

Keeping burnout at bay

Larger classrooms. Smaller budgets. Minimal parental involvement. It is easy to see why teacher burnout is on the rise. If you are like most teachers, you entered the profession simply because you love to teach. But unfortunately, too much stress can slowly erode your passion for education. Recognizing the signs of burnout before it is too late can make the difference between fulfilling your calling or calling it quits.

Some signs of job burnout include:

- Increased irritability and anxiousness
- A pessimistic outlook for your future
- Health problems associated with stress
- Dreading going to work everyday

If you find yourself in this situation, “force yourself to focus on a balance between teaching and non-teaching activities,” said Jeff Lewis, career coach and owner of CrossRoads Services Group. “Remember that even if you love your job you still have to keep a perspective. Your job is not your life. It is a way to make the money you need to have a life.”

Some of Lewis’ other burnout prevention tips include:

- Indulge your hobbies or develop new ones.
- Use your summer break to relax and give yourself some down time. Resist the urge to overbook your summer with activities or obligations.
- Try to figure out what is making you unhappy. Much of your frustration comes from feeling like everything is out of your hands.
- Take a yoga class. It is exercise, stress relief, and spirituality all rolled up into one.
- Remember the things that are important in your life – your family and friends – and make time to spend with them.

Adults, like children, often need a time-out when things become too much to handle. Whenever you feel overwhelmed, take a walk down the hall, splash cold water on your face or just sit quietly. Make a point to give yourself 15 minutes each day to sort problems through rationally and deliberately.

Lewis said, “the most important thing to remember is to never take work (or life) too seriously. Once you accept the fact that you are not a superhero, you will not only be a better teacher, but a better person all around.”