



Transcript:

Tired, Wired, Mired and Inspired!: Strategies for Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

Presenter: Mark Sanders
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ANN SCHENSKY: Here we go.

Hello, everyone. Welcome We will get started in just about a minute or so. We're going to give people a chance to get in and get settled.

All right. We have a lot to cover this morning. So we're going to get started. Again, welcome, welcome, everyone to our webinar this morning, "Tired, Wired, Mired, and Inspired, Strategies for Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue."

Again, we are lucky enough to have Mark Sanders as our facilitator today. This webinar is brought to you by the Great Lakes MHTTC and SAMHSA, the Great Lakes ATTC, MHTTC, and PTTC are all funded under the following cooperative agreements. The opinions expressed in this webinar are those of the speaker and do not necessarily reflect the official position of DHHS or SAMHSA. The MHTTC network believes that words matter and they use affirming, respectful, and recovery-oriented language in all of our activities. Just some housekeeping details, if you are having any technical issues, please individually message Stephanie Behlman or Kristina Spannauer in the chat section at the bottom of the screen and they will be happy to help you. If you have questions for the speaker today, please put them in the Q&A section, also at the bottom of your screen, and the speaker will respond to questions. We will be using automated transcription today. And we will be taking a break about halfway. If you need to take a break at any other time, please feel free to do so.

You will be directed to a link at the end of the presentation to a very short survey. We would really appreciate it if you could fill it out. It takes about three minutes and it's how we report back to SAMHSA. The recorded webinar slides and any resources will be posted on the Great Lakes MHTTC website. And it will take about 7 to 10 days for us to get them up there.

Certificates of attendance will also be sent to all who attend the full session. They will be sent via email. And they will probably take about a week as well. If you would like to see what else we're up to, feel free to follow us on social media.



And, again, our speaker today is Mark Sanders. Mark is the state project manager for Illinois for the Great Lakes ATTC, MHTTC, and PTTC. In addition, he is an international speaker and trainer and consultant in the behavioral health field whose work has reached thousands throughout the United States, Europe, Canada, the Caribbean, and the British Isles. And, again, we are excited to have you, Mark. And I'm going to turn it over to you. MARK SANDERS: Thank you, Ann. Good morning, everyone.

Would you repeat this long sentence with me? The flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can cause an earthquake in Texas. The flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can cause an earthquake in Texas. This is a scientific fact, that long sentences have a way of waking people up on a Monday morning.

So I begin with two stories that I'd like to share with you in honor of the work that you do. In 1996, I was giving a speech in Downers Grove, Illinois. And Downers Grove, Illinois is a suburb west of Chicago. And there was a woman sitting in the front row who asked, are you the same Mark Sanders who worked at a detox facility in 1985, 11 years earlier?

I said, yeah. That's me. She says, I was a patient on the detox unit. You were my counselor.

I don't always remember names. I remember stories. And I remember [AUDIO OUT]. And she supported her substance use disorder through prostitution. She sold her body not too far from our detoxification facility.

And I worked the evening shift. And some evenings as I was driving home, I would see her standing on the corner. She went back to selling her body. She looked really bad to me.

You know how when a person goes back to using drugs, they don't eat, they lose a lot of weight. And I remember saying to myself, boy, she looks really bad. I don't think she'll ever recover.

Am I the only one who's ever worked with a client who you thought that client would never recover? You see, that's why I'm convinced that computers will never be counselors. Computers will never be able to take your job.

It's not like you can feed information through a computer who will recover, who won't recover. Although, if the job of a counselor is about empathy, compassion, and patience, especially patience, patience, and more patience, machines are getting really [AUDIO OUT] hotel in Washington, DC, put a dollar in a pop machine, couldn't figure out what brand of soda I wanted. While I was standing there, the machine said, "Sorry you're having a difficult time. Take your time." It sounded like a licensed therapist.

Anyway, there she was, sitting in the front row of my seminar. So I look down at her name tag and I saw the initials behind her name, LCSW, CADC,



licensed clinical social worker, certified alcohol and drug counselor from street prostitution. So I left the facility. And I went back out in the streets to do more research. We call it, going back out there, using drugs research.

I discovered I had a drug problem. I went back to detox. I remember. I did the intake.

She said, I went from there to Narcotics Anonymous meetings. And then I went to a community college where I received a GED. She said I stayed in the community college and I received an associate's degree. I went to university and I got a bachelor's degree.

I went to graduate school. I received a master's degree in social work. I worked for two years. So now I'm eligible to take the licensure exam. And one of the questions they ask on the application for licensure is if you've ever been convicted of a felony. She said my life was about honesty and so I checked yes. And the state denied her the right to take the exam.

She said, but Mark, I fought too hard to give up that easy. And I appealed it. She won the appeal. She became licensed.

And I told her that when she told me that story, that she didn't make my day, she made my decade. You see, I've been a licensed clinical social worker for 36 years. And what has kept me going is stories like that recovery story. They keep me inspired.

As a matter of fact, what I've learned is that when you help someone with their recovery, mental health recovery, substance use disorders recovery, gratitude sets in. Once they become grateful, they start helping people. And then the people they helped start helping people. And then those that they helped start helping people. It basically means that your great work never ends. The second story was told to me by a friend of mine named Greg Risberg. He started off as a social worker in the backdrops of public housing in Chicago. And then he became first a schoolteacher, then a social worker, then a motivational speaker.

He told me that one day a man called him at midnight and woke him up. And asked, are you the same Greg Risberg [AUDIO OUT].

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Think we might have lost Mark. Let's give him a moment to log back on. Sorry about this.

Thank you again for joining us. While we wait for Mark to get back on, I just wanted to mention again, if you do have questions for him as we're going through the presentation, please feel free to put them in the Q&A. That is located at the bottom of your screen. And also, feel free to communicate with us through chat since you won't be able to turn on your video or unmute since we're in a webinar.



That's right, Dean. These are the struggles of living in a virtual world. But we're all getting used to them. We really appreciate your patience. Wallace asked in the chat what happened to the presentation? And Mark must have lost connection with us. So we're working on getting him re-logged on.

So we really apologize for that. We appreciate your patience. We expect to be able to pick right back up from where he left off.

So if you have a moment to give us, he's logging on right now. So thank you, again, everyone. I'm sure he'll pick right back up from where we left off.

MARK SANDERS: It says that I can't start. The host has stopped it. So am I co-host? This is Mark.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: You are now. Go ahead and try sharing.

MARK SANDERS: Perfect. So I heard you, Kristina, tell people that I would pick up right where I left off. So I'm going to pick up right where I left off. I was telling the story about my friend Greg Risberg, the fourth grade teacher who received a phone call from a man who said, you changed my life.

He said, we were living in poverty. And every Friday, you would sit the class in a large circle. And you would have us to read the newspaper from cover to cover.

And in reading the newspaper from cover to cover, what I learned was that there was more happening in the world than simply what was happening in public housing. It made me so curious about the world. I hurried up and graduated high school, joined the military. I went around the world twice, he said.

But you did something that was more special than that. He said, one day you invited the whole class on a special field trip. You invited the whole class to your house. And you asked everybody to bring a bagged lunch to your house. And I looked at my refrigerator that night and I saw that I had no food. When I made it you house with no food, you went in your refrigerator and you fixed me a sandwich. It's because we still have a home in Chicago, and I'll be coming home next month. And I wanted to invite you over my house so I could fix you a sandwich.

When he told me that story, it dawned on me that it reminds me of your work. It took him 30 years to see the fruits of his labor. You're like farmers who plant seeds, who may not see the fruits of your labor in the season that you plant the seed. And sometimes it takes many seasons to see the fruits of your labor.



So I know that you do your work based on faith. And so I salute you for that. Welcome to the webinar this morning.

It's always to my advantage to find out what you do. So would you put in chat what you do and what city you're from? And we'll ask Kristina to let us know. That way I can tailor my comments to what you do. So where are you? And what do you do?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I know we already saw some folks from Illinois and South Africa. We have a college counselor from Charlotte, North Carolina. Denver, Colorado, prevention specialist, prevention team. A training specialist from Albany, New York. Texas, Canada.

It's going very fast. Waupaca. Another Charlotte, Elmira, New York, Seattle, Washington, Oak Park, Illinois, St. Paul, Minnesota, Des Moines, Iowa, Wisconsin.

MARK SANDERS: It looks like you're from a number of different places. Now what do you do? I want to find that out.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Assessment specialist. One person said retired and now a storyteller. So we have, it looks like, folks working in schools, a lot of prevention specialists, social workers, therapists. MSW.

MARK SANDERS: So it seems like from all over the United States and a range of occupations, Canada, South Africa, New York, right, Chicago, Oak Park. Welcome, everyone. Let us get started.

"Tired, Wired, Mired, and Inspired, Strategies for Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue." We start with a definition of key terms. The first is the definition of compassion satisfaction, the pleasure you derive from your work. This includes doing your work well, client progress, collegial relationships, and the realization of the difference that you are making. The one statement I want to make right now is that compassion satisfaction is a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue.

And then we have a definition of compassion fatigue. It reads, "Secondary trauma as a result of the internalization of the client's traumatic experiences." You see, I'm flipping through here. And I'm looking at your pictures. And you don't look like you've been through a lot, but you've been through a lot. And there's a psychologist by the name of John Briere, one of our nation's profound trauma specialists and researchers. And his research indicates that counselors, case managers, therapists, helping professionals, you and me, that we actually experienced more trauma in childhood than any other profession, that we experienced more trauma in childhood than any other profession. But your brilliance is that you've taken what you've been [AUDIO OUT].



KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Oh, no. Looks like Mark dropped off again. So we're going to get him back on and hopefully not continuously experiencing problems. Maybe it's some internet [AUDIO OUT].

Yeah. I'm sorry about that, Ricky. We don't actually normally experience this. So it may just be weather issues or this internet connection. So we're working on it. Thank you, again and we're sorry about this.

Yes. I feel you, Brenda. We all needed this. This is a good Monday morning thing. So we are working on it.

And I just sent him a message. So I believe he's going to be logging back on here shortly. I'm going to go back through our chat here and see if I can catch more of what you all do and where you're all from.

If Mark hadn't mentioned it, our team is based out of Madison, Wisconsin at the University of Wisconsin. Although we don't all who work in the Center actually live in Madison, but that's where I'm coming to you from today. Mark is in Chicago, Illinois.

Compassionate satisfaction, I like that. So it looks like we have a lot of social workers, program coordinators or grad students, domestic violence, drug and alcohol counseling, a pregnancy counselor. And we really do have folks from all over, Richmond, Atlanta, Southern Illinois.

Peer recovery specialists, Pennsylvania, Indianapolis, that's fantastic. Yeah, that's a great suggestion, Dean. I will ask him, since he is reconnecting now. Hold on, Mark. Let me get you co-host rights again. OK.

MARK SANDERS: So like a resourceful social worker, I have a back up plan. I don't know what's happening here. But if it happens again, I shall shift computers and let us continue. Thank you.

So I was asking the group who's ever experienced burnout, raise your hand. And some of you are saying, I've experienced so much burnout, it's hard to raise my hand. You know, the people who are most vulnerable to burnout are the ones that are the most passionate about what they do. And if you've never been on fire, then you're not as vulnerable to burnout as the rest of the folks that are with us today.

A form of compassion fatigue that develops much slower than secondary trauma, burnout has a gradual onset and is associated with a non-supportive work environment, toxic organizational dynamics, a large caseload, and the feeling that your work does not make a difference. Notice that nowhere in this definition does it say that challenging clients are a cause of burnout.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I don't mean to interrupt you, but your video stopped. And your audio cut out once. I'm wondering if you turn your video off,



if it will reduce the amount of bandwidth that you're using and hopefully make your overall internet connection better. So that at least we can hear you and see the screen.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you. So I'm doing that right now. And if we have any more difficulties, I'm shifting computers. And thank you everybody for your patience. It's even taking a moment for the video to go out.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: And Mark, Stephanie also put the call in info in the chat in case you need it.

MARK SANDERS: OK. I see that as well. Thank you.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Gotcha.

MARK SANDERS: Can you hear me, though?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Yes. The sound is good.

MARK SANDERS: OK. So let me see if I can stop the video.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I can try stopping it for you, too.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you. So I was pointing out that it's not difficult clients that really cause burnout. It's really toxic organizational dynamics. And that's why we have a definition of work-related burnout. Stephanie, you can still hear me? And Kristina?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Yep, you're good.

MARK SANDERS: It reads that work-related burnout is a response to chronic stress. You get hired and you can handle the stress day one. But day 101, you can no longer handle the stress. These symptoms include emotional exhaustion.

How many of you, by show of hands, listen to people all day at work? Raise your hand if you listen all day. All right. Very good.

And how many you go home in the evening and listen all evening to your son, who's brilliant, who constantly asks you questions that he already knows the answer to, or that spouse of yours, your partner, who can't talk stop talking about themselves? If you listen all day and all evening, you can feel like you're one huge ear. And you can suffer from emotional exhaustion, depersonalization.

And depersonalization is where you stop seeing your clients, those that you serve, as human as you should see them in the past. Anyone who's ever had a large caseload is vulnerable to depersonalization. If you've ever had a large



caseload, would you put the number of clients that you worked with at one time in chat? What's the most number of clients you've worked with in one time? Put that in chat, if you would.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: 89. 60. 225. 100.

MARK SANDERS: So right now, the top is 225. Let's play a game. Can you top this? Has anybody ever worked with more than 225 clients at one time?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Somebody put 580.

MARK SANDERS: 580? 580 clients, that is the largest I've ever heard. Would you give them a round of applause for surviving the largest caseload in the history of caseloads?

You ever had a caseload so large that one day you're walking down the street, and you see somebody walking towards you and you say, they look vaguely familiar, only to realize you did their intake, like, five minutes ago? A caseload so large that one day you're in the mall, and there's 1,000 people in the mall, and their faces start to blend into one. And you start to wonder if all of them have been on your caseload at one time or another?

You know who has a bad case of depersonalization where they begin to dehumanize their clients? Sometimes it's people who work in public aid offices. You walk into a public office, take a number. Next! Sometimes the same with Social Security.

One time I went to a Baskin-Robbins ice cream parlor, 31 flavors. You know Baskin-Robbins. I walked in. The person behind the counter said, take a number. Next! And I was the only person there.

If we're not careful, this can catch up to us. Then there was a time that you went to the emergency room of a hospital late at night. You walked into the ER. I'm bleeding!

So is he. Sit down. They've become immune to blood.

One time in my town, a community called Ravenswood, there was a 16-year-old teenager who was shot. He started running to the hospital. And when he couldn't run anymore, he walked.

And when he couldn't walk, he crawled. And when he couldn't crawl, he rolled. And he wound up in the alley behind the emergency room door. He lay in the alley, about where I'm at right now, the door was about right here.

The hospital personnel left him in the alley to die based upon a technicality in their policy and procedure manual that said, we don't go out to get you. You have to come into the emergency room. You see what happens is that when



depersonalization sets in, we become immune to pain and suffering and sometimes go strictly by the book.

Work-related burnout is a response to chronic stress. Its symptoms include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, which can occur amongst people who help others. There are four stages to burnout.

The first stage is called the honeymoon stage. It's when you first get hired. Your co-workers are so happy to see you. They've given you a cubicle. You have a coffee cup that they've given you, two pens, three pencils, and a notepad. You're so happy to be there.

You call your friends. Say, friends, I have the perfect job. I don't need food, clothes, air, water, sex. All I need is the job. That's the honeymoon stage. You call those same friends two years later. Do you know of anybody who's hiring? We call that second stage the stagnation stage. The honeymoon is over.

Difficult co-workers, difficult boss, difficult clients, and a ton of paperwork. How many of you have a lot of paperwork to do? Raise your hand if you have a lot of paperwork.

I used to bring mine home with me. Then one day, I stopped bringing my paperwork home. Because I became convinced if I died a social worker tomorrow, I'd have at least one form to fill out before I died. If nothing else, a discharge summary. I figured out how to stop bringing my paperwork home. The third stage is called frustration. It's in this third stage that you catch the fact that you're burning out. And you start doing positive things to recover from burnout.

Positive things like what? What are some positive things that people do to recover from burnout once they discover they're burning out? Let us chat.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Self-care. See a counselor yourself. Take some time off.

MARK SANDERS: What else?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Ask for help.

MARK SANDERS: Yes.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Leisure.

MARK SANDERS: Yes. You know what I do, Kristina? I call in well. Hello, boss. It's me. I don't have a cold or the flu. I'm feeling real good. I'm calling in well.



I spend that day taking care of myself. If we don't catch it in the third stage, we are vulnerable to slipping into the fourth stage of burnout, which is called apathy, chronic burnout. Now your attitude is a job is a job is a job.

You show up to work 9:00 on a Monday morning. And you say the best thing about 9:00 AM Monday morning is three hours from noon. And noon is lunch. You say the best thing about Wednesday's it's two days from Friday. For you, the best part of the whole week is 5 o'clock on a Friday afternoon. The phone rings. Now you want to shoot the phone. You start running from clients. You know, there's a doctor from the University of Arizona that did a study on counselors who do what he called stupid stuff. He didn't have a better term for it than that. And found the relationship between counselors doing stupid stuff and apathy, chronic burnout.

Things like marrying a client, moving a client in your home, adopting a client's child, things like smoking weed with a client behind the agency, expecting the client not to tell, and thinking that your co-workers can't smell the weed. Stupid stuff like walking out of the agency with the agency's computer on your shoulder with the cameras rolling. Stupid stuff like depositing a coworker's expense check in your banking account. Stupid stuff like robbing a Walgreens during the lunch hour while wearing an agency ID and then calling a cab for a getaway car.

You know what his research indicated is that as we burn out, it can affect our ethical code. We can find ourselves also being under involved with clients. But then there are a number of factors that buffer us against burnout. At the top of the page, it's feelings of appreciation.

You might have heard the story about this woman who worked at Woolworth's for 50 years. For those of you unfamiliar with Woolworths, it's like Target before Target. And she was never late, hardly ever called in sick. Reporters asked her, how are you able to give 50 years of your life to Woolworths, never late, hardly ever called in sick. She said one word-- that word was baseball glove. She started her job during the Great Depression of the 1930s. And the first day she showed up to work, her son called and said, mom, now that you have that new job, will you finally give me that baseball glove you promised?

Not now, son. I'm kind of behind in the payment of bills. I promise you that I'll get you the baseball glove as soon as I possibly can. Her supervisor overheard the conversation. And listen, I wasn't intentionally eavesdropping. And I have a son, too.

One of the things I understand about kids is kids don't always understand when you say you can't buy something right now. So I brought you this baseball glove. I'd like to ask you to give it to your son. And I hope he appreciates it.



And she said that one act of kindness after another led to her feeling a sense of appreciation. And she was able to give 50 years of her life to Woolworths. Research says that what motivates us, counselors, case managers, therapists, supervisors to do our best work, pay ranks number three on the list.

Number one is feelings of appreciation from the people that we work with. If you're curious about what's number two, number two on the list of what motivates counselors to do their best work is feeling like they're in on things. Staff want to feel like they're in on things and that they can give an opinion and that their opinion matters.

Feelings of appreciation, incredible story from The Chicken Soup for The Soul series. You know Chicken Soup for The Soul? First they came out with the first helping of a Chicken Soup for The Soul, then a second and a third. Then chicken soup for the cat's soul, the horses soul.

Here's a story from a book called Chicken Soup for The Teenage Soul. Tells the story of this teacher, the school teacher that had a really special group of students. She wanted these students to know how special they were. So she lined all of them up in a straight line and gave them ribbons that said you make a difference. I appreciate the difference you make.

And realizing that feedback is nothing unless it's specific, she told them how they made a difference and why she appreciates the difference they're making. Then she gave each student some extra ribbons to go out in the world and share with people who made a difference in their life. And one of her students gave a ribbon, you make a difference, to his boss.

He said, sir, when you hired me to do this work, you taught me the value of hard work. And you helped me save enough money to buy a bicycle. Here's a ribbon. You make a difference. He gave his boss some extras.

His boss decided he would give a ribbon, you make a difference, to the CEO of the company. He said, my boss is grumpy. But if a kid can do it, I can do it. He said, boss, you were a creative genius. That's why we're one of the top companies in America. Here's a ribbon. You make a difference. He gave his boss some extras.

The CEO decided he would give a ribbon to his nine-year-old son. You make a difference. He says son, I know I'm always yelling at you.

Do your homework, eat your vegetables, turn off the television, pick up that sock, go to bed. Just wanted you to know that the day you were born was the happiest day of my life. Here's a ribbon. You make a difference.



And to his surprise, his son said, well, thank you, dad. Now I don't have to end my life. I was thinking of ending my life because I thought you didn't care about me, that you didn't appreciate me. But now I know I don't have to.

My encouragement to you today and every day, to let at least one of your co-workers know one thing you appreciate about them. That's one of the buffers against burnout, along with team cohesion. You might have heard the story about this boy named Mike who played little League Baseball on a team known as the Cougars.

And Mike came down with a rare illness requiring him to have chemotherapy, radiation treatment. He lost his hair due to chemotherapy. And he was embarrassed to go to the next Cougar's baseball game. Because at the beginning of each game, the team would line up along the third baseline. They would take off their hats and place their hats over their heart. And they would sing the national anthem. And he was afraid that everyone would laugh at him when they saw that he had no hair.

And his father talked him into going to the next Cougar's baseball game. And right before Mike took off his hat, all 25 of his teammates took off their hats first. And he saw that they'd all shaved off their hair.

They looked at him. And they said, once a Cougar, always a Cougar. Truth be told, my friends, is that when we're connected to cohesive teams, that's a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue.

A third factor that baffles us is open communication, that when we as a staff can talk to each other openly without censoring our words, that, too, is a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue. And then, of course, proactive strategies to deal with chronic stress, like seminars on burnout and compassion fatigue, taking a team on a retreat. All of these things can help, wellness strategies at work.

Effective supervising relationships. You might have heard this story about this boy that was asked to draw a picture of someone significant to the family. So he drew two circles representing the body of this person significant to the family. And he gave the drawing no ears, no arms, no legs, no feet, and fangs for teeth.

And they were about to send the boy to see a psychologist. But they called his father. His father said who is that picture, son? The boy said, well, dad, that's your boss.

You said he never listened to you, so I figured he had no ears. You said he never helped you. So I figured your boss had no arms. You said your boss never left his desk, so I figured he had no legs and feet.



And you said he's always yelling at you. So I figured he had fangs for teeth. The truth of the matter is that people join organizations, and they leave immediate supervisors. It is that relationship, that when it goes well, seems like everything goes well. Right?

That relationship is important. You know, I offer a quote that right now to me sounds like a cliché. If you are leader hearing the sound of my voice-- the quote is that nobody no one cares how much we know unless they know how much we care. A good supervisor-supervisee relationship is a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue.

Creativity. You know, there's a book that's called *The Artist's Way*. And the author said that each of us are born an artist. As a matter of fact, if you ask your average five-year-old child who's the best singer in the world, he says he is. By age 10, he doesn't think he can sing at all.

Anyway, in the book, *The Artist's Way*, the author says that many people who say they are burned out, they're not burned out. They're bored out. They're bored from doing the same job the same way, day in and day out.

She said that the opposite of creativity is depression. Then the author says no, the opposite of creativity is death. That when we're not being creative at work, inventing new things, then it's like we're dying inside.

And then finally, a factor that buffers us against burnout is an individual decision to take responsibility for managing their own burnout. So I have a question for you. Let us chat.

There are organizational dynamics that can facilitate burnout. And then there are individual qualities within us that increases the chances of burnout. Whose responsibility is it to manage our burnout?

What percentage of that responsibility lies within the organization and what percentage of that responsibility is our own? And your number should add up to 100%. Who's responsible for managing our burnout, us or the organization? Put a percentage on both, if you would.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Someone said 50-50. Some said 100% ourselves.

MARK SANDERS: Yeah. So I would say that 50.50 is also like saying 100/100. Any other responses? Who's responsible for managing our burnout?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Someone said, let me scroll back up, 30% the organization, so 70 us. 80% us, 20 the organization. A few more 100s on either side and a few more 50-50s.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you, Kristina. So let's talk about factors that help us increase the risk of burnout. I shall share the first factor in the form of a



question. Has anyone ever been to Toledo, Ohio? Anybody been to Toledo, Ohio.

Raise your hand if you've ever been to Toledo, Ohio. OK. Why? Just kidding. Is anyone here from Toledo, Ohio? If you're from Toledo, would you say yes in chat? Because I want to get permission to tell this story.

So one day I did a speech in Toledo, Ohio. And if you were standing next to me and looked at the facial expression on the people in the room, you would have thought that something bad happened, a tragedy. They looked so depressed.

It took me a few minutes into the presentation to realize that this was the most chronically burned out group of workers I'd ever seen in my life. Here's the catch. The program had only been in existence for six months.

Question. How can a program be in existence for just six months and the entire staff is burned out? Would you put your response in chat? How can an organization be in existence for just six months and the entire staff is burned out? What do you think?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Poor leadership, no direction, community stress, poor management or leadership, poor work environment, insufficient structure.

MARK SANDERS: Let me make it interesting. This was a juvenile detention center built from the ground up. I know you're thinking, oh, they're burned out because it's difficult to work with juveniles.

Let me make it really interesting. They hired people to work all three shifts, first, second, and third shifts. And before they admitted the juveniles, the inspectors came in, the water inspectors, the fire inspectors.

And they found out the building was in violation of water and fire codes so they can admit no juveniles. They were all burned out. How could it be? That will be like a hospital with no patients, a prison with no inmates, a school with no students, a church with no congregation members. How could they all be burned out? It turns out what my grandmother used to say was correct. She used to say that an idle mind is the devil's workshop.

You've heard that before. So with no clients to work with, they spent all of their time talking about each other. Say, Mark, do you ever, like, talk bad about people and notice that it gets you tired? I'd never noticed.

So I quickly made it home, started talking bad about people, and I discovered that gossip gets you tired. So once I got that revelation, I called my brother, who's very spiritual and religious.



I said did you know that gossip gets you tired? So he and I made a commitment that we would not gossip for three months. We shook hands. And because he's religious, he quoted a scripture to seal the deal. So here's the scripture my brother quoted. "You criticize your neighbor for having a splinter in his eye. Meanwhile, you have a whole tree in your eye. Instead of criticizing your neighbor for having a splinter in his eye, why don't you take the tree, the log out of your own eye, and then help your neighbor take the splinter out of his eye?"

So we agreed, no gossip, three months. He called me six days later. And said, man, I haven't talked bad about people in six days. I'm shaking like a leaf.

He was going through withdrawal, like somebody who drinks a little bit too much alcohol. We learned that gossip is the number one cause of burnout. Gossip, backbiting, and backstabbing, these things that we do that lead to toxic organizational dynamics is a leading cause of burnout. Other factors contributing to burnout are poor boundaries. And we tend to learn our boundaries in our families of origin. How many, by show of hands, come from families.

OK. Nobody landed here. Very good. There are three types of boundaries we see in families.

Some of you come from families where the boundaries are loose, when no one is aware of what's going on with anyone else in the family. An example would be like the Smith family.

Little Cheryl Lynn Smith, the daughter, made the cheerleading team. No one in the family knew she made the team. She celebrated in her room. Her brother John was cut from the basketball team. The family is so busy that no one knew that he was cut from the team. He cried in his room. Mom was promoted at work eight months ago. The family didn't know. Her co-workers took her to Applebee's.

Dad was fired at work six months ago. They didn't know he was fired. He would go to the bar every night to drink. They didn't know he was fired. They were too busy.

Uncle Ned is up in the attic dead. You know, Uncle Ned has been dead in the attic for six months. And because they're so busy, no one checked on Uncle Ned. They smell something every July.

We're talking about a family where the boundaries are so loose that the dog gets a leash and he walks himself. The four-year-old cooks a hamburger for himself. Let me give you an observation.



Usually families that I've worked with where the boundaries are loose, everyone doing their own thing, often they've suffered a big loss that they can't talk about. Maybe a death, maybe another tragedy, so they don't talk to each other to avoid dealing with the tragedy, loose boundaries.

Some of you and some of your clients come from families where the boundaries are enmeshed, where things are a little bit too close. You ever seen the family where things were just a little bit too close? You can always tell clinically when boundaries are enmeshed.

You ask one member of the family a question. Before they can answer, someone answers for them. You ask them what they're thinking, someone will tell them what they're thinking.

They're so enmeshed they finish sentences for each other. They talk over each other. They talk at the same time. Let me let you in on a secret. Families that have enmeshed boundaries usually have deep dark secrets and they band together to protect the secrets.

And some of you and some of your clients come from families where the boundaries are pretty healthy. They're clear. There's room to be who you are. You have the freedom to communicate your own wants, desires, needs, and goals.

Everyone in the family, when the boundaries are healthy, are allowed what's called the five freedoms. The first is the freedom to think what you think rather than what you should think. You see, when there's lots of enmeshment, you're not allowed to think your own thoughts.

The freedom to feel what you feel rather than what you should feel, the freedom to want what you want rather than what you should want. Should children get everything they want? Of course not. Should they be allowed to want it? Of course.

Because when your wants are shamed, you become a social worker. Just kidding. The freedom to see what you see rather than what you should see. Two short stories.

The first is about actor Samuel L. Jackson, who starred in a movie called *Eve's Bayou*, filmed in New Orleans. Samuel Jackson played the role of a Southern doctor who made house calls. And one day his nine-year-old daughter Eve opened the door and saw her father Samuel L. Jackson on top of one of his female patients making a house call. She slammed the door. Later that night, she met with her big sister who was about two years older than Eve. She said to her sister, I saw daddy on top of Mrs. Such-and-such making a house call. And her big sister put her arm around Eve. Said Eve, no, that's not what you saw. This is what you saw.



There are some families that are so enmeshed that you can't even see what you see. My favorite aunt, my Aunt Annie died. And I was invited to speak at her funeral.

And so I started talking. I said, when we were kids growing up, me and my siblings, the five of us, we stayed for a short amount of time in a three bedroom apartment with our grandparents and their 14 kids, 21 of us in a three bedroom apartment. And of course, there were not enough beds, I told the congregation.

So I slept at the foot of my Aunt Annie's bed. And every night before I went to sleep, I would pull out her art portfolio and look at her beautiful paintings. So I told the congregation that my first dream in life was to be a great artist like my Aunt Annie.

And as I took my seat, my mother whispered, nice story. We never lived with them. You never slept on the floor. In other words, there's some families that are so enmeshed, you can't even see what you see.

And then finally, the freedom to imagine your own self-actualization. You always wanted to be the next drummer for the Grateful Dead, but your family needed you to be a doctor to make the family look good in order to protect the family secrets. By the way, the only thing that can make us happy is when we do what we are called to do.

Sometimes when we come from enmeshment, they try to deny you the right to choose what you want to do with your life. Do what will make the family look good. So I want you to take a moment to think about the boundaries in your family of origin. That is, the family you grew up in as a kid.

Were those boundaries in your family of origin more loose, everybody doing their own thing? Were they enmeshed, a little bit too close? Or do you feel like the boundaries in your family of origin were pretty healthy? Would you put a word in chat, loose, enmeshed, or healthy? This is our informal survey, boundaries amongst helping professionals.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: A lot of loose, but also a lot of healthy. I've seen a couple enmeshed. I think it seems to be kind of an even tie between loose and healthy as the most answer.

MARK SANDERS: OK. So check this out. Now what we would like to ask you to do is to put the word same or different in chat. The boundaries in your current family, that is, whoever you live with now, are they the same as your family of origin or are the boundaries now different? The boundaries in your current family, are they the same as the boundaries in your family of origin or are they different?



KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I think the majority are saying different or healthy, or different, equally healthy.

MARK SANDERS: Yes. Thank you, Kristina. So let me translate that. Here's what I hear you just saying. That you made a conscious choice as an adult that the boundaries in your family of origin would be different-- the boundaries in your current family would be different than the boundary of your family of origin. You either, like, moved far away, married a spouse or a partner, have a partner who has healthier boundaries, you went to therapy, you did something in order to make things better in terms of boundaries.

And then some of you mentioned healthy boundaries. So I'm the social worker that gets called into situations where social workers establish unhealthy boundaries with their clients. And what I've found during this therapy with the social workers is that the majority of them come from families where the boundaries are enmeshed.

And they never did the work of what Murray Bond calls differentiation, the ability to establish healthy boundaries in their family of origin. So they wind up getting enmeshed in all of their relationships with friends, spouses, and partners, their kids, and in the world of work. So the real key to having healthy boundaries at work is to have healthy boundaries in all of our relationships. Also, we know that every organization has boundaries. Some organizations have loose boundaries, everybody doing their own thing. Have you seen our co-worker Ralph? Ralph retired seven years ago. We're so busy, so loose, we didn't even know he retired.

Some agencies have enmeshed boundaries where they're a little bit too close to each other. And then some organizations have healthy boundaries. It requires a certain amount of work.

So I remember once having a boss, a supervisor, that had the worst boundaries in the history of boundaries. Our supervisor smoked a pack of cigarettes a day. So he had all the energy that the nicotine can give you, drank about 20 cups of coffee a day with sugar, all the energy that caffeine can give you, plus the sugar, and had really, really poor boundaries. And so I had a co-worker that would set limits on our supervisor, boundaries. I said, aren't you afraid of getting fired for setting boundaries on the boss? She said, but Mark, I'm more afraid of dying. She told me that before she joined our agency as a young social worker-- by the way, she was quite a bit younger than me, but she was my spiritual teacher.

She said she almost died of anorexia-- bulimia that is, bulimia. And so she said she learned that if she didn't set boundaries, she might not eat healthy. She doesn't want to die. So she's been setting boundaries on our supervisor. Then one day her mother called. And she said, mom, I love you. And I can no longer be your switchboard. I can no longer allow you to talk bad about dad to me.



She set a boundary on her own mother. You ever set a boundary on your mother? When she told her mother that she loved her, but she would not be her mother's switchboard, her mother went into therapy.

When my friend's father assaulted his wife, my friend's mother went into therapy. He started going to AA meetings. The wife was complaining about his drinking.

When the two younger sisters saw their big sister, my friend, and their mother and father get healthier, they went into therapy. What I observed is this one friend of mine who set boundaries in all of her relationships, the beneficiaries were her entire family.

So it's really important. Some of us have an invisible sign in the middle of our forehead that says we will help anybody at any time. Call us. And sometimes we have to set boundaries in those spaces as well.

So if you're working at an agency that has really loose boundaries, no one is supporting anybody enough, that facilitates burnout. If the boundaries are enmeshed, you don't have enough breathing room. That facilitates burnout. So at our organizational levels, we want to strive for healthy boundaries. Another factor contributing to burnout is closed systems. You know about closed systems, where no information can come into the organization and no information can go out. We're taught to keep everything inside. Do not talk about what's happening within this organization. Do not air this organization's dirty laundry in public.

Extremes can also contribute to burnout. If you get too much support from co-workers, they may be doing your work for you, that's stressful. Too little, you don't feel appreciated.

Too much supervision is called micromanagement. That's stressful. Too little, you have no support. You're vulnerable to burnout. Caseload size, if it's too large, you're vulnerable to depersonalization. If your caseload is too small, an idle mind, my grandmother says, now you have plenty of time to gossip, which facilitates burnout, toxic organizational dynamics.

A lack of creativity-- so you might have heard the story about this man who worked at a toll booth where you had to pay to drive-through. He was always on the right side. And every time you drove through, he was always dancing. And boy, could he dance. He could do everything from the latest hip hop dances to the meringue, the salsa, to a waltz. He could really dance. But it's really striking, because you notice that all of his co-workers in the tollbooth were always standing still.

So one day you drove through the dancer's lane and you say, how come every time I drive through here, you're dancing and your co-workers are



standing still, he was asked. He said, you see, the thing is that my co-workers are standing. I said sure. Those aren't tollbooths. Those are caskets. He said my co-workers died of boredom a long time ago. He said, you see, what I'm standing in is not a tollbooth. It's a dance studio. I'm a creative genius.

Let me lean in for dramatic effect. I've been a social worker for 36 years. Part of my secret to longevity is always creating something new to do, a new group, a new procedure, a new way of working with clients. Lack of creativity helps facilitate burnout in the workplace.

Tension and work relationships-- you might have heard this story about this US soldier stationed in Afghanistan. And she flew back home to New Jersey to get married. And then she flew back to Afghanistan.

And she lost her hand in battle. Her co-workers, her best friends in the military, went back on the battlefield and found her hand so they can give her back that wedding band that was lodged on her finger. When we have good relationships with our co-workers, when we have a friend at work, that's a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue, continuing stress, and of course, feeling ineffective in the work that we do.

So let's take a moment before we take our break. How do you define success in your work? Would you put a short answer in chat? How do you know when you're successful?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Someone said, doing the best I can.

MARK SANDERS: Oh. Look at that. We've got to remember that one.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Positive feedback. That the clients have the tools they need to be successful. By the people I help. When my clients respond. When a client says thank you.

Feeling good at the end of the day, even if I don't do everything on my list. Any meaningful change. Being acknowledged by a client or co-worker. Helping to break bad cycles. I'm getting thanked for showing empathy.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you. And those are really wonderful definitions of success, great markers of success. I zeroed in on the very first one I heard, doing the best that I can. Because what do we have other than the best that we can?

What catches my attention also about that definition is, with that definition, the only person that can decide whether or not you're successful is you. Because only you know if you did your best. And to me that makes all the difference in the world, that you determined your feelings of success. Because the two



things that contribute to that are toxic burnout, unhealthy organizational dynamics, and feeling successful in the work that we do.

So you might have heard this story about a painting called The Praying Hands. And for those of you who never heard of the painting or have seen the painting, it looks like two hands together, like praying hands. And so I became curious about the painting of The Praying Hands and I learned. I looked it up, the story.

That painting was painted by a man by the name of Albert Durer during the 15th century in Germany. From the time he was a little boy, he always wanted to be an artist. So did his brother, Albert.

The problem was, they had 18 siblings and they were really poor. So the two brothers decided they would flip a coin. And whoever lost the coin toss would go and work in a coal mine and send the other one to art school. Then, upon graduation, they would switch roles.

And Albert won the coin toss. And he went to a famous art school in Nuremberg, Germany. And he distinguished himself as the greatest artist in all of Germany the four years he was in college.

So upon graduation, they held a dinner for him in this small town. And everyone was praising him on his incredible artistic talent, especially his father. He looked at his father and said, dad, instead of praising me, you ought to praise my brother, Albert.

He was the one who worked in the coal mines to send me to art school. He looked over at Albert and said, Albert, now that I've gone to art school, it's your turn. I'll go and work in a coal mine to support your education through art school.

And Albert told him, he held his hands up, and he says, my dear brother, while you were away in art school, every bone in both of my hands were crushed from having worked in the coal mines. He said, in addition to that, I got a case of arthritis so bad last year in my hands from working in the coal mines that I can barely lift this fork to eat, let alone operate a paintbrush. He said, no, my dear brother, I won't be going to art school.

And Albert took a good look at his brother's hands. And he painted his brother's hands. And those are the hands behind the painting of the praying hands. If you ever look at it again, I invite you to look up close to the hands. They're imperfect, these hands, lots of scrapes, scratches, and bruises on those hands. Of course, he got those in the coal mines as well.

What it says to me is behind every success, there are people behind the scenes who rarely get credit. And as it pertains to mental health recovery, and substance use disorders recovery, and recovery from COVID-19, and



recovery from the economic recession, you are the people behind the scenes that are making a difference. I don't know of any work that's more important than the work that you do.

As far as I'm concerned, you're successful. When we come back, we'll break for 10 minutes. We'll talk about compassion fatigue and some fun and interesting ways how to recover from both. So I'll see you in 10 minutes. Thank you.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Mark? So we'll come back at 10 after the hour. I'll put up a timer since we have people from all over different time zones. We will have some music and a visual. Oh, thank you, Stephanie.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

MARK SANDERS: Now let's talk about [INAUDIBLE]. Now let's talk about compassion fatigue, the stress of caring too much. Compassion fatigue differs from burnout in that burnout is caused by organizational stress and compassion fatigue is caused by caring. As a matter of fact, the more you care, the more vulnerable you are.

Another definition of compassion fatigue is the emotional residue as a result of listening to those who suffer secondary trauma, secondary PTSD. And who's vulnerable? At your organization, the person most vulnerable to compassion fatigue is the receptionist. The least vulnerable is the CEO. Whoever has the most contact with clients are the most vulnerable. Everybody who calls the agency is a part of the receptionist's caseload. Everybody who walks through the door.

There was an agency with 20 counselors. And each counselor had a caseload of 20 clients. The receptionist has 400 clients, everybody who walks through that door. And by the way, client engagement does not begin with you. It begins with the receptionist.

There's a man by the name of Dr. Ken Minkoff from Harvard University who had a period where he traveled the country, working with receptionists on how to create a welcoming environment for clients. Some of that involves dealing with your own potential possibility of compassion fatigue. Social service workers are vulnerable, attorneys, especially criminal attorneys who read bad stuff.

Emergency care workers, medical professionals, the clergy are vulnerable, volunteers, soldiers on the battlefield. Police officers are vulnerable to compassion fatigue, as are teachers. Ever notice that sometimes teachers become social workers or counselors, because they're so impacted by the students that they want to help in great-- in other ways. Firefighters, what makes the firefighter training so unique, unlike any other profession that I



know of, is that during their training, firefighters are taught in case of an emergency save yourself first, and then save your co-workers, and then help others. Nurses are vulnerable to compassion fatigue.

Some of the signs of compassion fatigue includes anger, frustration, and tardiness, exhaustion, depression, feeling hopeless, blaming others, irritability, sleep problems. You might have been triggered by your client's stories and now you're having difficulty sleeping. Rudeness and gossiping, which makes you even more tired. Erosion of idealism-- so, the next time you're in a Zoom meeting with your team or you're sitting in a conference room with your team, I want you to look in the eyes of those workers and the graduate students, the ones who have only been doing this work a little while, and notice how their eyes glow.

Yeah, their eyes glow. That glow is about I want to save the world. But over a period of time, if you listen to enough stories of pain and suffering, your eyes may start to dim. You might have flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, spiritual distress. So in every state, this profession has a different name.

Those who investigate child abuse. And in my town, the organization's called the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services that investigates child abuse. And I used to be a consultant with some of the caseworkers that investigated child abuse. And they would say to me, Mark, I no longer believe in God as much as I used to. And I say, well, what happened?

They say, if there really is a God, then how are there so many children being abused? If you listen to enough stories of trauma, it can shift your world view. I have a colleague that specializes in working with people who are sex abusers, sex offenders. And she says she doesn't trust anybody anymore. And I know that as a 36-year social worker, my wife is a 30-year social worker, we had kids later in life. And we were less comfortable than most people getting babysitters. Because I had three decades of stories in my head about bad things that happen to kids at the hands of babysitters. My wife had all those years.

You know what we did? You know what we did when it was time for babysitters? We'd get a niece from both sides of the family to babysit together. You know how costly that is, two people babysitting at once, because of the stories in our heads about children being abused by babysitters.

So here we have a question. Let's just take the first question. We'll chat. Are you more vulnerable to burnout which is caused by organizational stress, or are you more vulnerable to compassion fatigue? Just answer question number one, if you would? Which are you more vulnerable to, burnout or compassion fatigue?



KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: First answer we have is burnout. Second is compassion fatigue. It looks like it's pretty even. I was going to say maybe a little bit higher. But I think actually compassion fatigue is winning out now over burnout.

MARK SANDERS: I kind of thought so. So all right. So then the next question is, what are some things you do to take care of yourself, to avoid these occupational hazards of burnout and compassion fatigue? How do you take care of you?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: The first answer was run, meditation, music, step back in areas where they can, snuggle with my dog, get my nails done, self-care, exercise, vacation or camp, listen to comedy, laugh, paint, see a counselor, set boundaries.

MARK SANDERS: Yeah. This was a nice-- thank you-- thank you, Kristina. This is a nice range of responses.

I'd like to add to your list. My mentor did a study where they wanted to find out what are the reasons that some professionals in our field are more resilient and have more resistance against burnout and compassion fatigue than others. So they did a study. And they found out that these four factors decrease our risk of burnout and compassion fatigue.

The number one research finding is those of you who laugh the most at home and at work that you have more resilience against burnout and compassion fatigue. You know the resource says that you can reap the benefits of laughter even if nothing is funny? In India, they have what's called these laughing clinics. And there are these individuals who are clinically depressed. They show up every evening in the town square. They do 15 minutes of yoga stretching, and they laugh for 45 minutes. Nothing is funny.

They eat better. They sleep better. They need less medication. There's a brighter outlook on life.

As I mentioned, the research says there's a value of laughing even if nothing is funny. So if you're working from home, every day, at least once a day, I want you to close the door and just simply laugh. If you're going to work every day, when you get off work at 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM, 8, whatever time you get off work, I want you to go to the parking lot and get in your car, lock the door, and look around in both directions.

Make sure nobody's watching. And simply laugh. Even if nothing is funny, laughter has therapeutic benefits for us.

Centering rituals. Those of you who have the most resilience, resistance to burnout and compassion fatigue, you're more likely to engage in what's called daily centering rituals. You do something every day to center yourself.



Maybe you eat your whole lunch hour every day. You take a break, prayer, meditation, quiet time. You do something every day to center yourself. You spend time alone to replenish yourself, remembering your ideals. That is, why you became a helping professional in the first place.

A buddy of mine bought a church that had almost burned to the ground for \$1. It was in the 1990s. And he asked me and his closest friends would we come to the church to repair it because it had almost burned to the ground. I was already burned out then. And I didn't want to go.

But people pay attention at who shows up. I showed up. We repaired the church.

A few months later, he had the first church service. And there were 50 choir members there and 200 visitors. There were 250 of us attending his first church service.

He told us that the family that lived adjacent to the church had a child that recently died. And he asked us would we go into the alley and stand underneath their window and sing to them so they know that somebody cared that they lost a child. So we were in the alley, dust in the alley, dirt in the alley, it was cold in the alley. And I didn't know the words to the song, but I was singing anyway.

It felt so good to be in that alley. Gang members came down the alley. They asked us what we were doing. They joined us in the singing. There was about 260 of us in the alley singing, cold, dirt on my shoes, cold, freezing.

It felt so good to be in the alley. I asked myself, when was the last time you felt this good about giving purely for the sake of giving? It was when I was 22 years old and I got a job as a case manager. And I didn't care anything about my salary. All I wanted to do was help.

Here's what the research says. Those of you who engage in meaningful acts of service, volunteerism, meaningful volunteerism, that you experience less burnout and compassion fatigue than those that don't. Now there's a caveat. The volunteerism has to be meaningful to you. Because if you're a helping professional, the world always has something for you to do. But if it's meaning for you-- in other words, I'd even go so far as to say that if you do trauma-related work, whatever you volunteer to do should have nothing to do with trauma. What the research says is that meaningful acts of service volunteerism replenishes us because it reminds us why we became a helping professional in the first place.

What helps with compassion fatigue? Daily breaks in lunch, healthy boundaries, avoiding triangles, staying out of other people's mess and chaos. Creativity helps with burnout and compassion fatigue. Support from



colleagues that we work with and those that we don't. Support from co-workers, support from a supervisor, family, friends, and mentors, all that helps.

Balance helps. It reads that individuals who are experiencing compassion fatigue are often leading lives that are out of balance, too much focus on giving and not enough on balance. An important part of recovery from compassion fatigue involves putting first things first. So we step away. And we start to look at how we're spending our time. So I read a book. The book is called, *What The Most Successful People Do Before 9:00 AM*. They develop their body before they go to work. They develop their spirit. They improve their relationships.

You know why? Because people get tired after they get off work. And so they found that people who start exercising routines are more likely to be successful if they exercise in the morning. Develop their body, develop their spirit, and improve their relationships.

I worked with a man, I counseled a man who was crying because he didn't feel like he spent enough time at home, enough time with his son. He had a full-time and a part-time job. Except every morning at 8 o'clock, he would drive his son to school, kindergarten through 12th grade, father and son against the world. They had 45 minutes together every day for 12 years. Then I became curious. Why are people more successful in the morning? Because people lose discipline at night. Most affairs happen at night. Most relapses happen at night. We turn to drug use, that is. Most diet breaking-- when people say, let's go to have that pizza, it's never 7:00 in the morning. It's always midnight.

Most gambling debt happens at night. Return to cigarette smoking more often happens at night, bad arguments. Have you noticed, we've been on television, lots of riots since COVID-19. They're usually peaceful during the day, and the more tired people get later at night.

Most break ups happen at night. Murders are more likely to happen at night. People lose discipline at night. Get the balance in in the morning.

Then I read a book called *What The Most Successful People Do On Weekends*. They get up early. You see, some of you stay in bed on Saturday and Sunday until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. And then you're angry Monday morning because you realize you stayed in bed so long you didn't really have a weekend.

They get some of their weekend chores done during the week so they can have fun on the weekends. They create family rituals which can last a lifetime. If I can give you an example, both of my grandfathers were cooks.



So my one grandfather, every Friday night, would do a fish fry. I remembered that for 50 years. And the other grandfather would cook breakfast for us on Sunday mornings. I remembered that for 50 years.

They do three activities that are meaningful or fun that last two to three hours, the last one occurring on Sunday evenings after 6:00 PM so that they know that they actually had a weekend. You see, I have a moment of clarity and epiphany. There are 52 weekends in the year. And based upon my age, and I've looked at the Department of Public Health statistics on how long most African-American men live.

There are 52 weekends in a year. If I live the average length that African-American men live, I have about 450 weekends left. If you're white and female in America, and you're 40 years old, and most white women in America live to be about 80, you have about 2,000 weekends left. That's it. If I live as long as most African-American men live, I have nine summers left-- nine summers. You see our time has to count. We spend all of our time changing the world. We have a right to enjoy life as well.

OK. So we only have so many vacation days per year. So I encourage you to periodically take a nine hour vacation. What could you do in nine hours to replenish yourself? If I could just give you one example.

I live in Chicago. It takes me 75 minutes to get to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. So one time I went to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and watched the Marquette University basketball game. Then I had lunch. And then I went to a bookstore. And then I watched a Milwaukee Buck basketball game. I was home in nine hours, one of the best days of my life. Yeah, nine hour vacations can replenish us.

You know, Mark Twain said, when you get up in the morning, the first thing you should do is eat a live frog every day. He said then the rest of your day is guaranteed to be better than that, because that's the most disgusting thing you'll do all day. And what the live frog represents are things that we procrastinate on.

So the suggestion from Brian Tracy, who wrote a book on time management, is that the things that we procrastinate on the most are the things that we should get done early so that we can have more fun and enjoy the rest of the day. For some of you, I bet it's your paperwork. So I'd like to ask you to take a piece of paper and letter it A, B, C, and D. A, B, C, and D. Take a moment. A, and B, and C, and D. I'm going to give you a task.

If you ask me what's most important to me, without blinking, I would tell you that my children are most important to me. And yet I can't tell you how many times I walk past one of my children to see if one of you sent me an email or called me on my phone. One day I was in downtown Chicago, and I was headed home to do more paperwork.



And the cab driver looked at me through the rear view mirror and said, can I tell you a story? I said sure. He said, one day a man got in my cab and said roll the windows up. Turn the air conditioner on. Turn the radio off.

Take me to O'Hare Airport. I have a plane to catch. Yes, sir. At one point he said, the passenger said, listen, I'm running late. I'm taking a plane from Chicago to California. If you get me to the airport on time, I'll give you a \$100 tip.

Are you kidding? I can't get a ticket. If I speed, I'll get a ticket. As soon as the cab got close to O'Hare Airport, the exit, they saw a huge gush of black smoke in the air. And the passenger said turn on the radio. Let's hear what happened.

And they turned on the radio. And what they heard was that there was an American Airlines flight that had just crashed coming out of the runway. And everybody on the plane went up and died.

So he sat back in his seat. He looked at his ticket. And he saw that that was the flight he was supposed to be on.

So said in a low voice, I want you to take this cab and turn it around and take me to Union train station. He said, oh, you want to take a train from here to California? He said no, I'm taking the train from here to Ohio.

That's where my family's at. This has put things in perspective for me. It's not about working all the time. It's about loving and spending time with people who you love.

I don't know how he knew to tell me that story. But I didn't do any paperwork that night. I spent time with my three-year-old son. So under A, B, C, and D, I'd like to ask you to write down the four things that are most important to you in the world. What are the four things that are most important to you? We'll take about 30 more seconds, the four things that are most important to you in the world.

OK. Next to each one, I'd like to ask you to write yes or no to the question. Next to each one, does each of them receive the time and attention from you that they deserve? Does each of them receive the time and attention from you that they deserve, a yes or no next to each one.

Would you put in chat the number of yeses you have? How many yeses?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: First person that answered had two yeses. Three, one, four, three, zero, two, four, two, one, one, two, zero, two.

MARK SANDERS: Kristina, the average across the country is somewhere between a 1.5 and a 2. You see, my friends, that you and I can save the world



in our current role and lose everything that's really important to us. Because we can put all the time in the world into, like, helping others and lose everything that's close. Relationships that we really would like to nurture, but we're so busy doing the work that we do 9:00 to 5:00.

So it's time to manage time. This is a time management grid developed by Stephen Covey. It really speaks to how we spend our time. In the upper left-hand corner, these are activities that we engage in that are urgent and important. Crises, emergencies, deadlines, a client that wants to end their own life, for many of us we spend all day at work going from crisis to crisis to crisis.

In the upper right-hand corner, these are activities that we engage in that are important, not urgent, most important. These include our purpose, our mission in life, important relationships that we want to nurture, long range planning, goals that we're setting.

That book-- what book? Most people are writing a book, often an autobiography. But they're so busy at work that when they come home to write the book, they're too tired to write. So it's collecting dust on the shelf. In the lower left-hand corner, these are activities that we engage in that are urgent but not important. It includes other people's crises. You see, I know that some of you, like me, if a friend calls, you'll help them with their problems. That's not a problem.

The problem is that when word gets out, and you start hearing from your friend's friend friend's friend that they want you to solve their problems, can you help? I heard you were a counselor. And they always called at the wrong time. You've been watching American Idol all season. They call one minute before the finale, can you help?

Interruptions, some phone calls, I imagine that all of you have taken phone calls that were simply a waste of time. As a matter of fact, I've just reconnected with all of my college and high school friends since COVID-19. And to be honest, the ones that I talk to the least are the ones who talk without pausing.

You know that friend that talks and talks and talks. And you being the counselor, you're waiting for the pause. But they never pause. And they talk to you for an hour. But they don't ask you anything about yourself. They just want to talk and talk and talk.

Some meetings are a waste of time. As a matter of fact, you ever gone to a meeting where the most important thing you discussed was who was going to bring the donuts and the coffee? There are some organizations that have one sit down meeting a month. And the rest of their meetings they stand up, because they say that people can only stand so long.



And then, in the lower left-hand corner, these are activities that we engage in that are unimportant and not urgent, time wasters, like watching shows like *The Real Housewives of Alaska*. Yeah, where it's cold all the time. Or shows like *Snooki* has a baby, moves to Mississippi, and leaves *Jersey Shore*. I'm making it up. But you get what I'm saying.

Snoop Dogg and Martha Stewart cook some quiche together, just wasting time, reading bad novels written by writers that don't write all that well, confusing activity with progress. Here's what the research says. Most of us spend most of our time during the day in box number one, urgent and important, going from crisis to crisis to crisis at work.

And then as a result of that, we have a lot of adrenaline pumping through our bodies when we go home in the evening. So we start solving problems of people at home really, really quickly with all that adrenaline running through our bodies. And now we're tired.

We sit. We watch TV, frivolous TV, unimportant TV. Have you ever fallen asleep in a chair at home because you're so exhausted? But over the course of a lifetime, what often gets neglected are our items in box number two in the upper right-hand corner, things that are important. Not urgent, most important, like our personal mission statement.

So let's take a moment and write a mission statement that can guide our work. If you have a pen, please work along with me. I'm going to ask you to finish this sentence.

My mission in my community is. Would you take a moment to finish that sentence? My mission in my community is. We'll take about one minute. We would like to hear from a few people. What's your mission in your community?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To live with intention, to make the community a better place to live and be. Doing my best to help others.

MARK SANDERS: OK. Fantastic. Now when you finish this, then, right here. My mission at home is. So you've been working all day. What's your mission at home? And what do you see, Kristina?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Sorry. To be a good neighbor, to make meaningful connections. To be the best parent that they can be, or the best spouse or partner they can be.

MARK SANDERS: You know what that means? It means that even though you've been working all day saving human lives that you have to be ready when you enter home if you're going to be the best parent you can be, the



best spouse you can be, the best partner you can be. Very good. Here's the third stem. My mission at work is. What's your mission at work?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To not bring it home.

MARK SANDERS: Ah, that's interesting. Yeah.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To ensure my client's needs are met within my capacity.

MARK SANDERS: Great.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To be a consummate professional and help others. Helping others to be successful. To have a productive day.

MARK SANDERS: This is awesome, so one more.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To be at peace.

MARK SANDERS: Oh, my goodness. I'd gladly take that. So they say that when you write a mission statement, it should be so small that it should be able to fit on the back of a business card so that you really know it. It should excite you and involve many areas of your life.

I've written two in my life. The first one was to help individuals and organizations reach their potential through speaking, training, and consulting. Blah, blah, blah. That could be the mission statement of anybody who does the work that I do.

I wrote a second mission statement and it came out like this. To leave every room I enter better than how I found it, to leave every room that I enter better than I found it. Practically, it means that if I'm giving a training somewhere, I clean up after myself. But what it really means is that I go in lots of rooms where people feel pessimism, especially now during COVID-19.

So my purpose is to uplift. And then I have to remember that after somebody at a training says Mark, you're a great guy, that home is a room, too. And I have to leave my home plate better than I found it, nurture the relationships that are important to me.

So now you have two minutes. You just wrote about your mission at home, your mission in the community, your mission at work. I invite you to take those three and merge them into one and come up with one mission statement for your life that's small enough to fit on the back of a business card. Take a moment if you would. I'll make this make sense if you do this. You have two minutes. What's your overall life mission?

If you have it, feel free to put it in chat. What's your mission?



KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To do my best.

MARK SANDERS: Wow, how about that?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To always be the best I can be. To serve my purpose in life. To help and encourage others to see the good in themselves. To live a meaningful life. To show up. To see others more clearly and as a reflection of myself. To do my best in everything I do and know my limitations.

MARK SANDERS: Nice and short and sweet, very good. OK. So they say that the two most important days of a person's life is one, the day they're born, and number two, the day they find out why they were born. When we discover our mission, our purpose in life, what a glorious day.

So my mentor, my mentor, gets done, like, 30 times more than most people. He achieves 30 times more than most people. He has the same 24 hours in the day. But he gets so much done. We all know people like that. So one day I visited his office, his home office. And I saw part of how he gets so much done. So most of his requests come in through either his phone or his computer. And he has on the wall above his phone and his computer his personal mission statement.

He has above his phone and his computer a sign that says, life is not an emergency. And then the third thing above his phone and his computer is a hand with a puppet string. So I said, why do you have those three things? He says, I keep my mission on my wall. Because when requests come in, I ask myself, is this request lined up with my mission? And if it's not, he refers the request to someone else. So he's being guided by his personal mission statement.

Even if you can't honor your mission statement 24/7 365, I bet you you can honor it on a weekend and in the evenings when you come home from work. And I said, well, why the sign that says life is not an emergency? He says, people are always calling me with emergencies.

So I remind myself that whereas I might choose to help them with their emergency, my life is not in this state of emergency. I refuse to live my life in a state of emergency. And that sign reminds me of that.

And why the hand with the puppet string? To remind myself that when requests come in, I'm not a puppet. You can't just dangle me in any direction that you want. Because I have a mission and a purpose. I'm going to replenish myself in the evening and on weekends.

So let me ask, as we begin to wind down, does anybody have a comment or a question? Comment or a question?



KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Brenda says very motivating.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you, Brenda.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Let's see if we have-- we didn't have any questions in Q&A. Claire says thank you for helping me to look inward.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you, Claire.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Claudia said very inspiring. Valerie says the best training on this topic.

MARK SANDERS: Ah, thank you, Valerie.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Very inspirational. Many people are thanking you and saying how helpful this is. I can't read everyone's names as they're going through.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you, Steph. Thank you, Kristina. So I have a question for the group. And what I've learned over the years is less about anything that I teach and more about the action you take.

So here's the question. You can put your response in chat. What's the action you're going to take when this webinar's over? As a result of the time that we spent together today, what will you do with this information? What's your plan?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Share it with others. To start to implement the things they've learned. To focus on myself and family. To focus on my missions and act on them.

To be more intentional with my time. To share and thank you for this seed that I will plant and continue to-- I think it said grow or water or something. Resume my Artist's Way classwork.

MARK SANDERS: Paint, draw. That's right. All of us were born an artist. My mentor's mentor was dying. And he called my mentor and asked if my mentor would fly from Florida, where he lived, to Kalamazoo, Michigan, to sit near his mentor's bedside to help him write one more article before he died. My mentor got on the plane. And he flew from Florida to Kalamazoo, Michigan.

And he said to his mentor, I love you. But this is really strange. You've written 400 articles. You revolutionized behavioral health through your pen. Why are you writing this article on your death bed?

And his mentor quoted that philosopher who said that each of us dies twice. He said the first time you die, it's a physical death. They'll have a funeral for



you. And the last time you die is the last time someone on Earth speaks your name. So if you keep helping people, there'll be people speaking your name for a long time.

Thank you so much for all that you do to support recovery. And enjoy the rest of your day. Thank you.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Thanks, Mark. Have a great day, everyone.