

## Prevent Burnout

Work-related burnout is an enormous, disruptive, and often expensive problem for millions of people. To put it bluntly, people get sick of and fed up with their jobs and crave a better, different, or more satisfying life. Obviously, there's no way to guarantee the prevention of burnout, but there are things you can do to put the odds in your favor.

The keys seem to be balance and growth. If you talk to people who aren't burned out, you'll discover that most of them strive to have a balanced life and to be growth-oriented. This means that while they work hard, compete well, strive for excellence, and have very specific, often lofty goals, they nevertheless insist on having a life outside of work—they enjoy hobbies, they value their free time, and strive to make a contribution to their community apart from their work. In addition, people who avoid burnout are constantly attempting to better themselves and to grow, not just professionally, but spiritually and emotionally as well. They attend workshops or classes, they learn new things, and are open-minded. They strive to overcome their own blind spots. They have a fascination with learning and a zest for life. They are curious and enjoy listening to others.

Those who avoid burnout do so with their uplifting, positive attitude. They have outside interests and take advantage of their time away from work. Their interest in and ability to focus on aspects of life other than work keeps their spirits nourished and their lives relatively content. Doesn't it make sense that if a person was fulfilled and satisfied outside of work, he would carry that sense of freshness and wonder into his work life?

When all you do is work, even if it's satisfying, burnout will be the end result. You're too invested in one thing. You become stagnant, predictable, habitual, even boring. Think about it. What would happen if you only ate one food, over and over again, day after day, year after year? It wouldn't matter if it was your favorite food or not—you'd get sick of it. Or what

if you watched the same episode of your favorite television show again and again? Boring!

Andrew worked for the same mid-sized company for fifteen years before he caught a major case of burnout. Outside of work, he had no life to speak of—no exercise or outside activities, very few friends (and almost no time spent with them), no pets, and no real hobbies. Because his whole world was his job, he assumed that his job was the source of his burnout. He didn't know what to do. Eventually, he became so frustrated, he resigned.

He didn't have the financial luxury of not working for too long, so within a month or so, he was forced to start looking for a new job. During his month off, however, he tried some new things for the first time—and loved them. He read a few books, took some regular walks, and even enrolled in yoga classes. "I not only had fun but met some really nice and interesting people too," he told me. For the first time in his life, he was having fun. His enthusiasm returned, his burnout disappeared and his perspective was enhanced.

Because he felt so much better, he called his old boss and explained what had happened. Luckily for Andrew, his company hadn't found an adequate replacement and they offered him his old job back—which he accepted with gratitude. He realized that there was nothing wrong with his career, but that his life lacked balance. He made the commitment to keep doing the things he now knew he enjoyed and, in fact, to try even more things as time went on.

This is a strategy that some (really busy) people try to dismiss with the old excuse, "I don't have time to have a life." Unfortunately, this is a narrow, shallow, and extremely short-term way of looking at your life and your career. The truth is for most people, if you don't "get a life," you will end up with a major case of burnout. You're playing with fire—it's only a matter of time. So, you have to ask



yourself, "Is it smarter for me (i.e., better business) to continue my lopsided, out-of-balance lifestyle, or might it be better to reserve even a little time for some other things—regular reading, exercise, meditation, an evening with friends, time alone or with family, a course on how to have a positive attitude, or some hobby?"

Even if you're a full-fledged workaholic, or if you are by circumstances forced to work excessive hours, it's a great idea to at least think of balance as a desirable goal. But hard as it can be, you must back up your good intentions with action.

A good place to start is to evaluate your priorities apart from work. If you had to pick, what would be most important? Would it be to volunteer some time or learn to meditate? Is it your spiritual life that's most important? Would it be to schedule a regular date with your partner, child or friend? Or might it be to exercise on a regular basis—or something else entirely? Whatever it is, take a look at your calendar and begin to carve out the time. Anything is better than nothing.

I remember when I began running on a regular basis. The only realistic time for me to do it was early in the morning, well before sunrise. So that's when I did it. Some health clubs are open twenty-four hours a day. Where there is a will, there's a way. Perhaps you can volunteer some time on the weekends, as I used to do for the Big Brothers of America program, or set aside thirty minutes each evening to relax in the bathtub and read a great novel.

Most people take a lunch break. You can spend this time watching a soap opera in the lunchroom or learning to meditate. It's your choice. If you work five days a week, a year from now you will have had 260 lunch breaks. In that time alone, you could be well on your

# MAAGCS Golf Notes

## Superintendent/Club Official Tournament Results

### Net

1st (58) Dean Graves/Jack Hargett	Bethesda CC
2nd (60) Corey Haney/Lynn Roach	Westfields GC
3rd (61) Bill Neus/Bob Bellamey	Hobbitts Glen
4th (61) Jeff Vance/Wayne Righter	Laytonsville GC
5th (62) John Kotoski/Allan Hirsh	Suburban Club

### Gross

1st (67) Glenn Smickley/Tom Tracey	Robert Trent Jones
2nd (70) Mike Evans/Jeff Collett	CC of Woodmore
3rd (70) Jim Weaver/John Daniel	Washington G & CC

### Closest to the Pin

#4 - Jim Weaver	#9 - Dan Thompson
#12 - Glenn Smickley	#15 - Ken Ingram

### Straight Drive

#8 - Steve Caruthers

## Burnout

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way to speaking a foreign language, being in better physical condition, becoming semiproficient in yoga, or many other worthwhile ventures. Whatever it is that you love to do, it will be worth it, and it will help you create a more balanced, growth-oriented life. It's inconceivable that you wouldn't feel better about life and about yourself by creating some balance. And as an added bonus, you'll prevent burnout. It is really that simple.

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