

Preventing Burnout

with Susan G Mathis

*Who am I?
I'm a type-A burnout
waiting to happen!*



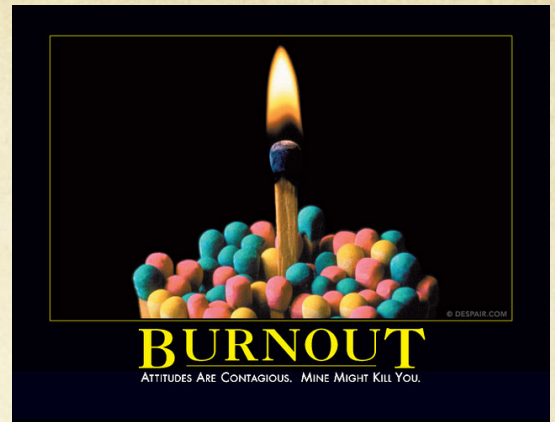
- Former teacher and curriculum writer and editor
- Founding Editor of *Thriving Family* magazine and former Focus on the Family Editor or Editorial Director of twelve publications
- Published non-fiction author of *Countdown for Couples* and *The ReMarriage Adventure*
- Published children's picture book author of *Lexie's Adventure in Kenya* and *Madison's Rainbow Adventure*
- Published historical fiction author of two books: *The Fabric of Hope* and *Christmas Charity*. And two more scheduled for 2019: *Katelyn's Choice* and *Sara's Surprise*
- Published author in six compilations including three *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books and three family-focused books.

*What am I working on now?
I'm busted...*



- Marketing my first six books
- Preparing for the launch of my next three novels/novellas
- Writing second novel in the Thousand Islands Gilded Age series
- Social networking: weekly blog and Pinterest boards, and daily FB and Twitter posts
- Serving a vice president of Christian Authors Network (CAN)
- Judging national writing contests
- Speaking at writing conferences
- Coaching writers
- Serving God, husband, children, grandchildren, friends, writers
- and more...But aren't most of us like this?

*What do I know
about burnout
anyway?*



- Been there. Done that. My story isn't pretty (including my car/garage/hubby story). I want to help you avoid burnout if I can.
- According to leading experts and much research, let's look at the:
 - signs
 - symptoms
 - causes
 - prevention
 - cures
 - recovery
 - and what God's word says about burnout.

What are some symptoms of burnout?



- ✓ You're exhausted all the time.
- ✓ You feel frustrated. Nothing you do seems to make a difference or is appreciated.
- ✓ You're apathetic. Caring about your work or home life seems like wasted energy.
- ✓ You're overwhelmed. The majority of your day is spent on tasks you find either mind-numbingly dull or too much to do.
- ✓ You're unhealthy. You notice changes to your body or are vulnerable to illnesses like colds and flu.
- ✓ Beware! The negative effects of burnout spill over into every area of life, including your home and social life.

What about work-related causes of burnout?



- ✓ You feel out of control, like you have little or no control over your work.
- ✓ You're disappointed. There's a lack of recognition or rewards for good work.
- ✓ You're frustrated. You face unclear or overly demanding job expectations.
- ✓ You bored. You are doing work that's monotonous or unchallenging.
- ✓ You're overwhelmed. You work in a chaotic or high-pressured or bureaucratic environment.

What about lifestyle causes of burnout?



- ✓ You're overworked: working too much, without enough time for relaxing and socializing
- ✓ You're overloaded: expected to be too many things to too many people
- ✓ You're unable to say no: taking on too many responsibilities, without enough help from others
- ✓ You're exhausted: not getting enough sleep
- ✓ You're feeling alone: lack of close, supportive relationships

What about personality traits that can contribute to burnout?



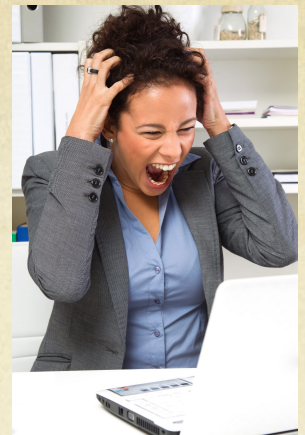
- ✓ You're a type-A personality.
- ✓ You have perfectionistic tendencies. Nothing is ever good enough.
- ✓ You've become negative and have a pessimistic view of yourself and the world.
- ✓ You're controlling and need to be in control or are reluctant to delegate to others.
- ✓ You have a high-achieving personality.

What are some physical signs and symptoms of burnout?



- ✓ You are feeling tired and drained most of the time.
- ✓ You have a lowered immunity and feel sick a lot.
- ✓ You have frequent headaches, back pain, and/or muscle aches.
- ✓ You may have arthritis or other chronic ailments caused by stress.
- ✓ You have a change in appetite or sleep habits.

How about emotional signs and symptoms of burnout?



- ✓ You have a sense of failure and self-doubt.
- ✓ You're feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated.
- ✓ You are feeling alone in the world.
- ✓ You have a loss of motivation.
- ✓ You lack self-confidence.
- ✓ You are increasingly cynical and have a negative outlook.
- ✓ You have a decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment.

*Are there behavioral signs
and symptoms of
burnout? Oh yeah!*



- ✓ You are withdrawing from responsibilities.
- ✓ You are isolating yourself from others.
- ✓ You are procrastinating, taking longer to get things done.
- ✓ You are taking out your frustrations on others.
- ✓ You are skipping work or coming in late and leaving early.
- ✓ You are using food, drugs, or alcohol to relax or cope.
- ✓ YIKES! It's time to take a good, long look at life.

*How can you prevent
burnout?*



- ✓ Start the day with a relaxing tradition. Spend time in prayer, writing in your journal, doing gentle stretches, or reading something that inspires you.
- ✓ Adopt healthy eating, exercising, and sleeping habits to give you the energy and resilience to deal with life's hassles and demands.
- ✓ Set boundaries. Don't overextend yourself.
- ✓ Learn how to say "no".

What else can you do?



- ✓ Take a daily break from technology. Set time each day to disconnect. Put away your laptop, turn off your phone, and stop checking email.
- ✓ Nourish your creative side. Creativity is a powerful antidote to burnout. Try something new, start a fun project, or resume a favorite hobby. Choose things that have nothing to do with work.
- ✓ Learn how to manage stress. When you're on the road to burnout, you may feel helpless. Managing stress will give you control over it.

*What if you're already there?
Recovering from burnout...*



- ✓ Slow down. Force yourself to take a break and slow down. Cut back on commitments and activities. Give yourself time to rest, reflect, and heal.
- ✓ Get support. When you're burned out, the natural tendency is to protect what little energy you have left by isolating yourself. Engage with others.
- ✓ Reevaluate your goals and priorities. Burnout is an undeniable sign that something is wrong. Think about your hopes, goals, and dreams. Rediscover what really makes you happy and change your course accordingly.

What if you're stuck in your job? Coping with job burnout...



- ✓ Clarify your job description. Review your job description, discuss what's not on your job description and set boundaries.
- ✓ Actively address problems. Take a proactive approach to issues in your workplace. You'll feel less helpless if you assert yourself and express your needs.
- ✓ Ask for new duties. If you're bored or unmotivated, ask to try something new.
- ✓ Take time off. If burnout seems inevitable, take a complete break from work. Go on vacation, use up your sick days, ask for a temporary leave-of-absence—anything to remove yourself from the situation. Use the time away to recharge your batteries and find perspective.
- ✓ If you must, you may need to seek a less stressful job. Toxic work environments can kill the body, soul, and spirit!

*What else can you do?
Executing your plan:
Prioritize!*



- Put the projects you are being paid for or that are in your job description at the top of the list.
- Schedule projects with a deadline at the top of the list, and prioritize them according to due dates.
- Place projects that will motivate you to complete something quickly next, even if it's simply a FB post or a Tweet.
- Finally, place the projects you'd like to get around to doing at the bottom. Such grand ideas of what you could write or do may be hampering what you can do. Don't discard them, but give them less prioritization until they become clearer in your mind.

Give them all a solid deadline on the calendar, then adjust when needed.

*Thoughts from God's word.
Ecclesiastes 3:1*



There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

- a time to be born and a time to die (an idea is birthed; others may die)
- a time to plant and a time to uproot (a plan for a project is planted, but sometimes you have to uproot certain aspects of it)
- a time to kill and a time to heal (an idea is “killed” as you do your market research, talk to others, etc., and sometimes it’s “healed” by adjusting the idea)
- a time to tear down and a time to build (as you work on your idea, you’ll see how to tear down poor ideas and build up others)
- a time to weep and a time to laugh (when rejection comes, weep, and when success comes, laugh)
- a time to mourn and a time to dance (ditto)

- a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them (as you scatter your work for scrutiny or gather it back, remember Who is in charge)
- a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing (sometimes you'll embrace a situation and other times you may refrain from embracing it.)
- a time to search and a time to give up (looking for the right situation, requires a search...and sometimes for you to give up on it)
- a time to keep and a time to throw away (keep most of your work; throw away some).
- a time to tear and a time to mend (there's a time to tear up your work, and more often, time to mend—or rework it)
- a time to be silent and a time to speak (take time to rest and be silent before you “speak” on the page)
- a time to love and a time to hate (discern when positive discussions should happen and when conflict needs to happen)
- a time for war and a time for peace (most situations have elements of war and peace—know what the right time is for each)

My prayer for you: May every season of your editing, writing and personal life be filled with God's presence and peace!



www.SusanGMathis.com