



PREVENTING AND  
MEASURING BURNOUT

HOW NOT TO  
*Burn  
Out*



My darling, I have to tell you: when things took off in my business, I got so immersed in the busy that I burned out. I'm the last person on Earth that I thought could burn out - I've always had abundant buffalo energy with great stores of energy reserves that I could keep using on and on.

But I learned (the hard way) that when I used those stores of buffalo energy, and didn't refuel... at some point, I would run out.

*Learn from my mistakes if you will, dearest grasshopper. This is how it happened:*

I opened up enrolments for my first e-course. I processed enrolments and welcome emails manually - and ended up with 150 students. I entered everything by hand into an Excel spreadsheet with hundreds of little yellow squares to indicate what I needed to do next for each enrolment. I promised hand-made packages to the first 80 students. At the same time, I had a Christmas rush of custom art orders and had over 30 artworks to create in a month. Enter sleepless nights and a distinct feeling of running on adrenaline. I would forget to eat, drink, go to the toilet, have time off or be someone outside my business. I finished just in time for Christmas so I could drive halfway across the country.

I had a strong vision for the e-course I was going to hold, but didn't start creating it until it was due to begin - two weeks after Christmas. Each week I would create a handpainted, written and illustrated e-book, produce a half hour video, come up with the week's projects, and create, record and master a 30-minute meditation. Then I'd send it out into the world and stay up until 11pm every night answering emails.

At the same time, I ran an online message board as a women's circle for the 150 enrolled goddesses - reading and responding to every goddess' sharings.

*It was sacred and huge and transformative all at once.*

I decided that I needed more time in my day to write, so I began waking up earlier and earlier to cram even more into my over-stuffed day, before heading off to work 3 or 4 days a week as an editor at an Australian Government website.

On and on this went for the six weeks of the course. I called Mondays, the days I needed to send out course materials, "Breakdown Mondays" - by the time Chris came home, I would be hyperventilating as yet another piece of the course materials broke, or took too long to put together, blowing out my timelines.

One day, I woke up extra specially early to get more work done, went outside for my now speed-ritual of crouching on the ground in prayer... counted out two minutes of meditation - then stood up to get back to work, saw black, and plummeted back down to the ground on my face. I distinctly remember lying there, my tense muscles in spasms, unable to move my hands to take the weight off my face, and thinking:

*Well, I guess I really needed to get grounded.  
This is a strange experience.*

I took it as a sign, and went back to bed. (Yay me, finally!!!!)

Two days later, I found a tight, sore lump in my breast and began having panic attacks.



Having never really been an anxious person before, I couldn't understand why the smallest stress set me off in washes of tears, gulping for air, hands shaking, awash with waves of fear and anxiety and overwhelm.

I learned a very deep + big lesson the hard way - when you take from your stores of energy, and don't give back, at some point, you will hit the bottom of your energy well - and it hurts. On every level.

And when you live on adrenaline for three months, your nervous system becomes incredibly taxed... and my highly scientific research shows that if your nervous system gets taxed, you'll find it approximately 3.2 bazillion times harder to feel safe, secure, peaceful, calm and happy.

Reaching the bottom of my well forced me into a self-healing retreat. After the course was over, I postponed any other things I offered until I had not just the energy to fill my own well - but the excess to share with others as well.

I started using healing herbal remedies on my breast lump, and for my anxiety. I let myself crumple into a ball and learn the medicine of self rest. It took me three months to heal and recover from burnout - three months that I used - and needed - to find myself, my spirit, my health and my truth again. My breast lump disappeared once I had learned what I needed to learn. My breast lump was a gift to me, teaching me in a freaking big way that I needed to honour my body. (Though if you have a breast lump, darlingheart, get it checked by a doctor, m'kay? I'm not a doctor, just FYI. So, you know, GO + GET IT CHECKED!)

My experience of how my body, spirit and mind moved within my business during this time was also powerful medicine for me - I learned that I could no longer take myself for granted, over-extend myself, or take too much of my own energy away.

I needed to respect and honour myself first.



SO!

Was this the first AND last time that I got burnout?

Nope, nope + nope.

Not even close.

And while I haven't burned out in quite such a spectacular way since that first time, I've danced many times with burnout in the years since. I've come to think of burnout as a teacher of sacred limits: every time I approach my burnout edge, I learn more about the signs that tell me I'm near burnout + about how to recognise, avoid and heal it.

I learn more about what radical self-care looks like, and how it's not just for selfish wankers, but is for you + me + everyone.

### I learn its gifts:

The irrefutable truth that you must tend to yourself.

It enforces gentleness towards yourself + your life.

It's the greatest holiday-giver of all time to those who won't take them themselves.

It's your body's barometer telling you when you need rejuvenation + rest + replenishment.

And it takes you on a mammoth healing journey.

And the healing journey is hard + lovely + has its own gifts too.

[I wrote a long, long list of ways to help + heal burnout in this blog post](#), so go + take a look and add them to your toolkit for when you feel the burnout encroaching.

So, from learning the hard way, I feel well qualified to tell you about staying sane during business busy-ness, and how not to crash and burn afterwards (like someone who shall remain nameless, but usually answers to "Leonie"). **This is like a report from the battle trenches of business** - if battle trenches meant "I'm working on my great big shining dream, it's just really dingdang busy, and I don't have time to stop!"



# 1. Support systems are angels with shiny, shiny wings.



I'm not an anal, Virgo-ian, ordered-everything sorta person. I'm a happy go-with-the-flow goddess hippy. But then I burned out + learned how to heal and then my biz grew SO FAST. Now I worship at the altar of support systems every day. It's what has allowed my biz to double - and even triple - every year. It's a beautiful thing to allow into my life, and you'll see wonderful results if you allow systems of support into yours too.

## Here's my advice:

When things start getting busy, get some support systems! Better yet - do it *\*before\** stuff gets silly-busy and you start dreaming about answering all those emails in your sleep.

There's four kinds of shiny winged support system angels you can have:

### *a) Automatic Angels.*

I made that hilarious mistake I told you about the other week of not using a mailing list provider when I started running my business. And then I realised that adding to my mailing list spreadsheet every.single.stupid.day and getting locked out of my Gmail account for sending too many emails in one day and probably getting marked as a spam-artist was not cool. Neither was then losing half my mailing list numbers when I had to migrate the list onto an actual mailing list company's server. Lesson learned: Just pay for a real mailing list company already. ActiveCampaign. MailChimp. Whatever. Just don't do it by yourself. It's not conducive to sanity.

Also not cool was that Other Thing I Learned The Hard Way: I ran an e-course with 150 people and did not use a product management system like WooCommerce. Again, with my stupid.spreadsheet.that.I.never.want.to.look.at.again. Again with the ridiculous amount of manual data entry and time wasting. Your time and creative energy and sanity is important. Automate.

## b) People Angels.

If you can't hire people to help, suck those who love you into doing stuff to help you out. In my case, I looked around at the existing skills of my closest ones and asked them very, very nicely to do particular things for me. After a hilarious-that-turned-into-tears six-hour session of me attempting to record **myself doing** a meditation, I remembered that my hottie used to be an audio engineer. So I did the unspeakable: I ASKED HIM FOR HELP. And I got it. And it was completely, completely awesome. I owed him breakfasts on Saturday mornings for the next year, but it was worth it. Besides, I love French toast.



## c) Team Angels

Once you're flying in Business Goddess land, you may want to hire angels to be a support team for you + your shining business.

I have had a mahooooosive amount of fun, tears, laughter, stress + gigglesnorts in the process of getting good at hiring, managing, firing + keeping a team to support me + my biz. It's a learning journey - and one I'm still on.

Lend me your ear a lil moment, and I'll tell you my best tips for hiring + keeping a team, just so you have 'em when you need 'em:

- ★ **You have to get good at hiring.** Hire really, really well. Test people out before you hire them, as much as possible, to make sure they're a good working fit for you. Sometimes you might just get people who don't match up with your mindset or skillset and that's fine. There are places where they WILL fit - and you need to let them go + find that place so that you can ALL be happy!
- ★ **Firing is HARD.** If you find that the person you've hired DOESN'T have the skillset you thought they did, or the fit turns out all wrong, you need to fire quickly + well so that any damage to your business is minimised.
- ★ **Even when you have awesome staff who you love, they will make mistakes.** This is okay - no-one gets away without a mistake, even though we all aim to never have one happen! What you need to do is USE the mistakes to find where your systems have failed your staff. Create amazing Standard Operating Procedures for your staff to follow; there is more on this in the [How to Create Standard Operating Procedures Course in the Academy](#). Talk to your staff + coach them on how to have this be a learning for everyone.
- ★ **Refine your communication, have checklists for everything + commit to learning** what your staff need + creating the space for that to happen.

*Have I tipped you into overwhelm now, gorgeous soul?*

Don't let this list daunt you - I just want you to have hiring information handy dandy for the day when you realise that you need to hire yourself some help in your business. Because for a lot of us (MEEEEEE!) that day is usually well past the point at which hiring help might have been a good idea. Keep the list for the day when you think, "Now what did Leonie say about teams? I'm sure she said something!" 'Cause I did! And here it is!

**Bottom line: don't grow your biz until you can't manage it + then burn out.**

**Ask for Help. Please.**

## d) *Angels of Being Prepared Like A Boy Scout*

For the love of gawd, do the best you can to create any course materials BEFORE the course begins. This will circumvent Breakdown Mondays and Freakout Fridays.

Nothin' much else to say here. Don't do as I did... do as I say!



## 2. *Take care of you.*

I mean it. There's only one person who can do what you do, and that's you. Your health and sanity really, really matter. And you really don't want to burn out. Taking a little bit of time to nurture yourself and give yourself what you need now is going to help you not crash-and-burn and be an emotional sob-monster for a month. (Not that there's anything wrong with that, it's just not FUN being it. I prefer to err on the fun side).

### *Things To Do To Take Care of You:*

- ★ Impose a stop-work-time at night. Give your mind at least an hour to wind down before going to bed. Mine is 7:30pm, usually. Yours might be earlier or later. Either way, it will reduce the amount of answering-email dreams you'll get.
- ★ Have some part of the day set aside for nurturing you + maintaining your inner stability. Do I need to repeat again how important this is? And that burnout is sucky? No? Good! Your nurturing might mean

meditation or yoga if you're a hippy-shaka-laka like me. Or it might mean a hardcore Wii competition. Or it might be cheese, biscuits and beverage every night at 5.30pm outside in the backyard. Dooo eet. Every part of you needs it.

- ★ Busy-ness business can make you really serious, even when you're usually a giggling fairy. Fun is as important to human survival as cheese-and-bikkies. Go have some at least once a week. Go to a bookclub even when you haven't read the book just so you can gossip. Hire one of those two-person-water-bicycles and get stuck on the lake. Let your pets jump all over your heart. Whatever reduces you to a giggling gert, you need it. Drink it up. This is a Very Important Business Survival Tip (VIBST).
- ★ Take time off from your business. REGULARLY. I mean it.
- ★ Set parameters around what you WILL do and what you WON'T do. Decide to switch off the computer by a certain time at night. Make a rule about what self-care you need as an essential each day. Multivitamins? Five minutes of movement for every hour worked? An actual lunch hour each day?
- ★ Be a good boss to yourself - not the worst manager in history.

## 3. Don't Expect To Be A Creation Machine

I survived that long-ago Christmas period of art orders, only to start running a mammoth six week e- course complete with videos and meditations and projects and hand-painted e-books (ha!) in January. And I had all these dreams about jumping straight onto my next Magical Idea and creating that too. I didn't. I burned out for a month. I needed time out before I could even think about the next big thing.

### **You are not a Creation Machine.**

Allow for times of retreat, replenishment and revival after big projects. Give yourself space and time to heal and reintegrate and just get back to being you for a while. From a hippyshakalaka perspective, the Native American Medicine Wheel has four directions.

Three of those are about walking your talk, getting your new ideas and making them come alive. And the fourth part? It's a cave. A cave to curl up in, get some sleep, recover, re-dream and re-discover yourself when you've made some of your big dreams come true.



## 4. You Are Doing Good

From one Big-Dreams-Battle-Trenches survivor to another, I just want to remind you: you are doing good. We're all in this together as we set about chasing down those impossible dreams of ours. It's challenging, but by far, it's the best thing I've ever done.

And the Twitter version of this for those endowed with a short attention span is:

Support systems make things better. Automate. Ask for help. Take care of you. Retreat time is essential. You=Awesome. Leonie=loves you.



REST



PREVENTING AND  
MEASURING BURNOUT

THE ECONOMIC COST OF

*Burn  
Out*

So, this is totally my nerdy side coming out...but it's for the greater good! Yay!

I know I definitely do NOT want to burn out. It hurts and it's exhausting and it takes SO long to recover from it.

But when I'm in the thick of it? Creating up a storm? Striving to get to the bottom of my inbox? I think I can put self-care and rest on the backburner. I think I can power through. And I don't want to spend the time and money it takes to care for myself properly.

So I deviously decided to get around my taskmaster brain, by coming up with a Totally Plausible And Left Brained Equation.

## FIGURING OUT THE ECONOMIC COST OF BURNOUT

There is an economic cost to your burnout - both to you and your business.

### What is your ECB?

My highly mathematical equation for ECB is:

$$T \times L + C$$

Time and duration of burnout x Loss in Earning Ability  
+ Correlated Expenses

As an example, let's suppose that when you burn out - as in you feel totally overwhelmed/anxious/exhausted by your business - it takes you between 2 to 3 months to recover before you can create something new again. ***And that's at a bare minimum.***

And we'll suppose that your usual monthly income when creating + producing is around \$6-8,000. But when you are not creating or producing, it hangs out around \$1 500.

So at a bare minimum, if you are not able to create + produce, you are losing approximately \$5k a month. And if you are burnt out for two months, that's \$10 000.

**So in that example, your Economic Cost of Burnout = \$10 000.**

These are very conservative estimates. Correlated expenses of burnout for me are:

- I'm not in a joyful, abundant mood + mindset (the more positive + balanced I am, the more I earn)
- Both the deep + band-aid healing I need to do once burnout hits
- I'm not able to write as much on my blog - thus not building audience + not creating even more awesome vibes with my tribe.

Thus, in the example above, whatever you need to do to stop burnout - if it is less than \$10k, is a business saving.

So if that means hiring staff, that's what it means.

If it means taking a week's vacation, it is cheaper (and funner) than burnout.

Your energy is the most potent, powerful essence of your business. If you do not have it, your business does not exist.



*Shining Business Tip*

Your energy thus becomes the single most important resource in your business.  
And you need to regard it as such!

