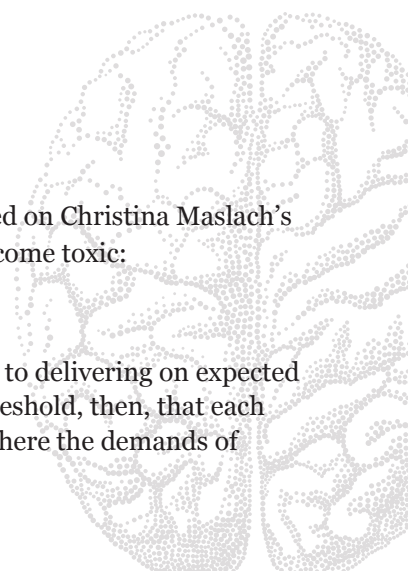


WHAT LEADS TO PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT?



Professional burnout is the result of healthy conditions in the workplace malfunctioning. Based on Christina Maslach's research, there are six fundamental areas that lead to burnout for leaders when conditions become toxic:

WORKLOAD

Every leader experiences a heavy workload in a range of job functions. From managing others to delivering on expected outcomes, a busy and often overflowing work schedule is no stranger to leaders. There is a threshold, then, that each leader must become aware of. Without that knowledge, we are all at risk of reaching a point where the demands of work exceed available resources - be it physical or mental.

CONTROL

Determining how we execute tasks and projects helps us feel empowered to use our strengths and contribute to the overall mission and vision of the organization. When circumstances are in place that prevent us from having the appropriate level of control over our work, we begin to develop a sense of frustration and powerlessness that lead to burnout.

REWARD

While a healthy paycheck absolutely helps prevent burnout by fairly compensating the level of work accomplished, money alone will not keep us from experiencing professional burnout. There are other conditions that must be in place as well to satiate our need to feel properly rewarded for the work we do. These include receiving recognition, validation, and celebration on a regular basis -- which can often be more difficult for leaders who are "alone" at the top.

COMMUNITY

As we know, the brain is hardwired to be in a group. When these critical connections with others whom we trust and can rely on are missing, we risk feeling emotionally isolated -- one of the largest contributors to burnout. This issue goes beyond the workplace and is becoming an epidemic in the United States, which is ironic given the increased connection technology gives us. Leaders must work to find safe and secure relationships with others in order to carry their work load for the long term. It is these individuals who literally make work feel lighter and easier, and therefore more likely to get done with the least amount of stress.

FAIRNESS

We all have an "internal sensor" that registers organizational justice. As human beings, we want the rules to apply to everyone because it promotes an environment that is moral, consistent, and predictable - the qualities needed in order to feel safe and thrive. When situations or processes start to feel confusing, random, or unjust, this inconsistency has a corrosive effect. Whatever the source of the partiality or prejudice, the impact carries a painful sense of lack of accountability and integrity that can burden a leader.

VALUES

Feeling a deep sense of connection to the values of an organization or job function is a cornerstone of engagement. When values are misaligned or there is a disconnect between individual values and the day-to-day work or an organization's purpose, it is increasingly difficult for us to show up everyday and commit our time and energy.

Professional burnout is not simply a result of too much work, it is a result of tension between the factors listed above and your own personal needs and boundaries. Knowing what those boundaries are and who to talk to about making changes when needed are two critical components to maintaining a healthy and balanced work life.

Adapted from: Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. (1997). *The truth about burnout: How organizations cause personal stress and what to do about it*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

