

Do you have spiritual burnout?

Feeling drained from the events of 2020 and somewhat lost, spiritually? According to our experts, you're not alone...

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How are you doing? It's a question that's taken on new significance in the past year. Once a throwaway phrase usually met with a standard "good, thanks", these four little words are now weighted with a different kind of meaning. It's a sign of the unsettling times we've found ourselves in: while the global pandemic rages on with little respite, many of us have been battling feelings of anxiety, fear and overwhelm.

And as this emotional exhaustion starts to take its toll, an increasing number of people are reporting feeling spiritually lost, ungrounded and disorientated. You may have experienced it too – perhaps you feel drained of your positive resources, unable to tune in to your manifesting powers, or simply adrift among a sea of uncertainty. So, what exactly is going on? Could we all be suffering a sense of spiritual burnout? Holistic experts seem to think so.

"Spiritual burnout is a deep feeling of soul weariness and spiritual uneasiness that is sometimes an extended effect of physical and emotional burnout," explains life coach Carlyne Bennett, who's also an advanced Law of Attraction teacher (carolynebennett.com). "It's on the rise today because of the immense strain on our minds and spirits. The events of 2020 have pushed many of us to the limit in virtually every sense – financially, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually – and people are becoming 'soul weary' as a result of the negativity and fear it's created."

In springtime we had the symbol of the rainbow to lift us up and keep us on our spiritual paths. There were inspiring messages of hope and gratitude displayed proudly in our windows and the sense that everything was going to be okay, if we could all pull together. But now, as

the weeks have turned to months and the colours in those rainbow drawings have started to fade, so too has our ability to stay continuously upbeat. Many of us may be feeling disillusioned with our spiritual practices as they fail to give us the answers we desperately seek, and instead may be submitting to feelings of panic and negativity.

Holistic health coach Louise Murray (livewellwithlou.com) sees people with all kinds of burnout in her line

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of work. And although the effects can show themselves through a loss of energy, confidence and enthusiasm, she is keen to remind people that there is no shame in feeling this way.

"Burnout can happen to anyone, and experiencing it does not mean that you are weak or that you have failed in any way," she says. "To the contrary, burnout is a particularly painful condition that good people experience when they are trying to do and give their very best."

So, what's the answer? According to our experts, it's time to tune back into our spirituality and to remember our core values.

"It's never too soon to take a closer look at how you are feeling, make time for yourself, set new priorities and seek the right support," says Louise. "Slowing down, accepting ourselves and our limits, and realigning our

hearts and minds with what matters most will foster the self-compassion needed to overcome difficult times."

The vital signs

According to Louise, recognising that you're feeling burnt-out is key to overcoming it. "And recognition starts with understanding the difference between feeling challenged (which is totally normal at a time like this) and the early signs of burnout. When we are faced with challenging situations, our spiritual ego goes into action and this can be really beneficial and help you overcome these trials. Signs of feeling challenged include anxiousness, sleeplessness, feeling particularly tense or pressured, and a sense that you'd be okay if you got the situation under control.

"Burnout signals, on the other hand, are a state of deactivation. After periods of prolonged emotional stress you may find that you retreat from yourself and your higher power. Signs that you need to slow down and implement radical rest include:

- Withdrawal from your community and favourite activities
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling hopeless
- A sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment, loss of confidence and self-doubt
- Spiritual disconnection – feeling detached from your beliefs, core values and goals
- Overwhelming sense of emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalisation – feeling detached, uncaring and cynical toward yourself and others."

Solstice blessings

RESTORE IN JUST 7 STEPS

Looking to regain clarity and a sense of peace in your life? Follow our experts' advice...

1 Remember how your spirituality helps you

It can be hard to maintain your sense of faith during challenging times – particularly if you feel as though it has let you down – but it's precisely at these moments that we need it the most. "Quite often we leave our spiritual practices at times of stress," says Carolyne. "As routines change, we may find ourselves forgetting the rituals that maintain our wellbeing and create feelings of optimism, clarity and calm."

TRY THIS: Look for inspiration around you

Remind yourself how much you can benefit from your spiritual practices by seeking the words and experiences of others. "We have so many spiritual leaders to read or listen to, and in times of darkness their wisdom can often be the light in the world we need to be reminded of," says Nina Thistlethwaite, of London-based wellness studio House of Wisdom (houseofwisdomstudio.com).

2 Create calm within

Stress and anxiety can impact our ability to connect with our inner wisdom. Perhaps you're experiencing blocks when you try to follow the Law of Attraction, or maybe your meditation practice is becoming overshadowed by the constant internal chatter in your head. Either way, embracing a sense of calm can help you regain your sense of self.

TRY THIS: Breathe deeply

You can let go of feelings of fear by just focusing on your breath, says Carolyne. "Sit or stand still with both feet flat on the ground," she advises. "Close your eyes and relax your shoulders, and then simply inhale and exhale. Our breath can be incredibly powerful in helping us to switch off from the world around us and to create calm within."

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3 Practise gratitude

When our positive resources are depleted, we often need reminders about all the good in our life. "Gratitude will bring you to a place of positivity, connectivity and clarity – a vantage point from where you can chart a course that's not clouded by the overwhelming feelings of spiritual burnout," Carlyne says.

TRY THIS: Keep a journal

Nina suggests ending each day by writing down what you are thankful for. "As you keep doing this practice, you'll realise there are many reasons to be grateful, and your outlook on life will begin to shift."

4 Make your home a spiritual haven

As we spend an increasing amount of time within our own four walls, it's important to ensure this is somewhere that allows our spirituality to flourish. Keep your workspace separate from where you relax, and allow your spiritual tools to take pride of place in your living area – whether that's candles, crystals, yoga equipment or tarot cards.

TRY THIS: Buy some plants

Nina suggests adding some greenery to your home to boost your mental wellbeing, too. "Caring for a plant and witnessing its growth is nothing short of a miracle," she says. "Learning how another living organism thrives helps us cultivate awareness and a natural connection to something greater than ourselves, allowing us to anchor into feelings of interconnectedness and hope."

5 Accept what you can't change

It's a sad fact, but we have to let the events of this year unfold around us and know that we can't always change the bigger picture. While this may impact the way you view your own strength and spiritual power – and lead you to feel somewhat helpless – try to remember what gifts you do possess, and be content with this.

TRY THIS: Find peace with yourself

"Summon the inner compass of your intuition to gently guide you in setting reasonable, humane expectations for yourself," advises Louise. So, for example, if you've been using divination tools to try to predict when our lives will return to normal, or angel energy to try to protect everyone in the world, look to more achievable goals closer to home.

6 Choose what to focus on

With Covid-19 dominating our news feeds, social media platforms and conversations with friends, it can be hard to think of anything else. And yet, by simply making time to focus on your hobbies or discover new topics of conversation, you can embrace feelings of positivity rather than negativity.

TRY THIS: Make small swaps

Slight changes can make a big difference to your life, says Louise. "Choose where to put your energy and choose what to focus on," she says. "Ask yourself what behavioural shifts will make you happy." These little shifts could relate to anything – if you scroll through Instagram every night and berate yourself for not having a 'lockdown life' that compares to others, why not swap your phone for that Gabrielle Bernstein book you've always wanted to read? Or, instead of using the latest statistics as your go-to small-talk with colleagues, try discussing what the stars have in store for you this month.

7 Review your priorities

As with any major event, the lockdown is offering us the chance to look anew at what's important in our lives – so take the opportunity to do so. "Taking time to reassess your priorities by honestly listening to what your body, mind and spirit need is vital for healing burnout," says Louise. It may be that your sense of spirituality is changing and your practices could reflect this better.

TRY THIS: Ask yourself key questions

To help you find your footing, Louise recommends asking yourself some important questions such as: What do I need less of in my life? What do I want more of? What would I enjoy doing on a daily basis to calm and centre myself? If my heart could talk to me, what would it say it needs most right now?

How do you feel now? Do a quick meditation to see if your subconscious feels lighter and more energised. Now, pass this piece on to a friend to pay it forward!

