The Burnout Mask

WORKBOOK

Find your mask. Understand it. Set it down, slowly.



EWA KALINOWSKA

A companion to The Burnout Mask

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Before you begin

What this workbook is for

The book introduced four masks: the Inherited Achiever, the Proving One, the Self-Raised One and the Pleaser. This workbook helps you work out which one runs your life, where it shows up, what it is protecting you from, and what to do next, on your own or with support. It has six short steps, and you can stop after any of them.

1. **Check in** (about 5 minutes): rate five dials to get a starting point.
2. **Find my mask** (about 15 minutes): work out your lead mask and where you wear it.
3. **Know my mask** (about 20 minutes): understand its rule, its lines, what it gives and what it costs.
4. **Try it** (5 to 10 minutes a day): one small action a day for seven days.
5. **Review** (about 15 minutes): re-rate the dials and notice what changed.
6. **Decide** (about 10 minutes): choose your next step.

You do not need to have finished the book, but it helps. If you did the four quizzes, Step 2 uses your scores. If you did not, it still works.

Important notice

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1. **What it is.** A self-reflection workbook about burnout and the patterns many people develop in childhood and young adulthood. It is for personal reflection and general information.
2. **What it is not.** It is not medical advice, therapy, counselling or a diagnosis. The four masks are descriptive patterns, not clinical categories, and nothing you write or score here diagnoses anything. Using this workbook does not create a therapist-client or practitioner-client relationship between you and the author.
3. **Your health comes first.** If low mood, anxiety, poor sleep or physical symptoms are severe or have lasted for weeks, or everyday tasks feel impossible, speak to your GP or another qualified health professional. Do not delay or stop medical care or prescribed treatment because of anything here.
4. **If you are in crisis.** In the UK, call Samaritans free on 116 123 (24 hours), contact NHS 111, or call 999 in an emergency. Outside the UK, find a helpline at findahelpline.com or call your local emergency number.
5. **Breathing practices.** Stop if you feel dizzy, faint, anxious or unwell, and return to normal breathing. Never do them while driving, using machinery, or in or near water. If you have a breathing, heart or panic-related condition, or you are unsure, ask your GP first.

6. **Difficult themes.** Some questions ask about childhood and family. Skip anything that feels too heavy. You can come back later, or work through it with someone you trust or a qualified professional. This workbook describes common patterns; it does not say that anyone caused yours.
7. **No promises.** People differ, and I cannot guarantee any particular result.
8. **About me.** I am a hypnotherapist and somatic practitioner. I am not a doctor, psychiatrist or clinical psychologist, and I do not diagnose or treat medical or mental health conditions.
9. **Liability.** To the fullest extent the law allows, the author and Mindful Horizons accept no liability for loss or harm arising from use of this workbook. Nothing here limits liability that cannot lawfully be limited, including for death or personal injury caused by negligence or for fraud, or affects your statutory consumer rights. Governed by the law of England and Wales.
10. **Your answers are yours.** Please do not email or message them to me, because I cannot give personal advice that way. If you book a call, bring your notes. How I handle your information is explained in my privacy notice at https://mindfulhorizons888.systeme.io/d75c5733.

Start here

What is the mask? The mask is the role you built, as a child or young adult, to stay safe, accepted or loved. It is not fake, and it is not you. It is armour that has become heavy. This workbook is about getting to know it, not getting rid of it.

Five rules

1. **One step at a time.** Stop whenever you like.
2. **Use a pencil or pen.** Messy is fine.
3. **Go with your first answer.** There are no right ones, and nothing here is a test.
4. **Skip anything that feels too heavy.** You can come back later.
5. **Small is the point.** A tired person needs clear and small, not big and perfect.

The stop rule. If anything stirs up more than you can hold, stop. Put both feet on the floor, breathe out slowly, and look around the room and name five things you can see. Come back another day, or talk it over with someone you trust or your GP.

If you have not read the book. You can still use this workbook. Step 2 includes a question that works without any quiz scores.

Step 1: Check in

Rate each dial from 0 to 10 for **this past week**. On every dial, higher is better. Fill in the "Today" line under each dial now. You will fill in the "Day 8" lines in Step 5.

1. My energy (0 = empty, 10 = full)

- Today: _____
- Day 8: _____

2. My sleep (0 = wired or broken, 10 = deep and restful)

- Today: _____
- Day 8: _____

3. My body (0 = very tense in jaw, shoulders or stomach, 10 = loose and easy)

- Today: _____
- Day 8: _____

4. My ability to rest without guilt (0 = impossible, 10 = easy)

- Today: _____
- Day 8: _____

5. My sense of joy or play (0 = none, 10 = plenty)

- Today: _____
- Day 8: _____

My lowest dial today is: _____

Three words for how this week has felt: _____

One thing the exhaustion has taken from me that I miss: _____

Safety check: if your mood has been low for weeks, or you have had thoughts of harming yourself, do not wait. Go straight to Path C in Step 6.

Step 2: Find my mask

You will use three small tools. None of them is a test. Together they show you which mask leads, and where you wear it.

2a. The four masks at a glance

The Inherited Achiever

- The rule it learned: love comes when I follow the plan.
- The fear underneath: disappointing the people who invested in me.
- What it often says: "It's the sensible choice."

The Proving One

- The rule it learned: I have to earn my place.
- The fear underneath: being found not enough.
- What it often says: "I haven't done enough yet."

The Self-Raised One

- The rule it learned: I can only count on myself.
- The fear underneath: needing someone and being let down.
- What it often says: "I'm fine. It's quicker if I do it."

The Pleaser

- The rule it learned: I stay safe by keeping everyone okay.
- The fear underneath: causing conflict or being left.
- What it often says: "Sure, no problem."

If the first two sound alike. The Inherited Achiever is mainly driven by loyalty to expectations. The Proving One is mainly driven by the need to establish personal worth. Many people recognise both.

2b. My quiz scores from the book (optional)

Write each score (7 to 21):

If you skipped a statement in a quiz, count it as 2.

- Inherited Achiever: _____
- Proving One: _____
- Self-Raised One: _____
- Pleaser: _____

Highest score: _____ Second highest: _____

If two scores are within 2 points of each other, you are probably wearing both. That is common.

2c. The 3 a.m. question

The scores show what you *do*. This question shows what you *fear*. It is the quickest way to tell the masks apart.

It is 3 a.m. and you cannot sleep. Which thought is loudest? Circle one.

- **A.** "What if I let them down after everything they gave me?"
- **B.** "What if I'm not good enough, and they find out?"
- **C.** "What if I need help and no one comes?"
- **D.** "What if I upset someone and they leave?"

A is the Inherited Achiever. B is the Proving One. C is the Self-Raised One. D is the Pleaser. If two feel equally loud, circle both.

2d. Where I wear it

Most people do not wear one mask everywhere. For each part of your life, tick the mask that shows up. You can tick more than one.

At work: ☐ Inherited Achiever ☐ Proving One ☐ Self-Raised One ☐ Pleaser

With my family: ☐ Inherited Achiever ☐ Proving One ☐ Self-Raised One ☐ Pleaser

With my partner or closest person: ☐ Inherited Achiever ☐ Proving One ☐ Self-Raised One ☐ Pleaser

With friends: ☐ Inherited Achiever ☐ Proving One ☐ Self-Raised One ☐ Pleaser

On my own, when I try to rest: ☐ Inherited Achiever ☐ Proving One ☐ Self-Raised One ☐ Pleaser

Example: a Pleaser with family, a Proving One at work, and a Self-Raised One when she is unwell.

What I notice: one mask nearly everywhere / different masks in different places (circle one)

Where it is loudest: _____

2e. My result

My lead mask: _____

My supporting mask: _____

Where I wear my lead mask most: _____

My check-in answers from my lead mask's chapter in the book (copy them here, or write them now):

1.
2.

If the tools disagree, that is information, not a mistake. Your scores show your habits and the 3 a.m. question shows your fear. Start with the fear.

Next: go to your lead mask in Step 3. Do only that one for now. You can come back for the others.

Step 3: Know my mask

Go to your lead mask only. Every mask has the same seven parts, so it is quick to move around. Parts 2 to 5 are for noticing, not fixing. Parts 6 and 7 are for trying something small.

One note on the tick list in each section: three or more ticks means the mask is probably loud in your everyday thinking. It is a pointer, not a verdict.

3A. The Inherited Achiever

1. The rule I learned. Many Inherited Achievers learned: *"I'm accepted when I follow the plan."*

To stay accepted, I had to _____

2. Where I learned it (only if it feels okay today)

- The plan I was handed was _____. Who handed it to me, and how?
- Something I wanted that I set aside, and what I was told about it: _____

3. My mask lines. Tick the ones I say, out loud or in my head.

- ☐ "It's the sensible thing to do."
- ☐ "After everything they invested in me, I can't change now."
- ☐ "I'll do what I really want later, when things calm down."
- ☐ "I should be grateful for what I have."
- ☐ "It's too late to start again."
- ☐ "What would people think?"
- ☐ "It looks right on paper."

My ticks: ____ of 7

4. What it gives me and what it costs me

What this mask gives me:

-
-
-

What it costs me:

-

-
-

A real strength it gave me that I would keep: _____

5. My body's early warning. When I think about the life I would choose, my body _____. I notice it first in my: jaw / shoulders / chest / stomach / throat / other _____

6. A different line to try

- **The mask says:** "It's the sensible thing."
  - **Try instead:** "It's sensible. Is it also mine?"
- **The mask says:** "I'll do it later."
  - **Try instead:** "What is one small piece I could do this month?"
- **The mask says:** "It's too late."
  - **Try instead:** "It may not be too late for a small version."
- **The mask says:** _____
  - **Try instead:** _____

7. The question I'm taking into Step 4: *Whose life is this, and which part is mine?*

3B. The Proving One

1. The rule I learned. Many Proving Ones learned: *"I have to earn my place."*

To feel good enough, I had to _____

2. Where I learned it (only if it feels okay today)

- Words I heard about rest, tiredness or effort ("lazy", "useless", "not trying"), and who said them: _____
- Who I was compared with, and what I decided about myself: _____

3. My mask lines. Tick the ones I say, out loud or in my head.

- ☐ "Just one more thing and then I'll stop."
- ☐ "I haven't done enough yet."
- ☐ "Who am I to rest?"
- ☐ "They'll find out I'm not that good."
- ☐ "Once I've done this, then I can relax."
- ☐ "It was nothing. I can't take credit for it."
- ☐ "I should be further along by now."

My ticks: ____ of 7

4. What it gives me and what it costs me

What this mask gives me:

-
-
-

What it costs me:

-
-
-

A real strength it gave me that I would keep: _____

5. My body's early warning. When the voice says I haven't done enough, my body _____. I notice it first in my: jaw / shoulders / chest / stomach / throat / other _____

6. A different line to try

- **The mask says:** "Just one more thing."
  - **Try instead:** "That is enough for today."
- **The mask says:** "I haven't done enough."
  - **Try instead:** "I have done what I could with what I had."
- **The mask says:** "Who am I to rest?"
  - **Try instead:** "Rest is part of the work, not the prize."
- **The mask says:** _____
  - **Try instead:** _____

7. The question I'm taking into Step 4: *What would enough look like, and who decides?*

3C. The Self-Raised One

1. The rule I learned. Many Self-Raised Ones learned: *"I can only count on myself."*

To stay safe, I had to _____ on my own.

2. Where I learned it (only if it feels okay today)

- A time I looked after something or someone because the adults around me could not. What I was doing, and roughly how old I was: _____
- What I learned about asking for help, from what happened when I did: _____

3. My mask lines. Tick the ones I say, out loud or in my head.

- ☐ "It's quicker if I do it myself."

- ☐ "I'm fine."
- ☐ "I don't want to be a burden."
- ☐ "No one else will do it properly."
- ☐ "I'll sort it out."
- ☐ "I don't need anything."
- ☐ "Don't worry about me."

My ticks: _____ of 7

4. What it gives me and what it costs me

What this mask gives me:

-
-
-

What it costs me:

-
-
-

A real strength it gave me that I would keep: _____

5. My body's early warning. When someone offers to help me, my body _____. I notice it first in my: jaw / shoulders / chest / stomach / throat / other _____

6. A different line to try

- **The mask says:** "I'm fine."
  - **Try instead:** "I'm tired today and could use a hand."
- **The mask says:** "It's quicker if I do it."
  - **Try instead:** "It may take longer, and it would be shared."
- **The mask says:** "I don't want to be a burden."
  - **Try instead:** "Let them decide whether it's a burden."
- **The mask says:** _____
  - **Try instead:** _____

7. The question I'm taking into Step 4: *Who has shown up for me, and what would I ask them for?*

3D. The Pleaser

1. The rule I learned. Many Pleasers learned: *"I stay safe by keeping everyone okay."*

To keep the peace, I had to _____

2. Where I learned it (only if it feels okay today)

- At home, how could I tell the mood was about to change, and what did I do about it? _____
- What happened to my own wants, opinions and "no"? _____

3. My mask lines. Tick the ones I say, out loud or in my head.

- ☐ "Sure, no problem."
- ☐ "I don't mind, whatever you prefer."
- ☐ "Sorry to bother you."
- ☐ "It's fine, honestly."
- ☐ "I'll just do it."
- ☐ "I'm sure it was my fault."
- ☐ "I didn't want to make a fuss."

My ticks: ____ of 7

4. What it gives me and what it costs me

What this mask gives me:

-
-
-

What it costs me:

-
-
-

A real strength it gave me that I would keep: _____

5. My body's early warning. When I say yes but mean no, my body _____. I notice it first in my: jaw / shoulders / chest / stomach / throat / other _____

6. A different line to try

- **The mask says:** "Sure, no problem."

- **Try instead:** "Let me check and get back to you."

- **The mask says:** "I don't mind."
  - **Try instead:** "I'd prefer _____."

- **The mask says:** "Sorry to bother you."
  - **Try instead:** "Do you have a minute?"

- **The mask says:** _____
  - **Try instead:** _____

7. The question I'm taking into Step 4: *What do I actually want, and what happens if I say so?*

Step 4: Try it

Seven days, one small action a day, for your lead mask only. Each action should take ten minutes or less. These pick up where the "Try This" tasks in the book stop, so if you skipped those, Day 1 does the first one for you.

Three rules. Noticing counts as doing. You cannot fail, because whatever happens is information. If a day goes badly, write one line about what happened and carry on the next day.

The daily pause. Once a day, take the Two-Minute Pause from your mask's chapter: breathe in through your nose for 4, out slowly for 6, then say one sentence silently. Use mine below or words that feel true to you. If you feel dizzy, return to normal breathing.

- **Inherited Achiever:** "This weight doesn't have to be mine."
- **Proving One:** "I have nothing to prove at this moment."
- **Self-Raised One:** "I'm allowed to lean back."
- **Pleaser:** "My energy belongs to me."

4A. The Inherited Achiever: whose life is this?

- ☐ **Day 1.** Look at the three goals you marked in the book (or write three now). Circle one you marked I or ?.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 2.** Before one decision today, notice whose face you picture approving. Write the name, or "no one".
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 3.** Spend 20 minutes on something that is only yours. No result needed. Tell no one.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 4.** Make one small choice you would normally run past "the plan" (what to eat, how to spend an hour). Rate any guilt, 0 to 10.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 5.** Finish this sentence in writing: "What I would really like is _____." Read it twice.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 6.** Say that sentence to one safe person, or write it as a note to yourself.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 7.** Fear check: "If I let myself want this, the worst that could happen is _____. The most likely thing is _____. I would tell a friend _____."
  - What I noticed: _____

4B. The Proving One: what is enough?

- ☐ **Day 1.** Catch the voice once. Write its exact words, and whose voice it sounds like.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 2.** Write one sentence back to the voice, as you would speak to a friend who was exhausted.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 3.** Before starting one task, write the finish line. Stop when you reach it.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 4.** Rest for 10 minutes without earning it: no phone, no list. Rate guilt before and after, 0 to 10.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 5.** Receive one piece of praise or good news. Write it down and stay with it for 30 seconds before moving on.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 6.** Do one thing at 80 per cent (send the email, stop the task). Write what you predicted, then what happened.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 7.** Finish this sentence: "This week I was enough, even when I did not do more, when I _____."
  - What I noticed: _____

4C. The Self-Raised One: who is on my side?

- ☐ **Day 1.** Write your small-ask ladder from the book (easiest, medium, hardest), or write it now. Choose the medium one.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 2.** Let one small offer of help through today, or ask for the easiest thing. Rate the "I owe them" feeling, 0 to 10.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 3.** Hand one task to someone else and do not redo or check it. Write what happened.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 4.** Make the medium ask from your ladder.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 5.** Name three people who have shown up for you at some point, and what each did.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 6.** Tell one person one true sentence, such as "I've been carrying a lot lately."
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 7.** Accept a kindness, say "thank you", and do not pay it back today. Notice what your body does.
  - What I noticed: _____

4D. The Pleaser: what do I want?

- ☐ **Day 1.** Three times today, ask yourself "What do I want?" and write the answer, even if it is only tea or coffee.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 2.** Use the pause before yes once: "Let me check my diary and get back to you." Rate the urge to say yes, 0 to 10.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 3.** Before a request you would normally accept, write how upset they would be if you said no (0 to 10). Afterwards write what actually happened.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 4.** Say one small no with no explanation and no apology: "I can't make it. Thanks for asking."
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 5.** Notice one moment of resentment. Write what was asked and which limit it crossed.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 6.** Choose something purely because you want it (the film, the restaurant) and say so first.
  - What I noticed: _____
- ☐ **Day 7.** Compare what you predicted this week with what happened. Write what surprised you.
  - What I noticed: _____

Step 5: Review (Day 8)

First, re-rate the five dials. Go back to Step 1 and fill in the "Day 8" lines. Do it before you read your Day 1 numbers, so you rate how you feel now.

The dial that moved most: _____

The dial that did not move: _____

A small change is still a change, and no change is information too. Seven days is a short experiment, not a verdict on you.

Now notice the mask.

1. What I noticed about my mask this week: _____
2. What the mask said when I tried something different (its exact words): _____
3. Which day was hardest, and what did my body do? _____
4. Which action was easiest, and what does that tell me? _____
5. What surprised me? _____
6. One thing I would keep doing for another seven days: _____

One last rating. How hard was it to do this on my own, from 0 (easy) to 10 (very hard)? ____

Next: Step 6 turns what you have noticed into a decision.

Step 6: Decide my next step

There is no right path. Tick what is true for you in each box. More than one path can apply. **If Path C applies, start there.**

Path A: I can keep going on my own

- ☐ My dials went up or held steady.
- ☐ I could do most of the daily actions without much distress.
- ☐ I know what my next small step is.

What to do: repeat Step 4 for another seven days with a slightly bigger action, then redo Step 5 in a month. Re-read your mask's chapter in the book. Keep it small.

Path B: I would like company with this

- ☐ I tried the actions, but the old reaction (guilt, fear, tension) was strong or came straight back.
- ☐ My dials barely moved, or the exercise left me feeling more stuck.
- ☐ My mask showed up in most areas of my life in Step 2d, not just one.
- ☐ My answer to the "on my own" rating in Step 5 was 6 or higher.
- ☐ This pattern has been with me for a long time and I would like someone alongside me.

What to do: book a free 30-minute Burnout Clarity Call: https://www.themindfulhorizons.com/burnout-reset. It is a conversation, not a therapy session. I will tell you honestly whether I think I can help, and if I am not the right fit I will point you to other options. There is no obligation. Use the next page to get ready.

Path C: I need more support first

- ☐ Low mood, anxiety or poor sleep have lasted for weeks.
- ☐ Everyday tasks feel impossible.
- ☐ I have new or worrying physical symptoms.
- ☐ I feel hopeless, or I have thoughts of harming myself.

What to do: please speak to your GP, or another qualified health professional, before anything else. A call with me is not a substitute for medical care.

If you feel unsafe or are thinking about harming yourself, please get help now. In the UK, call Samaritans free on 116 123 (24 hours), contact NHS 111, or call 999 in an emergency. Outside the UK, find a helpline at findahelpline.com or call your local emergency number.

The path I am choosing: A / B / C (circle)

My next small step, and the day I will take it: _____

If I book a call: my one-page prep

You do not need to share anything you do not want to. This page just helps you use the time well. Bring it, or a few notes from it, to the call. Please do not email it to me beforehand.

- **My lead mask:** _____
- **My supporting mask:** _____
- **Where I wear it most (Step 2d):** _____
- **My lowest dial on Day 1, and on Day 8:** _____
- **The line my mask says most (Step 3):** _____
- **What I tried in Step 4, and what happened:** _____
- **What I would like help with, in one sentence:** _____
- **One question I want to ask:** _____

Thank you for doing this. Getting this far is already a step. Whatever you decide next, you are allowed to take it slowly.