

# Six-Month Checkup: Early Warning Signs of Judicial Burnout

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**TRUE    FALSE**

T	F	<i>1.</i>	I feel tired after hearing three or four cases in a row.
T	F	<i>2.</i>	I often daydream of earning a good living in some other way.
T	F	<i>3.</i>	I am easily irritated, and generally feel impatient.
T	F	<i>4.</i>	Despite my efforts, I find that my attention wanders a lot.
T	F	<i>5.</i>	I delay in picking up the ringing telephone, or in asking my secretary for messages.
T	F	<i>6.</i>	I feel isolated from the mainstream of current legal thought and administrative innovation in the judiciary.
T	F	<i>7.</i>	I consistently delay returning troublesome calls. I search out the pleasant calls among the messages and return them right away.
T	F	<i>8.</i>	I care little about the outcome of most trials.
T	F	<i>9.</i>	I believe that the concerns of most litigants are banal and exaggerated.
T	F	<i>10.</i>	I allow myself to tolerate boredom, without trying to initiate some relevant and stimulating dialogue.
T	F	<i>11.</i>	I let others ramble on excessively while I rationalize that they ought to be allowed to get to the point in their own way.
T	F	<i>12.</i>	I cannot wait for the day's work to end. I terminate proceedings a little early.
T	F	<i>13.</i>	I realize I am too heavily burdened with committee and other commitments.
T	F	<i>14.</i>	I cringe at the prospect of night or weekend calls.
T	F	<i>15.</i>	I am reluctant to be socially identified as a judge.
T	F	<i>16.</i>	I feel almost physical relief at any legitimate excuse to cancel or postpone a hearing.
T	F	<i>17.</i>	I neglect record-keeping.
T	F	<i>18.</i>	I feel impotent when colleagues are procrastinators.
T	F	<i>19.</i>	I have let office correspondence and memos lay about. Some are never even answered, but not deliberately so.
T	F	<i>20.</i>	I sometimes think I behave inappropriately without much concern about being challenged or censured.

**TRUE FALSE**

TRUE	FALSE	
T	F	21. I am impatient at meetings. Instead of attempting to facilitate or enliven discussion, I tend to be either too directive or too withdrawn.
T	F	22. I have largely given up explaining or speaking up about the nature of my work.
T	F	23. I feel cynical about the motives of my brethren.
T	F	24. I increasingly feel supremely confident about my own motives and reasoning.
T	F	25. I never ask a respected colleague to critique my work.
T	F	26. My social isolation has increased to the point where I cannot recall who among my old friends is still alive.
T	F	27. I have an answer or approach for most questions.
T	F	28. I find that 15 minutes are usually more than enough for a 30 minute hearing.
T	F	29. I seem to glance at my watch a lot.
T	F	30. I feel that basically people do not change, and that the human condition is rather hopeless.
T	F	31. I have no desire to write anything about my work as a judge.
T	F	32. My daydreams are increasingly concerned with money/security, sex and peace.
T	F	33. After verbally making an appointment or promise, I often forget to write it down.
T	F	34. Shortly after my work day begins, I think about what I will have for lunch, or about the little chores that I will squeeze in.
T	F	35. I often feel physically exhausted or ðwiped out.ö
T	F	36. I have diminished interest or curiosity about the fate of my former colleagues.
T	F	37. Holiday greetings, Christmas cards, etc., have become a nuisance.
T	F	38. It's not funny anymore. At work I seldom seem to laugh when others do.
T	F	39. Every case in a particular category starts to sound the same. I've heard it all before.
T	F	40. I seldom have time to see my friends.
T	F	41. My reaction to pleas of urgency is increasingly numb.
T	F	42. I feel little empathy for others.
T	F	43. I keep people waiting while I finish reading a magazine.

**TRUE FALSE**

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T	F	44.	While others are talking, I stare at and admire my collection of framed degrees and awards.
T	F	45.	My notes are perfunctory; I largely rely upon my memory and my clerk's memoranda.
T	F	46.	I have difficulty recalling details in cases. I wait for others to start the discussion and fill me in.
T	F	47.	When meeting lawyers and court staff outside of the court, I often fail to recognize them.
T	F	48.	I have stopped fighting administrative battles. Let them do it their way; it's not worth the struggle.
T	F	49.	I feel that my present appointment holds my last chance to advance professionally or socially.
T	F	50.	I feel that only cases involving the wealthy, the powerful, or the big corporations command my full attention.

**SUGGESTED SELF-SCORING GUIDE**

If the total number of T (True) answers is:

Above 24: I am probably experiencing burnout.

Between 16-24: I am on the borderline.

Below 16: I am coping with stress reasonably well.

**SUGGESTED DATE OF NEXT CHECKUP: 6 MOS.**

Call the Missouri Lawyers' Assistance Program (MOLAP) at **1-800-688-7859** for professional, confidential assistance with stress or any problem affecting your personal or professional life or visit the MOLAP Web page at [www.mobar.org/law/molap.htm](http://www.mobar.org/law/molap.htm).

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