

## How Burnout Makes Us Less Creative



### Warm up:

- Do you understand the term burnout? What does it mean?
- Nowadays more people are taking time off due to stress. Why do you think that is?
- Do you know anyone who has suffered from a burnout?
- Do you feel guilty if you haven't been productive enough during the day?
- Do you like working under pressure?
- Have you ever worked over the weekend to meet a deadline?
- Do you think employees should be banned from sending emails and working outside of work hours?
- Have you used any apps to organise your time better (i.e *task apps, calendar apps, time management apps*)? If yes, which apps? Did they help?
- Do you have a good work-life balance?
- Do you ever delegate tasks when you are too busy? (*at home or at work*)



### 1. Write down tips to improve work-life balance and compare with your partner:

.....

.....

.....

.....



### 2. What do you think of the quote below? What do you think a "knowledge worker" is?



*'Today, knowledge workers are facing a big challenge. We're expected to be constantly productive and creative in equal measure.'*

- Rahaf Harfoush



3. You are going to watch a video which contains the following vocabulary. Match the vocabulary on the left with its definition on the right:

- |                 |                                                      |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| a. obsession    | 1. the opposite, less good/popular side of something |
| b. literally    | 2. to wait for something in fear                     |
| c. to indicate  | 3. to learn or do a lot in a short period of time    |
| d. consistent   | 4. the feeling that you have good qualities          |
| e. to dread     | 5. to change continually                             |
| f. to cram      | 6. something done the same way over time             |
| g. flipside     | 7. something that you can't stop thinking about      |
| h. self-worth   | 8. to take something apart                           |
| i. to fluctuate | 9. someone who often stays up late                   |
| j. night owl    | 10. to show/to point out                             |
| k. to dismantle | 11. completely / no exaggeration                     |



4. Watch the video *How burnout makes us less creative by Rahaf Harfoush*<sup>1</sup> and answer the following questions:

- a) Harfoush says that she 'suffered an episode of burnout.' What were some of the symptoms of this episode?
- b) What criticisms does Harfoush make regarding how companies adapted from an industrial based economy to a knowledge based economy?
- c) According to Harfoush knowledge workers are expected to be both productive and creative. What is the problem with this?
- d) How much of their vacation leave does the average American worker take ?
- e) According to Harfoush, what is the flipside of the idea of 'the American Dream'?

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dvhu2OK7ffg&ab\\_channel=TED](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dvhu2OK7ffg&ab_channel=TED)



5. Harfoush says we need to ask ourselves these 4 questions to make positive changes. Answer these questions and then discuss with a partner.

- Does being busy make you feel valuable?
- Who do you hold up as an example of success?
- Where did your ideas of work ethic come from?
- How much of who you are is linked to what you do?



6. Discuss the following with your class or partner:

- What did you think about Harfoush's video?
- Are you a night owl or an early bird?
- Are you a creative person? If so what inspires your creativity?
- What is the last creative thing you did? When did you do it? If it's been a long time, why is that?
- (If you have children) What creative things have you seen your children doing? Do you feel more creative around them?
- If you received 500 dollars for coming up with the best solution to an organisational problem, do you think you would be more or less creative?
- The founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics once said "We fail forward to success". What do you think she meant by this? Have you ever "failed forward"?