

Three Ways to Banish Burnout in the Office

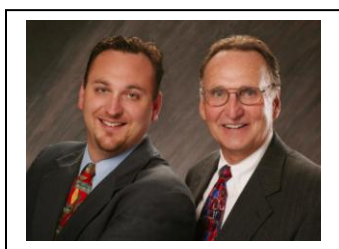
Stress, long hours, career insecurity and the general day-to-day grind can exact a toll on any employee. But there are ways to avoid burnout. Following are some tips to help you thrive - rather than barely survive - the everyday demands of work:

1. Learn How to Let Go: There are several effective strategies designed to reduce stress while increasing productivity, but delegation and prioritization rank among the most important, according to experts. Take time to teach others how to properly perform routine tasks both at home and at work. It might require extra effort and patience at first, but the long-term rewards will be well worth it.

2. Learn How to Say No: Don't make the mistake of taking on more than you can effectively handle. Instead, focus your efforts on the most important aspects of each project. It's also important to have clearly defined roles and job descriptions to avoid the tendency to take on more responsibility over time.

3. Learn How to Lay Low: Sooner or later everyone encounters a troublemaker. Rather than taking their insults or insinuations personally, learn how to lay low. In most instances the problem will take care of itself, given a bit of time. Recognize that every situation does not require a response, and then allow yourself the freedom to focus on the job rather than the interpersonal relationships of the office. Not only will it result in better performance, but the extra energy is better spent dealing with family and friends rather than co-workers.

Thinking of Buying a Home? Get My Free Guide



Buying a home is a big decision - one of the biggest you'll make in your life - with many factors to consider.

Make the decision easier by asking for my free guide, "10 Easy Steps to Buying a Home."

Just call me at 231-941-8283 and I'll send it right out to you.

How to Tell Stories That Your Audience Will Love

The ability to effectively communicate an idea or concept through the age-old art of storytelling is just as important today as it was in the past.

Stories have helped entertain, educate and inform throughout history, so it should come as no surprise that those most versed in the skill are held in very high regard.

The advent of multimedia is rapidly transforming the role of orator and storyteller into an in-demand skill.

Whether your audience consists of tired toddlers at bedtime or a roomful of sponsors at a celebrity bash, it's important for you to learn how to make maximum impact.

The following are some tips for successful storytelling:

1. Identify: Every good story has an antagonist and protagonist or a hero and conflict. Clearly identify both early in the story, and then allow the tension to build as the character or plot develops. The audience must be aware of the problem and the potential resolution in order to care for the character or concept.

2. Passion: Say it with meaning. The essence of a great story lies in the way it is told. Without passion, even the most inspirational story comes across as lackluster. Use inflection points and emotion to create an atmosphere in keeping with the primary points of the story.

3. Transformation: Build a bridge by providing pictures of before and after in the mind of the audience. Clearly explain the outcome or impact related to the objective of the story, including how it relates to others.

How Real Estate Agents Save Sellers Time, Energy and Stress

Selling a home without the services of a professional real estate agent can be a complex process that requires a lot of time and commitment.

It can also leave homeowners with a few more gray hairs.

First, home sales require complex legal documentation. There are many templates to use, but they skim only the surface of the legalities.

Often the best way for an owner to deal with this issue is to have a lawyer draw up the paperwork after the rough details have been worked out with a potential buyer.

Second, finding a qualified buyer can be difficult. Agents typically ensure that potential buyers are qualified to buy the property before they cross your doorstep.

Mortgage pre-approvals and extensive consultation typically ensures that the buyer is serious before a showing takes place.

Homeowners have limited access to a potential buyer's financial qualifications before the sale.

Third, you must assess whether you have the ability to market your home and court potential buyers.

Real estate agents insulate the seller from direct contact with a potential buyer, reducing the emotion involved in the sale.

Using a real estate agent can seem more costly than selling a home on your own, but sellers need to measure whether they are prepared to invest their time and energy into the sale of their home.

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If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just give my office a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I won't try to push you into listing with me or waste your time.

I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

And maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Just give my office a call at 231-941-8283 to arrange an appointment.

Alternatively, stop by at the office. The address is on the back page of this newsletter.

How to Get Kids to Eat Their Fruits and Veggies

Here's a summary of a useful article by Dr. Ayala Laufer-Cahanain in Salon.com.

1. Start early. That means women should eat fruit and vegetables during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, because flavors are transmitted through amniotic fluid and mother's milk. This helps babies get used to fruit and vegetables more easily. Children aged 6-24 months are particularly receptive to new tastes and textures, so this is a good time to introduce fruits and vegetables.

2. Be a good role model. Because children copy us, it's a good idea for the whole family to enjoy a balanced diet at the dinner table. Most food preferences are cultural, habitual behaviors. In other words, they're not built in.

3. Let the fruits and vegetables taste like themselves. Cook vegetables simply or serve them raw and allow children to learn to like their flavor and texture.

4. Serve the best quality. A bad experience can turn a child off a fruit or vegetable, so it pays to serve the best you can.

5. Serve one family meal. "Kids menus" are unnecessary - just let your child eat smaller portions of what you eat instead of bland, highly processed foods.

6. Involve children in making fruit and vegetable dishes. Teach them how fruits and vegetables are grown and how delicious dishes are prepared.

7. Don't pressure, coax, bribe or reward your child to eat fruits and vegetables. Pressure creates tension around the dinner table and can be counterproductive.

How to Choose the Right Home Inspector

If you're hiring a home inspector prior to signing off on a piece of property, there are a few things you might want to keep in mind.

Following are some important questions to ask:

Home Long Have You Been Working in the Field?

An inspector should be able to provide references and a history of experience. It's also important to know about his or her background.

What Experience Do You Have With Residential Inspections?

A background in engineering or construction is a bonus, but if the inspector has never worked on a home, it won't help much.

How Much Time Does an Inspection Take?

A thorough home inspection should take between two and three hours, depending on the size of the home.

Special considerations need to be taken when looking at wood-burning fireplaces and swimming pools.

What Will the Inspection Cost?

The cost of the average home inspection is \$300 to \$500, depending on the region, size of the home and the complexity of the building systems that are used.

What Type of Inspection Report Is Provided?

Some inspectors provide a big binder

full of information, but if you don't understand the report, that information is essentially useless. The report should be clear and help guide your final decision to purchase the home.

Do You Belong to a Home Inspection Association, and Do You Attend Continuing Education Courses?

Building technologies are constantly evolving, so an inspector should be educated to assess all aspects of a home, regardless of its age.

Membership in an organization like the American Society of Home Inspectors means the inspector has been certified and approved by that organization.

Keep Your Home Safe With a Webcam

Thanks to webcam technology, you can keep an eye on your home even when you're out. Following are some tips to get you up and running in minutes:

- 1. Install the Webcam Using the Provided Instructions:** Position it for maximum visibility, and adjust the settings for contrast and brightness, if required.
- 2. Search the "Options" Area and Check the "Use Motion Detection" Box:** Name the file where images will be stored and set the interval option to two seconds.
- 3. Test It:** Leave the room for a few moments, and then return. Move in front of the camera for a few minutes, and then verify the image was captured.

For more robust applications, a webcam surveillance and broadcast system is the way to go. There are many different versions on the market, but most include a combination of software and/or hardware to assist in remote viewing, video/audio capture and distribution. Once motion or an audio alert is triggered, the data is compressed into a file and then saved to the Internet, sent to email or stored as directed. Enhancements such as remote view enable users to perform real-time video and/or audio surveillance in real time from anywhere in the world.

Make Your Cell Phone Battery Last Longer

If you're looking to extend the life of your cell phone battery, try the following tips:

1. Turn the phone off when not in use, or activate the power-save feature, especially when sleeping or traveling through areas with a weak signal.
2. Stop searching for signals. Constantly searching for a signal draws down the battery. Instead, simply turn the phone off until arriving at the destination.

3. Use vibrate or ringtone but not both. Ringtones use less power.
4. Turn off the backlight. If you must use it, reduce the time it's left on.
5. Just use the basics, as Bluetooth and other options all strain batteries.
6. Keep the device cool, as batteries don't like heat. Avoid leaving the phone in the car or in other hot areas whenever possible.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

I enjoy doing projects outside. What work can I do to make my home more attractive to potential buyers?

Fencing: Families with pets, young children or those just seeking a little additional privacy will appreciate the functionality and appearance of an attractive sturdy fence.

Outdoor Sanctuary: With a little creativity and a few hundred dollars, it is easy to turn a problem spot into the center of attention. Get creative with an easy to install garden pond, butterfly or flower garden, wind chime and outdoor seating. Consider adding a decorative fire-pit to encourage family time on those warm evenings.

Update the Paint: Indoors or outdoors, painting is a simple way to give your home a fresh new look. If it has been more than five years since your home has had a fresh coat, make it a priority to paint. Just be sure to keep all your paint colors neutral.



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Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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