

WHEN #GOALS LEAD TO BURNOUT



One of the most commonly used hashtags on Instagram is #goals. Living in the 21st century, we are preoccupied by time and efficiency, productivity and achieving the goals we set out each New Year. We work long hours in our profession, attend meetings and commitments, we tick off our daily to-do-lists and schedule our life to the minute. We try utilising time management hacks and apps in order to cope with all the demands we are under in our fast-paced lives.

Maybe you just read this, and it made you feel overwhelmed just thinking about all the commitments that you have. Does this mean that we need to drop all our responsibilities and lay in bed and watch Netflix all day? Absolutely not! However, we must ask ourselves the question – how can I live a life full of commitments and not burn out?

Burnout is a psychological syndrome emerging as a response to prolonged, chronic stressors. We often don't recognise the signs of burnout until it's too late. We are pushing ourselves and working hard, until we physically and mentally are unable to carry on. Burnout often stems from our profession; however, high standards and expectations of ourselves, difficult relationships and unrealistic demands can contribute significantly. The first step to improving your health is to be aware of the common symptoms associated with burnout:

- Chronic fatigue
- Emotional exhaustion
- Cynicism towards work and commitments
- Feeling detached and disconnected
- Looking for excuses to escape situations
- Feeling overwhelmed to the point of not being able to do anything
- Feeling a lack of accomplishment and feeling ineffective

If you notice that you are experiencing some of these symptoms, it may be a sign that you need to make some adjustments to your daily life. The common mentality is to work hard and push ourselves to the limit until you take a holiday and have a break. While this may work, it perpetuates the notion that we can only enjoy ourselves when we have a holiday or that we are unable to rest in our daily life... this is not the case.

Rest and relaxation is unique to each person and looks different for each individual. Rest is not something that we can only achieve laying by the pool while drinking a cocktail in the Bahamas. Rest is a daily decision to incorporate an activity that we enjoy, to give ourselves margin in our schedule, to put healthy boundaries in place and to schedule regular time out. It can be easy to overlook the benefits of these small daily decisions; unable to see the compounding effect of stress on our life.

For some people, rest may look like small moments in the day of uninterrupted time. For others, it may be longer chunks of time set aside to be in nature or to spend time with a close friend. The time needed to feel at rest and relaxed varies for each individual, so it is important to discover what makes you feel rested and how much time is needed for you to feel rested. Life is seasonal, and we go through many different stages, therefore determining what is most suited for the season you're in, is key.

Rest and relaxation has a wide range of benefits to our overall health; including increased energy, improved focus and attention, enhanced immunity and overall improvement in mental health. Therefore, to answer the question of how we can live a life full of commitments and avoid burning out/or burnout... it is the small daily choices to incorporate rest and relaxation. This may be a difficult adjustment to make but is a necessity in order to sustain good health. So, put some boundaries around your schedule, plan an activity that you enjoy and make the decision to incorporate rest into your life.

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