



## Burning Brightly or Burning Out?

Nearly a half-million teachers left the teaching profession this year. Many left because they're experiencing burnout—frustrated by long hours, endless paperwork, discipline issues, class size and minimal administrative support. Not everyone who feels burnout leaves; some tough it out and others switch schools. The impact on individual and systemic health (the loss of beginning teachers costs the United States up to \$2.2 billion annually<sup>\*</sup>) is profound.

<sup>\*</sup> Haynes, Mariana. *On the Path to Equity: Improving the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers*. Alliance for Excellent Education, July 2014.

## Are you experiencing burnout?

Is your passion for teaching burning brightly or nearly out? Take this quiz to find out.

Indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with these statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “I strongly disagree” and 5 being “I strongly agree.” Total your score.

I often do not feel like going to work.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

I have stayed at home several days because I felt unable to go to work.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

I find it difficult to concentrate on and complete job-related tasks.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

My workload is overwhelming.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

I am unable or feel inadequate to complete the tasks I am assigned.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

I feel disconnected from my students and colleagues.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

I have more than one hostile relationship with co-workers.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

School often irritates me.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

I have experienced insomnia, digestive disorders, headaches and/or heart palpitations.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

I often feel professionally inadequate.

*strongly disagree*    1        2        3        4        5        *strongly agree*

### Total Score

If your score is:

**40-50 POINTS** Burnout detected!

You may be feeling disconnected from your students, colleagues or community. Perhaps you no longer see your daily accomplishments. Do you feel emotionally or physically exhausted? These are signs of burnout. Although it’s always easier to prevent burnout than to address it after it has occurred, all is not lost. Remember why you chose teaching? Reconnect with the motivations you had when you first started. Keep a daily reflection journal of successes and joys. Take a guilt-free day off to pamper yourself when necessary.

**30-39 POINTS** The embers of your passion for teaching need stoking! Sign up for professional development right away. Join the Teaching Tolerance community. Our online communities can provide allies to help you through the slump. Follow us on Twitter and “like” us on Facebook, and then head over to [tolerance.org](http://tolerance.org) for blogs from fellow anti-bias educators and professional development opportunities.

**20-29 POINTS** Prevention is worth a pound of cure! Although you may be safe from teacher burnout now, prevention is key to avoiding it later. Reach out to colleagues about concerns or issues you may be confronting. Find a mentor and identify the events and experiences that are weighing heavily on you. Together, come up with a plan to put vision back into your work. Whenever possible, leave your work at school—but don’t wait until the last minute to catch up on grading papers.

**19 OR FEWER POINTS** No burnout here! You love everything about teaching. Be sure to monitor your feelings. List what you love about your job. Plan to avoid burnout with an action plan. Make sure you’re doing everything you can to remain connected to your students, colleagues and practice while taking care of yourself.

**STAY CONNECTED**

STAY INSPIRED AND CONNECTED WITH THESE 11 TT RESOURCES!

[tolerance.org/join-our-community](http://tolerance.org/join-our-community)

# Bypassing Burnout

Maintain your pep and bypass burnout with these tips.

**ADDRESS ISSUES IN A TIMELY MANNER.** Need a colleague to step up? Need support from an administrative leader? Have a student whose behavior derails lessons daily? Don't be afraid to speak up. Teachers who seek to resolve problems report higher job satisfaction and engagement, and are less cynical.

**SEEK PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** One way to experience personal achievement is through learning. Is there an area you'd like to know more about? Do you want to add skills to your assessment repertoire? Would you like tools to strengthen students' social emotional growth? Developing yourself will increase job commitment.

**LIST YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.** Focus on *all* of your achievements—big and small. Take a moment every day to make a list and bask in the little things you do for students daily.

**SET SMART GOALS.** Smart goals are specific, motivating, achievable, results-driven and trackable. Seeking to reach just one student may not be challenging enough, but setting the goal that all students achieve perfect scores on their end-of-course exams is too distant and unrealistic to fuel a sense of success. Daily or weekly goals that you can feel good about can be a key to avoiding burnout.

**UPDATE YOUR CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES.** Using new resources, instructional strategies or assessments can keep you passionate, involved and engaged.



Teaching Tolerance has free online professional development modules that you can complete independently or with colleagues. Start with Teaching Tolerance's Anti-bias Framework.

[tolerance.org/seminar/teaching-tolerance-s-anti-bias-framework](https://tolerance.org/seminar/teaching-tolerance-s-anti-bias-framework)

Check out *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. Create an integrated learning plan. Take a look at *Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education*, and incorporate some new anti-bias practices into your classroom this school year.

Don't forget: *Critical Practices* also has professional development modules.

[perspectives.tolerance.org](https://perspectives.tolerance.org)

[tolerance.org/critical-practices](https://tolerance.org/critical-practices)

[tolerance.org/seminar/critical-practices-anti-bias-teaching](https://tolerance.org/seminar/critical-practices-anti-bias-teaching)

# Burning Brightly Benefits Everyone

When teachers stay, they enrich their students, colleagues and communities.

## Students gain ...

- reliable, quality instruction.
- consistent disciplinary structure.
- caring advocates.
- academic growth.
- social emotional stability.
- connection to curriculum, school, peers and teachers.

## Colleagues gain ...

- dependable colleagues and allies.
- stable approaches to discipline.
- academic progress with students.
- social emotional stability for students.
- parent and community trust.

## Communities gain ...

- trust in schools and educators.
- advocates for their children.
- academic and social emotional stability.
- quality, consistent educators.
- time and money for substitutes and/or a replacement.
- accreditation and rigor.