



The 5 Levels of Burnout

A Guide for Mid-Career Women

Burnout isn't a personal failure – it's a physiological and emotional response to sustained overload. Your exhaustion is a *signal*, not a weakness. Use this framework to recognize where you are and identify supportive next steps.

Stage	What You Might Notice	Your Next Steps	How Coaching Can Support
STAGE 1: HONEYMOON PHASE <i>"I'm excited about this opportunity!"</i>	☐ High drive ☐ Elevated standards ☐ Subtle tension ☐ Overextending yourself ☐ Skipping rest	☐ Steady yourself ☐ Begin recovery rhythms ☐ Reduce one unnecessary commitment	• Coaching can help you set sustainable rhythms before strain deepens
STAGE 2: ONSET OF STRESS <i>"Some days are definitely harder than others."</i>	☐ Lingering fatigue ☐ Irritability ☐ Harder to focus ☐ Emotional heaviness ☐ Early sleep disruptions	☐ Ideal intervention window ☐ Strengthen one boundary ☐ Add a decompression ritual	• Coaching is suitable here to interrupt patterns and prevent escalation
STAGE 3: CHRONIC STRESS <i>"This is how it is now."</i>	☐ Task paralysis ☐ Sleep disruptions ☐ Consistent overwhelm ☐ Feeling brittle or thin ☐ Reduced patience	☐ Danger zone ☐ Reduce demands urgently ☐ Seek supportive guidance	• Coaching can help reduce overwhelm and rebuild supportive structures
STAGE 4: BURNOUT <i>"I don't know how much longer I can do this."</i>	☐ Deep exhaustion ☐ Withdrawal ☐ Impaired coping ☐ Rising self-doubt ☐ Emotions feel muted or flat	☐ Requires intervention ☐ Contact a clinician ☐ Consider protected leave	• Coaching is appropriate alongside medical or mental health support
STAGE 5: HABITUAL BURNOUT <i>"I can't remember what 'fine' feels like."</i>	☐ Chronic exhaustion ☐ Cognitive fog ☐ Numbness ☐ Persistently low capacity ☐ Identity erosion	☐ Immediate care recommended ☐ Partner with medical support ☐ Protect rest fiercely	• Coaching can support rebuilding, but cannot replace clinical care

→ **READY TO RECOVER YOUR LIGHT?** Contact liz@northernlightscoaching or click [here](#) to book a discovery call.