

Book Review by Yvonne S. Smith

How to Beat Burnout

Frank Minirth, Don Hawkins,
Paul Meier, & Richard
Flournoy. (1986).
Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

Why should a book on burnout be reviewed in a business journal? Because businesspeople face burnout just like anyone else. Last semester, a colleague of mine assigned this book to an undergraduate POM class. "POM teaches students to create effective and efficient systems," he argued. "We also need to teach them to be healthy and effective people in the workplace. They need to understand the causes and cures for burnout in order to keep their personal systems working well." The result? The students loved the book and found dozens of applications both to POM principles and to their personal lives.

How to Beat Burnout is a short (151 pages) paperback written by psychologists associated with the Minirth Clinic in Richardson, Texas. The book is written in a popular, easily understandable style but has a great deal of sound clinical

application in its few pages. It starts with a basic definition of burnout and examines some of the major causes: unfulfilled expectations, bitterness, and workaholism. It then shows how to reverse the burnout process and start an upward spiral towards health.

The book is obviously written by and for Christians. The biblical assumptions of the authors are overt and appropriate. For example, in the chapter on burning out for God, they examine the issues of obsessive control, the need to let other Christians bear one's burdens, and the need for appropriate perspective. In the chapter on bitterness, they discuss pre-conditions of bitterness such as murmuring, misplaced strife, conditional love, and an unforgiving spirit. However, the authors also stress how God's forgiveness, spiritual balance, and wise perspectives can lead to a healthy and appropriate level of work. They show that throughout Scripture, God provides rest, strength, and hope to His people, elements that are lost when a person experiences burnout.

However, the authors do not leave the reader with a series of vague platitudes. Each chapter is filled with practical suggestions as to how to apply sound psychological and biblical principles to an individual's life. Even more valuable, the authors use illustrations of how both clients and biblical characters used these suggestions to overcome their individual burnout. The book is a practical and well-written example of integration—one that is valuable for both professors and students to read and apply.

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