



Burnout & High Achievers

A Short, Supportive Guide to Understanding
Exhaustion and Taking Steps to Recover

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Burnout & High Achievers

Why you're exhausted—even though you're “doing everything right”

If you're capable, responsible and used to pushing through, burnout can be especially confusing. You may look fine on the outside—while feeling depleted, irritable or disconnected on the inside.

This isn't a personal failure. It's a nervous system that's been under sustained pressure for too long.

Signs of Burnout That Often Go Unnoticed

Burnout doesn't always look like collapse. Often, it looks like:

- Feeling tired even after resting
- Small tasks taking more effort than they should
- Staying productive but feeling joyless or numb
- Increased irritability or cynicism
- Feeling guilty when you slow down
- Repeatedly thinking, *“I should be able to handle this”*

Burnout often shows up as a **loss of capacity**, not a lack of motivation.

Why High Achievers Are Especially Vulnerable

Many high achievers are skilled at pushing through discomfort—and are rewarded for it.

You may:

- Take pride in being reliable and capable
- Minimize your own needs to meet expectations
- Tie self-worth to performance or productivity
- Rest only after everything is finished (which is rarely)

What helped you succeed may now be what's exhausting you.

Burnout Is a Nervous System Issue (*Not a Mindset Problem*)

Burnout isn't something you can think your way out of.

It happens when the nervous system remains in a prolonged state of stress without enough recovery.

Motivation, focus and creativity don't return through more pressure.

They return through **safety, regulation and support.**

Three Small Things That Can Help Right Now

These aren't fixes—they're ways to reduce strain and signal safety to your system.

1. Reduce, don't eliminate

Ask yourself: *What is one thing I can make **10% easier** today?*

2. Shift from pushing to pacing

Work in shorter bursts. Pause *before* you're depleted, not after.

3. Regulate once a day, Choose one:

- Step outside for five minutes
- Slow your exhale so it's longer than your inhale
- Ground through your senses (name five things you can see, four things you can hear...)

Small changes matter when your system is overloaded.

When Burnout Doesn't Resolve on Its Own

If rest doesn't help the way it used to, burnout may be layered with anxiety, trauma or long-standing pressure to perform.

Therapy can help you **recover capacity**, not just cope better.

Next Step

If any of this resonated, you are not alone. Please contact me to discuss how working together can support you. Office: 858-204-2599 or email: Kim@Kimjonescounseling.com.