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Seven Ways to Beat the Burnout Blues

Have you ever wondered why some people leave jobs after two or three years and others stay for 15 or 20? Burnout may not be the only reason people leave their jobs, but it often is a factor.

You may be experiencing burnout if you feel bored, tired, unattached, impatient, and

constantly irritated with your co-workers.

Don't panic, there's hope. Some of the secrets to long-term job happiness are revealed below in the words of people who have avoided burnout.

Change positions within your company

"I avoided burnout by changing positions every two to four years. During my 27-year career, I worked in sales, market research, technical management, operations, and product management. The changes kept me interested and excited about my work," says Jan Powell, from Dallas, TX, who worked for 27 years at Xerox.

Find like-minded people

"To avoid burnout, the most useful tool I have found is to identify like-minded people with whom I can share humor, have fun, and vent frustrations when needed. These must be people who share a similar sense of humor as yourself and people you trust implicitly," says Bobbe White, from Quincy, IL, who has worked as a business development officer at a community bank for 21 years.

Seek out short-term projects

"I have avoided burnout because, in addition to my normal routine job, I seek out short-term projects, working with different teams each time," says Jaswant Kaur, a nine-year employee of the Samling Group of Companies.

"These projects could be on cost-cutting efforts, improving quality efforts, charitable causes, or other social functions for the company," says the Samling employee, who lives in Kuching, Malaysia.

Get more education

"I was previously with a technology company for more than 13 years and became burned out since I wasn't able to go anywhere within the company," says Teresa Johnson, from Southlake, Texas. "I went back to school and received a B.B.A. in management and an M.S. in human resources and training.

"The company paid for my schooling and knew when I started the master's program that I'd leave after graduation if no opportunities arose. That happened, and I left within 30 days after graduating. They felt it was worth it to keep me working at the company for the time I was in school," she says.

Keep on learning

"I worked at Sears for nearly 10 years many years ago. The number one thing I've learned through many years of employment is that it's important to continue to learn new things," says Melinda L. Surbough, from Dallas, TX, who is now the managing editor of Today's Dallas Woman magazine.

Have pride in your job

"I work in a busy medical office. Having pride and confidence in my job and doing work that I enjoy are very important to me," says Lucretia Rolland, a receptionist at The Dermatology Center in Irving, TX. "These, combined with appreciation and caring from management, have kept me in my job for more than 17 years."

Don't wait

If you start to experience burnout, don't wait until it affects your work and don't start looking for a new job. Instead, try making positive changes in your present job. Talk to your supervisor and discuss changes that could reenergize you.

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Beating Burnout

Sources such as your environment, your thoughts, hectic schedules and extra duties all affect your emotional health. Recognizing some signs of burnout is a great way to start diminishing the stress:

- Lack of energy and desire
- Exhaustion and frustration
- Enhanced stress and worry
- And lack of hope and boredom.

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Putting Out the Fire: Preventing and Managing Burnout

Stress contributes to the development of many physical and mental health conditions including (but not limited to) hypertension, diabetes, depression and anxiety. Research suggests that up to two-thirds of American employees experience some degree of burnout. Learn ways to beat burnout.

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