

How Dry Is Your Well? A Burnout Self-Assessment Tool

Over the past ten years the following clergy burn-out rating scale has been revised several times. It's a simple inventory, and I am consistently amazed at how accurately it identifies those experiencing, or on their way to, burnout. I invite you to rate yourself.

CLERGY BURN-OUT INVENTORY (CBI) *Developed by Roy M. Oswald, The Alban Institute, Inc.*

For each question, circle the number from 1 to 6 that best describes you. Then add all your answers for your total score.

1. The extent to which I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work (despairing of their ability to change and grow)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Optimistic about parishioners							Cynical about parishioners

2. The extent to which I have enthusiasm for my work (I enjoy my work and look forward to it regularly).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
High internal energy for my work							Loss of enthusiasm for my job

3. The extent to which I invest myself emotionally in my work in the parish

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Highly invested emotionally							Withdrawn and detached

4. The extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Cheerfulness, high energy much of the time							Tired and irritated much of the time

5. The extent to which my humor has a cynical, biting tone

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Humor reflects a positive joyful attitude							Humor cynical and sarcastic

6. The extent to which I find myself spending less and less time with my parishioners

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Eager to be involved with parishioners							Increasing withdrawal from parishioners

7. The extent to which I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with parishioners

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Remaining open and flexible with parishioners' needs and wants							Becoming more fixed and rigid in dealing with parishioners

8. The extent to which I feel supported in my work

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Feeling fully supported							Feeling alone and isolated

9. The extent to which I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Reasonably successful in accomplishing tasks							Mainly frustrated in accomplished tasks

10. The extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can't explain

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
General optimistic							Sad much of the time

11. The extent to which I am suffering from physical complaints (e.g., aches, pains, headaches, lingering colds, etc.)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Feeling healthy most of the time							Constantly irritated by physical ailments

12. The extent to which sexual activity seems more trouble than it is worth

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sex is a high							Sexual activity is just another responsibility

13. The extent to which I blame others for problems I encounter

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Minimal blaming Or scapegoating							Others are usually to blame for the malaise I'm feeling

14. The extent to which I feel guilty about what is not happening in the parish or with parishioners

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Guilt free							Feeling guilty much of the time

15. The extent to which I am biding my time until retirement or a change of job

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Highly engaged in my work							Doing what I have to to get by

16. The extent to which I feel used up and spent

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
High source of energy For my work							Feeling empty and depleted

Total of numbers circled _____

0-32 Burnout not an issue

33-48 Bordering on burnout

49-64 Burnout a factor in my life

65-80 You are a victim of extreme burnout. Your life needs a radical change so you can regain your health and vitality.

Before going on, take a minute to fully absorb the meaning of your total score. If you have a score of forty or less, burnout is not really a factor in your life and ministry. If your stress and strain scores are of concern to you, you may want to focus more on the self-care strategies that deal with stress.

If you have a score of fifty or more, I recommend that you take seriously the impact that burnout is having on your ministry and primary relationships. The following reflection questions may help you focus:

1. Because burnout usually creeps up on us unaware, recall the times when you were not experiencing this condition. What changes took place in your life and/or work to help bring this about?
2. What are some options that could help to alleviate the symptoms of burnout?
3. Who are the individuals or resources you can turn to help you reverse the burn-out trends in your life?

Oswald, Roy M. *Clergy Self-Care: Finding A Balance for Effective Ministry*. The Alban Institute, Inc., 1991. Print.