

TADD Talk - Burnout – Elizabeth Brink

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Hello, welcome to TADD talks with ADDA. I'm Elizabeth Brink, coach, community organizer for neurodivergent people based in Kansas City, Missouri. I'm grateful that ADDA invited me to be with you today to talk about a very important topic, and that's functioning during burnout.

So, what is burnout? Well, the Cleveland Clinic puts it this way, "burnout can be difficult to describe. However, it's not a medical condition. And according to the APA dictionary of psychology, burnout is defined as, quote, physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion, accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance and negative attitudes towards oneself, and others end quote.

I've also heard it can include all kinds of things like exhaustion, extreme fatigue, persistent irritability, like just being snippy, lack of concentration, feeling kind of bummed and hopeless on the regular low libido, dozens of other things that may overlap with a lot of other labels and conditions that perhaps you identify with. Executive functions we've already established are a real pain point for a lot of neurodivergent people.

Burnout turns up the volume and can leave you feeling unable to function at all. So for many of us with a very sensitive nervous system, and who may be easily exhausted by day to day life, a period of burnout can feel almost inevitable.

Managing burnout, it really can become a full-time job. So traditional advice is to just you know, simplify your life take extended leave from work, you need routines, sleep, more exercise, okay, all these things that a lot of us really struggle to manage on a good day.

So, what in the world how can we cope with burnout? When we can't put life on hold? We can't take a leave. We can't stop doing the things that we have to do day to day.

Okay, so I have three things that I want to leave with you. The first one is to tell the truth. Be honest with yourself, and ideally someone you trust, about how bad things are for you right now. How hard it is to get through your day, even if outsiders would never understand how you could be so exhausted by life with so few burdens. heh, heh.

Your Limits are not the same as mine. And if I'm not honest about how much is too much for me, I am living in a harmful reality where I don't even know what I'm pushing and how far I'm pushing into my

own red zone. The Nap Ministry yes N-A-P, like sleeping. The Nap Ministry is a great organization to learn more about why it's important to embrace the truth of what internal resources you have to offer others.

If you don't have a trusted person to share this with. There are lots of communities where others are really holding space for one another's truth. It's important that we don't suffer alone. Being honest about having limits and being honest about the fact that you've reached them when they seem unreasonable to whatever internal judge you have telling you shouldn't be this tired. You shouldn't be this cranky. Telling the truth about that is one really healing step that you can take toward managing these feelings of burnout while they're happening.

Okay, the second one is practice saying, "I'll get back to you." So, if you want to say yes, in order to keep people pleased with you, I'd like to offer an alternative. Giving yourself an opportunity to pause and consider if the request is one that you can meet without costing that last ounce of energy or cares that you have - this is good for everyone. Sometimes I say I need to check my calendar. I'll get back to you. Uh, can I get back to you? When can I get back to? Can I get back to you tomorrow? Can I let you know Monday? I need to sort things out this weekend.

Stall tactics when you're put on the spot are an essential life skill that nobody taught us. But they're very important tool for managing our energy and for managing coping if you're feeling at the end of yourself. Many of us don't feel safe saying no. And we might need alternatives to just flat No. It does not make you a rotten person. It just means that you're human and you have limits. And you might need to say I'll get back to you so that you can say your "No" in a text or an email or another way that feels a little bit more comfortable for your nervous system.

When we practice saying no, in these ways this "I'll get back to you" when we practice this on small requests it gets easier to do it on the big things, when we feel really on the hook because there's some emotional, relational expectation that we would come through for the person making the request.

Okay, so I've mentioned we're going to tell ourselves the truth. We're going to practice saying I'll get back to you. And the last one, okay, this may sound a little trite, okay, but I'm going to say the last one is to seek laughter.

Laughter is so good for building resilience. It's also a great way to engage your vagus nerve and soothe your nervous system. There may be some studies out there that talk about even fake laughter. There's laughing yoga, there's all kinds of things but genuine laughter being around people who make you laugh, watching your favorite show that makes you laugh or reading your favorite book that makes you laugh. Making space for those things, is a really important part of living and functioning in the midst of burnout.

I really liked listening to the podcast, the Maintenance Phase, the Maintenance Phase. The hosts really enjoy each other, they make each other laugh, but they're unpacking like really heavy topics related to diet culture. And, and they have a little language, you know, so if that bothers you, but I love it. They make me laugh. They make me feel like I've just hung out with them. And it is a way in which I can help

my nervous system in the midst of a busy, hectic and overwhelming season. So, find the things that really engage your whole self in ways that feel restorative to you. Maybe that spending time out in nature and laughing at the ridiculousness of the squirrels that are chasing each other around a tree. But finding laughter in the face of burnout is one of the hardest things to do and it's one of the quickest ways back to connection and to some groundedness.

We can't always prevent burnout. We can acknowledge when it's looming. We can acknowledge when we're in it. And we can practice pausing when we're making commitments and finding ways to feel the goodness of being alive.

I'd love to hear from you from if you try any of this or you have your own ways in which you manage that impending doom, and the executive function challenges that come up in operating day to day when you're feeling at the edges of yourself. I'd love to hear more from you.

So thank you for spending a few minutes of your day with me for addes tad talk about burnout. I'm Elizabeth Brink. I'm a coach and a community organizer for neurodivergent people. If you want more information about me and my work with ADHD adults, you can find me online at www.dothriving.com. That sister single, thriving sister coaching or find me on Instagram at coach Elizabeth brink and in our online community the Enclave www.thedashenclave.co. Okay, I am wishing you all a goodness filled moment for today. Just one moment of goodness for today.