Burnout-Proof Snapshot Self Check-In

A gentle self-reflection too for building sustainable change

The Burnout-Proof Self Check-In is a simple assessment designed to help you measure the skills that protect you from burnout, not just the symptoms you're trying to escape.

Getting out of burnout is the first step, but "not terrible" isn't the goal. Most of us want to **thrive**—doing meaningful work, carrying real responsibility, and riding life's ups and downs without being overwhelmed.

I made this check-in because so many people are walking around thinking, *"I'm not okay… but I don't know what to do about it."* It's easy to point to the external stressors (and you're not wrong), but the inside work can feel like a mystery. Burnout recovery isn't like building a birdhouse with clear steps and an easy to recognize finished product. Most of us were never taught what "thriving" even looks like. This tool helps you **name what matters, find your starting point, and choose your next step with clarity.**

This check-in is for you if you are ready to **move forward without the fears that have previously held you back**. Fear that trying something new will knock you off course or fear that you will fall back into the same patterns that burned you out before. Maybe you are afraid that you aren't cut out for something (leadership, parenthood, marriage, physical fitness, owning a business, advocacy, etc.) even though your heart is pulling you toward it. Or perhaps your heart is so broken by the loss of something you loved that you can't imagine ever loving anything else again.

These elements are the core foundations of being burnout-proof: **the essential skills that keep you steady in the toughest storms.** Strengthening even one of them reinforces the whole system. When you're solid in all of them, you don't just avoid burnout, you become genuinely **unstoppable**.

How to use: Rate each statement based on what feels true *most days lately.* This isn't a test, it's a mirror. The goal is noticing, not perfection.
1 = not very available right now
10 = supportive and accessible most days

Steady in the Storm

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When stress spikes, I have a reliable way to calm my body down										
When my mind starts spinning, I can redirect my attention										
I can feel hard emotions without getting swept away by them										

Consistency Without Shame

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I fall off track, I restart gently instead of quitting										
I make progress using small steps I can repeat										

Identity and Story

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My daily choices match the person I want to become										
When I notice an unhelpful story in my mind, I can shift it										

Boundaries and Time Leadership

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My calendar reflects what matters most (most weeks)										
I focus on what I can control instead of getting stuck in what I can't										
I protect time to recover after hard days										

Support and Connection

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ask for support when I need it										
When support is offered, I let myself receive it										

Body and Joy Foundations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I support my body in small consistent ways (sleep, nutrition, movement, hydration)										
I make space for joy and pleasure, not just responsibility										

How to Use Your Results (with compassion)

First: take a breath. These scores aren't a grade, they're information. A snapshot of where you are *right now.*

1) Notice what stands out most.
Circle the one area that grabbed your attention immediately. This may be one that felt tender, obvious, or important.

2) If you scored low (even a 1), you're not failing. You're exhausted.
A score of **1** doesn't mean "you're bad at this."
It often means: *you've been carrying too much for too long,* and this skill hasn't had a chance to develop yet. You're not behind, you're human.

3) Find the tiniest proof that this isn't hopeless.

- *When has this been even slightly better—like a 2?*
- *What helps, even a little?*
- *What's one moment I handled better than I used to?*

This is about spotting your *starting point*, not judging the gap.

4) Define what "one point higher" would look like.
Don't aim for a 10. Aim for a **2**.
What would be different if this area felt just 5% more supported?
What's one small action, boundary, mindset shift, or request for help that could move the needle?

5) Pick ONE area to focus on first.
You don't become burnout-proof by fixing everything at once.
You become burnout-proof by strengthening the foundation. One small, repeatable skill at a time.

Case Studies

Sometimes it helps to see how other people have applied these ideas in real life. You're not alone in your struggles and seeing how it all comes together can make the next steps feel clearer and more doable.

Below are a few case studies to help you connect the dots.

Case Study 1: "I Thought It Would Get Easier by Now"

Jen is 51. Her kids are older, one is in college, and the other is driving and mostly independent. For years, she told herself she was in the "busy season," and once things calmed down, she'd finally have time to feel like herself again.

But now that the pace of parenting has shifted… she doesn't feel lighter. She feels untethered.

Her body is giving her new feedback she doesn't know how to interpret:

- blood pressure creeping up
- migraines that come out of nowhere
- peri-menopausal sleep changes
- pre-diabetes on the lab report (that rattles her)
- a steady fatigue that doesn't respond to "just get more rest"

She's still capable and reliable at work, but she feels like she's constantly falling behind. Her energy has changed, and she can't push the way she used to.

And then there's the background guilt. Jen follows the news and cares deeply about all the suffering in the world. She donates, signs petitions, reads articles about injustice and climate and healthcare and education… and then feels this crushing sense of *I'm not doing enough.* She feels like she's failing the world by not helping "the causes" more.

At home, her marriage is fine. It's safe and functional. They've done the hard years together, but now that the kids aren't the center of everything, Jen realizes "I don't really know how to do life as a duo." There's no shared hobby. No play. No spark. Mostly logistics, TV, and exhaustion.

And more nights than she'd like to admit, she ends the day with a familiar routine: a glass (or two) of wine and some Oreos in the pantry. Not a crisis… but enough to make her quietly disappointed in herself.

She tells me:

“I’m not falling apart… but I don’t feel like I’m living. And I’m scared this is just what the rest of my life will feel like.”

So we start with the **Burnout-Proof Self Check-In**, because Jen doesn’t need another vague instruction like *“take care of yourself.”* She needs clarity.

She rated herself lowest in the foundations that create a steady inner life:

- **Steady in the Storm:** She doesn’t have reliable ways to calm her body when stress spikes, and once her mind starts spinning it’s hard to interrupt the spiral.
- **Boundaries & Time Leadership:** Her calendar reflects responsibility more than what matters most, and setting limits still triggers guilt.
- **Body & Joy Foundations:** Her basic body supports are inconsistent, and joy has quietly disappeared from the system.

Jen doesn’t feel shamed by this, she feels **seen**. Because suddenly, her “bad habits” make sense. They aren’t the problem. They’re the **symptom** of a nervous system trying to self-soothe.

Instead of trying to overhaul everything, Jen chooses one focus:
making space for joy and pleasure—by raising that score by one point.

Not turning into a new person. Just rebuilding the part of her life that forgot how to feel good.

Her “one point higher” plan is simple:

- a 10-minute walk after dinner *before* the pantry moment
- a weekly plan for one tiny pleasure (music, bookstore, stretching class)
- one honest sentence to her partner: *“I miss having fun with you. Can we try something new?”*

Nothing dramatic. Just small, steady steps. And within a month, Jen isn’t magically “fixed”—but she’s different.

She sleeps a little better.
She feels less trapped in her own mind.
She begins to trust her body again instead of resenting it.
And she stops living as if joy is a luxury she hasn’t earned.

Because what Jen needed wasn’t more pressure. She needed a foundation.

Reflection Questions

1. What part of Jen's story feels most familiar right now?
2. If your body has been sending signals lately, what have you been ignoring or minimizing?
3. What's your version of "wine or Oreos"—the thing you reach for when you need comfort?
4. Which foundation skill would help you the most in this season of life?
5. What would "one point higher" look like this week?

Case Study 2: "I Don't Even Know What I Need"

Maya is a 43-year-old physician and mom of two. On paper, she's doing fine. She's respected at work, her patients love her, and she's holding everything together.

But inside, she feels brittle.

She keeps thinking *I'm not in full burnout anymore… but I'm not okay either.*
She isn't crying in her car every day. She's functioning. She's not falling apart.

But she's also not living.

She's constantly bracing for the next thing—another schedule change, another email, another family need, or another crisis at work. Even on her 'days off,' her nervous system stays on high alert. Life has felt like a bad game of Monopoly over the past few years, and she just can't handle another 'go to jail, do not pass go, do not collect 100 dollars' card.

When she finally decided to invest in support, she told me:

"I don't even know what I want to work on.
I just know I can't keep doing life like this."

And honestly, it makes sense. Maya can clearly name the external stressors:

- understaffing
- the EMR
- productivity pressure
- constant emotional labor
- the feeling of being responsible for everything and everyone

But when it comes to **inside work**, she feels lost. Like she's staring at a messy room and doesn't even know where to start cleaning.

So we began with the **Burnout-Proof Self Check-In.**

Maya expects it to tell her she needs better time management.

Her lowest scores aren't about productivity they're about her foundation:

- She scores a **1** in **asking for support when she needs it**
- A **2** in **making space for recovery after hard days**
- And a **3** in **restarting gently instead of quitting when she falls off track**

She pauses and says something simple but powerful:
"Oh. I'm not lazy. I'm unsupported."

For the first time in a long time, Maya doesn't feel broken.
She feels… **clear.** Not because everything is solved, but because now she has a map.

Instead of trying to fix her entire life, she chooses one small focus:
raising her recovery score from a 2 to a 3.

Not a total reinvention. Just one point.

That week, her "one point higher" plan is tiny:

- 10 minutes of silence in the car before walking into her house
- one boundary phrase she practices once a day
- one honest check-in with herself: *What do I need right now?*

Nothing dramatic. No big overhaul.

But something shifts.

Within a few weeks, Maya wasn't just surviving the hard parts of her life—she's meeting them differently. She's less reactive. More steady. More resilient. The storms still come… but they stop flattening her.

And that's what burnout-proof actually means:

Not a perfect life.
A stronger foundation.

Reflection Questions

1. Which part of Maya's story feels familiar?

2. If you had to pick one “foundation skill” to build first, which would it be?
3. What would “one point higher” look like for you this week?