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BREAKTHROUGH TO BETTER

200 PRACTICAL IDEAS from REAL PEOPLE*

* Real people like you have great ideas for how to reduce their risk of burning out.

You'll notice they start with "I could".

*Because...you can only take action on what you can do
(not what you think someone else <u>should</u> do, or wish someone else <u>would</u> do).*

Any one idea is not for everyone but any idea is for someone and you can find out what's possible for you!

The six Areas of Worklife[1] can contribute to our being either engaged at work or at risk of burning out.

When what we experience is different from what we need or expect, our risk of burnout increases.

When we are able to see what mismatches exist, we are better able to identify the right fixes.

If I want my WORKLOAD to be more of what I need or expect, I could…

1. take an honest look at my tasks and ask myself, **"is it my job to do this?"**

2. learn **how much I can get done in a week** so I can plan more realistically.

3. have a **hard stop for my day.** Especially as a member of a global team, I want to address a question or a problem before I log off but, no, I need to stop and pick it up again tomorrow.

4. **trust that those I left in charge will make the right decisions** in my absence when I need to be away from work for vacation and have prepared my coverage plan. Their decisions might not necessarily be the ones I would make but I have hopefully prepared enough that the work continues, disasters are mitigated, and we can reconvene on any decisions made once I return.

5. **ask my manager to help me scope** my workload better. When my manager asks me for a ham sandwich, I tend to also provide a pig farm and a farmer's market stall and will have a soft opening for our storefront next month.

6. audit my workload to **decide what is most important.**

7. **remove my email app** on weekends, holidays and when I'm taking time off.

8. **plan far enough ahead to be able to delegate tasks** that someone else would have to get up to speed on.

9. remind myself that **how I handle workload sets an example for my team.**

10. suggest to my leadership team that we **prioritize** what's on the work schedule and confirm what we can deprioritize.

11. use one-on-one weekly conversations to **get us on the same page/confirm that we are in agreement** about work for the week. I might be ignorant of a bigger picture/long term goal that needs focus.

12. check myself: **are my expectations for productivity healthy?**

13. take an honest look at whether I'm **holding on to work out of a fear of change.**

14. **speak up** when I believe my workload is out of alignment with my needs or expectations.

15. **share more about what I do** so that leadership can have a realistic view of my workload.

16. be on the lookout for when **trying to be in control might be making extra work for me.**

17. **FIND A COACH!**

18. build the habit of focusing on **one thing at a time** and do **what's most important first.**

19. highlight **meetings that aren't high-value** and try to change or cancel them.

20. **check in with my team members** about their workload and be willing to **reshuffle duties** to help balance workloads.

21. honestly **evaluate timelines.**

22. be open to **new processes that can create efficiencies.**

23. explore **what's behind my feeling guilty** about not getting everything done or saying no.

24. outlaw (or simply silence if "outlawing" is not your thing) **group chats.**

25. insist on **detailed meeting agendas** and use them to decide whether my presence is necessary.

26. set (or learn to set) **boundaries** around when to say no, what is a priority, how long to spend on tasks, when I am available and when I'm not...

27. be (or learn to be) **honest with others** about how I'm doing.

28. remind myself that **I'm not the only person who can be depended on.**

29. create **personal policies** for myself that help me govern my workload.

30. **be careful about procrastinating** - sometimes it can actually create more work.

31. divide tasks into what is **critical, nice-to-have, and unimportant** and govern my time accordingly.

32. take an honest look at **whether my workload is a function of my environment or me.**

33. provide others with guidance (like a door tag) around **when I can be interrupted and when I cannot.**

34. keep a **work phone separate from a personal phone**

If I want my sense of CONTROL to be more of what I need or expect, I could…

1. **review my job description** and update it if it is no longer accurate.

2. review and **collaborate on my job plan.**

3. **discuss problematic areas with my supervisor** and figure out a better way to get things accomplished.

4. create detailed one-on-one meeting documents to help me **take charge of and drive accountability in my one-on-one meetings** with my supervisor.

5. focus not just on my role but also the **bigger picture and connections to other work.**

6. learn how to not be a "control freak" (aka learn how to make informed decisions about how I use my time based on **what I control and what I don't**).

7. seek buy-in from my leadership to **cut back on low-value activities.**

8. identify specific situations where **role definition** is problematic.

9. identify circumstances where I feel tempted or pressured to **take on other people's tasks.**

10. create more **specific project job descriptions.**

11. **learn about the roles** of people around me.

12. listen (or learn to listen) effectively to my team to **create a safe and positive environment.**

13. provide more **timely feedback.**

14. ask for **more resources/authority/help.**

15. trust that others are going to do their job and **fight the temptation to prepare unnecessarily** in case they don't.

16. explore why I feel **obligated to do work that is not mine.**

17. ask for **control over my workspace.**

18. explore **why I want to always be perfect.** A COACH CAN HELP.

19. assess **whether our priorities are realistic.**

20. be better (or learn to be better) at **communicating my expectations and boundaries.**

21. identify **dependencies** in committees.

22. intentionally **schedule my time.**

23. communicate my **'door open' versus 'door closed' policy** and follow it to manage distractions.

24. be okay (or learn to be okay) with **not taking on too much.**

25. assess my/our goals and **prioritize what <u>needs</u> to get done** over "yes-ing" everything.

26. assert myself (or learn to) in **recruiting people to help.**

27. **prioritize time with individuals** to keep them more informed.

28. follow up weekly with my team to **make sure roles are aligning.**

29. **ask more questions** and request clarification on expectations.

30. explore **what I can let go of** from the past.

31. **practice saying no** so that I get more comfortable with it.

32. **step back** from a leadership role that doesn't suit me.

33. accept that **some things are out of my control.**

34. **utilize performance reviews** to share where there's misalignment or a need for support.

35. know what I'm responsible for and **don't let anyone micromanage or derail me.**

36. practice holding others accountable (and **resisting the temptation to fix issues that aren't mine**).

37. really **scrutinize my to-do list** for what should stay on my list and what can be delegated.

38. recognize when **my role isn't needed in a process.**

If I want REWARD to be more of what I need or expect, I could…

1. spend more time in ways that **connect me to the organization's (or my own) purpose.**

2. block out **focus time** on my calendar.

3. **schedule breaks** (taking lunch, going on a walk while it's still light out vs. after work, taking time alone).

4. communicate to my team **what I find rewarding.**

5. decide what **rewards I most care about** and how to ask for them.

6. explore how to **make my work more visible.**

7. stay away from **negative people.**

8. sit up and **seek opportunities to build fellowship** with others.

9. make sure I **recognize the work of others.**

10. recognize **birthdays.**

11. set up **time for lunch** - which I can forget when I'm just 'go, go, going' - so I'm not so overwhelmed at the end of the day.

12. **create opportunities** to socialize (office potluck, anyone?)

13. be intentional about **team building.**

14. give (or ask for) **comp days** when we meet our goals.

15. find out **how people like to be rewarded** and/or celebrated.

16. be intentional about **what rewards motivate my team members.**

17. explore what makes **people feel connected to the purpose** of our work.

18. **personalize** rewards.

19. **evaluate our policies and benefits** to meet team member's wants and needs.

20. schedule a **celebratory meeting** where we go around the room and shout out our victories.

21. keep a **"wins jar"** (or a spreadsheet if that's more your thing) so I don't forget throughout the year.

22. offer **options for rewards** that people can choose from.

23. **give compliments** daily.

24. **write personal notes** to recognize others.

25. organize **staff appreciation events.**

26. create **awards amongst myself and my colleagues.**

27. invite colleagues to **lunch.**

28. **share with my supervisor** what makes me feel valuable and important.

29. point out **the good work of others.**

30. have **transparent and honest conversations** about the concept of 'reward'.

31. schedule **time with individuals** for one-on-one recognition.

32. where possible, **prioritize tasks that have intrinsic value** for me (or my team members).

33. learn to **celebrate big and small wins**, by myself and with my team.

34. **ask myself when I'm happiest and work** and what's making me that way.

35. learn **what actually feels rewarding to others.**

If I want my COMMUNITY to be more of what I need or expect, I could…

1. **form a community** of people from the same organization or with similar professional experiences.

2. structure **social time before digging into work.**

3. find ways to form a **community virtually.**

4. **be authentic** instead of masking my challenges.

5. engage in **solution-centered venting.**

6. make it a point to **connect regularly with supportive people.**

7. **be careful with my energy** so that I'm able to fully engage when participating in social activities, maybe by using mood meter or emotional scale.

8. **create a community-building opportunity** where one doesn't exist or ask for it from others who have the ability.

9. regularly discuss non-work topics and **be curious about the interests of my co-workers.**

10. schedule **off-site activities** and other team building opportunities.

11. intentionally **celebrate wins.**

12. be (or learn to be) **more aware of complaining** and negativities.

13. **be aware of being overstimulated** so I don't react in ways I'd prefer not to.

14. be more **intentionally inclusive.**

15. be **a safe person** who doesn't perpetuate negativity.

16. be **more vulnerable** and less withholding.

17. reach out to new people and **make them feel included.**

18. celebrate **birthdays and other milestones.**

19. offer **my office as an oasis** to coworkers.

20. be intentional about **being reassuring to people.**

21. starve the negativity and **feed the positivity** in my office.

22. **break the community norm to brag** about overworking.

23. **remove myself** from negative conversations.

24. **listen to the concerns of others without having to fix it or offer solutions.**

25. recognize when I don't have the **energy to engage** and be honest about it.

26. **schedule check-ins with others** and be intentional to show the value of the relationship.

27. **take people to lunch** individually.

28. organize events to **bring different groups together.**

29. find people with **similar likes or values.**

30. be part of **multiple communities.**

31. be (or learn to be) more **intentional about my connections.**

32. focus more on the positive and **speak less when feeling negative.**

33. **be cautious not to participate in office gossip**, even if it's tempting for a sense of belonging.

34. **join employee resource groups** of others with similar experiences.

If I want FAIRNESS to be more of what I need or expect, I could…

1. **be careful about taking on other people's work** – those are often the instances when I don't get credit which can start a cycle of not feeling appreciated.

2. monitor (or learn to monitor) **my thoughts and narratives to avoid looking for unfairness** and starting a snowball effect.

3. **manage my own stress and burnout**, starting with awareness about my thoughts.

4. be (or learn to be) more of **an advocate for myself in situations I deem unfair.**

5. **provide feedback** about processes that I do not perceive as fair and be willing to explain why.

6. transparently and intentionally **share information** about how important processes are managed.

7. **assume I don't know the whole situation** and advocate for myself or others if I see unfairness.

8. ENGAGE A COACH!

9. start the **uncomfortable conversation.**

10. **share my perspective** before I am asked.

11. get in the habit of **sharing as much of the big picture** as possible.

12. institute a **salary management system** to help with transparency.

13. **watch my assumptions** so as not to mistake differences as unfairness.

14. engage others and **seek a collaborative approach** so as to avoid resentment.

15. use **channels of accountability** that exist in my organization.

16. intentionally **write expectations down** and communicate.

17. work to **understand roles across teams.**

18. **forgive** miscommunication.

19. **ask others how they feel** (and then **really listen**).

20. **be transparent myself and encourage others** to do the same.

21. ask others if they have **questions or concerns.**

22. treat everyone with the same **respect and kindness.**

23. ask myself if I have an historic bias and **watch out for hidden prejudices.**

24. be intentional to **explain the 'why' behind something** rather than just the 'what' of it.

25. seek **more input.**

26. **advocate for others** who are not being treated fairly.

27. be (or learn to be) more watchful and **encourage people to speak up.**

28. have more **informal 'water cooler' chats** with colleagues.

29. partner with my supervisor to help **navigate things** (like taking on the tasks of others) **that feel unfair.**

30. **ensure "teambuilding" efforts recognize a mix of personalities and skills.**

31. take advantage of **mediation resources** when they can be helpful.

32. **evaluate our policies and procedures** from a fairness perspective.

If I want VALUES to be more of what I need or expect, I could…

1. be clear about **which values are most important to me** and how I exhibit them.

2. **speak up** when values are not lived out.

3. explore when **unpleasant emotions might be signs of a values mismatch.**

4. consistently **restate my values.**

5. hold myself accountable to **living out my values.**

6. be (or learn to be) more **clear about what I am capable of and willing to accept.**

7. broach the topic of values in a diplomatic manner, not accusingly but clearly, so we can **together explore whether there is a better way to solve issues.**

8. **ask my team members** about their values.

9. commit time to doing **values exercises with my team.**

10. **say what I mean** and mean what I say.

11. **move on** from a role, or even an organization, when my values don't match.

12. **stand up** for my values.

13. **BE KINDER.**

14. **reinforce consistent behavior** in myself and others.

15. explore **my own values.**

16. approach issues with **grace and honesty.**

17. **communicate** when there's something that is a gray area or crosses a line.

18. do a **values check-in with myself.**

19. **remind myself of our organizational values** intentionally and often.

20. have **real conversations with our teams** about values and pet peeves.

21. be **clear about my expectations.**

22. be **honest about my shortcomings.**

23. be mindful of **respecting and honoring the values of others**.

24. **volunteer for something** that aligns with my values.

25. **voice my concerns** when the values exhibited by leaders don't align with the organization's values.

26. **request clarity** around the organization's values.

27. take stock: **do our personal values need to match?**

[1] *Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter*