

Think Small

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Think Casey's Blog...

Title: Burn OUT

I don't like feeling burned out. However, I feel burned out usually once a week. I don't know if it is just me, but I get tired quickly. Now that I think about it, I get tired everyday. I know this sounds crazy, but I wish we never slept. To me, it would be much more enjoyable to be awake all 24 hours of the day. If sleep didn't exist, perhaps burnout wouldn't either? But the reality is that both are significant parts of our lives, and it's important to me to address ways to keep you from crashing and burning as a leader.

The bottom line: we all get tired. We all have days when we would rather do anything in the world but what we are doing. There are days when we wish we could throw in the towel. I want to share with you a couple of practical ways I have found to stay in the game and not get burned out and burned up. Especially as a Growth Group leader, you will need strength and endurance for the long haul because leading anything is a draining endeavor. I talk to leaders who sometimes tell me they need a break from leading. Just so you know, I talk to a lot of those same leaders months later and they want to be leading again. Why? Though leading adds weight to our lives, it keeps us fit. Leading people is like constant exercise for our spiritual and emotional life. It isn't necessarily always fun, but it builds muscle. I want to give you a couple of tips on how to stay in the game and not get burned out. (I have learned some of these points from Rick Warren and my professional counselor).

1. Relax daily

This sounds simple, but do you do it? Do you intentionally relax your body and mind seven days a week, or are you going from activity to activity? Most people have no margin in their lives, which is extremely bad for your physical and emotional health. So find a place and a time to intentionally relax each day. Relaxing for me is kind of weird. For me to relax, my surroundings have to be quiet, and I actually practice deep breathing. For some people, relaxing is playing videogames. For others it is playing golf. Whatever it is, do you have a relaxation plan for each day of your life? One vacation a year doesn't do. In fact, vacations can produce more stress in your life if you only relax during those couple of weeks a year. Take the small moments to reflect and relax.

2. Rest weekly

Do you have one day a week where you don't do anything? If not, you will burn out soon. God designed our bodies to have one day a week in which we gear down, do nothing with our work, and transition our mind and body into "off" mode. The worst thing I ever did for this practice was get a blackberry phone with e-mail

on it. I became addicted to my “crackberry” and would email people all the time. Sooner than later, my wife told me to cut the email function on that phone. Now we spend Fridays having a day date and relaxing. I don’t do anything with church on Fridays. I will not return work-related calls or answer my phone because that one phone call or work item will mess with my rest for that week. Rest! I promise your business will not fall apart! Look at Chick-fil-a; they have great employees and service and are an extremely successful corporation because they do what God has asked of all of us – one day off to rest!

3. Don’t be stupid

Essentially, don’t do things such as meet during breaks. When we have a week off, summer off, or Christmas break off, take off! Don’t ever let your group members highjack your off time. If they want to meet the whole time it’s because they don’t know what it is like to lead the whole time.

4. Know your calendar

One of the best ways to burn out is to not have a written calendar that is discussed with your spouse and/or yourself. Yes, discuss your calendar with yourself. If you don’t have a written out calendar, you will over-commit. When this happens, your agenda becomes your master and you become a slave to it. It helps to create priorities, eliminate conflicting schedules, and know what to expect. Think about this in terms of moving. When I help friends or family move, it helps me to look at all the stuff that is going to be moved before I start in order to establish realistic expectations. I am fine moving furniture and boxes for ten hours if I know, from the beginning, that it’s going to take that long. (Not really; I actually hate physical labor, but that sounded good in creating the spiritual metaphor! ☺) Isn’t it terrible to think you are finished, only to discover you have to do more moving because you didn’t know you were moving the stuff in the shed, too? The same is true with your calendar. You will last longer if you know what to expect during the week. Write your agenda down and you’ll quickly realize that you don’t have as much time as you think you do. We do too much. To stay in the game, plan!

5. Stop doing list

Most of us have a “to do” list. We need a “stop doing” list. The secret to effectiveness is elimination. What do you need to stop doing so you can do what God wants you to really do? We often times weigh ourselves down with stuff that has no eternal significance whatsoever. For instance, I don’t cut my grass because it is worth it for me to pay someone else so I can spend time with my wife on my off day. I want to be a good husband, so if that means I pay to spend time with my wife, I will. I am not telling you to not cut the grass, but it is something I have “stopped doing” in my life. Consider what you could stop doing for the sake of something of more significance.

6. Drink coffee

Got your attention, didn’t I? What I mean is have a cup of coffee with God consistently (or whatever beverage you would like). Having a time alone with God has kept me in the game as much, if not more, as anything above. If you neglect a time with God, your life will suffer burn out. If you invest your time in God and his word, He will restore you day by day. Test me on this.

7. Have fun

Last but not least, have a hobby that you “calendar” in! Get with good friends and have a blast!



The Search for Real Relationships

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

Transferring data...28% complete
7 out of 25 leaders committed



Objectives

- To discover together how to invest in people who are disconnected from Christ and the church.
- To formulate plans on how to get people to your invest and invite dinner.

Facilitators' Guide

- The first thing you need to do is explain that this week is going to be extremely practical and that your group is going to help each other. If you want to know what a “deep” Bible study looks like, this is it. Nothing is deeper than learning how to invite people into the kingdom of heaven. **THIS WEEK IS NOT BASED UPON THE WEEKEND MESSAGE! LET YOUR GROUP KNOW THAT IT IS A UNIQUE WEEK. WE WANT TO ADEQUATELY PREPARE YOUR GROUP FOR THE INVEST AND INVITE DINNERS NEXT WEEK.**
- Do not meet next week as a group for any reason. Use the week wisely investing personally in people. Your group doesn't need to do a “group party” and invite people. Each person should take responsibility for investing in someone.
- This week in Growth Group we are going to do something unique. In preparation for our upcoming Google series starting on Sept. 9th and 10th, we are going to use this week to discover practical tools for beginning to invest in someone who is disconnected from Christ and the church.

Message Based Curriculum

1. **This week we are going to read two stories about how Jesus interacted with two disconnected people. Read Luke 19:1-10 and John 4:7-26; 39-42. Compare and contrast the following aspects of these two passages:**

***Jesus' approach to Zaccheus and the woman at the well.**

- We are jumping right in this week! Your group needs to take the two stories and look at them through the lens of Jesus talking to people who didn't know him yet. Look at the approach Jesus took when he was reaching out to disconnected people.
- His approach with Zaccheus was very direct. It seems as though Zaccheus was ready to know Jesus and his way of life. The woman at the well approach was much more indirect. He didn't start with, "Let's go to your house." He started with questions. He started with a lot of dialogue. The goal of this question is to take apart the different things Jesus did to connect with people. I am not going to go through every example, but as you prepare, take time figuring this out.
- When comparing and contrasting, look at the following areas: Did Jesus meet one on one or in a crowd? Did Jesus ask questions or make statements? Did Jesus use scare tactics or was he relational? Was Jesus pushy or soft? Etc...

***Their initial response to Jesus' invitation**

- Look at how each person responded. Zaccheus seemed to be on board quickly. The woman at the well needed time. Different people respond in different ways. Compare and contrast the situations.

***The resulting impact of each person's encounter with Jesus**

- Not only did Zaccheus and the woman at the well come to know Jesus, they immediately brought their friends and family into the fold by telling them about their life change. Let your group see the impact of investing in disconnected people. Guess why it helps to connect with disconnected people? Because most everyone they know is disconnected as well. Everything starts to multiply.

2. Who can you approach with the intention of investing in their life and inviting them to dinner next week?

- You will want to make a transition from studying the Bible to practical life application here. Perhaps say something such as, "It is awesome to look at the way Jesus invested into people. Now let's take what he did as an example and see how we can model it in our lives this week. With that in mind, who can you approach with the intention of investing in their life and inviting them to dinner next week?"
- Understand the importance of this question. Some people will not know "who" to invite because they don't know "anyone" who is disconnected. However, Jesus didn't know Zaccheus or the woman at the well, but he approached them anyway. This means that you may have to explain to different people that they will have to "start" a "new" relationship! That is a good thing. Others will know a ton of people who are disconnected, but please make sure they have realistic expectations when it comes to who they invite next week. For instance, if you work in downtown Atlanta, you wouldn't want to invite your coworker to dinner next week because it isn't realistic that they could come to church with you during the Google series. Is it wrong to do that? NOT AT ALL! However, the closer people live to this area the better for kingdom impact.
- Make everyone identify someone to invite and help your group help each other think through potential people.

3. Now that you know who you are going to invite, formulate a plan of how and when to approach them this week? (Brainstorm together ideas on how to approach different people)

- When and where are you going to invite this person or people to dinner? How this is done is important. For instance, "Let's do dinner sometime" isn't a good way to ask. But, "Next Tuesday, let's eat dinner at Chili's together" is. Why? Because it is specific! Coach everyone to have a plan!

4. What are some ways *NOT* to invite someone to dinner or church?

- Talk about things you don't want to do when inviting someone. Pushy or forced invites can really turn people off and have a negative effect. For instance, a poor way to ask someone to dinner is to say, "Hey, my church is having this week where we are inviting people to dinner; do you want to come to dinner with me?" Or something like, "I want you to come over, and I have some things I want to talk with you about." Instead, just be yourself and ask someone to eat with you! If they think it is weird, so what.

5. As a group, brainstorm ways to move someone from dinner with you to church the weekend of September 9th and 10th for our new Google series.

- Brainstorm things to talk about during dinner with someone. What do you say to someone you don't know? How do you then invite them to church? Do you whip out a flyer and let them know that we are starting a new series? Well, *yes* in some cases and *no* in others. This is an art more than a science, but you need to say something. You can talk about how much your kids love church or how much you love church and ease into an invitation that way.
- Some of you will inevitably have someone say that this is "bait and switch." As the leader, share the vision. Let's say it is bait and switch; it is better than nothing at all. The alternative is just to do nothing...to meet with our groups and talk about how great our church is and how we wish everyone could know what's it's like to belong and become in this type of atmosphere. Instead of talking about it, why not share it with those who are disconnected? Why wouldn't we tell people about our church? It ROCKS! They will love it!

6. What scares you the most about asking someone to come to church with you? What is really the worst thing that can happen? ☺

- What scares me is that they will associate me with a TBN preacher. I don't want people to view me as something I am not. However, more than likely, THEY WILL COME. So I will just take a risk and do it. Talk openly about group fears and concerns, but make sure you end positively on number seven...

7. As a group, pray for each other and the people you will be inviting.

- Spend a few minutes praying for each other's plans. Open it up for group prayer. Challenge your group to pray for each group member!