

Burnout Self-Assessment

How Exhausted Is Your System?

Educational Disclaimer

This is an educational self-reflection tool. It is not a clinical assessment and does not constitute a diagnosis. Any clinical assessment should be conducted by a qualified mental health professional. If you are experiencing significant distress, please seek support from a qualified practitioner.

Burnout isn't just tiredness. It's what happens when parts of your system have been working too hard, for too long, without enough support. This assessment helps you see which patterns are most active — and where your system has been working hardest.

PART 1 — ENERGY & PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE

How is your energy most days?	<input type="checkbox"/> A) I have reasonable energy and recover well after rest <input type="checkbox"/> B) I feel tired more often than not, but push through <input type="checkbox"/> C) I'm exhausted most of the time, even after sleeping <input type="checkbox"/> D) I feel completely depleted — rest doesn't help
When you wake up, you typically feel:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Rested and ready <input type="checkbox"/> B) Slow to start, but okay once moving <input type="checkbox"/> C) Like I haven't slept — heavy or flat <input type="checkbox"/> D) Already dreading the day ahead
Physical symptoms in the past month:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Frequent headaches or muscle tension <input type="checkbox"/> B) Digestive issues or changes in appetite <input type="checkbox"/> C) Getting sick more often than usual <input type="checkbox"/> D) Feeling physically fine — no notable symptoms

PART 2 — WORK, PERFORMANCE & PRESSURE

How do you relate to your workload?	<input type="checkbox"/> A) I manage it well and set reasonable boundaries <input type="checkbox"/> B) I take on too much but feel I have no choice <input type="checkbox"/> C) I add more tasks even when already overwhelmed <input type="checkbox"/> D) I've become avoidant — tasks pile up and I freeze
When you complete something, you feel:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Satisfied — a genuine sense of accomplishment <input type="checkbox"/> B) Briefly relieved, then immediately anxious about the next thing <input type="checkbox"/> C) Numb — nothing feels meaningful or worth celebrating <input type="checkbox"/> D) Critical of the result, regardless of how it went

Your inner critic has been:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Relatively quiet — I'm okay with my effort <input type="checkbox"/> B) Active but manageable <input type="checkbox"/> C) Loud — telling me I'm not doing enough <input type="checkbox"/> D) Relentless — nothing I do feels good enough
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PART 3 — EMOTIONS & INNER LIFE

Your emotional range lately:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) I feel a full range — present and responsive <input type="checkbox"/> B) I feel more flat or muted than usual <input type="checkbox"/> C) I'm mostly running on stress hormones — anxiety, irritability <input type="checkbox"/> D) I feel disconnected from myself and my feelings
When you have unstructured time, you:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Enjoy it — rest or do things I genuinely want to do <input type="checkbox"/> B) Feel restless or guilty unless I'm productive <input type="checkbox"/> C) Reach for numbing — scrolling, food, alcohol, anything easy <input type="checkbox"/> D) Feel empty — I don't know what I even enjoy anymore
Your sense of meaning in daily life:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Present — things feel purposeful and worth doing <input type="checkbox"/> B) Inconsistent — good days and flat days <input type="checkbox"/> C) Mostly absent — I go through the motions <input type="checkbox"/> D) I'm questioning whether anything I do matters

PART 4 — RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL WORLD

In your closest relationships, you feel:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Connected and able to be genuine <input type="checkbox"/> B) A bit withdrawn, but managing <input type="checkbox"/> C) Irritable or short-tempered more than I'd like <input type="checkbox"/> D) Like I'm performing — too tired to really show up
Asking for help or support feels:	<input type="checkbox"/> A) Natural — I do it when I need to <input type="checkbox"/> B) Uncomfortable, but possible <input type="checkbox"/> C) Like a burden on others — I tend to hide it <input type="checkbox"/> D) Impossible — I can't let anyone see how I'm really doing

What Your Responses Might Suggest

The patterns below describe how different protective strategies can show up under prolonged stress. These aren't fixed traits — they're what your system learned to do.

The Driven Achiever

Your system learned that output = safety. A manager part keeps pushing to prevent failure or loss of control.

Curiosity prompt: What is this part afraid would happen if you stopped or slowed down?

The People-Pleaser

A part has learned that attending to others' needs is safer than attending to your own. Saying no feels threatening.

Curiosity prompt: What does this part believe would happen if you prioritised yourself?

The Numbing Part

A firefighter part has learned to use distraction, disconnection or substances to manage intolerable feelings.

Curiosity prompt: What feeling is this part trying to keep you away from?

The Inner Critic

A critical part is working hard to prevent failure, rejection, or shame — even if its methods are costing you.

Curiosity prompt: If this part weren't criticising you, what might it be trying to protect?

Collapse & Withdrawal

The system has moved into conservation mode. Parts that once managed through effort are exhausted. This may signal that an exiled part carries significant weight.

Curiosity prompt: What would it mean to get some real rest — without guilt or urgency?

WHAT TO DO NEXT

If something in this assessment felt true, that recognition is useful information. A few places to take it:

- Read the paired article: 'Why You're Always Tired: What Your Inner System Is Trying to Tell You' at bencareydonaldson.com
- Notice which pattern resonated most — without judgement. Curiosity about a part is the beginning of working with it.
- If you'd like to explore this further in a structured way, IFS therapy offers a method for working directly with these protective strategies.

*Created by **Ben Carey Donaldson**, certified IFS practitioner, meditation guide, and group facilitator. Online sessions available for English- and French-speaking clients.*