

A CTEDU GUIDE

# 10

## Days to Rebuild Your Capacity

A coaching-based guide for leaders moving  
from burnout back to engagement.

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START HERE

# Burnout is built. You can rebuild it.

The most dedicated people burn out hardest. Herbert Freudenberger noticed this in 1974, and the research has held up since. That single fact moves burnout out of the territory of personal weakness and into something a capable person can study and change.

This guide treats burnout as a design problem. Across ten days you will look at the conditions you work under, find the few that drain you most, and start adjusting them. Each day asks for about fifteen minutes.

## DESIGNED FOR

Leaders and high-achieving professionals who are running hot and want a clear, grounded way to recover their energy and protect it.

## THE EVIDENCE

In a 2019 randomized trial published in JAMA Internal Medicine, physicians who received six professional coaching sessions saw overall burnout fall 17.1%, while the group without coaching got worse, rising 4.9%.

Coaching worked by helping people examine and change the conditions of their work. That is the method this guide is built on.

## HOW TO USE IT

One short practice a day for ten days. Keep your notes in one place so the picture builds where you can see it.

DAY 01

1

# Start with engagement

Engagement is the real goal. The absence of strain is only the starting line. Researchers describe engagement as vigor, dedication, and absorption in the work, and naming that target gives the next ten days a direction to move toward.

THE SHIFT

You are building toward something, not only escaping something.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Recall a stretch when you led at full engagement. Write down what was true about you, and about the work, during that time.

DAY 02

2

# Treat curiosity as your stance

Study your own energy the way you would study a market you care about. A curious, diagnostic posture keeps this work useful and honest, and it stops the slide into self-criticism that shuts the inquiry down early.

THE SHIFT

You become the analyst of your own working life.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Track your energy across one workday. Note what lifted it and what drained it, without judging either.

DAY 03

3

# Your capacity is a system you design

Energy is a product of conditions, and conditions are something a leader can engineer. The people carrying the most responsibility carry the most exposure, which makes designing your own conditions a core skill rather than a soft one.

THE SHIFT

A willpower failure is usually a system gap.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Name three recent moments you blamed on your own discipline. Re-read each one as a gap in how the work was set up.

DAY 04

# Find the levers

4

Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter identified six areas where the strain between a person and a job shows up: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Naming the specific area turns a heavy fog into a problem you can actually work on.

THE SHIFT

Burnout is specific. Name it.

## TODAY'S PRACTICE

Score yourself from one to ten in each of the six areas.  
Circle the two lowest. Those are where your attention belongs.

DAY 05

5

# Read your energy balance sheet

High performance holds up when resources keep pace with demands. You can add real capacity by investing in resources like autonomy, clarity, support, and recognition, even during stretches when the workload itself stays heavy.

THE SHIFT

You can change the resource side, not only the demand side.

## TODAY'S PRACTICE

List your real demands in one column and your real resources in the other. Choose one resource to add this week.

DAY 06

6

# Build a simple dashboard

The three signals of burnout make a clean weekly check: exhaustion, cynicism, and your sense of effectiveness. Cynicism is the leading indicator, the one that tells you early, well before the exhaustion becomes impossible to ignore.

THE SHIFT

You can measure this before it becomes a crisis.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Rate yourself from one to ten on each of the three signals.  
Set a reminder to run the same check next week.

DAY 07

7

# Make asking for help normal

The strongest performers build support on purpose and hand off work without flinching. The belief that needing help signals weakness keeps people isolated and quietly drains a resource they could be drawing on every day.

THE SHIFT

Asking adds capacity and frees you for the work only you can do.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Name one load you have been carrying alone. Hand off a piece of it, or ask someone for help with it today.

DAY 08

8

# Redirect the achievement engine

School trains many high achievers to chase external scores and tie their worth to performance. That same drive becomes strong fuel once you aim it at goals that match your values rather than someone else's scoreboard.

THE SHIFT

The engine is fine. The target is what needs choosing.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Pick one external metric you will stop chasing, and one internal measure you will track in its place.

DAY 09

9

# Treat recovery as training

Rest restores you only when your mind detaches from work, not only your body. Sabine Sonnentag's research shows that real recovery depends on switching off mentally, which turns out to be harder, and more important, than most people expect.

THE SHIFT

Detachment is a skill you train.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Block one period of true detachment this week. Protect it the way you would protect a meeting with your most important client.

DAY 10

10

## Build engagement at scale

The work now widens from you to the people you lead. Designing the conditions for vigor, dedication, and absorption across a team is how personal insight becomes leadership, and it is where the six levers pay off most.

THE SHIFT

You set the conditions other people work inside.

TODAY'S PRACTICE

Choose one of the six levers and one recovery or engagement practice to put in place for your team this quarter.

WHAT COMES NEXT

# Coaching is the work behind this guide.

Every practice in these ten days is something a skilled coach does with a client. Helping someone see their conditions clearly, name the right lever, and build the support that holds the change in place.

The 2019 trial put numbers behind it. Coaching reduced burnout where self-care advice on its own has struggled, because it works on the conditions rather than the symptoms.

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If you want to do this work for others, or build a practice around it, CTEDU offers ICF-aligned coach certification designed for professionals who want rigor and real-world readiness.

## SOURCES

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