

THE JOURNAL FOUNDRY CO.

FREE SAMPLE

The Burnout Journal

The opening pages and the first three evenings,
exactly as they are in the full journal.

Print single-sided on A4 or US Letter, or fill it in on a tablet with any PDF markup app.

Do the opening page before the first log. It takes five minutes, and the logs mean very little without it.

If the three evenings work for you, the full journal carries on from exactly where this stops.

A self-help record, not medical, psychological or financial advice, and not a diagnosis.
Interior written and laid out with AI assistance and edited by hand. Quotations are public domain.

Free for personal use. Please share the link rather than the file:
thejournalfoundryco.co.uk/journals/burnout/

How This Journal Works

You are not lazy. Nobody arrives at burnout through laziness — they arrive through six months of spending more than they earn and calling it commitment. The problem is that energy has no statement. Money has one, so you notice the overdraft. Energy does not, so you notice only the day you cannot get out of the car.

This journal is that statement. For forty-two days you write down what took energy and what gave it back, score each one, and the page turns the two columns into a single signed number: today's balance. Every seventh day you add the week up and carry the total forward, so by the end you are not guessing whether things are getting worse. You are reading a running balance in your own handwriting.

THE SEVEN PARTS

The Deficit Statement	a signed page naming what this has already cost you, and the one thing you will protect for six weeks.
A Worked Day	one filled-in example, so the arithmetic takes three seconds on Day 1 rather than three minutes.
42 Day Logs	two minutes each evening: what drained you, what paid you back, both scored, and the balance between them.
6 Weekly Checkpoints	add the week up, carry it forward, and apply the one rule that matches your running balance.
The Ledger Line	all forty-two days on one page, above and below the zero line.
The Verdict	on Day 42 you read the record back and state what it proves.
Two reference pages	where the drain is actually coming from, and what genuinely counts as a deposit.

WHY SIX WEEKS, AND WHY A NUMBER

Burnout does not move in a week, and a single bad Tuesday proves nothing — which is exactly why most people misread their own state. Six weeks is long enough for a pattern to separate itself from a bad mood. The number matters because energy is the one resource people negotiate with themselves about. A balance of minus nine, written in your own hand on four days out of five, is harder to argue with than a feeling.

Undated, so a missed evening costs nothing — skip the page and take the next one. This is a self-help record, not a medical assessment. Read the next page before you start.

"Do few things, if you would have tranquillity."

— Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (trans. George Long)

If It Is More Than This

Burnout and depression overlap enough that a journal cannot tell them apart, and it would be dishonest to pretend otherwise. The difference most often described is this: burnout tends to lift when the demand does — on a real holiday, in a different job, after the project finally ships. Depression travels with you, and takes the good days too.

STOP AND TALK TO A DOCTOR IF

- nothing gives you any pleasure any more, including the things that always did
- you are sleeping badly most nights, or sleeping far more than usual and waking unrested
- your appetite, weight or memory has changed noticeably
- you are drinking or taking something to get through the day, or to come down from it
- you feel hopeless about things ever changing, or you have thoughts of harming yourself
- the exhaustion is physical and constant, and rest does not touch it — that deserves a physical check-up too

If you recognise yourself in that list, this journal is not the right tool on its own, and filling it in diligently is not a substitute for the appointment. It can still be useful — six weeks of specific, dated evidence is a far better thing to take to a doctor than "I have been tired". Take it with you.

A second honest caution. Most of what drives burnout is not inside you. Workload, control, recognition, fairness, the people around you and whether the job asks you to act against your own values — those are conditions, and a journal does not change conditions. What it can do is show you precisely which of them is doing the damage, so that when you ask for something to change, you are asking for the right thing, with evidence, rather than apologising for being tired.

If you are in crisis, contact your local emergency services or a crisis line in your country now, rather than writing anything down.

"It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste much of it."

— Seneca, On the Shortness of Life

The Deficit Statement

Fill this in before the first log. It is the page you read back on Day 42.

WHAT THIS HAS ALREADY COST ME (work, health, patience, the people who get what is left of me)

THE FIRST THING I DROPPED WHEN I GOT BUSY, AND HOW LONG AGO

MY STARTING POSITION

HOURS I ACTUALLY WORK IN A WEEK

evenings and Sundays included

EVENINGS A WEEK THAT ARE GENUINELY MINE

HOW LONG I HAVE FELT LIKE THIS

weeks

THE RULE FOR THE NEXT 42 DAYS

I write the evening down before I decide how I feel about it. I score what it cost me, not what it should have cost me. I do not skip a day because it was bad — the bad days are the data. And I keep the one thing below, on the worst week as well as the best.

THE ONE THING I PROTECT FOR SIX WEEKS

one specific, defensible thing: a lunch away from the desk, a hard stop at six, Sunday untouched, one evening a week

SIGNED

DATE

"We suffer more often in imagination than in reality."

— Seneca, Letters to Lucilius

A Worked Day

One filled-in evening, so the first real page takes two minutes. Score what it cost or gave, from 1 (barely registered) to 5 (took the day, or made it).

WHAT DRAINED ME

Back-to-back calls 9 till 1, no gap to think	4
Rewrote the deck because the brief changed again	5
Chased three people for things they owed me	2
Ate lunch at the desk, again	2

WHAT GAVE IT BACK

Walked twenty minutes at four, no phone	3
Finished the thing that has been open for a week	4
Laughed with Sam about the brief	2
Shut the laptop at 6.10 and did not reopen it	3

THE ARITHMETIC

Drain total 13 Deposit total 12 Balance $12 - 13 = -1$

A day that looked terrible and came out very close to even. That is the point of writing it down.

Two things worth knowing before Day 1. First, a single minus day is nothing — every working life has them, and a week of minus threes is more dangerous than one minus twelve. It is the total, carried forward, that tells you anything. Second, be careful of the day that scores well because nothing happened. An empty balance is not the same as a good one, which is why the capacity score sits underneath: it catches the flat days the arithmetic misses.

Score fast. Your first number is usually the honest one.

“Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of things.”

— Epictetus, Enchiridion (trans. Elizabeth Carter)

Day 01

DATE _____

HOURS WORKED

ENERGY, FIRST THING

ENERGY, LAST THING

1–10

1–10

WHAT DRAINED ME

score each one 1–5

COST

WHAT GAVE IT BACK

anything that genuinely paid you back, however small

VALUE

TODAY'S BALANCE

DRAIN TOTAL

DEPOSIT TOTAL

BALANCE

deposit total - drain total. Keep the minus sign: it is the part that adds up.

CAPACITY SCORE

- 1 Empty — got through it on nothing, and it showed
- 2 Low — did the work, had nothing left for anyone
- 3 Patchy — fine in stretches, flat in others
- 4 Steady — the day cost me roughly what it was worth
- 5 Full — finished the day with something still in hand

THE ONE THING THAT COST THE MOST TODAY**TOMORROW I PROTECT***"Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop."*

— Ovid, Ars Amatoria

Day 02

DATE _____

HOURS WORKED

ENERGY, FIRST THING

ENERGY, LAST THING

1–10

1–10

WHAT DRAINED ME

score each one 1–5

COST

WHAT GAVE IT BACK

anything that genuinely paid you back, however small

VALUE

TODAY'S BALANCE

DRAIN TOTAL

DEPOSIT TOTAL

BALANCE

deposit total - drain total. Keep the minus sign: it is the part that adds up.

CAPACITY SCORE

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- 1 Empty — got through it on nothing, and it showed
- 2 Low — did the work, had nothing left for anyone
- 3 Patchy — fine in stretches, flat in others
- 4 Steady — the day cost me roughly what it was worth
- 5 Full — finished the day with something still in hand

THE ONE THING THAT COST THE MOST TODAY

TOMORROW I PROTECT

"The bow that is always bent will soon cease to shoot straight."

— Phaedrus, Fables

Day 03

DATE _____

HOURS WORKED

ENERGY, FIRST THING

ENERGY, LAST THING

1–10

1–10

WHAT DRAINED ME

score each one 1–5

COST

WHAT GAVE IT BACK

anything that genuinely paid you back, however small

VALUE

TODAY'S BALANCE

DRAIN TOTAL

DEPOSIT TOTAL

BALANCE

deposit total - drain total. Keep the minus sign: it is the part that adds up.

CAPACITY SCORE

- 1 Empty — got through it on nothing, and it showed
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THE ONE THING THAT COST THE MOST TODAY

TOMORROW I PROTECT

"You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough."

— William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

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THAT WAS THE FIRST THREE EVENINGS

The rest of The Burnout Journal

42 evenings, six weekly checkpoints, the Ledger Line and the Verdict.

A few days of this is a sample. The part that changes anything is keeping it going long enough for the numbers to mean something, and that is what the checkpoints and the verdict are for.

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Paperback

amazon.co.uk/dp/B0HJP7SGJG

How it works, and the method in full

thejournalfoundryco.co.uk/journals/burnout/

Questions, or want it for a team? Write to kzukas@thejournalfoundryco.co.uk. One reply, from a person.