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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Are You Burned Out?

In some ways it was a typical breakfast meeting at the Coldwater Hotel. The waitress was pleasant, the eggs were sunny side up, and the restaurant was occupied with the typical early morning coffee crowd. The person I was meeting with was drinking a cup of black coffee. However, as he did so, I noted that his trembling hands managed to spill quite a bit of it. He also looked pale and exhausted. After enquiring about how much he has been at work and what he has been trying to accomplish at home, it was obvious that his obligations at work and at home were far too much. Although I don't think he was aware of it, I was pretty sure that he was showing the signs and symptoms of physical and emotional "burnout".

I eventually raised the subject of his potential burnout and he did not hesitate to want to talk about it. I picked up a fork and explained that as long as I used it for eating, the fork would last indefinitely. However, if I began to use it to drive nails or dig trenches, it would soon break. The point was to use it for what it was designed to do. The look in his eyes told me he got it, but I still went on to say that people are like the fork. When they, people or a fork, do what they are not designed to do or more than they can handle, they eventually break down.

He then asked how do you know if you or someone else you know is suffering from burnout? I told him that some of the early warning signs are:

- Chronic fatigue - exhaustion, tiredness, a sense of being physically run down
- Anger at those making demands
- Self-criticism for putting up with the demands
- Cynicism, negativity, and irritability
- A sense of being besieged
- Exploding easily at seemingly inconsequential things
- Frequent headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances
- Weight loss or gain
- Sleeplessness and depression
- Shortness of breath
- Suspiciousness
- Feelings of helplessness

Increased degree of risk taking

Unfortunately, there too many people in society that have reached physical and emotional burnout. I see them at my office complaining of neck pain, back pain, chronic fatigue, headaches, and excessive stress. They are also typically taking too many prescription medications and have been diagnosed by someone as having Fibromyalgia. Chiropractic treatment can make great improvements in their pain ability to cope with physical stress. However, this needs to be done in conjunction with a significant lifestyle change. This includes more exercise, less work, avoiding stressful situations, no alcohol/smoking, lose weight, and much more.