

E-BOOK - Stress Management Tips

-content from Atomic Habits by James Clear, - specifically for 3) chronic burnout management

Core Principle: Your Worth Is Not Based on Your Productivity

Burnout is a signal that you're operating from a place where your worth is tied to how much you get done. The goal of these practices is to cultivate a new sense of worthiness that is inherent and unconditional.

Practices for Managing Burnout

These practices are organized by the level of a student's distress, with a focus on shifting from a "never enough" mindset to one of "I am enough."

Low-Level Stress (Feeling Tired, Unmotivated, or a "Hustle Culture" Mindset):

Cultivate Play and Rest:

Instant Tip: Schedule a 15-minute "play break" in your calendar. This is not for a chore, a social obligation, or scrolling. This time is for something purely for fun. Draw, listen to a favorite song and dance, or play with a pet.

Deeper Practice: Recognize that rest is a need, not a luxury. Consciously let go of the idea that exhaustion is a status symbol. Make a "rest list" of things that genuinely recharge you (e.g., napping, staring out the window, reading a book for pleasure) and commit to one per day.

Cultivate Self-Compassion:

Instant Tip: When you make a mistake (e.g., miss a deadline, get a bad grade), replace the thought "I'm a failure" with a kinder, more factual statement: "I'm a student who is struggling right now. This is a moment of difficulty, and I am not alone in it."

Deeper Practice: Use a mantra. When you wake up, repeat, "No matter what gets done and how much is left undone, I am enough." This is a daily habit to counteract the perfectionist voice.

Medium-Level Stress (Feeling Resentful, Overcommitted, or Overwhelmed):

Cultivate Authenticity and Boundaries:

Instant Tip: Practice a simple phrase: "I would love to, but I can't right now." Or, "Let me check my calendar and get back to you." This buys you time and prevents an instant, guilt-fueled "yes."

Deeper Practice: Take a moment to list your current commitments. For each one, ask yourself: "Did I say 'yes' to this because I wanted to, or because I felt I 'should'?" The goal is to start slowly letting go of the "shoulds" and making space for what truly matters to you. Setting boundaries is an act of self-love and the best way to prevent resentment.

Let Go of Comparison:

Instant Tip: When you find yourself scrolling through social media and feeling bad, remind yourself, "Comparison is the thief of joy." Put the phone down or close the tab.

Deeper Practice: Focus on your own lane. Create a "progress journal" where you only track your own small wins and learning moments. Celebrate your unique journey and skills without measuring them against anyone else's highlight reel.

Extreme-Level Stress (Feeling Hopeless, Disconnected, or Emotionally Numb):

Cultivate Connection:

Instant Tip: Reach out to one trusted person (a friend, a family member, a peer mentor on MinMesh). Share something real about how you are feeling, even if it's just "I'm having a really rough day."

Deeper Practice: Burnout is often tied to a feeling of powerlessness and isolation. Brené Brown's research shows that the most powerful antidote to shame is empathy. Cultivate the courage to share your story and allow yourself to be seen, which strengthens your connection to others and reminds you that you are not alone.

Let Go of Numbing:

Instant Tip: When you feel the urge to check out (e.g., binge-watching, excessive gaming, etc.), pause for a moment and identify the underlying emotion. Are you feeling anxious, lonely, or bored? Naming the emotion helps you respond to it rather than just reacting.

Deeper Practice: Instead of numbing the pain, make a conscious effort to "lean into discomfort." This can be as simple as sitting with a difficult feeling for one minute, or as complex as having a brave conversation with someone. By doing this, you are not only processing the difficult emotion but also building your resilience and confidence.