

# Burnout

THE SECRET TO UNLOCKING  
THE STRESS CYCLE

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## DECISION GRID

Should I stay or quit: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., my job, my  
relationship, my diet, my place of worship, my substance use, my  
habit of overcommitting . . .)

STAYING THE SAME

QUITTING

<u>BENEFITS—IMMEDIATE:</u>	<u>BENEFITS—IMMEDIATE:</u>
<u>BENEFITS—LONGER-TERM</u>	<u>BENEFITS—LONGER-TERM</u>
<u>COSTS—IMMEDIATE:</u>	<u>COSTS—IMMEDIATE:</u>
<u>COSTS—LONGER-TERM</u>	<u>COSTS—LONGER-TERM</u>

## REDEFINE WINNING

To cope with the frustration of trying to achieve a goal that's all but impossible—e.g., “perfection”—or else eternally in-progress—e.g., “successfully” parenting a child—start by redefining what it means to “win” at this goal.

Frustrating Goal

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What is it about this goal that frustrates your Monitor? Is it unattainable? Do you feel ambivalent about it? Was it someone else's dumb idea? Is there part of it that makes you feel helpless? Are there too many frustrating yet unavoidable obstacles between you and “winning”?

Brainstorm at least twenty options for definitions of “winning” that will satisfy your Monitor. Make sure you have plenty of silly, impractical ideas, as well as a few that could actually work. Brainstorming works best when you don't filter! For some people, it also works better when you collaborate; if that's you, ask a friend to help.

Now choose your three favorites and score them based on the criteria for Monitor-pleasing goals:

**Soon:** When will you know you've succeeded? Your goal should be achievable without requiring patience.

**Certain:** How confident are you that you can succeed? Your goal should be within your control.

**Positive:** What improvement will you experience when you win? It should be something that feels good, not just something that avoids suffering.

**Concrete:** Measurable. How will you know you've succeeded? There is an external indication that you have succeeded.

**Specific:** As opposed to general. You should be able to visualize precisely what success will look like.

**Personal:** Why does this goal matter to you? How much does it matter? Tailor your goal so that it matters to you.

	SOON	CERTAIN	POSITIVE	CONCRETE	SPECIFIC	PERSONAL
1.						
2.						
3.						

Reread your description of what made this goal frustrating. Now you can select whichever new definition of “winning” best addresses those problems!

SMASHIN'-SOME-PATRIARCHY WORKSHEET

My Something Larger is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Something I do to engage with my Something Larger  
that also smashes some patriarchy is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I'll know I smashed some patriarchy when . . .  
(soon, certain, positive, concrete, specific, and per-  
sonal): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 24/7 WORKSHEET

On the first calendar, mark your actual time use. If you have a pretty stable schedule, you can fill it out all at once. If your schedule tends to change, fill it out each day to see how these next seven days go.

1. Block out time for sleep. *At minimum*, it should be a realistic representation of when you really do sleep. Be sure to include in your sleep time the time it takes you to fall asleep and the time between when your alarm goes off and when you actually get up. This is your complete “sleep opportunity.”

2. Block out regularly occurring events, including:

- a. work (with commute);
- b. kids’ activities and care;
- c. social activities, including those with partner (don’t forget sex);
- d. meals, including preparation time;
- e. bathing/showering/hair time;
- f. shopping (including groceries and online shopping); and
- g. TV, Internet/social-media use, solo games, and staring at your phone.

3. Approximate less-regular but anticipatable activities, like doctors’ appointments, car maintenance, home repair, etc. An easy way to get a rough estimate is to look at how much time you’ve spent on these things over the previous twelve months. Add up all that time, divide it by fifty-two, and you’ll have the average time per week.

4. Color-code each activity by types of needs they fulfill: connection, rest (both sleep and mind-wandering), meaning, and completing the cycle.

On the second calendar (“Ideal” 24/7 Calendar), imagine the ways you might, hypothetically, make your time use more like the “ideal”—“ideal” being entirely subjective. You’re the one who knows whether you need more sleep, more stress-cycle completion, more connection, or just more time.

1. Ideally, your sleep schedule is a solid block of the same seven to nine hours every day, including weekends, but you can make up a shortfall with naps or extra sleep on the weekends.

2. Reserve thirty minutes of each day for a “stress-reducing conversation.” If your stress-reducing conversation partner is your life partner, you might also add a weekly hour-long “state of the union” conversation. Research recommends these as the standards for sustaining a satisfying relationship.<sup>39</sup>

3. Include thirty to sixty minutes for physical activity three to six days per week, plus any prep/travel time.

4. Code as before—social, rest, meaning, and completing the cycle.

5. Code some activities, like some phone use, shopping, or meal prep that you haven’t been using for mind-wandering rest time, and see if you can transition your state of mind from one of fretful worry to calm future-mapping.

6. BONUS: Mark activities that smash patriarchy. Example: If you work in a job where women are underrepresented, all your work and commute time is patriarchy smashin'. If you parent a child with the goal of transmitting positive and inclusive gender norms, that's patriarchy smashin'. If you are a woman of color, a hijabi in the West, not heterosexual or cisgender, or live with a disability, literally every waking moment is patriarchy smashin'.

The payoff of spending more time resting is that during the remaining 58 percent of your life, you're more energized, more focused, more creative, and nicer to be around—not to mention a safer driver, less likely to make mistakes that will cost you later, and more likely to enjoy what you're doing, rather than simply feeling that it's the “right” thing to do.

We know what to do, and we have the time to do it. Simple. Obvious. Easy. Right?

Of course not. If it were simple and obvious and easy, we'd all already be doing it. So what makes this simple, obvious change so difficult for so many people?

In his book *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams*, Matthew Walker describes our cultural neglect of sleep as a “suffocating noose,” and insists “a radical shift in our personal, cultural, professional, and societal appreciation of sleep must occur.”<sup>40</sup> For instance, we need schools—especially high schools—to open later, which requires that parents have flexibility about their work hours, which requires that employers prioritize workers' ability to meet the demands of family equally with the demands of the organization. That's just one example of the fundamental systemic changes necessary to create a world where we all have the resources to be rested and well. Getting adequate rest will not be easy.

## REAL 24/7 CALENDAR

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
6 A.M.			
7 A.M.			
8 A.M.			
9 A.M.			
10 A.M.			
11 A.M.			
NOON			
1 P.M.			
2 P.M.			
3 P.M.			
4 P.M.			
5 P.M.			
6 P.M.			
7 P.M.			
8 P.M.			
9 P.M.			
10 P.M.			
11 P.M.			
12 A.M.			
1 A.M.			
2 A.M.			
3 A.M.			
4 A.M.			
5 A.M.			

## REAL 24/7 CALENDAR

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 A.M.				
7 A.M.				
8 A.M.				
9 A.M.				
10 A.M.				
11 A.M.				
NOON				
1 P.M.				
2 P.M.				
3 P.M.				
4 P.M.				
5 P.M.				
6 P.M.				
7 P.M.				
8 P.M.				
9 P.M.				
10 P.M.				
11 P.M.				
12 A.M.				
1 A.M.				
2 A.M.				
3 A.M.				
4 A.M.				
5 A.M.				

## “IDEAL” 24/7 CALENDAR

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
6 A.M.			
7 A.M.			
8 A.M.			
9 A.M.			
10 A.M.			
11 A.M.			
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3 A.M.			
4 A.M.			
5 A.M.			

## “IDEAL” 24/7 CALENDAR

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 A.M.				
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3 A.M.				
4 A.M.				
5 A.M.				