

# The Realities of Resilience in the Face of Burnout

*How to Survive and Thrive during  
Contemporary Times*

Tai J. Mendenhall, Ph.D., LMFT

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*Department of Family Social Science*

Behavioral Medicine Program  
*Department of Family Medicine &  
Community Health*

# Alternative Titles?

# **It is Better to Prepare than it is to Repair**

*If it's not broken, then you  
don't have to fix it!*

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# Practicing what we Preach

*Easier said-than-done...*

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# Why am I working while sitting on the toilet?

*Doing work/home boundaries better...*

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# Is coffee really a food-group?

*...or wine?*

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# Contests in Misery

*Who's got it worse?*

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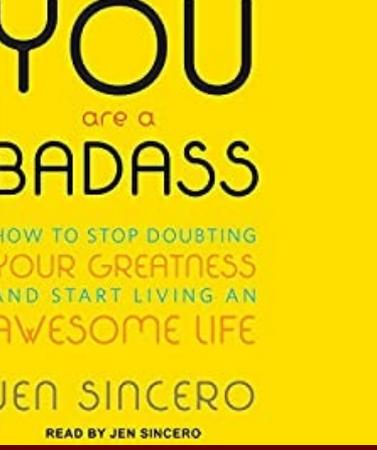
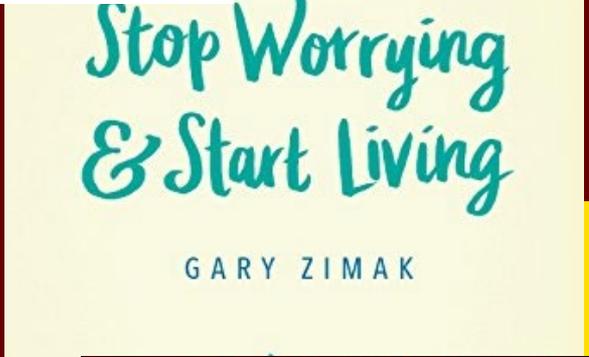
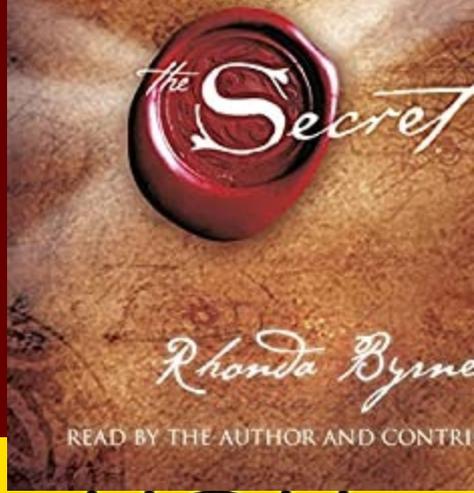
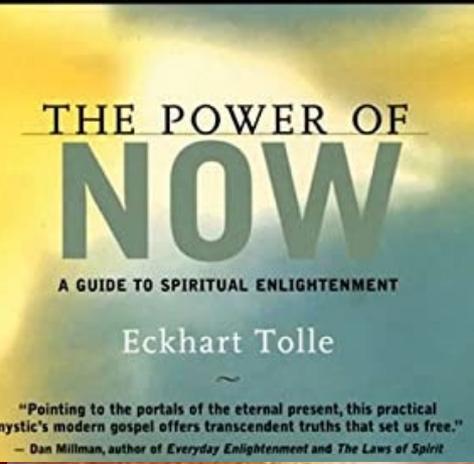
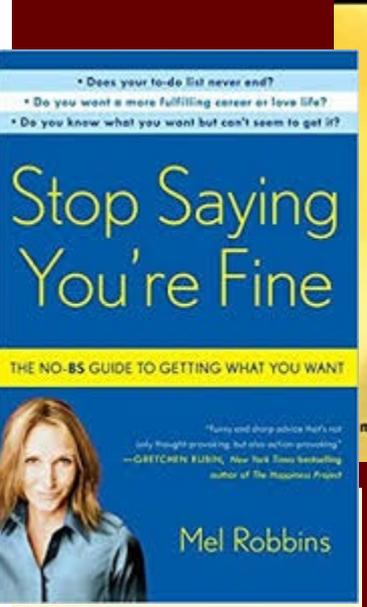
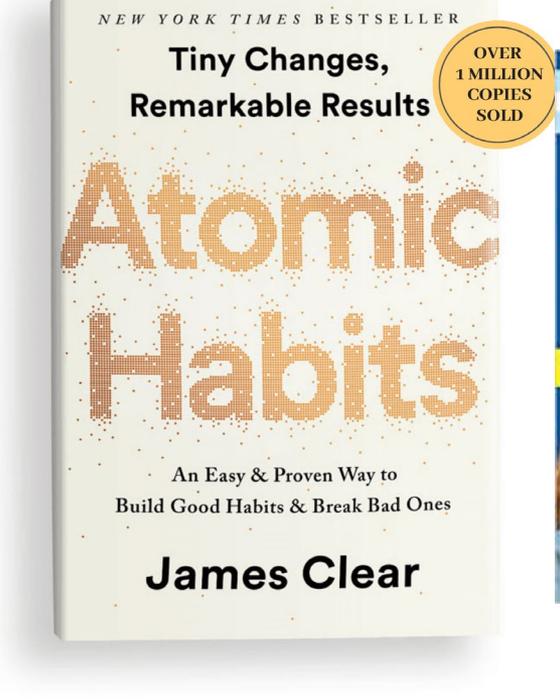
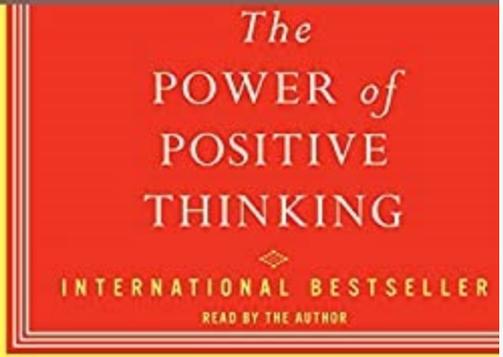
# Contests in Wisdom

*Who's got the panacea?*

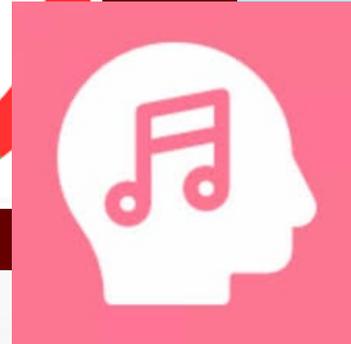
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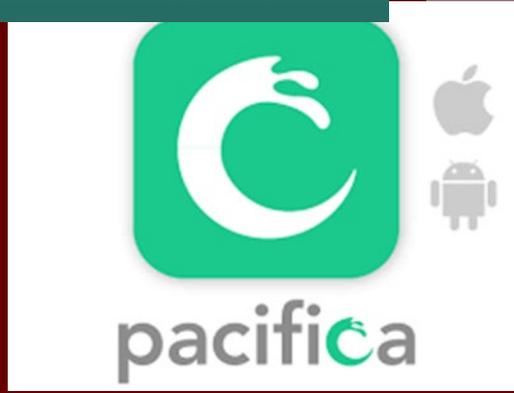
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- Books
- Articles
- Websites
- Apps
- Television
- Internet groups
- Other...



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# I missed my kid's field goal...

*Looking at my family instead of  
looking at my phone, emails, and  
texts...*

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# Can we focus first on Ourselves? Please?

*Tapping the Wisdom of Airlines...*

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# The Person we are with 24-hours per-day

*Putting the last things on our  
to-do lists first (for a change)...*

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**I am a Rock!**

***Putting myself at the bottom of the jar – instead of sinking to the bottom of the Ocean...***

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**What Title is the best  
for YOU?**

***Here we go...***

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# What is Burnout?

- A condition that emerges as a result of prolonged and chronic stress(ors)
  - Work, School...
  - COVID-19, Quarantine...
  - Losses (tangible, ambiguous)...
  - Holidays (baseline, now)...
  - Other...
- Symptoms = multi-systemic

**Where do we feel it?**

# Where do we feel it?

- Everywhere

# Where do we feel it?

- Everywhere
- Multiple Systems
  - Our bodies (physiological / biological)
  - Our minds (psychological / emotional)
  - Our relationships (families, friends, colleagues)
  - Our spiritual selves (faith, religion)

# Physical Symptoms

- Insomnia
- Exhaustion / Fatigue
- Headaches
- GI distress
- Alcohol / Drug (ab)use
- Appetite changes (▲ ▼)
- Other...

# Psychological Symptoms

- Depression (*sadness, anhedonia...*)
- Anxiety (*worry, rumination...*)
- Exhaustion (*out-of-gas...*)
- Irritability (*outbursts; temper tantrums*)
- Poor concentration
- Diminished empathy
- Diminished compassion
- Other...

# Social Symptoms (at Work or School)

- Poor performance  
*(absenteeism, low efficiency, sloppy work, low quality, etc.)*
- Poor teamwork  
*(unreliable, bad verbal / email communication / etiquette, etc.)*
- Irritability with co-workers / superiors
- Other...

# Social Symptoms (in Relationships)

- Increased partner and/or family conflict (i.e., *fighting more*)
- Increased partner and/or family distance (i.e., *neglecting more*)
- Increased social isolation (*from friends, faith community, etc.*)
- Other...

# Spiritual Symptoms

- Crises of Faith
  - Anger toward Higher Power
  - Disconnection from Higher Power
  - Apathy regarding Higher Power
- Disgust / Disdain / Pity / Envy for others
  - (i.e., for those who have not lost their faith)

# Preventing Burnout

*Or...*

# Responding to Burnout

# Conversations about Resilience

# What is Resilience?

- Many definitions
  - Protection from (or the ability to overcome) challenges and “risk factors”
  - “Bouncing back” from adversity
  - Applies to multiple “types” of health (physical, psychological, etc.)
  - Applies to individuals, couples, families, and communities

# What is Resilience? (con't)

- It is **NOT** about innate or inborn strengths, fierce independence, or rugged individualism
- It **IS** an interactive and systemic phenomenon between our individual selves (e.g., psychology), others (e.g., relationships), and the environments (e.g., work) that we inhabit

# Promoting Resilience

- Attending to our whole selves
  - Our bodies (physical selves)
  - Our minds (psychological selves)
  - Our relationships (social selves)
  - Our spiritual selves
- Preparing and repairing

# Resilience in our Physical Selves

- Practicing good sleep hygiene
- Being assertive about self-care
- Taking breaks by self and with others
- Eating (healthy) and drinking (water)
- Physical activity / Exercising
- Relaxation sequences
- Creature comforts
- Other...

# *What is “Sleep Hygiene” ?*

- Psychology 101
- Be careful about what you associate with your bed!
- Sleep is essential for all things in human functioning
  - Biological, Psychological / Emotional, Relational / Social, Institutional / Work, and other arenas of health and well-being

# Resilience in our Psychological Selves

- Self-time (*having it – literally – on our “to do” lists*)
- Recognizing / honoring our own humanness
- Not minimizing or catastrophizing our symptoms
- Pursuing interests outside of work
- Seeking help if/when we need it
- Other...

# Resilience in our Social Selves (at Work or School)

- Discussing / negotiating expectations before and during work-sequences
- Strategically prioritizing, planning, and sequencing work tasks
  - (e.g., SMART goals)
- Resisting perfectionism – and making peace with “good enough”
- Other...

# Resilience in our Social Selves (in Relationships)

- Partners / family
- Establishing, maintaining, and/or re-engaging with support(ive) social systems (broadly defined)
- Friends / colleagues
- Community organizations
- Other...

# Resilience in our Spiritual Selves

- Personal reflections
- Personal processes
- Interpersonal reflections
- Interpersonal processes

# Closing Thoughts

- Remember that there is no panacea
- If it is not intentional, it will not last
- Be careful about human tendency to “do the opposite”
- Remember that behavior change(s) usually takes several weeks to “stick”
- Critical evaluation of to-do lists
- Compartmentalization

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# Closing Thoughts (con't)

- Whatever you do, it must be YOURS
- Make it public (at least parts of it)
- Don't catastrophize slips or set-backs
- If you fall down 9 times, get up 10 times
- Remember that there is more to life than work
- Enjoy the journey

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- **Enjoy the journey**

# Discussion / Q&A

***“Oh how liberating it is to pursue  
wholeness over perfection.”***

Morgan Harper Nichols

# Contact Information

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