

Is Hustling The New Burning Out?

My father, like a typical Asian parent, wanted me to achieve big things, so he imbued these words into my head: “If you don’t achieve the impossible feats, your life is going to be worthless.”

I took this to heart and always went out of my way to achieve things way beyond my capabilities to be worthy to him. And later this turned me into wanting to prove my worth to other people by always seeking to do impossible things.

So, it happened after graduation, I landed a content marketing internship program and I was determined to be great.

I had a knack for writing, I religiously devoured the textbooks on Consumer Psychology, I still could not make sense of the corporate world. Everything needed to be glitzy and it was a norm to be a super-human.

My entrances were nearing but while preparing and working were my top priorities, self-care and compassion took the back seat.

I was overworked, I compromised on my sleep, didn’t get exercise and started having a diet consisting of snacks because I rarely had time to cook myself a simple meal.

Days went by, my entrances were over but my grinding wasn’t. Before getting admission, I thought adding a few more certificates to my profile won’t hurt so I started hunting for more work. I took several interviews, funnily enough, due to such a long time of juggling work and studies, I didn’t prepare for a single interview, and even ignored some responses. My body needed rest but I wasn’t ready to give in, the great mantra: “Hustle till you die!” was spinning in my mind.

I could hardly get up from my bed, with physical exhaustion came mental numbing and then daily crying spells. I started hating work, having to get up, I became irritated at small things, started losing concentration and cried whenever my manager’s name was displayed in my texts. Work became a drag. Food felt obnoxious. I knew what it was: **Burnout Syndrome**.

What is Burnout Syndrome?

Burnout happens when you’re overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to keep up with life’s incessant demands. You could be a student, working professional etc. Burnout could happen to anyone who’s been facing constant pressure to adjust and work without any relief.

So basically, burning out happens when you are constantly feeling swamped. Burnout happens when you're overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to keep up with life's incessant demands.

According to ICD-10, (International Classification of Diseases- 10), Burnout Syndrome is conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- reduced professional efficacy.

Symptoms for academic burnout and job burnout can manifest differently:

For students the symptoms of burnout could mean:

- Feeling exhausted no matter how much sleep you get, resulting in fatigue and insomnia
- Lacking the motivation to attend classes or start assignments
- Lashing out at others and increased irritability due to frustration
- Lacking inspiration and creativity to bring to projects and class discussions
- Loss of confidence in academic abilities
- Incapability to meet important deadlines
- Increased pain and tension in your body, which can be manifested as headaches, sore muscle aches, or jaw tension

We're morally inclined to work harder. Get done more than expected. This often leads us to forget how much stress and negativity we're accumulating inside our bodies. We work ourselves to exhaustion, cynicism and hopelessness. Our body pays that extra price because of our unreasonable desire to follow that mantra: Go an extra mile.

The Toxicity of Hustle Culture

My therapist told me a very important thing about the popular hustle culture, which we all need to know:

"Hustle culture that's in rage today had been advocating a very toxic lifestyle and we are actively propagating it. When any of us tries to speak against it, they're labelled sensitive and are constantly told that they're not accepting the so-called corporate reality."

"We're normalising not having boundaries, we're normalising not getting a good amount of sleep to let our bodies recover, we're normalising leaving our families and ourselves behind. If people

start walking out of organizations that promote this kind of environment, if we collectively stand up against it, this trend won't last long."

How to Recover from and Prevent Burning Out?

If you're feeling like you're facing burnout, stop right there and take a break! Yes, take a break.

Here are a few steps to take when you're recovering from burnout:

- Take a few days off from work. Try getting rest on weekends.
- Make time for fun and enjoyable activities.
- Get plenty of workouts to keep your body active and get endorphins kicking.
- Walk often, observe the nature around you, observe people.
- Make time for socializing, talking to friends, family and acquaintances.
- Set reasonable goals. Set up timers, use calendars and also keep your own wellbeing in mind.

I want you all to take note of this and think for once. Why should working hard involve getting rid of a normal life, getting rid of your personal needs, not caring about your well being? Does working for money give you "the life" that you wanted? Should only hustlin' and bustlin' be your "life"? That's causing us cognitive dissonance, isn't it?

The truth is bitter, the corporate world is selfish and doesn't want to lose its money, so it wants you to work without stopping. It wants to breed a very toxic sense of competitiveness, where compassion and empathy don't exist, humanness ceases to exist. So, pause and listen, what is your body saying to you? Be compassionate.