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W. James Steen, CFP®

jim@petrafin.com

(O) 937.294.9000

www.petrafinancialsolutions.com

When it comes to helping people reach their goals, most financial advisors tend to focus on investing, tax planning, and other money-related topics. I am no exception. After all, these things are critically important if you want to save for retirement, start a business, travel the world, or simply leave a legacy for your family.

However, I have learned a very valuable lesson over the course of my career: Achieving the things you care about most requires *more* than just money. There are certain habits and behaviors that, while not directly related to finance, can spell the difference between reaching your goals or not. In my experience, people rarely hear about these from their advisors.

Although I'm not a life coach, I would like to share a *non-financial* lesson I've learned: the importance of avoiding burnout. It is my belief that applying this lesson makes working towards your goals both easier and more rewarding. So, without further ado, here is:

The Importance of Avoiding Burnout

Burnout, of course, is a "physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress."¹ Anyone who has worked a demanding job or raised children has probably experienced it at some point or another. But what does this have to do with your financial goals?

In a word: Everything.

You see, there's a reason we call it "working towards your financial goals." Because it's a lot of work! It is not uncommon to take *decades* to accomplish what you value most.

During that time, you may work at the same job for many years. Or, you may change jobs frequently. You may set aside money for the future only to be forced to use it when times are tough. As a result, there may be occasions where the daily grind just doesn't seem like it's getting you anywhere. In other words, you get burned out. Some common symptoms of burnout include:

- Fatigue that just does not seem to go away
- An inability to complete projects, or get started on new ones
- Apathy about your job or your goals
- An increase in addictive behavior (like eating unhealthy foods or watching too much TV)
- A drop in efficiency, competence, or productivity in your work

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Here is why this matters from a financial standpoint. People who are burned out often start making short-term decisions that *delay* their long-term goals. For example, instead of investing for the future, they start spending more on instant gratification. Instead of planning ahead and being proactive, they procrastinate. Instead of making consistent, steady progress towards the things they want most, they get side-tracked by things they only want right now. That's why, as a financial advisor, I try to teach my clients how important it is to do everything you can to avoid burnout. Here are a few methods I've found effective:

Take the idea of *time management* seriously. Time management might seem dry and boring, but in truth, it is an incredibly useful skill that helps you *get more* out of your day while *doing more* of what you love! There are several methods, but most have the following in common: Setting aside specific times and time limits for specific activities every day.

Take *smart vacations*. Going on vacation is a common remedy for burnout, but some vacations are more therapeutic than others. If you are trying to avoid burnout, avoid destinations far away that you've never been to. Those types of trips, while rewarding, can cause a lot of stress. Instead, revisit somewhere you *know* you will enjoy and have little trouble navigating.

Make *physical and mental health* your first priority. Take power naps. Work out. Eat healthy. Schedule times to pursue your passions. The more you take care of yourself, the more armored you will be against burnout. After all, you shouldn't have to wait until retirement to start enjoying life!

Delegate/ask for help. Burnout is often a result of trying to do too much. While society often lauds, "the rugged individual" or "do-it-yourself" types, the truth is, you are *not* alone. Do not hesitate to delegate responsibilities to family members or ask neighbors and coworkers for help with projects. It can make a huge difference in avoiding burnout.

As you can see, working towards your financial goals involves more than just money. It involves *taking care of yourself* so that you keep moving forward, step by step, day after day.

¹ Vanessa Loder, "How to Prevent Burnout," *Forbes*, January 30, 2015. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/vanessaloder/2015/01/30/how-to-prevent-burnout-13-signs-youre-on-the-edge/#4f241d604e3d>