

DOCTOR'S DIGEST PODCAST



Personal & Professional Growth Avoiding Burnout

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Welcome to this podcast by *Doctor's Digest*, bridging the gap between the BUSINESS of Medicine and the PRACTICE of Medicine with single-topic manuals that provide practice solutions from the experts.

A lot has been written about physician burnout—how to recognize the signs and symptoms and how to get back on track. But the best course is to avoid burnout in the first place. The challenge is to find a workable balance between your work and your life so that burnout can never happen. Here are five tips from the experts, as reported in the current issue of *Doctor's Digest*, entitled “Personal and Professional Growth.”

Number one, be clear about what you really want. For example, if you were told early in your career that you would need to do research and publish in order to succeed, decide whether research and publication really interest you. If they don't, set them aside and focus instead on direct patient care as your real calling. For some physicians, success means being an owner or partner in a group practice. For others, success means working part time or changing jobs several times over the course of their career. Decide what it is you really want—and go for it.

Number two, try teaching or mentoring. Many physicians who teach—whether to medical students or to residents—find that teaching helps them enjoy their careers more than ever. Teaching offers a wonderful chance to give back to the profession. It can also help you keep up with changes in the profession. As one expert points out, most medical schools and residency programs are begging for volunteers.

Number three, get out of the office. Physicians who get out of town occasionally to attend meetings and network with their peers claim that they come home refreshed, invigorated, and eager to put what they've learned into practice.

Number four, stay positive. Don't allow yourself to be surrounded with people who have negative attitudes. One way to be positive is to focus on treating your patients the way you would want your own family treated, rather than focusing on meeting job quotas. One doctor reports that he stays positive by saving thank-you notes from his patients; on a really down day, he gets those notes out and reads them to remind himself of the real value of his professional efforts.

Number five, volunteer. Although physicians never seem to have enough free time, a professional study showed that about two-thirds of all surveyed physicians had participated in at least one public role at some point in the past three years. The possibilities are endless: coaching a kids' soccer team, volunteering at church or temple, running for school board, helping out at a charity event. Any of these volunteer roles could offer a great way to find a successful balance between your work and your life.

For more tips and ideas to enhance your Personal and Professional Growth, please see the November/December 2007 issue of Doctor's Digest.

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