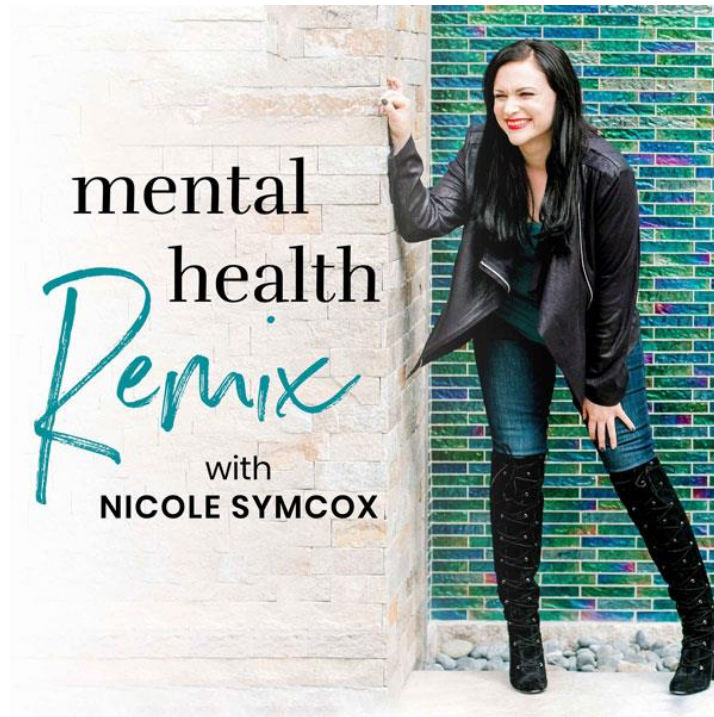


Ep #56: How to Heal and Prevent Burnout



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Nicole Symcox

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When we're hitting burnout, it's usually because we're doing too many of the things that drain the life out of us, and not enough of the things that bring life to us. So we want to keep this in check, right. We want to keep an ongoing balance of the good things that nourish our brains and nourish our bodies and nourish our souls so that we can keep going and doing the things that we maybe don't enjoy as much, or so that we can have enough reserves to take on a stressful situation. We want to be available to live our best lives.

Welcome to *Mental Health Remix*, a show for ambitious humans who are ready to feel, think, and be different. If you want to stop struggling with perfectionism, build better relationships, and connect with yourself and your potential, this is the place for you. Here's your host, educator, coach and licensed psychotherapist, Nicole Symcox.

Hey, hey everyone. Welcome to episode 56. So sticking with our anxiety theme, I wanted to talk a little bit about how to take care of yourself. So we'll call it self-care. But, you know, if you've been listening to me for a while, I don't mean self-care as in like bubble baths and massages. Although I love both of those things. They are delightful. Highly encourage you to do those things.

But they're not necessarily something that is internal, right? When we're wrestling with an anxiety disorder or wrestling with a lot of stress in our lives, we want to make sure that we're keeping our internal balances in check. So self-care, you can also call it soul-care, however you want to define that for yourself, is how you take care of your internal world so you stay in balance, right? Because it is so stressful. Like life is stressful. There are constant things that are coming and going. Staying on top of everything can feel really overwhelming at times.

I listen to so many people tell me recently, you know, I'm so burned out. I've been in burnout. So you have all my empathy, all of my sympathy. Like totally get it. Been there, done that, hated it. So what I want to talk about today is how to prevent you from getting to that place because it sucks.

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Like it's not fun to be in burnout where you feel like everything you do is effortful or everything you're trying to, you know, accomplish, you're working at a deficit. Like you want to always be in balance, okay.

So, for me, a lot of times I think of self-care. When we're hitting burnout, it's usually because we're doing too many of the things that drain the life out of us, and not enough of the things that bring life to us. So we want to keep this in check, right. We want to keep an ongoing balance of the good things that nourish our brains and nourish our bodies and nourish our souls so that we can keep going and doing the things that we maybe done enjoy as much, or so that we can have enough reserves to take on a stressful situation. We want to be available to live our best lives every day.

Sometimes I think we wait until we're burnt out before we do anything about it. I want to caution against that because, like I said, I've been in burnout, and it took months, months to get out of it. I know that that's true for a lot of people that I've talked to. Like once you're in burnout, like that's not a fun place to live. You're kind of stuck there for a little while.

Because once you've hit burnout, you're kind of looking right and left and you're like, well shoot, I don't have anything left. Like I don't know what to do here. So it just takes longer to fill up your internal cups again. So we want to create a life where we're keeping things in balance, right? So we're not just getting to this one point.

So let's talk about self-care, right? Again, self-care, soul-care, however you want to label it, totally fine. Same thing. Basically, it's an active practice we engage in to keep ourselves balanced and feeling good. This is where we take back our control even when we feel out of control. We pour the good things back into our nervous system, okay. It's being intentional with our time and our focus so we can expand the good feeling in our body. Okay.

Now, this is really important. Being intentional with your time and your focus is really, really important because a lot of times we think we need to

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carve out like weeks and weeks of like doing all these things. Really if we keep our focus in check, we can make a big impact on our daily life. Okay.

So this is critical, especially when we're pouring out internal resources on a daily basis. Okay. Like if you have a job that, you know, you tend to give out a lot or you have a family that needs a lot, or you have friends that need a lot, whatever that might be. You have to replenish the good, or it leads to burnout or extreme fatigue, which usually brings up the ugly side of our emotions. Yeah, you know what I mean? Like, no one likes feeling empty, numb. Like it's not cute. We don't feel good. It's not a great life, right? Like, we don't feel good when we live there.

So when we get there, we usually have a harder time getting things done. Our relationships start to feel hard because we're just done, right? You get into fights easier, resentment. You might feel like you're doing more than maybe somebody else is. Boundaries get harder to enforce, and they go out the window. This just creates a perpetual circle, right? Like now we're in a cycle of like this circle that's just never ending up, like ugh, why can't I do anything good for myself, right? Where you're really, really frustrated at that point. It's not a good place to be.

So we need to keep ourselves full in the good stuff, keep our perspective in check, and keep ourselves in balance so we don't get to the point of feeling like crap every day. Okay. And, and, and, and, and this is fully within your control, my friend.

This is fully within your control my friend. If you're in burnout already, you're probably like, "Girl don't have time for this. Like I already am suffering." I hear you. I hear you. That is the burnout talking. But when we feel bad or overstressed, we tend to feel like our world is small. Like we can't fit anything else in. We don't have time for anything else that doesn't provide like an immediate sense of accomplishment or directly related to survival, right. Like daily tasks, work activities, and we become very task oriented versus relationship oriented. This includes the relationship with ourselves. Okay.

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So when we do this and we're in this yucky place, our world starts to get smaller, right. Our mental health isn't exactly thriving, and we're not loving life. Okay. It becomes more and more stressful. We want to feel more spacious, like we have room for the good stuff. A story starts in our brain that once we get through this one piece of stress, then we'll slow down and rejuvenate.

But stress can honestly be a little bit like a drug. I know that sounds a little weird, but you can get addicted to stress. Like your body can get addicted to the stress cycle, the highs, and the lows, even if you hate it. Your body can kind of get used to it. So it starts becoming just like your baseline. So without making changes to your life and making an intention, we can default back into the stress cycle and not give ourselves a break and on and on it goes, right.

So here's what I want you to hear from me today. The most important relationship you have in your life is with yourself. It's the way you talk to yourself. It's the way you nourish yourself. It is the way you relate to how things are coming up for you. Because how you talk to yourself starts a narrative, and it feeds how you interact with the world around you.

So if you're really hard on yourself, chances are you're hard on other people. Okay. Like chances are if you have really high expectations for yourself, you have really high expectations for other people. Now this can work in the reverse. Don't get me wrong. There's plenty of people in therapy that are like, "Oh, no. I hold myself to an expectation, and I don't hold to anybody else to this expectation." So I'm not saying this is a hard and fast rule.

What I'm trying to say is that our relationships with ourselves inform how we show up in the world, okay? Because it feeds and flows everything in life. So we need to be intentional with ourselves and our relationships. We can't just fly blind. We can't just do a wish and a prayer that we'll feel better someday. We have to be an active participant in creating our own reality,

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creating our own lives. We have to create happiness on our own. Not wait for it to happen to us. Okay.

Happiness is not a lucky charm. I think a lot of people think happiness just happens. Like, it's just like oh, well today I was just happy, and I have no idea why. I think when you view happiness that way, you're robbing yourself of your own power. You have the power to create happiness every day, but it takes intention and it takes strategy, right? I mean I'm not saying it comes easy, especially if you're dealing with a mental health disorder, like anxiety or depression or PTSD or something else.

Like definitely hear me that I have nothing but compassion for anyone wrestling with a mental health disorder. Like creating happiness can almost feel downright impossible, right? So I fully understand that this is a difficult process for some, but I also want you to know that it's achievable. Even if you have a mental health disorder, it is achievable. Okay?

We never want to give into the stories that we can't have what we want or we can't be happy, right? Those are stories. Those are stories that are being formed by feelings that don't feel good. So we always want to offer ourselves an opportunity to reframe our feelings, reframe our thoughts, so we can create happiness every day. Okay, does that make sense?

So some of this might be just taking moments of happiness for yourself. Okay. So when I say happiness, I'm also just talking about self-care. Like things that nourish you. Okay? So right now just like kind of brainstorm. Like take a minute and write down some of the things that maybe bring you joy or happiness or that really fuel you. Like what do you like to do? What feeling does that action create? How long can you maintain that feeling? Okay.

So this is a great exercise for you to do. You can, you know, pause the podcast, and write it down right now and restart it, or you can do after we're done talking. But let me break this down a little bit more.

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So, for example, let's say that something that brings you joy is nature. So when you are out on a walk or a hike, the smell of the trees around you is your favorite part. You love hiking because you like the smell of the trees. Take a minute to pause and just breathe the smell of the trees. Don't rush through it. Pause, embrace this moment of ease. Like just feel the exhale and the inhale. Okay. Taking the smell of the trees through your nostrils and exhaling through your mouth. Like this is a very mindful practice, and it's a great strategy for anxiety.

Now, when you do this, I want you to notice the body sensation that comes over you when you smell the trees. You make a note of it. Like do you feel peace? Do you feel calm? Do you feel alive? Do you feel happy? Like whatever it is, name the emotion. Snapshot the whole experience in your brain, and let your body register this moment.

If you don't take a moment to pause and engage your senses, the moment will be forgotten in like the mountain of other stressors you have going on in your life. So this is an example of being intentional, okay. So you have to intentionally record the positive.

The brain is not going to necessarily automatically do that, right? Because what it's most interested in, the brain is most interested in your survival, okay? Smelling the trees isn't exactly linked to survival. Like that's a happy moment. So you have to make an intentional effort to get your brain to snapshot it and get your body to embrace it.

Okay. Now something like this that I'm talking about probably takes a minute. A minute max. Two minutes maybe. It depends on how long you can focus without your brain going to something else. But that does so much for you. I'm just talking about a one minute exercise. Okay. That's not even to add on the fact that you're probably on a half hour hike, right? Like if we're doing this in two parts.

So let's say you know, you're on this hike, and exercise makes you feel really good. So that's one great thing that you're doing for yourself. Then

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the other is that you're taking mindful moments to engage your senses and feeling and sensing calm and peace and nourishment around you.

If you guys make this an active practice, it does so much for your nervous system. Like honestly it's the little things that add up into the big things. So if you're taking little mindful moments out of your day to do something good for yourself, to give yourself a positive sensory experience, pouring good back into your nervous system, this eventually adds up.

So this becomes a way of life, what I'm suggesting. This isn't necessarily like oh, I did it once and that's it. It's like let's do this daily. Can you take a mindful moment every day? Is that with your coffee? Like find the thing.

So go back to those questions that I was asking you because the reason for taking that survey is for you to be an investigator and figure out for yourself what works best for you. Okay. Then you know how to apply it. So pretty soon let's say the tree thing works for you. Then you're like, oh cool. That was fun. I wonder what else might work for me.

Then you can go maybe it's to the beach, and you can do the same sensor experience with the ocean and the smell of the salty air and the sound of the waves. Like taking mindful moments to deposit good in your nervous system is one of the great strategies for managing your life when you're feeling overstressed, overwhelmed, overanxious, over fill in the blank, right?

Anyways, so let me know. I hope that this goes well for you. I hope that this was a helpful tip. You know if anxiety and stress is something that you are really wrestling with, and you're like oh this sounds like really good Nicole, but I need more coping skills. I have an entire workbook that I've written. It's about 75 pages on anxiety coping strategies and tools that you can find on my website.

So basically this workbook is you can grab it at any moment. It has exercises. It has different things that you can do to start learning how to manage your anxiety even beyond what we talked about today. If you want

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specific coping strategies and tools you, you can find that in my workbook. That's just on my website at nicolesymcox.com. All right, my friends. I will see you next time.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of *Mental Health Remix*. If you like what you've heard and want to learn more, go to nicolesymcox.com.

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