

Ep #10: The Burnout Avoidance Inventory: Beliefs, Behaviors, and Breaks



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kaneisha Grayson

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You are listening to *Scale Your Joy* with Kaneisha Grayson, Episode 10 late night edition.

Welcome to *Scale your Joy*, the only podcast that teaches high achievers with heart how to craft a life and build a business focused on freedom, joy, self-expression, and social impact. I'm your host Kaneisha Grayson, a Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School grad, author, essayist, and self-made entrepreneur. I did it and you can do it too. Let's get started.

Hello friend. It's late Tuesday night. It's 10:47pm. That's very late for me, that is past my bedtime. When I first started working on this episode it was a normal, good time. I had just finished eating dinner. We had spaghetti with meat sauce, salad, and for bread we use some hamburger buns from the freezer that we toasted and dipped in a homemade olive oil and vinegar herbed dipping sauce.

Tyler is pretty new to the kitchen. But we know we not about that women doing all the household labor life and neither is Tyler. So I coached him through cooking dinner while I luxuriously drank a glass of wine. And yes, I drink Moscato, judge me if you must. I love my sweet wine. Moscato is it? Is it Moscato? Moscato? It's spelled with an O, I don't know. Y'all let me know. Moscato drinkers unite.

So for the last few hours Tyler's been in the living room playing VR with his friend online. They love playing this game called Climbey. And me and Zadie have been in my office for hours planning out this episode. It's not supposed to take that long but the reason it took that long is I got distracted by some exciting news.

Just tonight, I got the news that I am officially under contract on a house. I'm so excited. So what this means is that a house was for sale and I went to go look at it. And I really liked it and I said, "I want to buy this house." And so I talked to my financial planner and she said, "If you insist on over

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bidding in order to buy a house in this market, here's the max amount you can offer based on my professional advice, how much you should do based on your goals and your income.”

And y'all know I play big, so I offered the max amount my financial planner said I could. And it was way, way, way more than they asked for. It's a very competitive market here in Austin. And I also did some creative structuring of my offer of some stuff I also offered with my offer. Let me not be so lack of transparent, there are some tenants in the house whose lease goes all the way till end of September. But I can't be a landlord legally, that's mortgage fraud if you get a residential loan and then you actually have tenants in there.

So I actually offered them two months free rent if they terminate their lease early. And I checked out the contract, it looks like the seller also offered them another month free as well. So between the two of us three months free rent, but they've got to leave early. And everybody was on board, so I'm officially under contract.

So what that means is they chose my offer among all the other people who made offers on the house. And now it is time to get the house inspected, time to get the house appraised, time to talk to my lender who already pre-qualified me for a mortgage and said, “If all goes well this is how much you can have at this interest rate.” But now it's time to speak to lenders, or the one particular lender I want to work with and lock in a rate. Lock in an interest rate and actually ask for the loan and get the loan. And so that's the part of the process that we're in.

The plan for this house, assuming that you know everything goes well with the inspection and appraisal is that actually I just put in my notice today at my apartment, my 60-day notice. So I'll stay here for the next 60 days. And then I'm actually going to move in with Tyler to his apartment, which is an exciting and unexpected happening.

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His apartment has been fully restored after the disaster of the snowpocalypse and basically all his stuff getting ruined. They've restored it, it looks great, and his rent is way less than my month to month rent that I pay at my place. And so sometime soon he will move back into his apartment. And then in 60 days I will move into his apartment with him.

And I'm pretty excited about it. He has only a one bedroom, it's a large one bedroom. And so actually, I just went and checked out a co-working space that I'll be working out of, and it's right across the street. I am thrilled. It's dog friendly. It's gorgeous, great sunlight. I think I'm going to have a good time.

So I will move in with Tyler, save up lots of money since I won't be paying this egregious month to month rent. And then we will work on getting the house renovated for a few months, I don't know how long it'll take. It might just be two months, it might be six months, I have no idea.

We're not planning on like gutting the house, but there is a few things that we want to work on like putting in new floors, taking out the carpet, putting in not carpet, because I have a dog and we both have pretty gnarly allergies, Tyler and I. And the other things like update the bathrooms, paint the interior of the house, just things like that. Nothing super major.

But after we get all that done, we would move into the house no later than the beginning of 2022. And I cannot think of a better way to start the year than moving into a house that I'm really excited about and just really grateful and feeling great.

Y'all know I was feeling discouraged, defeated, depleted. I was making up words, deflected. So I'm really, really excited and happy. Hope everything works out with the inspection and the appraisal, and that I can make the biggest purchase of my entire life. Which is a little scary but for the most part I'm very excited and financially prepared for such a large purchase.

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Another thing that's exciting is I declared that I wanted to find my house by May 1st because May 1st is my magical manifestation date. If you remember May 1st was also my date for meeting my beloved. I believe I've shared that on the podcast, if I haven't then I will share it now that I declared that I wanted to meet my beloved by May 1, 2020. And I met Tyler April 20th and Zadie on the same day, how special, on April 20. And so that's super cool.

So May 1st is my magical manifestation day, and I found my house by May 1st. If all goes well, I'll close on the house May 7th and move in some time a few months after that. So I'm just feeling full of joy and gratitude tonight. And thank you for being with me on this journey.

I want to remind you, my lovely listener, that we have a giveaway going on and I want you to enter it. I got things to give away. So what am I talking about? Because this is the launch of the podcast and we are celebrating the launch of *Scale Your Joy* I have a five-book bundle giveaway. So five lucky listeners will receive the five-book bundle.

It's five audio books or eBooks that I have a hand-picked. They are all about entrepreneurship, joy, lifestyle design, and living your best life. I've read all the books, and I'm handpicking the books. The reason I don't share which books they are is because I'm constantly changing my mind about which five I want it to be because I love books and I love to read.

So the way that you enter the giveaway is you go to scaleyourjoy.com/welcome and we have screenshots showing exactly how to leave a review on Apple Podcasts and exactly how to enter the giveaway. If you don't have Apple Podcasts, let's say you use Spotify, let's be resourceful and just download Apple Podcasts and leave a review. And then we can do something with Spotify listeners later.

So I want you all to enter the giveaway so that there's lots of people who have a chance to win. We've had a fair number of entries, but to my

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surprise there's actually way more people reviewing the podcast than there are people actually entering the giveaway. And I really want to make sure that you have a chance to win those very cool audio books eBooks. So make sure to visit scaleyourjoy.com/welcome and actually enter the giveaway. I'll be announcing the winners on next week's episode, episode 11.

Today, we are going to talk about burnout. If I were allowed to play famous music on this podcast here's where I would play that song that goes like, "Hello darkness my old friend." But instead I'll just sing it for you because I don't have permission to play that music. And I am all too familiar with burnout and how devastating burnout can be. And I never want to feel that level of depletion and devastating exhaustion of burnout again, and I really don't want that for you.

So I'm going to talk to you about what burnout is, and how the simple but often neglected habit of taking breaks can help you avoid burnout. Or heal from burnout if you've already gone too far down the path of overdoing and exhaustion.

But first, our listener spotlight. Today's listener spotlight is from Shadiah Sigala my Pomona College bestie, who I am still very close to to this very day. Shadiah is amazing, inspiring, wonderfully fun, and just a splendid overall lovely person. Shadiah embodies the expression *joie de vivre* so beautifully and she is my favorite *bon vivant*. I have to speak another language to even capture Shadiah's sparkle.

Shadiah immigrated from Mexico to the US when she was a kid. And she has completely achieved the American dream by being the founder of not one, but two venture-backed software startups. And that also happened after going to Pomona College and then Harvard Kennedy School. Who is this lady? So I'm so proud of Shadiah, so honored to be her great friend. And let's hear what Shadiah has to say.

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“Hi, I'm Shadiyah Sigala and I am the co-founder and CEO of Kinside, which is a venture-backed tech startup that focuses on connecting working families to vetted, trusted childcare. And I was previously the co-founder of a company called HoneyBook, which supports small business owners and their back-office management tools. Again, another software company.

So the thread here is that I am a tech entrepreneur, I suppose you might say a serial entrepreneur now. And I have been listening to Kaneisha's 'podcast' before there even was a podcast, which was really just knowing her both as a colleague at Pomona College, and a lifelong friend. And then also a mentor and admissions consulting, before she was that officially, and helping me to achieve a lot of my dreams.

So with Kaneisha's help I was able to get into the Harvard Kennedy School. And also, she infected me with the entrepreneurial bug. If it weren't for Kaneisha's inspiration and really opening my mind to all the ways that entrepreneurship can be so fulfilling, even if you're a person who doesn't identify with making a lot of money as the primary motivator for life, but rather making a difference in people's life as a primary motivator for life. This is one of Kaneisha's magical gifts.

Having said that Kaneisha has also mentored me, and inspired me, and guided me, and advised me throughout my 20s and 30s on how to then make more money. As I became a mother this became critically important. And also, I just developed and decided that wealth matters for me. While it may not be the number one motivator, it is a very direct outcome of a lot of the work that I do.

I have loved listening to the podcast because it actually refreshes my mind in a lot of the life lessons that I've already learned through Kaneisha. And also brand-new ones. And it helps me to think about things in a new way.”

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Thank you for the beautiful things that you said Shadiyah, I love you. Okay friend, it's time for us to talk about burnout. And my one simple tip of taking breaks as a way to heal from burnout or avoid it in the first place.

So what is burnout? Burnout is when you have driven yourself past the point of productivity and activity to over productivity, over activity, and you've moved into exhaustion, depletion, overwhelm, and often numbness, rage, or this low-level sense of a constant state of tension. Burnout is when you push yourself too hard in any area of your life and it drains your energy and zest for showing up in the other areas of your life. Burnout is when you have had your candle burning too brightly and too long and it has now, you guessed it, burned out. You have no light left because you have burned the width down to nothing.

Burnout results from operating at an unsustainable level of movement. You move too quickly, you move too much, and you move with too much tension to the point that you now can't really move much at all. You end up in a heap on the floor or curled up in the fetal position in bed. You can burn out due to a full-time job, or even due to hobbies or side projects. You can burn out while pursuing a really ambitious goal. But you can also burn out by just living what you feel is your normal day to day life. But in reality, your "normal" day to day life is actually way too much.

Tyler loves when I refer to myself or to other people as doing the most. And burnout is definitely a result of doing the most. Okay, so let's say we've gotten to the point of burnout, how can you heal from burnout?

It's imperative that we avoid burning out in the first place as much as possible, because our bodies, minds, and spirits deserve better than that. And also, I think that recovering from burnout, when it happens to me it takes so long to recover from burnout that it negates all the overdoing that I was engaging in that led to me burning out. So all of it was for nothing, net net, right? I'm back to where I started.

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So, you know, it's just not worth it all the doing, doing, overdoing that we do that gets us to burnout, and then we end up exhausted and under doing. It's not worth it, that lack of balance. So you can heal from burnout, and even avoid burnout in the first place by doing three important things.

One, take a look at your beliefs. Two, take stock of your behaviors. Three, take a much-needed break. All right, so our framework for today is the, I'm making up the name literally right now. Let's call it the Burnout Avoidance Inventory. Oh, I like it.

The Burnout Avoidance Inventory is beliefs, behaviors, and break. Take a look at your beliefs, take stock of your behaviors and take a much-needed break.

So first, let's talk about beliefs. Our beliefs or our thoughts drive our actions and behaviors. Right? That's the underpinning of the entirety of cognitive behavioral therapy is that our beliefs drive our actions, or our behaviors, and then that impacts what we do. So our beliefs or our thoughts make us feel emotions. And those emotions impact what we do. And actually they all are related, what we do impacts our emotions as well.

But let's get back to the, what did we call it? The Burnout Avoidance Inventory. All right, so if our beliefs drive our behaviors, we need to first look at our beliefs. I want you to be really mindful of holding burnout inducing beliefs like, "I have to prove that I'm good enough. I have to prove that I belong here. I have to show them that I deserve this opportunity. There isn't enough time or money left to get everything done that I need to get done. I'm going to run out of time, I'm going to run out of money. I'm already too behind to ever catch up." All those kinds of beliefs, they will sap your energy and have you go, go, going instead of joy, joy, joying.

Next, let's take stock of your behaviors. All right, so our beliefs drive our emotions and feelings, which drive our behaviors. So if you're believing things like I just mentioned, surely your behaviors will eventually reflect

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that. Some behaviors that will have you all the way burning out are, you know, one is over scheduling yourself. Putting way more on your calendar and your to-do list than you can feasibly and calmly get done in the allotted time.

That's how you end up rushing from one appointment to the next feeling like you're always breathlessly playing catch up. Just never on time, never getting your to do list done. When you leave yourself inadequate time to get from one appointment to the next, whether you're actually driving somewhere or if it's just going from one Zoom meeting to the next, it's going to foster feelings of burnout.

Another behavior that will cultivate burnout is blazing through achievements without taking time to stop, reflect, and celebrate. High achievers like us, we have lofty dreams and we have big goals for ourselves. And that is great. But we have to take time to stop and recognize when we've done great work, and when we've won the game. If you keep moving the finish line further out you rob yourself of the gift of acknowledging and celebrating how far you've come.

So let yourself take a pause and realize, "Wait a minute, I did it. That thing I wanted to do, I did it." Right? Whether it was maybe some savings goal you had or you wanted to apply to graduate school. Or you wanted to get that first client for your side business. Or you wanted to make the case that you be included on a project at work.

Before you get the ultimate, ultimate result of like, yeah, I got the raise. Or I got put on the new project. Or I got into a certain school, pause and celebrate the fact that you applied to the school, that you put yourself forward for the raise, that you made the case to put you on that special project. That is worthy. That effort itself is worthy of celebration. And if you do not let yourself acknowledge those wins you will burn out.

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All right, now we're at the solution part. Take a much-needed break. I want to talk about Americans. Y'all, we got to do better. If you're an American listening to this, we got to do better. Americans are terrible at taking vacations. Do you know this? I lived in Spain for four glorious months in 2019. And let me tell you Spanish people, and I was in Barcelona, so in particular, the Catalans, they know how to take a rest and they know how to relax. They really know how to enjoy life, slow down, and take a break.

And it was so wonderful to be in that cultural context of rest, relaxation, connection, quality time, fun. Oh, wonderful. And I want to capture that spirit of Spain and Barcelona. And I hope that I can infuse my home with that spirit of rest, relaxation, it's an oasis and this is a place of joy. I'm really getting myself excited, I really want to do that with my new home.

And I really get to see it up close and personal, even in my very own business, how bad Americans are at taking vacation. I have three full time team members in the Philippines. And then my Latvian bestie Ana, she's been working full time for The Art of Applying for about, I think, a month now. And do you know that my Filipino contractors and my Latvian contractor, they have so much more vacation than I have on my calendar as an American?

Like, this Thursday is Day of Valor in the Philippines. And I'm like, "What is the Day of Valor?" More like the wonderful day of country-wide vacation in the Philippines, I love it. But they're taking the day off and I'm going to be working. We don't have a day of valor in the United States. Even though when I googled what the Day of Valor is, it relates to something with the US and the Philippines. So why don't we get that day off in the US? So we are not good at taking time off in the US and I want to call it out, and I want us to work on it.

So when you're feeling burned out or better yet, before you get to burnout, I want you to prioritize taking breaks. And a vacation is the most familiar type of break, but there's other types of breaks. For example, let's just scale it

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down to the weekend. As much as possible treat your weekends as a real break. Stay off of social media. Keep your phone use to a minimum. Let work emails wait until Monday. Let all email, if you can, wait until Monday and just be fully present with yourself and your loved ones and enjoy the weekend.

But I don't want the weekend to be our only break. We deserve more than that. At your job I want you to take all the vacation you are entitled to and when you go on vacation, I want you to really go on vacation when you take vacation.

I remember that my dearly departed bestie Leah, we would take turns being a guest at one another. Because one of us would take vacation time and then be on the computer answering work emails on our so-called vacation day. It was usually me doing this. But at least one time I remember it was Leah. She took time off of work so that she didn't have to go to any meetings and could actually get her work done. She took a vacation day to work, can you imagine?

And so you know, that with Scale Your Joy I have to practice what I preach. So, my friend, this is where I tell you that I am taking a break. The other day Ana and I were having a meeting about Scale Your Joy and she asked me if I had thought about releasing the show in seasons instead of just continuously every week. And I felt very intrigued when she said this. And the more we talked about it the more I realized that Ana had just had an epiphany for me.

I realized almost as soon as she said it that I really needed and wanted a break from the every week, every week, every week schedule of podcasting. I love this podcast, it lights me up, it delights me, and I am so proud of it. Launching this podcast has given me a renewed sense of joy and purpose and has been one of the absolute highlights of 2021 for me.

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But it is also a lot of work. It takes me over three hours to plan and record each episode. I only record once; I don't do multiple recordings. It's just to think through what I want the episode to be about, to write out my thoughts and my notes. Then I get distracted, end up taking Zadie out. Like it's at least a three-hour endeavor for one episode, just of my time. That doesn't even take into account all the amazing hard work that my production team puts in once I submit the recording.

So thanks to Ana's gentle suggestion I have a wonderful Scale Your Joy congruent production schedule planned out for Scale Your Joy. So here's what I'll be doing, I'll be releasing two more episodes in the coming week. So I'll release Episode 11 and then Episode 12. And then that's going to wrap up season one of Scale Your Joy.

Then I'm going to take a much-needed break for the summer. During the break I'm going to continue to record episodes but at a slower pace. I'm also going to move in with Tyler, renovate my house, and hopefully maybe even move into my house if it's ready. Tyler and I are going to go on vacation to South Beach. We're going to celebrate our one-year anniversary. And of course I'll continue to run my admissions consulting business, The Art of Applying. If you or anyone you know is applying to grad school and wants our help, come visit us at theartofapplying.com.

And then Scale Your Joy, season two will be back in August and we'll have at least 12 episodes maybe more. And by taking this break I am honoring my energy, my enthusiasm, and keeping my inspiration nice and high. I'm practicing what I preach and I am thrilled with this plan. And if you're feeling a pang of, "No, but I'll miss you." I don't want you to worry, you can relisten to your favorite episodes.

And my team will put together a list of other podcasts I've been a guest on over the years. So you can listen to me share my stories, strategies, and ideas on other people's podcasts. And who knows, you may discover a great new podcast that way. So the place to find the list of all the other

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podcasts that I've been on is to come to scaleyourjoy.com/10, one zero. And then that will be the show notes for this episode and it'll have a list of all the other podcasts that I have been on that I think you would enjoy listening to me share about.

All right so, you know, this is not goodbye, it's just see you later. And only in two more episodes. Don't you stop listening, we have two more episodes in season one. And I also just want to thank you for being a loyal listener. It means a lot to me. It means so much to me to give me the honor of your attention for 30 minutes to an hour every week, that is something.

I like to tell my friends that in this world we live in the attention economy. The most valuable thing you can give another person, or a thought leader, or a brand is your attention. It means more than money, it means more than, I don't know, anything. In this highly distracted and distractible world it's your attention. And so I just want to say thank you for your attention during these 10 episodes so far. Thank you for your support for the two more episodes we have in season one. And it's time for your joy work.

All right my friend, I want you to journal, doodle, and noodle on the following questions. What are some warning signs of burnout for me? You know, what are your special warning signs? What replenishes me when I am feeling exhausted, depleted, overwhelmed, and undernourished? Next question, when is my next meaningful break? Is it a four-day vacation, a two-week vacation, a sabbatical?

If you don't know when your next break is it's time to schedule one. This is where we take our imperfect action and make a beautiful mess, and we choose a date. Be gentle with ourselves, choose it a little bit in the future so that you have time to plan, time to let people know who need to know so you can really unplug and go on vacation. But take some imperfect action and schedule your next break.

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Last question, what can I do in the coming weeks to prepare myself and the people in my life so that when I'm on my break I can really relax? All right my friend, that is it for today's episode. I enjoyed spending this time with you. Please come and enter the giveaway at scaleyourjoy.com/welcome. And I will talk to you next week.

To celebrate the launch of the show I'm giving away a Scale Your Joy audiobook eBook bundle. These are five hand-picked books that I have read and I love. They're about life, joy, and entrepreneurship. And five lucky listeners will be chosen to win.

The way you enter is you subscribe, rate, and review Scale Your Joy on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a five-star review although I sure hope you're loving the show. I want your honest feedback so I can create an amazing show that provides tons of value. Visit scaleyourjoy.com/welcome to learn more about the contest and how to enter.

I'll be announcing the winners on the show in Episode 11.