



## Transcript:

# Tired, Wired, Mired and Inspired! Strategies For Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue in Harm Reduction Efforts

Presenter: Mark Sanders  
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ANN E. SCHENSKY: Hi, everyone, and welcome. We will get started in just a minute or so. All right, we will get started. Again, welcome, everyone. Our webinar today is Tired, Wired, Mired, and Inspired! Strategies for Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue. Our facilitator and trainer today is Mark Sanders. This webinar is brought to you by the Great Lakes PTTC and SAMHSA, the Great Lakes ATTC, MHTTC, and PTTC are funded by SAMHSA 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 for SAMHSA.

The Great Lakes PTTC and the PTTC Network believe that words matter, and we use affirming language to promote the application of evidence-based and culturally-informed practices. We have a couple of housekeeping details for you today. If you are having technical issues, please individually message either Stephanie Behlman or Kristina Spannauer in the chat section at the bottom of your screen and they'll be happy to help you.

If you have questions for our speaker, please put them in the Q&A section also at the bottom of the screen, and our speaker will respond to the questions. We will be using automated transcriptions during today's webinar. You will also be directed to a link at the end of this presentation to a very short survey. And we would really appreciate it if you could take the time to fill it out. It takes about three minutes, and it's how we report back to SAMHSA.

The recorded webinar and slides and any resources will be posted on our-- I apologize-- our PTTC website, and it takes about 7 to 10 days. Certificates of attendance will also be sent out to those who attend the full session. They will be sent via email, and they can also take about 7 to 10 days. If you'd like to see what else we're up to, feel free to follow us on social media.

And we are excited today to have Mark Sanders as our presenter. Mark is a state project manager for the Great Lakes MHTTC, ATTC, and PTTC in Illinois. He is also an international speaker, trainer, and consultant in Behavioral Health field. His work has reached thousands throughout the United States, Europe, Canada, the Caribbean, and the British Isles. And we



are excited to have you as our facilitator today, and I'm going to turn it over to you.

MARK SANDERS: Thank you, Ann, Kristina, Stephanie for assisting us today, and good afternoon, everyone. So about four years ago, I was flying in from Arizona to Chicago where I live, and I promised the passenger next to me that I would tell every group this story. And I'm sitting next to a man with six Purple Hearts. And how do you earn a Purple Heart? I'm glad you asked. Bravery. He was about 90 years old, a World War II veteran. He says, Mark, what do you do?

I said I speak to counselors, and case managers, and recovery specialists, and harm reductionists, and people who help others for a living. He told me to tell you thank you for your service. I imagine that some of you have seen the sitcom Monk. Monk is living proof that a human being can have a lot of problems and still be successful. He's like a walking DSM-5. Monk has obsessive-compulsive disorder, a fear of heights, a fear of germs, a fear dark rooms, and yet he is the world's greatest private eye.

I've watched two episodes. The first episode of Monk that I watched he was on a plane, and he hadn't flown since he was nine years old, so he's trembling in the air. He's sitting next to a salesman. When the plane landed, the salesman thought that Monk was so odd, he demanded his business card back. And luckily Monk has his assistant. Everyone in the world can use an assistant like Monk's assistant. The world thinks he's odd. She understands Monk. Second episode I watched, his brother called. The assistant answered the phone. Monk you never told me you had a brother.

Hang up. I haven't seen my brother in seven years. I haven't talked to my brother in seven years. Hang up, he'll stop calling. And three weeks went by, and Monk's brother never stopped calling. So finally, she picked up again, and the brother said there's an emergency. I need to see my brother, Monk, right away. So she dragged Monk over, and as soon as she met his brother, she felt like she understood Monk better.

The brother had a psychiatric condition called agoraphobia, the fear of the marketplace. He hadn't been outside in seven years. No wonder Monk hadn't seen his brother. The door was open, and being the charming and convincing person that she is, Monk's assistant took his brother's hand, and she was leading him outside for the first time in seven years. And as soon as he saw daylight, he backed up, and he said I can't go out there.

And she whispered you don't know this, your brother, Monk, he's scared all the time too. What does he have that you don't? And the brother looked at her and said he has you and I don't. He has you. What separates those families, those clients, those communities that you serve from the ones that you don't serve is the fact that the ones that you serve, they have you.



Would you repeat this long quote to yourself? The flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can cause an earthquake in Texas. Would you say that to yourself? The flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can cause an earthquake in Texas? I'm in my 39th year as an alcohol and drug counselor, and people ask me how have you done this work for 39 years? And the answer is recovery. Here is the story, and then we'll get into our content.

It was March of 1986. I was sitting in my office downtown Chicago. The phone rang. A man called me collect. He was in tears. He was crying. He said I need to see a counselor today. I looked in the appointment book. I said I can see you in an hour. He said it will take eight hours. My office is located downtown Chicago on Jackson and State Street. He lived on 103rd Street South. He walked 103 blocks to meet with me. He walked 103 blocks to meet with me. Was he motivated?

He told me he got paid that Friday and spent his paycheck on drugs, so he called me collect at 9:00 o'clock on a Monday morning. He was exhausted. I said are you ready to get help? I'm ready. I said if you leave my office and go and stand on the corner of Jackson and State Street, a bus will appear. Take the bus to the end of the line. At the end of the line, there's a drug treatment center. He said I don't have bus fare. Now, I was about to reach in my pocket and give him bus fare, and then one of my professor's voices came into my head. We're not about charity. We're about helping people help themselves.

Give a man a fish, he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, he eats for a lifetime. Who's ever heard of that before? I reached in my pocket and gave him bus fare, and then I left my desk and waited for the bus. And not only waited for the bus, I asked myself why was I sitting behind a desk and people were dying outside? There are too many counselors sitting behind desks while people are dying outside. So I waited for the bus. The bus appeared. I paid his bus fare, and I said at the end of the line, there's a treatment center.

He came back a year to the day that I gave him that bus fare and he gave it back and said he was grateful for his recovery. What I've learned in my 39 years is that if you help someone with their recovery, eventually, gratitude sets in. If you do prevention work and you stop someone from developing a substance use disorder, eventually, gratitude sets in. And once they become grateful, they start helping people. And then the people they helped start helping people, and those that they helped start helping people.

It really is true that the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil cause an earthquake in Texas, for every little bit you do is magnified. And know that I know that the world cannot pay you enough, can't compensate you enough for this important work that you do. Now, there are three things that are really, really hard. The first is trying to climb a fence that's leaning towards you. Have you ever tried to climb a fence this leaning towards you? That's really hard to do.



A second thing that's really hard to do is to hug a spouse or a partner that's leaning away from you. You ever try to hug a spouse or a partner that's leaning away from you? And the third thing is really hard to do is to give a talk right after lunch, and I know that most of you have just eaten lunch. So would you stand? Take a moment to stand, and in honor of the work that you do, I'm going to give you a one-minute party. And you're going to feel like dancing, but I know you're too professional for that. So move your head from side to side or just sort of sort of stretch for a moment.

And really feel free to stretch because we want you to be awake as we share this important information and have a dialogue with you. So let us begin. I'm going to play an old disco song when dancing and partying was so fun. Alexa, play Get Down On It by Kool And The Gang.

ALEXA: Get Down On It by Kool And The Gang on Amazon Music.

MARK SANDERS: All right, my friends, that was your party. All right, so we want to find out what you do. So can you just find the chat feature, and put your response in chat. And if you do harm reduction, you can put that in chat.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Director of prevention services, prevention work, outpatient SUD counselor, family support services, adult services, youth SUD counselor, police social work, prevention, clinical manager for a SUD Clinic, prevention coordinator, OORP care coordinator, recovery coach, parent advocator for families of children born exposed to substances, public health, trauma, and resilience, mentor coordinator, prevention coordinator, outpatient therapist for youth and adults, community public health preventive health screenings.

MARK SANDERS: Yeah, so it sounds like there's a range. And thank you very much, Kristina, for sharing. So our presentation today is entitled Tired, Wired, Mired, and Inspired! Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue in Harm Reduction Efforts. I want to take just a brief moment to talk about the history of harm reduction, and it really began in Amsterdam in a red light district. And what they decided to do was to legalize prostitution. And when they legalized prostitution in Amsterdam, two things happened.

Crime went down. They didn't know the crime would go down once they legalized prostitution in Amsterdam. The reason that crime went down is because when it became legal, all of a sudden, the police and those involved in prostitution could be in the same neighborhood at the same time, and the police can be a deterrent of crime. The second thing they discovered is that when they legalized prostitution in Amsterdam, the spread of venereal diseases decreased because all of a sudden, where you had prostitution, you could also have medical clinics in the same area.

So they said, what else does this apply to? So they created what's called three-lane highways, one for cars, one for bikes, and one for walkers. And



what they discovered is that with these three-lane highways, one for bikes, and one for cars, one for walkers, they decreased car accidents on the highways, on the roads. And then they applied it to like overdose prevention, and they learned that harm reduction principles has a way of reducing overdose deaths.

So harm reduction saves lives. So those of you who do harm reduction work, thank you so very much for saving lives. Fentanyl strips where you look to test the purity of like the opiates to see if there's any fentanyl in there. At the end of the day, fentanyl is so much more powerful, as you know, than heroin and kills more people than heroin. You know, I have a brother-in-law who was a police officer. And his church was watching football games on Sunday.

And he administered Narcan to someone who had literally he said died, and that person came back to life. He saw it as a miracle. He went to church the following Sunday, Narcan saves lives. Not mixing opiates with alcohol. If we recommended anything to the clients that we serve, it would be if you want to continue to use opiates, continue to use opiates, but try not to mix it with alcohol. Here's why.

There's a doctor by the name of Carl Hart that shared some research that indicated that nearly 69% of individuals who have opioid-related deaths have alcohol in their body at the time of death. Not mixing opiates with other drugs, not drinking and driving, staying out of cars with strangers, watching your drink, testing drugs for purity, safe injection sites, not sharing needles. Again, thank you so very much those of you who do harm reduction for saving lives.

There's a well-known speaker named Tonier Cain, and one of her quotes is that "As long as there's breath, there's hope." Harm reduction can help keep people breathing. So let's take a moment to talk about definitions of key terms. The first one is compassion satisfaction. It reads the pleasure that you derive from your work. This includes doing your work well, client progress, collegial relationships, and the realization that the differences that you are making.

Compassion satisfaction, that is what you like most about your work, is a protective factor from burnout and compassion fatigue. And then we have a definition of compassion fatigue. Secondary trauma as a result of the internalization of the client's traumatic experiences. Let me lean in for dramatic effect. Research by John Briere from USC in California indicates that helping professionals, you and I, that we experience more trauma in childhood than any other profession.

I'm going to say that again. The research says that you and I, those of us who help others for a living, that we actually experience more trauma in childhood than any other profession. Your brilliance is that you've taken what you've endured in your childhood and you've turned it into purpose. You use it to help others.



His research also indicates that because we experience more trauma than other professions, we're more vulnerable to secondary trauma, to secondary PTSD, as a result of hearing the stories of those who are suffering. Those of you who work with individuals transitioning from homelessness, maybe they live in boxes or Tent city, just seeing physical suffering can retraumatize many of us. The next definition is one of burnout. A form of compassion fatigue that develops much slower than secondary trauma. Do you see? Secondary trauma can occur like this. [SNAPS]

I remember it as if it were yesterday. 30 years ago, I started a new job on the fifth floor of a YMCA. And a man ran past us at full speed, one of the clients, and he jumped out of the window from the fifth floor to his death. We witnessed that. We were having the nightmares and bad dreams that it happened [SNAPS] like that. Burnout is a form of compassion fatigue that develops much slower than secondary trauma. It has a gradual onset.

And it's associated with a non-supportive work environment, toxic organization dynamics, a large caseload, and the feeling that your work does not make a difference. Work-related burnout is a response to chronic stress. Raise your hand if you feel like the work you do during the day requires you to listen all day. Do you do lots of listening? Would you raise your hand if you do lots of listening?

If you do lots of listening during the day, and then you go home in the evening, and that brilliant son of yours who asks you questions that they already know the answer to, and then you have a spouse or a partner at home that can't stop talking about themselves. You find yourself listening all day and listening all night, then you are vulnerable to emotional exhaustion.

The second part of the definition of burnout is depersonalization. And what depersonalization is is where you stop seeing the clients that you serve as human as you used to see them in the past. Anyone who's ever had a large caseload, a large client load is vulnerable to depersonalization. If you believe you've had a large caseload, would you put in chat the number of clients that you've worked with at one time? How many clients have you worked with at one time? We want to hear from you.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: 42.

MARK SANDERS: We want to know who's-- what did you say?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: 42 is the first number someone shared.

MARK SANDERS: Anyone else work with lots of people? Some of you might be over a whole city if you do prevention work for a school.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: 15, 30.



MARK SANDERS: Right now, the biggest number is 42, Kristina.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Yeah. Oh, so someone covers an entire county which has a caseload of over 1,500.

MARK SANDERS: Oh my goodness. Right now, you are the winner. Let me ask you all this. Do you have 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 just didn't take with them like five minutes ago. The caseload's so large that one day you're at the mall, and there are 1,000 people in the mall and their faces start to blend into one. And you start to wonder, have you met with all of them at one time or another?

You know who has a bad case of depersonalization? Are people who work in public aid offices. Take a number, next. For some of them, their clients have shifted from people to numbers. You ever go into like the emergency room of a hospital late at night, all these people are in the ER. You walk in, I'm bleeding. So as he, sit down. They're so burned out that they're immune to like pain and suffering. You know, one time I went to Baskin-Robbins, the ice cream parlor, 31 flavors. I walked into Baskin-Robbins, the person behind the counter said take a number, next. I was the only person there.

If we're not careful, these things have a way of catching up with us. And then reduce personal accomplishment, which can occur amongst people who help others for a living. There are four stages to burnout. The first stage is called the honeymoon stage. It's when you first get that new job when you first get hired. You call your friends. Your friends gather around. I have the perfect job.

I don't need food, clothes, air, water, sex. All I need is this job. You're on a honeymoon, and you're floating on a cloud.

Two years later, you call those same friends. Do you know anybody who's hiring? Reality's set in. Difficult clients, difficult co-worker, difficult boss. We call that second stage the stagnation stage. The honeymoon is over. Reality's set in. Working with difficult individuals, tons of paperwork. How many of you have lots of paperwork to do? I used to bring mine home with me, and then one day I stopped.

I became convinced that I could die a social worker tomorrow, and I'd have at least one form to fill out before I died, if nothing else, a discharge summary or something like that. The third stage is the frustration stage. In this stage, you catch the fact that you're burning out. You catch it, and you start doing positive things to recover from burnout. Positive things like what? When people are burning out and they catch it, what are some positive things they do to recover from it?



Feel free to put your response in chat. How do you recover from it once you catch it?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Journaling.

MARK SANDERS: Yes. What else?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Meditation, yoga.

MARK SANDERS: Yes, quiet time, getting centered. Yes.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Spending time in nature.

MARK SANDERS: Yes.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Reading.

MARK SANDERS: And if we don't catch it-- thank you, Kristina-- if we don't catch it in the third stage, we're vulnerable to slipping into the fourth stage of burnout, which is called apathy chronic burnout. Now your attitude is a job is a job. You show up at 9 o'clock Monday morning. You say the best thing about 9:00 AM Monday morning is that it's three hours from noon, and noon is lunch.

You say the best thing about Wednesday is that it's two days from Friday. You don't call Thursday, Thursday, you call Thursday like Friday Eve. You can't wait for 5 o'clock Friday. You're so burned out, the phone rings, you look like you want to shoot the phone. You start hiding from clients, right? You don't want to do community work. You are chronically burned out. That's the fourth stage.

So we want to take a moment to talk about factors that buffer us against burnout. And one such factor is feelings of appreciation. Incredible story about this woman who worked at Woolworth's for 50 years. She was never late and hardly ever called in sick. Reporters asked her how were you able to give 50 years of your life to Woolworth's, never hate, hardly ever called in sick? She said one word. That word was baseball glove.

She started her job during the Great Depression. And the first day she showed up, her son calls and said, mom, now that you have that new job, will you finally give me that baseball glove you promised? She said not now, son.

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





And one of the things I understand about kids is kids don't always understand when you say you can't buy something, 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 Woolworth's.

I looked at research on what motivates us to do our best work. Believe it or not, pay rate's number three on the list. What motivates us to do our best work is feelings of appreciation from the people that we work with. I have a task for you. When we're done today, my challenge for you is to write emails or text messages to five people that you work with letting five people know one thing you appreciate about them. Feelings of appreciation is a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue.

Incredible story about this boy named Mike who played little League Baseball on the team known as the Cougars. And Mike came down with cancer. He survived it, but he had to get chemotherapy and radiation treatment, and he lost his hair. And Mike was embarrassed to go to 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 play some of their heart, and they would sing the national anthem.

He was afraid that all of his teammates would laugh at him when they saw that he had no hair. His father talked him into going to the next game. And sure enough, they lined up along the third baseline. And right before Mike took off his hat, all 25 of his teammates took off their hats first, and he saw that they all shaved off their hair. And they looked at him and they said once a Cougar, always a Cougar. Team cohesion is a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue. I'm a real fan of results-oriented team-building retreats.

Would you write down the name of a book, if you would take a moment, and then these three rules? Years ago a woman named Claudia Black wrote a book called *It Will Never Happen To Me!* And those words, it will never happen to me, are words that are often uttered by children who grow up in homes with parental alcoholism. These children often say that will never happen to me, but yet the research says they are three times more likely to develop alcohol use disorder than the general population.

And Claudia Black said in the book that children who grow up with alcohol use disorder often have to live by three unwritten rules in order to hide the secrets of the alcoholism in their family. And the first unwritten rule is don't talk.

You've probably heard the expression that children should be seen and not heard, don't talk because if you talk too much, what's to stop you from airing all the family's dirty laundry in public. Don't talk.



The second unwritten rule is don't trust. You've probably heard the expression you're lucky if you have three friends in your whole life. Don't trust. The only people you can trust are people under this roof because if you're too trusting, you might share the secrets of what's happening in our family. And then the third unwritten rule is don't feel because if you express too many feelings, you might go to school and tell your teacher about our family secrets around alcoholism. Don't talk, don't trust, don't feel.

The end result of that is that all the trauma living with alcoholism, you keep it to yourself. I've actually worked with some organizations that operate under these three unwritten rules, don't talk, don't trust, don't feel. And we do this stressful work, but if you can't talk about it and you have to keep it all inside, then you're at increased risk for burnout, not just you, but the entire team.

And the fourth thing is proactive strategies as a buffer against burnout to deal with chronic stress one thing that I recommend strongly is that you have regular retreats to come together to support each other and celebrate as a proactive strategy of dealing with burnout and compassion fatigue. Effective supervisor-supervisee relationships. In fact, I remember as if it were yesterday. It was May 29, 1986, a long time ago, and I was to give my first presentation ever.

My boss said I'm going with you. I want to give you some constructive criticism. My friends, I've always had difficulty with the term constructive criticism. Construct means to build up. Criticize means to tear down. How are you going to build me up and tear me down at the same time? That's like taking a bath in water and drying off in dirt. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense. So I'm sitting there on the Monday morning, the worst time to give a speech. And people are hungover on Monday morning.

She's sitting next to me, and everybody looked so serious like they weren't going to have a good time at my presentation. The only person that was having fun was the janitor. He was dusting the place singing an old Jeffrey Osborne song. And here are the lyrics to that song. Can you woo, woo, woo? Who's ever heard that song? Can you woo, woo, woo? I'm singing this song in my head. I'm completely relaxed.

Then five minutes into the presentation, there was a knock on the door. Is there a Mark Sanders here? There's an urgent phone call. My mother was on the other end of the line, and she was crying hysterically. And she told me that my dad had just died at work, and that was the worst news of my life to that point in my life. When I got that news that my dad died while I was giving my first speech, I have two or three things operating against me.

One, I was raised to be a traditional male and said men don't cry, I was told. I needed to cry. I couldn't cry. Second is I was raised to be a perfectionist and to intellectualize pain. So I'm sitting there, the worst news I ever gotten in my life up to that point in my life, and I'm thinking, you know, my siblings need



referrals for grief counseling. My supervisor said let's go. We got in the cab, and while I'm intellectualizing my pain, I looked at my supervisor, and she was crying.

She was doing for me what I cannot do but for myself. And every week after my father died, she asked me how was I doing? Did I need anything? You've heard the expression that no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. This relationship, when it goes well, you can have a beautiful life or work experience. But when it goes bad and you're not getting along with your immediate supervisor, there's a famous quote.

People join organizations, and they leave their immediate supervisor. And when that relationship is not going well, that's a risk factor for burnout.

Creativity, there's a book that's called *The Artist's Way*. And the author says that lots of people who say that they're burned out, they're really not burned out, they're bored from doing the same work the same way day in and day out. So let me lean in again for dramatic effect. Part of my secret to doing this work for 39 years, I'm always creating new stuff to do which energizes you.

Individual's decision to take responsibility for managing their own burnout is a protective factor. So there's some organizational dynamics that facilitate burnout, and then there are some things within us that also facilitate burnout. I'll give you an example. If you don't know personal limit, you are vulnerable to burnout. If you feel like you can be all things to all people at all times, you're vulnerable. If you're a perfectionist, you're vulnerable.

If you have less experience doing this work and you want to save the world, you're vulnerable. You're more vulnerable to burnout. If you don't have significant interpersonal relationships, you're vulnerable, more vulnerable to burnout. So there are some things within us that can make us more vulnerable to burnout, but there's also some organizational dynamics that can facilitate burnout like how people are getting along with each other or not getting along, or like stress can be connected to like meeting the requirements of funding sources.

So here's the question. What percentage of the management of your burnout lies with you, and what percentage of managing your burnout lays within the organization where you work? And your numbers should add up to 100%. Give us two numbers, you first, then the organization. What percentage of the management of your burnout is on you, and what percentage of the responsibility lies within the organization? Let's see those numbers.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: 75/25, 90 to 10, 100% me, 30/70, 40/60, 60/40.

MARK SANDERS: OK, all right, so I'm going to share with you a story. Anybody here ever been to Toledo, Ohio? Raise your hand if you've ever



been in Toledo, Ohio. OK, all right. Anybody here born in Toledo, Ohio? Do you see anybody's hand up that was born in Toledo, Kristina?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I can't see everyone's video, but there's not a Zoom hand-raise for Toledo.

MARK SANDERS: OK, so I can tell you this story. So years ago, I did a speech in Toledo, Ohio. And if you were standing with me as I was delivering this speech, and you looked at the facial expression of the people in the room, they looked so down, so sad, so tired. I could tell they were all burned out.

The problem is that the program had only been in existence for like six months.

Here's your question. Let us chat. How can a program be in existence for just six months, and the entire staff is burned out? What do you think? Six months, everyone's burned out. How could that be possible? What are you thinking? I mean, everyone from the regional director to the person who answered the phone.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Issues within the organization or the supervisory team, the overall vibe of the organization in general, not having any fun, unpleasant work environment, high stress level.

MARK SANDERS: OK, so let me make it interesting. Thank you, Kristina. So this was a juvenile detention center, a brand new building built from the ground up. And they hire people to work first, second, and third shift. And before they admitted the juveniles, the inspectors came in-- the water inspectors, the fire inspectors-- and found out that the building was in violation of water and fire codes, so they could admit no juveniles, and they were all burned out. That would be like a school with no students, a church with no congregation members, right? A hospital with no patients. How could it be?

It turns out what my grandmother used to say was actually correct. My grandmother used to say an idle mind is the devil's workshop. So with no clients to work with, they spent all of their time talking about each other. One woman said, Mark, around here, we always walk in threes. I said why? She's said because whenever you see two people walking side by side, you know they're talking about a third person.

And then they shared something with me which changed my life. She said, Mark, did you ever notice that when you gossip, when you talk bad about other people, it gets you tired? I'd never noticed, so I hurried back to Chicago and started gossiping, and sure enough, I discovered that gossip gets you tired. You know the primary factor contributing to burnout is gossip within the organization. So once I got that revelation, I called my brother, and I said did you know that gossip gets you tired?



So me and my brother made a commitment that we would not gossip for six months. We shook hands on the deal. He called me six days later and said, man, I haven't talked bad about anybody in six days, I'm shaking like a leaf.

He was going through withdrawal like somebody who drinks too much alcohol or uses heroin. Gossip is a drug. And few things diminish the quality of organizational happiness and well-being like gossip, negatively talking about those that you work with, your co-workers.

Other factors contributing to burnout includes unhealthy boundaries, and we learn our boundaries in our family of origin. And there are three types of boundaries we see in families. Some of you may come from families where the boundaries are loose. No one is aware of what's happening with anyone else in the family. Everybody's doing their own thing. An example would be the Smith family. Little Shirley Smith, the daughter that made the cheerleading team. She was so busy that no one knew she made the team.

The family was so busy, they didn't know. Her brother Jason was cut from the basketball team. He cried in his room. No one knew he was cut. Mom was promoted at work eight months ago. Her co-workers took her to Applebee's. The family didn't know she was promoted. Dad was fired at work. Dad was fired at work six months ago. The family didn't know. He went to the bar to drink. They didn't know.

Uncle Ned is up in the attic dead. He's been up there dead for about nine months, but because everybody in the family is doing their own thing, no one thought to check on Uncle Ned. They smelled something in July, but nobody checked on him. We're talking about a family where the four-year-old cooks a hamburger for himself, and the dog gets his own leash and he walks himself. The cat feeds himself, et cetera.

Let me let you in on a secret. Every family I've ever seen that has loose boundaries, often they suffered a big loss and they can't talk about it, so everybody goes their own way, no support. And some of you and some of the clients you serve come from families where the boundaries are enmeshed. Where they're a little bit too close. You ever seen a family that was a little bit too close? In fact, let you in on a secret. Families that have enmeshment also has lots of incest because they're just too close.

You can always tell when a family has enmeshed boundaries. You ask one member of the family a question. Before they can answer that question, another family member answers it for them. They finish sentences for each other. You ever seen the family that's so enmeshed, they finish each other's sentences? They mind read. They talk over each other. They talk at the same time. They look at each other before they answer your questions.

You ever seen a family where you ask one of the children a question, and before the child can answer the question, they look up at their parent, and the



parent gives them that look that says don't answer that question? Let me let you in on a secret. Families that have enmeshed boundaries, they have lots of secrets, and they band together to protect the secrets. And some people have come from families where the boundaries are pretty healthy, and those boundaries are clear, there's room for individuation.

You have the freedom to be who you are and 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. And they include the freedom to think what you think rather than what you should think. You ever seen a family that's so immense that you can't even 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. I'm a social worker. The freedom to see what you see rather than what you should see.

You might have heard of actor, Samuel L. Jackson. He starred in the movie called *Eve's Bayou* filmed in New Orleans. He played a doctor that made house calls. He had a daughter, Eve, nine years old, that opened the door, and she saw her father, Samuel L Jackson, on top of one of his female patients making a house call. She slammed the door. And later that night, she said to her big sister who was about two years older than her, I saw daddy on top of Mrs. Such and Such making a house call.

And her big sister put her arm around Eve and said, Eve, no, that's not what you saw. This is what you saw. There are some families out there where the boundaries are so enmeshed, you can't even see what you see.

My favorite aunt, my Aunt Annie, died, and I was asked to speak at my Aunt Annie's funeral. And I told the congregation a story that when me and my five siblings were growing up for a period of time, the five of us lived in a three-bedroom apartment with our grandparents and 14 aunts and uncles. Do the math. There were 21 of us in a three-bedroom apartment, and there were not enough beds. So I told the congregation that I slept at the foot of my Aunt Annie's bed. And under her bed, was her art portfolio.

She painted the world's most beautiful pictures. I told the congregation at her funeral that my first dream was to be an artist like my Aunt Annie. And as I was taking my seat, my mother whispered, "Nice story." "We never lived with them." "You never slept on the floor."

And later that night, my older sister called me and said, Mark, I heard what mom said. We did live with them. You did sleep on the floor. There's some family that's so enmeshed, that you can't even see what you see. You have to see what everyone else sees.



And then finally the freedom to imagine your own self-actualization. You always wanted to be the next great drummer for the reunion of the Grateful Dead, but your family needed you to be a doctor to protect the family secrets. How would anybody suspect that incest is happening in our family? Domestic violence, alcoholism, opioid use disorder, if my children are doctors, lawyers, and judges?

So let's take a moment to chat. Would you put one of three words in chat, and this is about the boundaries in your family of origin, that is the family that you grew up in. We can't see you individually. Were those boundaries loose, everybody doing their own thing? Were they enmeshed or were those boundaries pretty healthy, the family that you grew up in? Loose, enmeshed, or healthy?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: A couple healthies, loose, enmeshed, a couple more loose, enmeshed, healthy.

MARK SANDERS: So which one is in the lead? What does it look like there, Kristina?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I actually think healthy is in the lead with probably loose a second or tied, and then enmeshed third.

MARK SANDERS: OK, so let me ask you this. This is a yes or no question here. Do you think the boundaries in your current family, that is whoever you live with now, are those boundaries different than the boundaries in your family of origin? Yes or no? Whoever you live with now, are those boundaries in your current family different than the boundaries in your family of origin?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Many more yes's than no's.

MARK SANDERS: So here's what I learned, Kristina. When people say that the boundaries in their current family is different than the boundaries in their family of origin, they made a concerted effort, a choice, to make sure things were different. So we have boundaries in our family of origin that impact us, boundaries in our current family, and every organization where we work also has boundaries.

Some organizations have loose boundaries where everybody's doing their own thing. You ever worked there where you never get a pat on the back and no one says congratulations, great work? I know that where I currently work, we end every meeting on a Wednesday with shout-outs, right? But there's some organizations where everybody's doing their own thing, never get any praise, no positive feedback, right? They become vulnerable to burnout because we need support. Some of you may work in organizations that are enmeshed. Things are a little bit too close.



You communicate with each other on the weekends all the time. Holiday, they call you while you're on vacation. If you work in an environment where the boundaries are enmeshed, you are vulnerable to burnout because you don't get any rest from the organization, from the team. Now, obviously, if you worked in an organization that has healthy boundaries, where you are able to do the things that we just talked about, think your own thoughts, feel your own feeling, speak up in the meeting, see what you see, be honest, et cetera, then that's a protective factor against burnout.

So here's the key. Whether you work in an organization where the boundaries are loose, or enmeshed, or healthy, and whether your current household where who you live with is loose, enmeshed, or healthy, or whether or not you live somewhere else but your family of origin is always trying to pull you into some mess, the critical piece is this. It's really important for us to establish healthy boundaries in all of our relationships in order to preserve our energy because a lack of healthy boundaries anywhere, can lead to the absence of healthy boundaries everywhere.

Factors contributing to burnout. Closed systems, when you can't talk about stuff openly, then all of the stress mounts. Extremes, too much or too little support. You ever had a co-worker that has such poor boundaries, such enmeshed boundaries, they're doing all of your work plus theirs, and you have to snatch your work from them, right? We need support, the right amount of support. Supervision, two extremes, no support, micromanagement, right?

Micromanagement contributes to burnout because it's stressful. Too little support, we all need support. Without that support, we're vulnerable to burnout. Caseload size, if your caseload is too large, you're vulnerable to depersonalization. Too small, you've got plenty of time to gossip. Lack of creativity, and let me repeat this again. My secret for doing this work for 39 years, I always create new stuff to do.

Tension in work relationships, are you in this webinar today with a co-worker? Would you raise your hand, if a co-worker is with you today? Because up until like 11 months ago, I envied what you have because for 30 years, I didn't have co-workers. I gave speeches on the road. Today, I have co-workers. It's a beautiful thing to have co-workers. It was 35 years ago in July, a month before I married, my wife came to me with an album, not a CD, an album. Remember albums?

And she says, I want you to rehearse the first song on the second side of the album. We're going to sing to each other at our wedding. Now, the song was sung by a man named Marvin Gaye and a woman named Tammy Terrell. And I'm practicing the song and it dawned upon me, I could rehearse for the next 300 years, and I would not be able to sing as well as Marvin Gaye. I went to my wife and said I love you, and I can't sing that song. She said, OK, I'll sing to you. [SIGH OF RELIEF]





In our wedding party was my wife's Maid of Honor, her best friend. My wife's Maid of Honor-- they went to grade school together, high school, college-- is one of the world's greatest singers. I can't think of three people in the world that could sing as well as she could sing, but the world's never heard of her.

That'd be an interesting seminar. How you can be one of the best in the world at something and the world's never heard of you. She works at the post office. Anyway, during our wedding, my wife was singing the song to me, and she could not hit the high note. And she looked back at her best friend, and she hit the note for her. I know in my life when I've had tragedies, next to an immediate family member, there's nothing like a really, really good co-worker.

You know, I heard this story about this American soldier that was stationed in Afghanistan, and she flew to New Jersey to get married. And after she married, she flew back to Afghanistan, and she lost her hand in battle.

Her best friends at work 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. The research says that when you have a best friend at work, that that's a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue. Think about it. We spend much more time at work than we do just about anywhere else. Having a best friend really helps.

Likewise, when there's lots of tension in co-worker relationships, that's also a contributing factor to burnout. Continuous stress is a contributing factor.

Feeling ineffective. Let us chat. How do you define success in the work that you do? Would you put that response in chat? How do you know when you're successful? What is success? So how do you know when you're successful? I'm curious to hear your answer here. How do you know? Because when we don't feel successful and that our work matters, then we're really vulnerable to burnout.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Positive feedback from peers and supervisors, when I can get a client signed up in treatment, another positive feedback, when it's useful for others and for me, when I see or hear change, when I get the job done and I feel good about it.

MARK SANDERS: Yeah, you know I'm a-- thank you, Kristina-- I'm a fan of like small incremental change. A friend of mine told me this story. His name is Greg Risberg. He started off as a school social worker, right? First, he was a teacher, then he became a school social worker-- a teacher, a school social worker, a professional 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 who taught fourth grade across the street from public housing 30 years ago? He said, yeah, that's me. He said I was a student in your class, your fourth-grade class. He said now I'm a



decorated military man. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if I wouldn't wind up achieving the rank of a Colin Powell. I'm just calling you to tell you, you really made a difference in my life.

And Greg said what did I do? He says every Friday you would stop teaching and you would sit the whole 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, so it made me curious about the world. So I herein 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 this special field trip. You invited the whole class to your house, and you asked everybody to bring a bag lunch to your house. And I looked in my refrigerator that night, and I saw that I had no food. And when I made it to your house with no food, you went in your refrigerator and you fixed me a sandwich.

Because anyway, the reason I'm calling is 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 can fix you a sandwich. When he told me that story, it dawned on me that it took him 30 years to see the fruits of his labor. Your work is 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.

Something about seed planning, and guess what? You can do that every day. And guess what? When you do harm reduction work, you can save a life every day. So if anybody asks you what you do, say I save lives every time you go to work.

So we're going to shift from talking about burnout to talking about compassion fatigue defined as the stress of caring too much. Compassion fatigue differs from burnout in that burnout is caused by organizational stress, backbiting, backstabbing, and gossip, and feeling ineffective in our work, and compassion fatigue is caused by caring. It goes by the names of secondary trauma, secondary PTSD, emotional residue as a result of working with those who suffer secondary trauma. Who's vulnerable?

At the top of the list are receptionists. You know why? If every case manager where you work had a caseload of 20 and there are 20 case managers, everyone who walks through the doors is on the receptionist's caseload without relationships. Receptionists are very vulnerable to compassion fatigue. Social service workers, preventionists, case managers, social workers, therapists, recovery support specialists. Attorneys are vulnerable, especially the ones who look at crime scenes.



Emergency care workers, medical professionals, the clergy, volunteers, soldiers, police officers are vulnerable. First off, you know, one thing many police officers have in common with social service workers is lots of trauma in childhood thus says the research. And then they go out there and they see horrible crime scenes. They become vulnerable too. Teachers, firefighters.

You know, firefighters is the one profession that has it right. They say in the case of a fire, take care of yourself first and then save your co-workers, then help others.

Nurses are vulnerable to compassion fatigue. Some signs include anger, and frustration, tardiness. You used to be punctual at work all the time, now you're late all the time. Exhaustion, depression, feeling hopeless, blaming others which gets you more tired, irritability. Sleep problems, you know? You happen to work with clients who have histories of childhood sexual abuse. You listen to their stories, and now you're having a hard time sleeping.

Rudeness and gossiping, which makes you more tired. Erosion of idealism. When you go to work tomorrow, I want you to look in the eyes of your co-workers who have been doing this work for like less than a year or so, the students, and notice how their eyes glow. When workers are new, their eyes glow, and that glow is I want to save the world. But if you listen to enough stories of pain and suffering, our eyes can begin to dim.

Flashbacks, client stories that are reminding you of your own trauma. Intrusive thoughts. Spiritual distress, like where's God? Years ago, I used to work with HIV case managers, you know, during that era where people would get their HIV diagnosis and they would just die? The medication was really poor back then. And some of the case managers say that they don't believe in God like they used to because if there's a God, how are there so many children dying? How are there so many people and they overdose? And how are there so many people dying of COVID-19?

This work, if we don't talk about it, can impact us spiritually. We might even start to feel like the world is a bad place. So here's the first question. Let's take these one at a time. Are you more vulnerable to burnout-- this is you with the individual-- which is caused by organizational stress or compassion fatigue, which is caused by caring? So would you put one of those two words in chat, either burnout out of compassion fatigue? We want to know what you're more vulnerable to.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Burnout, compassion fatigue, burnout. I'm going to watch this and then I'll try to give you a sense of what is more.

MARK SANDERS: Yes.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: OK. It looks like we have a lot of compassion fatigue. A couple of people said both.



MARK SANDERS: Yeah, both, right?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Overwhelmingly, I think compassion fatigue.

MARK SANDERS: Yeah, what's interesting about that, Kristina, is that as a profession, we talk so much more about burnout than compassion fatigue, and yet more people are vulnerable to compassion fatigue than burnout. Next question. Would you put this in chat? So what are some things that you do to take care of yourself? What do you do to avoid these occupational hazards of burnout and compassion fatigue?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Strategic vacations. I like that.

MARK SANDERS: Yeah, how about that? Strategic vacations.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Prayer, eat healthy, sleep well, read, yoga and meditation.

MARK SANDERS: Nice list, huh?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Mm-hmm.

MARK SANDERS: You know, my mentor did a study where they wanted to find out what are some of the reasons that some professionals have more resistance to burnout than others. And what they found is those of you who have more resistance to burnout and compassion fatigue than others, you do four things on a regular basis compared to your peers, more frequently than their peers. One is that you laugh more than your friends, your peers, at home, and at work. Let me ask you a question? You ever hurt so bad that all you can do is laugh? I'm serious.

A relative of mine called me and told me he was a quarter of a million dollars in debt. He was laughing like a hyena. I said why are you laughing? He said, man, sometimes things hurt so bad that all you can do is laugh. Joan Rivers said the laughter is God's gift to humans, you never see a cow laugh. By a show of hands, how many of you have kids? February 3, 1995, was the scariest and happiest day of my life all wrapped up in one if you can imagine such a day. It was the day my son was born.

He came out weighing five pounds, five ounces looking exactly like his dad. Scared me to death. Those of you leaning away from your computer, you can't see me as well as those leaning forward, but if you could, you'd understand. My son was born with a frame this big. He had my nose, my adult nose on a body this big. The boy was all nose. I walked around the hospital room to get different angles. It looked like everywhere I walked, his nose was following me. You would have sworn that his nose had eyes.



And I wondered why nobody ever told me. The second my son was born, I had more love for him than people I had known my entire life. So strong was my love for my son, everywhere the nurses took him, I followed them. But my fear was that mine would get mixed up with someone else's son. So in the nursery where my son was born, most of the babies were born weighing between five to eight pounds at birth, five to eight pounds. They were sleeping in a fetal position.

There was one baby there I never will forget. That baby was born weighing 12 pounds sleeping like this. He looked like a grown man, like he was ready to say give me a pillow, some popcorn, and put the TV on Channel 7. That baby was huge. We brought our son home. And after a few days, he learned to smile, then he learn to laugh. I'd smile with him, laugh with him. I thought I was losing my mind because I was laughing and feeling better, but nothing was funny. How could that be?

Then I saw a program on Nightline where they talked about the fastest growing movement in India are laughing clinics. There are these people who are clinically depressed. They show up every evening in the town square, and they do 15 minutes of yoga stretching, then they laugh for 45 minutes.

Nothing is funny. They eat better, they sleep better, no comedy tapes, just laughing when nothing is funny. Less depression. I know your work is stressful, so here's what I'd encourage you to do for the rest of your career.

Every evening when you get off work, I want you to go to the parking lot and get in your car and lock the door and look around in both directions, and make sure nobody's watching, and simply laugh. You know what the best medicine for all that we're dealing with right now with COVID-19, et cetera? Is to turn off the news sometime and listen to the comedy channel because research indicated that those of you who have the most resistance against chronic burnout and compassion fatigue compared to your peers, are more likely to engage in what's called centering rituals where you do something every day to center yourself, every day.

Maybe it's prayer, quiet time, meditation. You do something every day to center yourself. He found that those of you who are able to have some time each day where you spend alone, spending time alone is also a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue. And then remembering the reason you became a helping professional in the first place, remembering your ideals. And that sometimes can occur if you periodically get together with positive people who recharge your battery and you recharge their battery.

Or believe it or not, they found that those of you who engage in meaningful acts of service, meaningful volunteerism, that meaningful volunteerism is a protective factor against burnout and compassion fatigue because what meaningful volunteerism reminds you of is why you became a helping professional in the first place. It recharges the battery. The other thing that



helps is taking breaks and lunch every day, setting boundaries, avoiding triangles, that is staying out of the mess of other people, being creative. Hey, I'll sell you third time. The way I've been able to do this work for 39 years is always create new stuff to do, that's creative.

Intervention strategies, support from colleagues that you don't work with, getting support from your co-workers, supportive supervision helps as an intervention strategy, spending healthy time with family and friends, having contact with mentors helps. Individuals experiencing compassion fatigue, are often leading lives that are out of balance-- too much focus on helping, not enough focus on balance.

And then part of recovery from compassion fatigue involves putting first things first, so it's time to like create some balance and manage our time better. So I read a book called What the Most Successful People Do Before 9 AM.

They're more likely to exercise in the morning, or practice meditation, or spiritual practices in the morning, the most successful people. They're more likely to work on their relationships in the morning because when you get home from work, most people are too exhausted to exercise, too exhausted to meditate, too exhausted to work on relationships.

I knew a man that had a part and a full-time job. He came to me in tears because he felt like he wasn't spending enough time with his son. But here's what he figured out, the time that he did give his son. He drove his son to school kindergarten through 12th grade, 45 minutes in the car with his son, one on one, no distraction. Why do successful people trade balance in the morning? Because so many of us lose this one at night. Have you ever noticed that most of the affairs happen at night?

Most relapses happen at night? Diet breaking? When people said let's go to Pizza Hut, it's not 7 o'clock in the morning. It's midnight. Most gambling debt accrues at night. We turn to cigarette smoking, real bad arguments. Even when there's like marches and protests, riots are more likely to occur the later it gets. So if we're going to get it done and create balance, we do it in the morning. What do most successful people to do on a weekend? Let me talk with you for a minute about weekends.

There are 52 weekends in a year. 52 weeks in a year, and I had a moment of clarity. Based on my age, I know how long most African-American men live. Based on my age, I have about 450 weekends left. If you're white and female, and you're 40, and you expect to live to 80, all you have is 2000 weekends left. Weekends have to count. Because statistically I only have 450 left, I make them count. I promise you.

Some of you if you're burned out, you like to sleep in on the weekend until 3 o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday and Sunday. Oh, what a mistake. What do most successful people do on a weekends to create balance? They get up



early. They get some of their chores done during the week so they can have a real weekend. They create family rituals that can last a lifetime.

50 years ago, my grandfather would cook-- one of my grandfathers would cook breakfast for the whole family on Sunday mornings, and the other grandfather would have a fish fry on Friday evenings, though they've created memories that will last us for the rest of our life. The most successful people manage their time by doing three activities that are meaningful or fun on the weekend that last two to three hours, the last occurring Sunday evening after 6:00 PM. They take these mini-vacations, nine-hour vacations, nine-hour trips, come back replenished, right? And so this becomes really important, how we spend our time on weekends.

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

Like how many of you have procrastinated on doing your paperwork during the week, and then took it home on a weekend, and didn't have any fun over the weekend? So we get the stuff that's mundane that we don't like out the way early, so we can have fun enjoying our weekends. Create balance, especially if you're experiencing burnout and compassion fatigue. I'd like to ask you to take a piece of paper and letter it A, B, C, and D.

One day, I was downtown Chicago doing a bunch of paperwork. And by the way, before I share the story with you, if you ask me what's most important to me, without blinking, I would tell you my kids. But I can't tell you how many times I walked past one of my kids to see if you called me or if you left me an email or something like that. So I'm downtown Chicago, I'm doing paperwork, and I quickly rush home to do more paperwork. And the cab driver-- I jumped in a cab-- 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, I turn the radio off. Take me to O'Hare Airport, I have a plane to catch. At one point, the passenger said, listen, I'm running late, and I'm taking a plane from Chicago to California. If you get me to the airport on time, this \$100 tip is for you. And they had an argument. The driver said I can't get another speeding ticket. And as soon as they got close to the airport, there was a black smoke in the air. And the passenger said turn on the radio. I want to hear what happened.

And they turn on the radio, and what they heard was there was an American Airlines flight that had just crashed out of the runway that was headed from Chicago to California. He looked at his ticket, and he saw that it was the flight



he was supposed to be on. So he set back and he said in a low voice, he said I want you to take this cab and turn it around, and take it to Union Train Station. He said, oh, you want to take a train from here to California? He said, no, I want to take a train from here to Ohio. This put things in perspective for me, the plane crash. It's not about working all the time. It's about loving and spending time with people who you love.

Here's what I'd like to ask you to write down, A, B, C, and D. Would you write down the four things that are most important to you in the world? The four things that are most important to you in the world, A, B, C, and D. Think about it 30 more seconds. The four things that are most important to you in the world.

Next, I would like to ask you the word yes or no next to each one of the four, yes or no next to each one. Does each of them receive the time and attention from you that they deserve? A yes or no next to each. So we want to know the number of yes's. Would you put the number of yes's that you have in chat? Is it one? Is it 2? Is it 3? Is it 4? How many yes's.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I'm going to keep an eye on this and try to give a breakdown. So it looks like we have several zeros, probably a majority are twos, but we do have some threes and fours.

MARK SANDERS: Yeah, so thank you, Kristina. So the average across the country is about two. In other words, so many of us, we're out there saving the world, but that which is most important to us we might find ourselves neglecting including the neglecting of people that we love. You know what I read in a book written by a billionaire. He wasn't even talking about money.

He said you are successful when the people that you want to love you actually love you. And love is a verb. It's time together. Some of us are too busy.

So this is the time management grid and it speaks to how we spend our time.

Activities in the upper-left-hand corner, are activities that we engage in that are urgent and important and includes crisis, emergencies, deadlines, suicidal clients. Those of you who are police officers, you spend a lot of time in that upper-hand corner. Those of you who are recovery coaches or case managers, you can go from crisis to crisis to crisis, urgent and important. And in the upper-right-hand corner, these are activities that we engage in that are important, but not urgent, most important.

They include our purpose, our mission in life, important relationships that we want to nurture, long-range planning in that book. What book am I referring to? So many people are writing an autobiography, but they never quite get to it because they're so busy doing the activities in the upper-left-hand corner.





They're too tired to write the book. In the lower-left-hand corner, these are activities that we engage in that are unimportant. They're urgent but not important.

This includes the crisis of other people who you don't have a relationship with. See, it's one thing to counsel a friend, but when you start hearing from your friends' friends' friends, I heard you can help me, now you know you're in trouble. Other people's crises, interruption. Some phone calls are a waste of time. Some meetings are a waste of time. Some emails are a waste of time.

The lower right-hand corner, these are activities that we engage in that are unimportant and not urgent, time wasters. Busy work, watching frivolous TV.

You know the Housewives of Alaska, Housewives of Mississippi, Snooki Has a Baby, a Reunion of Jersey Shore 1,000 years from now. You know, just kind of wasting time, reading bad books by bad writers, et cetera. And where do you think most people spend most of their time? During the day, in the upper-left hand corner, urgent and important. Then we go home and the phone rings, urgent but not important. Then we turn on the television.

You ever been so tired that you're not watching TV? It's watching you, and you fall asleep in the chair watching frivolous TV. If we're not careful over the course of a lifetime, we might find ourselves neglecting the most important, our mission, our purpose, important relationships. I had a son who was six years old, and I went out of town and left him a note that daddy will see you on Wednesday. This was years ago, 20 years ago. Daddy will see you on Wednesday. He died on Tuesday. Wednesday is not guaranteed.

So many of us, we're so busy helping other people, that we put off the most important, right? So let's take a moment to talk about being led by our mission. If you have a pen, would you work along with me and finish this sentence? Finish this sentence if you would. My mission in my community is.

What is your mission in your community? I just want to speak to my neighbors so that we get in the habit of speaking. That's my mission in my community.

What's yours?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Are they writing this to themselves or?

MARK SANDERS: Yeah, they can, but if people want to put it in chat, that would be fine.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: OK, do you want me to read out if something's—

MARK SANDERS: Yeah, if somebody puts it in chat, that would be fine. Thank you. Thank you, Kristina.



KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Someone put to help people to not be addicted to drugs.

MARK SANDERS: So that's interesting too because you might have that during your 9:00 to 5:00, but you said you take it upon yourself to be helpful as it pertains to recovery even when you're in your community as well, or you might work in your community. Very good.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Unity and peace to advocate, listen, and help, to make people aware of the importance of good mental health in children.

MARK SANDERS: OK, very good. Now, here's the next stem. Would you finish this sentence? You can feel free to put it in chat or you can write it down. My mission at home is. When you go home, what's your mission? When you enter your apartment, your house, your condo, what's your mission at home?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Relaxation, to make and raise good members of society, to exercise and relax.

MARK SANDERS: You know, Kristina, if I took some of those missions upon myself, that means that when I leave work and I'm in my car, that my car has to be a sanctuary for me to get some peace, so I can go home and be present. Have you all ever been home and not been present because you're still recovering from work? So many of us have, right? OK, third stem. My mission at work is. Let me suggest to you there is a difference between a mission and duties. What's your mission at work?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To give it my best.

MARK SANDERS: Oh, let's pause on that one, Kristina. Do you know if everybody gave their best, how successful they would feel? Your best when you have the flu is not like the same best when you're perfectly healthy. But oh my goodness, how much of a doubt we can avoid, and self-blame, if we just showed up and did our best. That's your mission at work. OK, someone else. What's your mission at work?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To educate and assist.

MARK SANDERS: Nice.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Offer support, help victims of crime, to be the best support system I can be to my clients and co-workers.

MARK SANDERS: Be the best I can be, yes. OK, so I'm going to give you a tab, and then I'm going to make sense. I promise you, I'll make this make sense. So you know every successful company has a mission statement, right? I think couples, with the divorce rate being 58%, I think couples ought to



go on a vacation once a year and write a mission statement how are they going to work together to keep their relationship together. I think families should develop mission statements once a year, once they find themselves going in different directions, right?

Successful individuals have mission statements. I've written two of them. I'll give you the first one, and I'll give you the second. So my first mission statement was to help individuals and organizations reach their potential through speaking, training, and consulting. Boring, blah, blah, blah. Then I wrote a second mission statement, and they said, you know, this time use your heart in writing your mission statement.

And here's my mission statement that I've held onto for 25 years, to leave every room I enter better than how I found it. To leave every room I enter better than how I found it. That means if I were physically with you today, if there was some paper on the ground, I'd pick it up and put it in the garbage can. It also means that I have to challenge myself to be upbeat and positive.

Even if I have negativity going on in my life, I have to work through it so I can leave the room better than how I found it.

It also means that home is a room. So it's not enough for you to say, Mark, you seem like a cool guy, then I go home and just raise ruckus at home.

Home is a room too. So they say you can tell when you have a good mission statement because it should be short enough to fit on the back of a business card, easier for you to remember. It should involve more than one area of your life. So we're going to do something, and it'll only take you two minutes to do.

I want you to look at what you said your mission is at home, work, and in the community. Combine them and make one mission statement for your life.

What's your life mission? Just take two minutes, and we'll make it make sense. Feel free to put that mission in chat if you'd like, and remember it. It's important. You ever notice that as soon as some people retire, they die? That means we need mission and purpose even in retirement.

You know, Viktor Frankl, the Holocaust survivor, said that what kept lots of people living during the concentration camp was they found purpose even in the concentration camp. The rabbi who still had services is in the concentration camp, the schoolteacher who gathered the students together. I bet you that some of you if you were incarcerated, you would still be a counselor in prison. What's your mission?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Someone shared that their mission is to be the best version of themselves.



MARK SANDERS: Wow, isn't that something? You have no competition except for the best you you can be. Isn't that something?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: To be the best I can be and help others do the same.

MARK SANDERS: That means you can't let people drag you down with that mission statement, not long-term, maybe for a season, a minute, but not forever because you want to be the best you can be.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Someone else said to relax after challenging meetings and encounters with clients—

MARK SANDERS: Nice.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: --and move on.

MARK SANDERS: OK, so I have a mentor-- thank you, Kristina-- who gets 40 times things more done than me, and he has the same 24 hours in the day.

You know when I meet really successful people really, I can ask them a million questions. I ask one question of the really successful people. How do you manage your time? I mentioned he gets 40 times more done than others, and I visited his office, his home office, and I understood how he gets so much done. Most of his requests come in through his computer and through his phone.

And above his computer and his phone are three things. One, he has his personal mission statement so that when requests come in, he prioritizes those requests based upon his mission. The second thing above his phone is a hand with a puppet string. I said why the hand with the puppet string?

People are always asking me to do stuff. Like people are always asking you to do stuff on your weekends.

If you are 50 years old, you only have about 1,000 left if you expect to live to about 80. So when those requests come in, he looks at that hand on the puppet string to remind himself I am not a puppet. You cannot dangle me around in any direction you want. I have mission, purpose, and things that are important for me to do. I have to replenish myself.

The third thing he has above his phone and his computer is a sign that reads life is not an emergency. He says I help people with emergencies and crises all the time, but I have that sign to remind myself that even though I help people with emergencies and crises all the time, I refuse to live my life from a state of emergency in crisis. And through that whole combination of things, he gets a lot done.



OK, so let's see who has a question or a comment.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: We don't have any questions in Q&A right now. Just as a reminder, if you do have a question, please put it in chat or Q&A, preferably Q&A. We can read it out.

MARK SANDERS: So I have a question for the group. So we've been together for an hour and 20 minutes. We're almost done. My question to you is what's the action you're going to take when our meeting is over today as a result of the time that we spent together? What's one thing you're going to do?

It's not so much anything I teach, but it's more about the action you take. What will you do?

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Work on my mission statement, laugh, recheck my priorities, create a vision board.

MARK SANDERS: It's funny, when you type it, and you write it down, and you look at it, it's more likely to happen.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Prioritize self-care, plan some time off, going to let my coworkers know I appreciate them.

MARK SANDERS: And when you do that, notice how you feel good yourself just letting them know.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: I will make it a point to hold space for myself and what I'm feeling and engage in meaningful self-care, let five people I know I appreciate them, dance, prioritize myself, get a puppet.

MARK SANDERS: That's the real deal there. I'm telling you. Keep on-- sorry, Kristina.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: No, sorry. Try to be more positive, look at areas of my life that I would like to change to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue, focus on being fully present.

MARK SANDERS: Nice. I imagine that some of you have seen the movie *The Color Purple*. Oh, they could have used your services. There was a lot of drinking in that movie, domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse. And towards the middle of the movie, a singer showed from Memphis. Her name was Shug Avery, and she was the daughter of a Memphis preacher. And towards the end of the movie, she was going back to Memphis to sing. They didn't know she was planning to bring half of the family with her.

So in true southern tradition, before they hit the road to go to Memphis, they had a dinner for her. And as she was leaving, her husband tipped his hat, and he said to those remaining in the dining room, you're the salt of the Earth. You



ever heard that phrase the salt of the Earth? So I looked up the phrase the salt of the Earth and found out that phrase has been with us for a long time. It's in the Bible. And I learned on the internet that in ancient Rome, people were not paid in dollars and cents. They were paid in salt.

You've probably heard that phrase, he's not worth his weight in salt And I learned that in America before we had refrigeration, salt was used to preserve food, so it was considered precious and sacred, which is exactly how I see you. Individuals who dedicated your life to helping others. You truly are the salt of the Earth. And thank you so very much for what you do. And thank you for spending this time with us today. Thank you so much.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Thank you.

ANN E. SCHENSKY: Sorry, we do have one question.

MARK SANDERS: Yes, ready.

ANN E. SCHENSKY: Someone said how do you remain so optimistic and upbeat even on hard days? What do you do to start your mornings?

MARK SANDERS: Oh, lately, you know, COVID-19 taught me how to get this thing started. So I just started during COVID-19 since I was in the house so much, that I would keep my blinds open in the living room. And I have a nice view out of the window. I can see trees, and grass, and a little water. I decided to keep them open, and guess what happened? Over the course of the last year, I've seen more sunrises the last year than all of my entire life combined.

It's good on the human spirit.

I allow myself when I'm really thinking about it is to not turn the news on right away because it's always negative, right? So I just sit and just get still, right? I listen to more music than ever. I have Alexa right here. Alexa has like a million songs on the playlist, right? Music that's good for the spirit. The other, like so many of you, I'm a trauma survivor, serious trauma survivor. And both of my grandparents had alcohol use disorder. My father died smoking crack cocaine.

I grew up with corporal punishment as a kid, and I survived all of that. I find a lot of optimism comes from that. And any time I can try to be helpful for someone else, then that contributes to optimism even more. Seeking progress rather than perfection. So every now and then, you're going to walk through the world, and at least once a month, I encourage you head held high.

And people are going to look at you and say look at her. She thinks she's a gift to the world. And look at him. He thinks he's special. He's a gift to the world. And you know what? You are. You've been given these gifts to help the



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world heal, and you're using those gifts to make the world a better place. Again, thank you for being you and all you do. Thank you so much.

KRISTINA SPANNBAUER: Thanks, Mark.

ANN E. SCHENSKY: Thank you, everyone. Thanks, Mark.