

Is It Time For A Change In Your Work Situation?

from the American Counseling Association

Do you look forward to going to work each day? Do you find that most days your job gets better, more interesting and challenging, and that you leave at night feeling satisfied about what you've accomplished?

Or are you like many people who find their work situations don't bring such satisfaction, but rather boredom and frustration? It's often not the kind of work, or the job title, but rather work-related stress that's causing the problem.

Experts call it "job burnout" and it's fairly common. It happens when your job seems to offer no hope or future, and most workdays leave you feeling frustrated, discouraged, and fatigued.

Such a work environment can affect not simply your job performance but your entire life. And because it can cause serious problems, job burnout needs to be recognized and dealt with early. Some signs include:

- Once-challenging work activities now seem common drudgery.
- Co-workers, bosses or the overall company make you feel bitter or easily annoyed.
- Your job seems more boring every day.
- You care less about doing a good job.
- You dread going to work and find Sundays depressing because the next day means work.
- You lack energy at work and are easily tired.
- Your work frustrations are starting to affect parts of your life, like your marriage and relationships with your children or friends.

While recognizing the signs of job burnout is important, dealing with the problem can be difficult. While a new job seems the obvious answer, issues such as your age, education, work experience or the current economy can all make even considering new employment very challenging.

However, a new job isn't always the answer. Sometimes simply identifying the causes of your problems can offer solutions. Maybe it means talking to a supervisor, or taking on new responsibilities. Your company's human resources department may be able to help with the issue. Job burnout needn't mean changing careers, but does require identifying the source of your current burnout.

Professional help is available through a career counselor. They specialize in helping people gain control over their working lives, as well as in identifying interests and skills related to work and career planning. You can find career counselors listed online, in your local yellow pages, or at the National Career Development Association's website at www.ncda.org. Don't ignore job burnout until it's a serious problem.

Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org

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