

STILL FUNCTIONING, Still Burned Out



*A Simple Guide to Recognizing the Signs,
Reclaiming Your Energy, and Moving
From Surviving to Thriving*

BY SOMAEJ BOYKINS



Introduction

Burnout doesn't always look like falling apart. Sometimes, it looks like continuing to show up while quietly running on empty. You're meeting deadlines, taking care of responsibilities, answering the calls, supporting everyone around you, and doing what needs to be done—but somewhere along the way, you stopped feeling like yourself. You may be physically present but mentally exhausted, resting without feeling restored, or wondering why things that once felt manageable now feel so heavy.

This eBook is your invitation to pause before pushing through again. Over the next few chapters, we'll explore how to recognize when exhaustion has become something more, identify what may be draining your energy, and begin making small, intentional changes that move you from survival toward restoration.

“*You don't have to wait until you have nothing left, give yourself permission to rest.*”

About Me



Somaej Boykins is a Certified Trauma-Informed Coach, grief and acute stress specialist, and co-founder of The JITT Group—Journey Into Thoughtful Transformation.

With a master's degree in Human Services Counseling focused on crisis response and trauma, she is passionate about helping people navigate difficult seasons, build resilience, establish healthier boundaries, and move from simply surviving to intentionally thriving.

Outside of her professional work, Somaej is a mom of four, woman of faith, who enjoys getting lost in a good book, having meaningful conversations, laughing with the people she loves, and appreciating life's simple moments. Her work reflects her belief that healing and growth should make room for something we sometimes forget along the way—actually enjoying the life we're working so hard to build.

Coach Somaej

Contents

When Rest Is Not Enough 05

Learn to recognize when everyday exhaustion may be signaling something deeper and identify the signs of burnout

Your Energy Is Trying to Tell You Something 07

Discover what's draining your energy, what truly restores you, and how healthier boundaries protect your capacity.

From Surviving to Thriving 09

Begin turning awareness into action by creating intentional strategies to reset, realign, and reclaim your energy.

Conclusion and Next Steps 14

You can also add a blurb to let readers know what each article is about. Two sentences will do!



01 When Rest Is Not Enough

Being tired and experiencing burnout aren't necessarily the same thing. You can have a long week, get some sleep, take a weekend off, and feel refreshed. Burnout can feel different. You rest, but don't feel restored. You accomplish something, but don't feel satisfied. Things that once excited you begin feeling like obligations. You may become more irritable, disconnected, overwhelmed, or emotionally exhausted. And sometimes the most difficult part is that you're still functioning.



High-Functioning Doesn't Always Mean Well

This is important. You can be productive and depleted at the same time. You can meet deadlines and be overwhelmed. You can care for everyone else while neglecting yourself. You can smile, show up, perform well, and still recognize that something needs to change. Sometimes we don't notice burnout because we've normalized pushing through.



Burnout may show up differently for different people, but it's worth paying attention when you notice persistent changes such as exhaustion, irritability, difficulty concentrating, decreased motivation, emotional detachment, disrupted sleep, feeling overwhelmed by ordinary responsibilities, or losing enjoyment in things that once mattered to you.

The goal isn't to panic when you recognize a sign. The goal is awareness.

Things We Tell Ourselves:

"I'll rest when this is finished."

"I just need to get through this week."

"Everyone depends on me."

"I'm fine."

02

Your Energy Is Trying to Tell You Something



Because you can't intentionally change a pattern you haven't recognized. When people recognize they're burned out, one of the first responses is often: "I need a break." And sometimes you absolutely do. But sustainable recovery requires us to look beyond simply stopping for a moment. We have to examine what keeps draining us.

Think of your energy like a bank account. Every responsibility requires a withdrawal, work, parenting, decision-making, relationships, caregiving, technology, conflict, financial concerns and the constant need to be available.

Even positive responsibilities require energy. The problem comes when we're constantly making withdrawals without enough deposits. Eventually, there's nothing left to give.

Conduct an Energy Audit

Ask yourself, what drains me? Then ask, what restores me? Your answers might surprise you. Some things that look like "rest" aren't actually restorative. Scrolling on your phone for an hour may distract you without restoring you. Lying in bed while mentally replaying tomorrow's responsibilities isn't necessarily rest.

True restoration may look like quiet, sleep, movement, meaningful connection, time outdoors, prayer or spiritual practices, creative activities, healthy boundaries, laughter, or simply having a period when nobody needs anything from you. The important question is, what actually leaves you feeling restored?

Boundaries Protect Energy

Sometimes reclaiming your energy doesn't require adding something. It requires removing something. One unnecessary obligation. One expectation. One notification. One commitment that no longer aligns. One automatic "yes." Boundaries aren't about shutting everyone out. They're about recognizing that your capacity has limits—and treating those limits with respect.

Your Challenge this Week:

Create two columns in your journal:

DRAINS MY ENERGY | RESTORES MY ENERGY

Write at least five things under each. Then circle one energy drain you can reduce and one restorative practice you can increase this week. Don't change ten things. Change two. Sustainable transformation is often built through small decisions practiced consistently.

A Healthy Boundary Might Sound Like:

"I can't take that on right now."

"I'll respond tomorrow."

"I need some time before I make that decision."



03

From Surviving to Thriving

Recovery isn't about becoming more productive so you can tolerate an unhealthy pace again.

Reset: Interrupt the Pattern

A reset doesn't mean quitting your job, abandoning your responsibilities, or disappearing for a month. Sometimes a reset is much smaller—and much more realistic.

It might mean recognizing that you haven't eaten all day because you've been too busy. It might mean noticing that you immediately reach for your phone every time you have a quiet moment.

It could be realizing that your schedule has no margin, that you're consistently saying yes when you want to say no, or that you haven't had a meaningful moment of rest in weeks.

Resetting begins with interruption. Instead of automatically pushing through, you pause long enough to ask, "What do I need right now?"

That question may sound simple, but for people who are accustomed to caring for everyone else, it can be surprisingly difficult to answer.

Your first instinct may be to think about what needs to be accomplished rather than what you need. That's why learning to pause matters. It creates enough space for awareness to enter the conversation.

And awareness gives you a choice.



Realign: Does Your Life Reflect What Matters to You?

Burnout can also reveal a disconnect between what we say matters to us and where our energy is actually going.

You might say your health matters, yet your schedule consistently leaves little room for sleep, movement, nourishment, or medical appointments. You may value family but find yourself physically present and mentally consumed by work. You may value peace while maintaining commitments that constantly leave you overwhelmed.

This doesn't mean you've failed.

It means it may be time to realign.

Realignment is the process of looking at your values and asking whether your current choices support them. Not perfectly—but consistently enough that the life you're building actually resembles the life you say you want. This is also where boundaries become important. A boundary isn't simply saying no to other people. Sometimes it's saying no to an expectation you've placed on yourself.

Start Smaller Than You Think:

- New morning routine.
- New diet.
- New boundaries.
- New schedule.
- New exercise plan.
- More sleep.
- Less screen time.
- More journaling.

Sometimes it's deciding that every message doesn't require an immediate response. Sometimes it's accepting that you can do something well without doing it perfectly.

Realignment asks you to stop measuring your life only by what you accomplished and begin considering how you're living while accomplishing it.



Reclaim: Your Energy Is a Resource

One of the most important shifts in burnout recovery is recognizing that your energy is not unlimited. Think about how carefully we manage other valuable resources. We budget money. We charge our phones. We refill our cars. We replenish supplies.

Yet we often expect ourselves to continue giving indefinitely. Reclaiming your energy means becoming more intentional about where it goes.

Some responsibilities are unavoidable. Life will still require work, parenting, caregiving, decision-making, problem-solving, and showing up when you would rather rest. The goal isn't to eliminate everything that requires energy.

The goal is to create recovery alongside responsibility.

That might mean protecting your sleep more intentionally, creating boundaries around technology, taking short breaks before you reach complete exhaustion, asking for help, making room for activities that genuinely restore you, or simply allowing yourself moments when you aren't producing anything.

And here's an important distinction: restoration isn't always the same as distraction.

Scrolling may distract you.
Binge-watching may distract you.
Staying busy with something different may distract you.

But ask yourself afterward: Do I actually feel restored?
Learning the difference can change how you approach rest.

“

Thriving isn't doing more with your energy. It's becoming intentional about where your energy goes.

- THE JITT GROUP



Conclusion and Next Steps

If there's one thing I hope you take away from this eBook, it's that you don't have to wait until you have nothing left to begin taking care of yourself. Burnout recovery doesn't require you to change everything overnight; it begins with awareness and small, intentional choices. Pay attention to what drains you, make room for what restores you, strengthen the boundaries that protect your well-being, and give yourself permission to pause when you need it. There will still be demanding seasons, but the goal isn't a life without stress—it's learning how to recognize when you're becoming depleted and having the tools to respond differently. You've already taken an important first step by becoming more aware; now, the question is: What will you choose to do differently with what you know?



Ready for Your Next Step?

If you're ready to go beyond awareness Thrive Beyond Burnout was created for you. This self-paced, trauma-informed program will guide you through resetting unhealthy patterns, realigning your values and boundaries, reclaiming your energy, and building sustainable practices for long-term resilience. Here is a little thank-you for taking the first step 🌿 Enjoy 10% off Thrive Beyond Burnout with code: THRIVE10

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