that point. Sometimes we withdraw from the more simple things in our family and at work we churn out memos. This is just another technique of avoiding the inevitable. We churn out memos to invent the appearance of activity. We're just acting like we're busy. It's called covering your ass time. You just watch yourself and be careful. Some individuals have commented that they sometimes find themselves crying for no good reason. We get angry. Little things disturb us things that we used to slough off. We pick fights. We feel depleted, we feel let down.

So if we look at burnout in a serious way, burnout is an emotional state and process that is accompanied and is often a consequence of an overload of stress. That's why I subtitled my book, "Burnout" 'The high cost of high achievement', there is an incredible cost to achieving and it's at a personal cost. Another sad aspect of the problem is that the process of burnout is infectious. It's not just something that you carry by yourself. It can operate on a group level spreading in every direction. A large group of employees begin to recognize that something is going wrong. This manifests itself in a high rate of employee turnover. The turnover increases. There's an increase of absenteeism. And many times, of course, this absenteeism is manifest most on Monday mornings. Professional managers know that many times the Monday morning absence may spell the beginning of covert alcoholism. The individual who's alcoholic can't recover enough by Monday morning from the Saturday, Sunday drinking. Throughout the ranks we may find a complacency, a lack of imagination, bickering and jostling for positions. All are really the consequences of burnout. The result is often a lower productivity a job dissatisfaction, and sadly enough many times, either a forced or a voluntary resignation from the job. The sadness is that many times the corporation loses a good person. That person has not been alerted to what's really going on. I've found that so many times in hospitals, in agencies and clinics. Good people leave in disgust and in disenchantment. They've lost their idealism. They're sick and tired. They feel they're not appreciated. They walk out. The corporation loses a good person because someone has not paid attention to something going wrong with this individual. That individual is more than salvageable. Many times, he desire to remain at his job.

Confirming the Trend

To get an idea of how widespread this problem is consider the finding in a study conducted by an Opinion Research Corporation. This ORC study entitled Strategic Planning for Human Resources, 1980 and Beyond, reveals three major trends. First of all, that, "American workers at all levels, are more dissatisfied in their jobs than at any time in 28 years. Secondly, middle managers are more unhappy and feel less secure in their jobs than ever before in the last 28 years. Thirdly clerical workers, blue collars workers, and managers in particluar, are becoming increasingly critical of the abilities of top management and are beginning to function less and less adequately." Another statistic indicates that we need to be concerned about productivity. The rate of productivity growth has slowed considerably from about 3.5% a year in the early 1970s, to about 1% a year more recently. Many explanations, of course, have been given as to why this is occurring. Most business leaders believe an increase in U.S. productivity is a key element in reducing inflation and reviving a lagging economy. A numer of methods have been advanced as a means of encouraging greater productivity and growth. All have involved either rather standard economic approaches, or the development of new techniques to spark great technological innovations. However, very little of the approaches have taken into account the possible significance of the human factor. Any homeowner or apartment dweller in this area knows that the quality of trade work has declined. It has become hard to find people who are qualified, ethical, and quality oriented. If you've got a good roofer, or plumber you treasure him. Caring and quality have dwindled. This is causing a decline in productivity. Many corporations are unaware of the impact of burnout on reduced productivity. In fact, there is a minimal awareness of the role that the human factor plays in the overall economy. We refer to humans in the economy in abstract terms. We seldom refer to them in human terms.

Abstract terms such as 'consumer', 'savers', 'investors' suffice. But those abstractions represent human beings, and do not do us justice.

Does a Corporation Have A Soul?

The development of skills to know what makes people tick is indispensable to increasing productivity. It is seldom addressed. Now how does all of this relate to burnout? We're paying an inordinate price to have people working harder and harder to actually achieve less and less. Is it worth it? We must recognize that productivity and human values are not mutually exclusive. Productivity increases when one is emotionally fulfilled and when one's employees are content. We must more fully understand the human factor in the managing process. I think industry at all levels and ranks must begin to address itself to the causes and implications of burnout. Business publications such as Business Week, Dunn and Bradstreet, The Registered Representative published long articles on burnout. Woman, just wrote an article on burnout for women executive. AT & T called me up about four or five months and inquired about such an article. The editor believed that it was critically important for their middle managers and top echelon people. They were all spontaneous calls based upon a felt need. In doing something about burn-out we must first of all recognize that organizations do have the capacity to care. I'm less interested in the fact that corporations have bowling leagues, clubs and picnics. They need to care in many more meaningful ways. Up to this time, by and large caring only gets lip service not real corporate attention. The psychologists and social workers who have joined industry, are a small group. What can corporate America really do? One, I think we need to know much more about the human factor in corporations. I think that we need to recognize that when the human factor is not taken into account then, the consequence not only is burnout, but lower productivity and the kind of dissatisfaction underscored by the Princeton study. The burnout manifests itself in bitching, complaining, griping, general dissatisfaction,

turnover and absenteeism.

Let me give you some very dramatic examples of what happens when you don't pay attention to the human factor. Policemen deal continually with stressful human contact situations. They are being threatened, shot at and sometimes killed. State troopers are extra careful about how to approach cars. What do you think this does to these individuals over a period of time? When they stop somebody in a car they don't approach it anymore as a simple job. They approach it with the fear that the driver might shoot at them. This makes for incredible stress. It is evident in the policemen that I work with. One of them recently commented, "What happened to me in time is that I became tough, hard, cynical callous. What you really have to do is you have to condition yourself every day in order to survive this job". Formerly he was a pretty stable individual. Then suddenly he beats up the person he had taken into custody. His sargeant happened to be an ex-patient of mine and he was human enough and perceptive enough to know that his man needed help.

Quick Fixes for Bad Conditions

We all know about the pressure on airport traffic controllers. One patient told me, the pressure sometimes gets to be so much, that "I feel like screaming. But I get over it by going home and having a couple of drinks." Drinking is a solution to tension of course. But I regard it more as a false cure for burnout -- one that may ultimately worsen the condition. Nevertheless this pattern is not only applicable for airport control personnel, but also for executives. The accident at Three Mile Island demonstrated that social and behavioral elements can be as important as physical or technological factors. The commission investigating the accident concluded that it was primarily "a people-related problem" that brought this nation so close to a catastrophe, or major tragedy. To understand better

how people respond we need to understand the impact of continuing stress on our lives. Stress is not something that is absent for any of us. Sometimes it's economic, sometimes personal, sometimes occupational. Stress is always with us. So I'm not one of those people who advises you to eliminate stress from your life. Stress is with us in our daily existence. It will be always be with us. If you don't have stress, you're not being challenged to grow. Stress began when we were children. The goal was to make honor rolls. Stress is a pressure that we put on our kids, and we do it very early in their lives. There are some people in this audience who are putting the squeeze on their kids, as to what kind of nursery school they'll attend. The right nursery school can lead to a lot of good things later on in life. I get many calls to do preliminary psychological testing on children. This testing is usually done before the child gets to the special school so the kid has had a little experience with the psychologist and with testing procedures. Hopefully, his scores will go up five or ten points. The squeeze is on in terms of getting on the honor roll. Later on in life it becomes a race to get on the corporate track. As I indicated, burnout doesn't happen over night. It's the logical extension of your life style and personal value system. The insensitive wall that we erect around our own emotions, we also erect around our corporate business dealings. This is really the hidden agenda of my book on burnout. It's not just to sell books. It's really to alert people to a process in society. I think that we have to recognize that we have a moral responsibility to take care of ourselves and those we love. I think many times, we have to take a look at what's going on. We have to break out of our conceptual provinciality. The world is a mixture of co-existing values.

Peaceful Coexistence

Certainly valid corporate, a personal and professional value systems can co-exist. But still I think we must learn to integrate the needs of the individual with the needs of the corporation. One is not opposed to the other. They're not

separate. We need to be sensitive to the structure of a job, and to the environment of the working place. We need to recognize that boredom, routine and nondisclosure has set the climate for early organizational and personal worker burnout. We all need to teach and train ourselves to adjust to stress and its daily demands. We need to recognize that we listen too much to the commercials on the radio that offer instant cures. In the long run, the quick fixes are all fake cures. A burnout will often grab too quickly for the quick fix. What are some of these quick fixes? Heavy drinking is one. Unfortunately alcoholism is on the increase in industry. Marijuana and cocaine abuse are on the increase. Another type of quick fix is the extramarital affair, and of course deliberately provoking tension at home. These diversions don't deal with problems. They're just really copouts. What we may need really is an overhaul of our spirit, our value system, and our personal priorities. I'm not talking about anything fancy. Just a good look inward.

How to Deal With Burnout?

Dealing with burnout begins with the recognition that something is happening to you. You are more conscious of your own personality changes. People think there is something different about you. People say, 'what's going on with you.' "He used to be this, he use to be that. Now this and that and the other thing are happening." When people make this kind of serious statement about you, you've got to look. No matter who is the source of the statement. Whether it's family, friends or colleagues, do not dismiss it. Do not say, "well I'm working too hard but I'll get over it'. Do not say "All I need is a week's vacation". The burnout nut is the individual who not only becomes burned out at work, but they also burnout on vacation. They come back from vacations and they say, 'oh boy, am I beat'. They have to see all the museums, all the galleries, and play all the games.

They've got to run like crazy. They've got to play tennis every morning. They've got to get up at dawn for the fishing. For a burnout, there is a need for emotional support from friends, family, and colleagues. Burned-out individuals also manage their time poorly. Poor management of time impacts a great deal upon yourself for the job that is at hand. In your job you must be constantly available to different groups of people. Someone who is rigid has a tremendous potential for burnout. Privacy is important during the course of a day. I'm talking about five or ten minutes. I'm talking about walking off for an hour. I'm talking about lunch breaks, not working lunches. Working lunches are no breaks. Working lunches are intense craziness. Everybody gobbles down food and they keep working. That's no lunch break. Next, I think you need to recognize how to manage your body in terms of nutrition and exercise. And do you take your responsibilities too seriously? Have you become so responsible that everyone tends to load everything on you. Which means that you can take care of everything at home, you take care of everything at work. You know, you're the guy or gal who can do everything. Suddenly you start collapsing or bitching and complaining so much, that you really become irritating to those around you. You should recognize that stress and burnout can aggravate some diseases and predispose you to many others. I've got two men in my office right now because their physicians have referred them to me for stress-induced diabestes. The potential for diabetes was present, and their exposure to stress was so high that they would need insulin within a few weeks. A physician referred the two cases to me, and said, 'Listen -- I'm giving you two to three months. In six weeks if you get these guys unstressed or readjust their life, we will re-evaluate them. One patient is a free-lance photographer, who runs around frantically all over Europe and the continents. He is so

busy that now he's got himself to the brink of a very serious diabetic condition. The other is a banking executive. There's a positive side to burnout though, and we should realize it. Burnout can be a friend, not just an enemy. If you recognize burnout you can start doing something about it. You can start making some changes. It can assist you in self-reflection. It can promote growth. You begin to develop a creative resourcefulness about what to do with your time, your job and your life. I'm talking about making changes in terms of your approach to life.

Living in the Abstract

I think one obstacle to making real changes in our lives is the fact that instead of personalizing our existence, we have grown too accustomed to dealing in abstract terms. Intellectualizing is a very important phenomenon of the burnout. Burnouts intellectualize, they put distance between themselves and reality. They turn everything into very abstract terms. They really don't personalize anything. Of course, it's marvelous for a college graduate, because they're highly capable in terms of verbalizations. But we seldom acknowledge our feelings in the process we do not communicate at all in any kind of specific, personal, concrete way. Of course, the more abstract you communicate, the less you're in touch with yourself. What's needed really, is a balance between our thoughts, our abstract thinking, and our personal self. All have their place. But no philosopher in the Western World would disagree with the phrase 'to thine own self be true'. That's what overcoming burnout is all about. I think it involves a recognition of the symptoms and then the setting of new priorities by getting in touch with your own needs. It involves learning to channel your energies in a very creative and resourceful way. Many times these shifts of energies result in a much more positive outlook on life. This in turn will have a definite impact on your corporation. Thus, in overcoming burnout I think we become a personal force --a force that more effectively serves the best interests of ourselves,

Our family, our corporations and of course, our overall society. I suppose that I've given you a lot to think about. But, in conclusion let me point to that great American humanist and humorist, Ken Hubbard, who said, 'do not take your life too seriously or you will never get out of it alive'. That's what it's all about. Thank you.

Q: When one recognizes the symptoms does one always need outside help?

HF: The answer is no. I believe that burnout is not a neurosis, it's not a sickness, it's not a disturbance. I think if you recognize the symptoms you begin to say to yourself, let me take a look at what's happening. What do I do during the course of a day? How am I living my life? What stress factors take place during the course of a day? How am I living my life? Many times, I send people out by saying first try to work on yourself before you seek professional care.

Q: Do people in a burnout condition, usually need a job change.

HF: Not necessarily. But many times, we need to re-evaluate priorities with a new job. But, that's a last resort. Job change may be one of the consequences of it, if you tried everything else. (It should not be the first response.) Since you're a woman, let me talk a little bit in terms of burnout as it applies to women. I think the issue of burnout with executive women is quite different than that of men. Many times it's a married woman who we're talking about. A married woman is really not one who is let off the hook by the husband, in terms of the demands placed upon her. She's expected to be a 'good wife', expected to be a 'good mother' and expected to be an excellent or a competent business person. Which means that she has almost three demands, which most of the men do not. Burnout is often specific to a locale or circumstance. A burnt-out

individual, who is a drag at work, goes home and has a ball playing with kids or playing tennis. Depression may be one of the by-products of burnout. But depression is not equivalent to burnout.

Q: Aren't you really saying that we need a new work ethic? That we need to teach children the limitations of human beings in terms of what they can hope to achieve?

HF: Not hope to achieve. Everybody hopes. But what is realistic to achieve without giving too much and losing yourself. Yes, we have to have different work ethic. That's truly one of the reasons I wrote this book. I think we need to really look at the value system within our society. I'm not knocking society. I'm talking about the need to evaluate our society and its industrial structure and make some changes.

Q: Does the burnout syndrome exist on a greater level here than in Western Europe?

HF: I don't think so. I think the societies of all Western nations are in trouble.

Q: Do you think the jogging and the exercise phenomena of the past couple years is a reaction to the need to deal with stress?

HF: I think it is most definitely a healthy approach as long as you don't become a jogging nut. A compulsive jogger is a burnout on another level.