

Preventing Author Burn-out



Writing can indeed become an obsession, as can promoting one's book. I always suggest to authors (and often remind myself) that we must find a balance between writing, promoting, other jobs/chores, family, friends and fun. Each needs to be a slice of the pie for authors to feel completely successful and not burnt out.

Over the years I've witnessed author burn-out many times. I've come very close myself a few times. I've known authors who have given up writing; some have continued to write but no longer do book signings. I've seen some who barely promote their books at all.

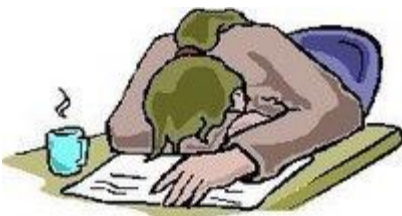
Why do they burn out? Usually because they put so much time, energy and money into writing and promoting their most recent book and have experienced little money, reward or feeling of success. Sometimes they burn out because they had no idea what they were getting into, that writing and promoting is a fulltime career. Being an author doesn't mean instant success; we have to work very hard for it.

All authors must be very wary of burn-out, and there are some warning signs:

1. Do you dread turning on your computer to write or even answer emails?
2. Do you make excuses not to write?
3. Do you make excuses not to blog, hold book signings, write articles etc that promotes your book?
4. When I say "book signing" do you immediately go into whine mode and say "aw, not again"?
5. Do you feel your days are spent on the computer, nights too?
6. Have you turned down an evening or afternoon out or even a few hours this week with a friend, husband, wife, child because you're "too busy"?
7. Have you watched the sun come up from your office window in the past month?
8. Does your agent, publisher, editor, husband, wife, friend, child irritate you?

If you've answered yes to 4 or less, you are doing well, right on track and coping with your obligations.

If you've answered yes to 5 or 6 of these questions, be on guard for burn-out. It is looming around the corner. Take a break now to prevent it.



If you've said yes to 7, you're at the verge of a burn-out melt-down. Time for a break. Take a day or two or 7 off now. Don't wait. Take a break now, or break down later.

If you've said yes to all 8, you are seriously burnt out and this makes you useless to everybody, so go take a 1 week holiday in Mexico or Bermuda and start fresh afterward! :)

Here are some tips to preventing burn-out:

1. Pace yourself! Set limits per day and goals. Prioritize and take each deadline one project at a time. Don't overbook or overcommit yourself.
2. Learn to say no. Learn to pick your projects; say no to ones with urgent deadlines if possible. Just say No.
3. Schedule your day each morning, allowing time to have a break. Have lunch while watching Days of Our Lives.
4. If feeling exhausted, take two days off and do nothing but watch soap operas or On Demand movies all day long.
5. When you have a good, well-balanced day of work and play, reward yourself that evening. Chocolate works well...or margaritas...or mohitos...

[Read my post follow-up on balancing life and more.](#)

[Cheryl Kaye Tardif](#),
bestselling author of [WHALE SONG](#)