



Managing Counselor Burnout: Promoting Wellness in Managed Care

Presented by

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Objectives

- Participants will learn how to recognize and prevent signs and symptoms of burnout as well as mitigate the inherent risks to counselor wellness present within a managed care setting.
- Evaluate effective strategies for dealing with burnout.
- Apply stress management techniques to workplace stressors.
- Practice stress management techniques.



Managed Care



Managed Care

- Arose in response to institutional demand for reduced health care costs and increase efficiency of health care systems
- Based upon medical model and treatment revolves around diagnosis
- Goal is to provide efficient quality care at a reduced cost

Acker, 2010



Affects Upon Mental Health Care

- ▶ Limiting of resources, particularly more expensive services
- ▶ Increased administrative control
- ▶ Emphasis on short term interventions and brief therapy
- ▶ Emphasis on measurable outcomes

Acker, 2010



Affects Upon Mental Health Professionals

- ▶ Reduced autonomy
- ▶ Increased stress and anxiety particularly for those unfamiliar with navigating managed care system
- ▶ Pressure to develop skills that allow for competence of managed care system
- ▶ Diminished social support since resources are limited to allow for adequate staff
- ▶ Lower levels of self-satisfaction
- ▶ Increased somatic symptoms
- ▶ Overall increased risk of burnout especially for younger professionals and those working in agency settings.

Acker, 2010



Impairment



Professional Responsibility

- ▶ The ACA Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) states that counselors “engage in self-care activities to maintain and promote their own emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being to best meet their professional responsibilities,” (Section C).
- ▶ The Code of Ethics recognizes the importance of self-monitoring in this capacity by requiring that “Counselors monitor themselves for signs of impairment from their own physical, mental, or emotional problems and refrain from offering or providing professional services when impaired,” (Section C.2.g.).
- ▶ According to the Code, “Counselors assist colleagues or supervisors in recognizing their own professional impairment and provide consultation and assistance when warranted with colleagues or supervisors showing signs of impairment and intervene as appropriate to prevent imminent harm to clients,”(Section C.2.g.).

Wellness





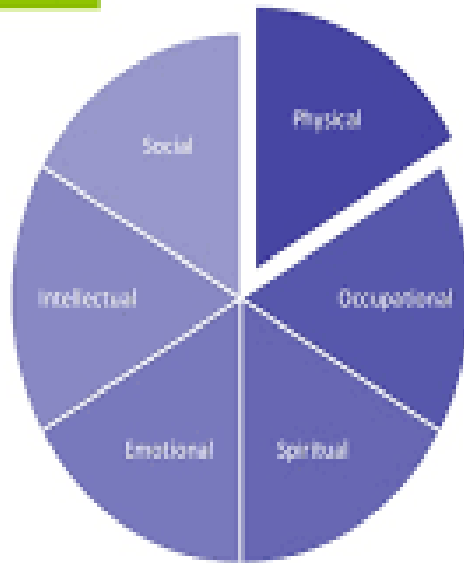
What is wellness?

- Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) defined wellness as “a way of life oriented towards optimal health and well-being in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community” (p. 252).
- “Wellness is the hallmark characteristic of those whose lives achieve the balance between self, life, and others”—Witmer & Granello, 2005.

Basic Domains of Wellness

Domains of Wellness

Addressing human health in a holistic or comprehensive sense and assumes that each person will actively participate in protecting their health, in preventing diseases and will not leave all this to medication



Cognitive Wellness: Increase satisfaction & personal success, visualization.

Emotional Wellness: Self-care plans, coping w/ anger, anxiety, pain, injury, & trauma, enhancing sense of self-worth.

Physical Wellness: Nutrition, physiological stress reactions, yoga.

Spiritual Wellness: Principles, growth, wisdom, journal writing, meditation.

Social Wellness: Assertiveness, values, relationships, positive confrontation.

Occupational Wellness: Career Development, self-exploration, life planning.



Overview of Burnout




Description of Burnout

- Burnout is defined as “physical and emotional exhaustion, involving the development of negative self-concept, negative job attitudes, and loss of concern and feeling for clients,” (Pines & Maslach, 1978, p. 234).
- “You may be suffering from burnout when you are feeling exhausted and are unable to pay attention to what someone is saying; you find yourself reacting more impatiently and intolerantly than you have in the past; your sleeping and eating habits change or you experience a new physical symptom; or you find yourself dreading the beginning of the workday and lacking enthusiasm, motivation, and interest,” (Okun and Kantrowitz, 2008, p. 302).



Burnout

- Burnout contributes to a diminished ability to act in a manner that promotes the well-being of others.
 - Burnout levels are considered to be impacted by both occupational hazards and environmental factors among helping professionals.
- 



Are you experiencing job burnout?


- Have you faced changes in the workplace, the demands of the job, your administrative supervisor, or the counseling profession?
- Was there a critical incident that altered the way you view your job—a new clinical supervisor, co-workers, or responsibilities?
- Have you changed? Are your interests or values pertaining to work now different from when you first registered as a PLPC? Has the company mission changed? Are your abilities and skills not being utilized?



Signs and Symptoms of Burnout



Factors of Burnout

- The nature of the work high expectations and limited resources to meet those expectations.
 - High emotional content of client problems.
 - Personal Crisis (natural disasters, traumatic events, life crises)
 - Debilitation
- 



Warning Signs of Burnout

- ▶ Frequent colds
- ▶ Restlessness
- ▶ Rapid Exhaustion/Drained
- ▶ Unsure about your choice of job or career
- ▶ Lower productivity/lack of new ideas
- ▶ Intolerance/lashing out
- ▶ Detached from people and things around you
- ▶ Feelings of emptiness, doubt, cynicism, or apathy
- ▶ Forgetfulness/spacing out
- ▶ Looking for “magic”
- ▶ Needing to “prove” oneself
- ▶ Depersonalization of work and clients
- ▶ Insecure about your competence and abilities
- ▶ Resentment for having to do too much



Consequences of Not Addressing Burnout

- Secondary Trauma
- Marital Problems
 - Absenteeism
 - Substance Abuse
- Exacerbation of Medical/Emotional Problems
 - Depression

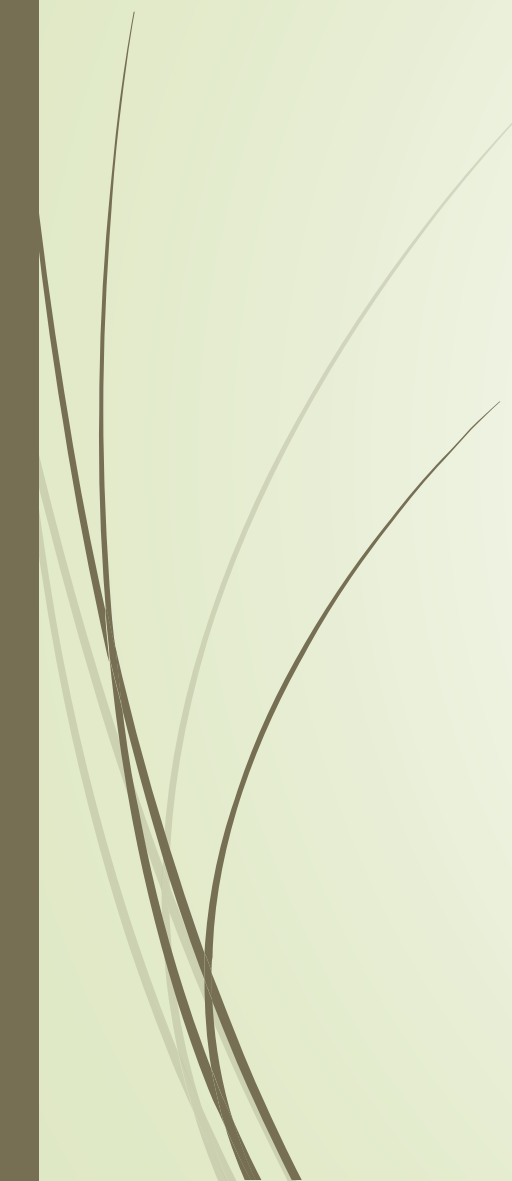


Barriers to reporting and/or seeking self-care

- Fear of denial by others
- Stigma associated with impairment
- Fear of reprisal
- Lack of awareness of procedures/programs



Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison (2014) Risk Factors of Burnout

- Clients have an unsolvable problem that must be solved
 - All clients are not "honors students" (they may not have the skills or resources to meet their goals)
 - There is often a readiness gap between them and us
 - Our inability to say no
 - Constant empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and one-way caring
 - Elusive measures of success and normative failure
- 



Systemic factors that promote vulnerability

Large caseload with seriously troubled clients

Managed care policies may require hospitals discharge clients before they are ready

Client may express anger when counselor sets limits on availability

Ability to obtain quality administrative supervision

Nature of our clientele (e.g., vulnerable children, complexity of problems, safety concerns)

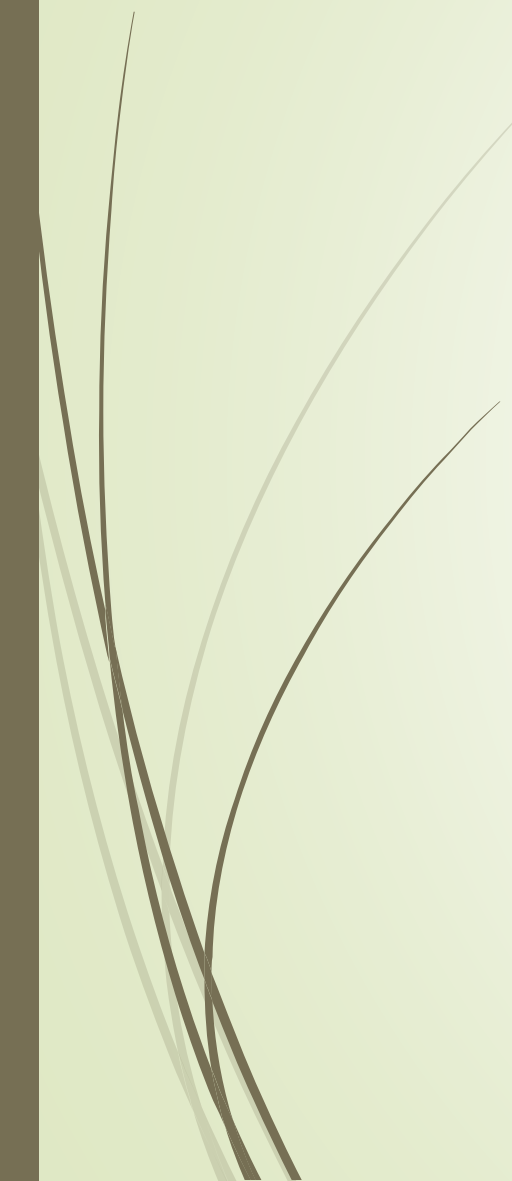
Nature of workplace (lack of vacation time, lack of input into decision making process, current policies prohibit best practices treatment)

CASE STUDY





CASE STUDY



Marissa works at a community agency as a PLPC. Marissa manages a caseload of nearly 30 individuals with severe mental health disorders and is swamped in paperwork. Many of her clients are receiving roughly four sessions of treatment covered by their insurance before there is a need for concurrent review. Marissa has the responsibility of keeping up with these deadlines as well as those of treatment plans. Marissa has a client with a review due and must review progress notes, physician and nursing notes, and any other material she can use that will help to justify continued treatment and payment for the client. She believes that the client needs more sessions but the reviewer disagrees. Marissa believes her CT is not at baseline but her administrative supervisor advises her to prepare the CT for discharge due to insurance company's refusal to pay for future sessions. Marissa has one more session with client to do this. Marissa calls the client to inform her before the session and the client is very upset and demanding. She blames Marissa for early termination. Marissa feels the weight of this client and knows this will not be the last time events like this will occur in her current workplace. She is also overwhelmed by student loan debt and while she has made attempts to find another job she has been unlucky thus far.



Strategies for Preventing or Treating Burnout



Self-Care

Corey, Corey, and Callanan (2003) defined self-care as “searching for positive life experiences that lead to zest, peace, excitement, & happiness.”



Health is the greatest gift,
Contentment is the greatest wealth,
A trusted friend is the best relative,
Liberated mind is the greatest bliss.

Buddha



Start in the here and now

When thinking about your self-care strategies, stop and ask yourself the following two questions:

When considering my wellness needs, what area do I want to begin with **TODAY**?

Today, what is the area that is bothering me the most?



Wellness Activities

Physical

Cognitive

Emotional

Spiritual

Social

Occupational



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**“This treadmill is so high-tech, you
burn 100 calories just selecting
your workout program!”**



Wellness Activities: Physical

- ▶ Drink plenty of water
- ▶ Check out local food co-ops if one is in your area for good, affordable food.
- ▶ Exercise, move, and get outdoors; do not be afraid to touch the earth
- ▶ Try managing your routine to carve out time to rest and sleep, and cut back on caffeine.
- ▶ Unplug: turn off the tv, computer, video game, cell phone, etc.
- ▶ Check out free resources, such as YouTube, to learn how to do yoga or other exercises.
- ▶ Search for tracking tools like <http://www.myfitnesspal.com> that will show how far you've come.
- ▶ Consider engaging in hypnosis, acupuncture, or nicotine replacement therapy to curb the smoking habit.
- ▶ Discuss preventive health care with your doctor, dentist, or other health care provider.
- ▶ Talk to your doctor, using a process of shared decision-making when you are unsure about a prescription or need guidance.
- ▶ Join and visit local gyms, YMCAs, and fitness clubs, or join a neighborhood pool.





Wellness Activities: Cognitive

- Meditation
- Journaling
- Flip through travel books or go online to find places you might enjoy reading about or visiting.
- Play crossword puzzles and other games like Sudoku
- Befriend people who can stimulate your mind, and get into a discussion with them about topics that interest you.
- Going to the movies, theater, symphony, museum, festivals.

SHOP TALK





Wellness Activities: Emotional

- ▶ Reflect each day on your emotions, what can they teach you, and how you can express them.
- ▶ Consider using a journal to record feelings and thoughts.
- ▶ Develop regular habits that help you process and deal with your feelings effectively so you move forward in fulfilling your emotional needs.
- ▶ Find a place where you feel the most comfortable and go there when you feel a need for comfort, quiet space, or safety.
- ▶ Take a step back when in a stressful situation.
- ▶ Practice deep breathing or other relaxation techniques.
- ▶ Discover what you like to do best, and do it often. It will help keep your spirits and emotions up.

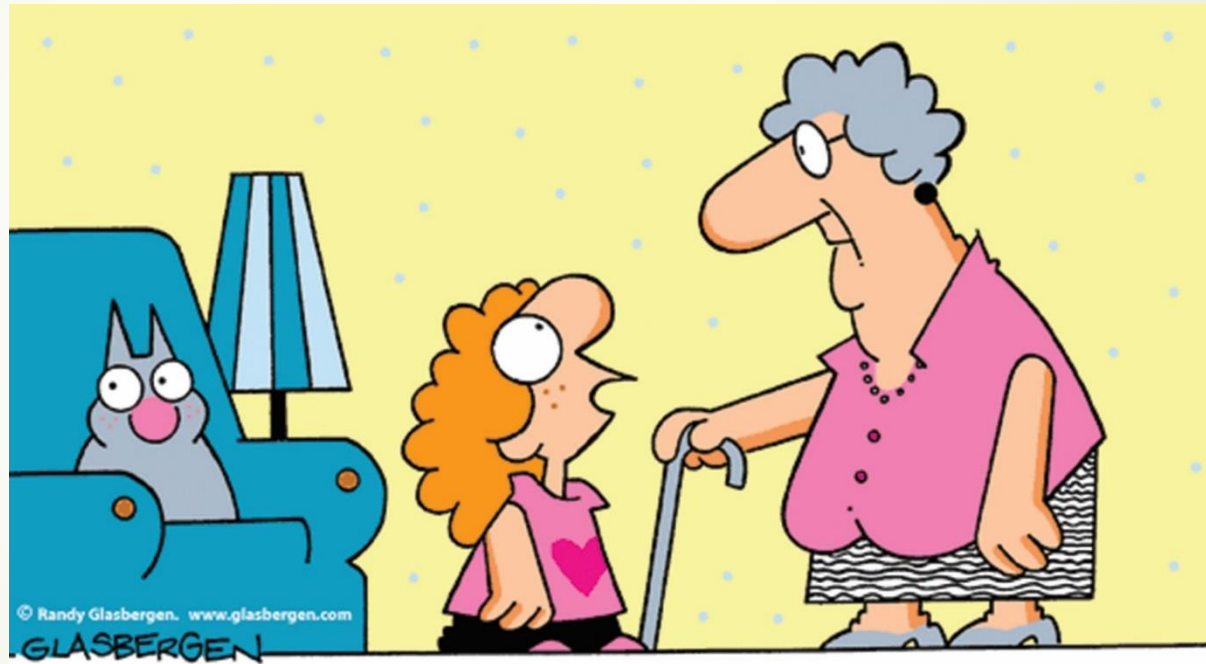
- ▶ Find an outlet for physical activity, such as a sports league or a gym/fitness center.
- ▶ Take some time to yourself regularly.
- ▶ Identify resources that can help you with a sleep schedule or ideas for meal planning.
- ▶ Practice positive self-affirmations. Develop a positive statement to repeat to yourself daily. When you change your thoughts, you can change your mood and attitude.
- ▶ Try out different coping exercises or strategies when not in a stressful situation. When challenges arise, you will be better prepared to deal with them.
- ▶ Practice finding positives (a silver lining) in something that you feel is negative. Support others in doing this, as well.





Wellness Activities: Spiritual

- Read about other types of beliefs to help you become more understanding, accepting, and open-minded.
- Keep your beliefs in your thoughts to use them in your everyday life.
- Share your beliefs, values, and principles with others, as appropriate, as a means of deepening relationships and expanding your world view.
- Learn about different organizations or groups in your community and decide which ones are the best fit for you.
- Find out about the many groups offered within your organization and get involved.
- As often as possible, find a peaceful location to reflect and meditate.
- Learn other religions through books or conversation.

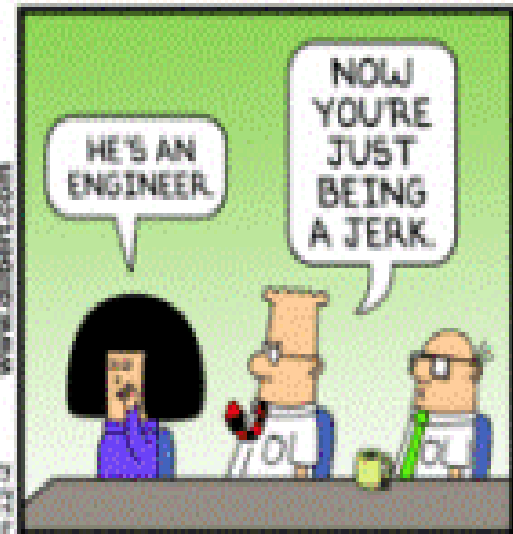
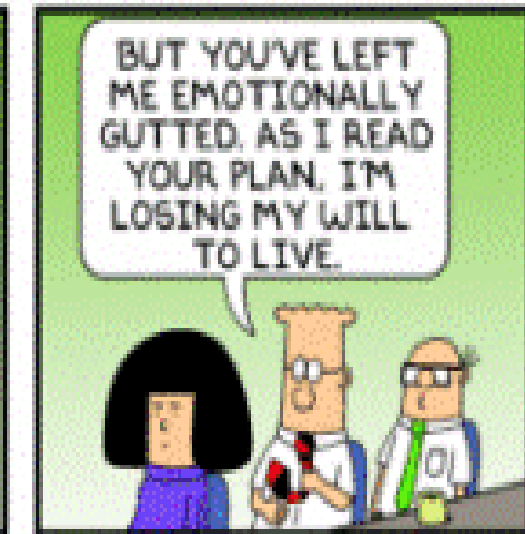
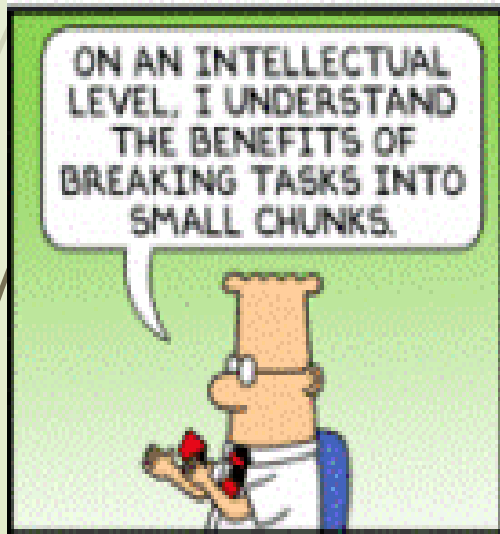
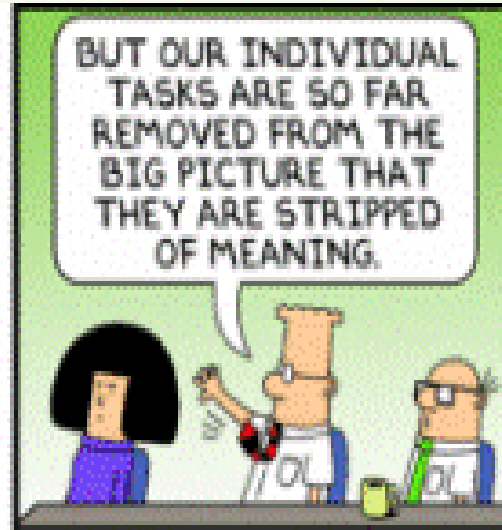
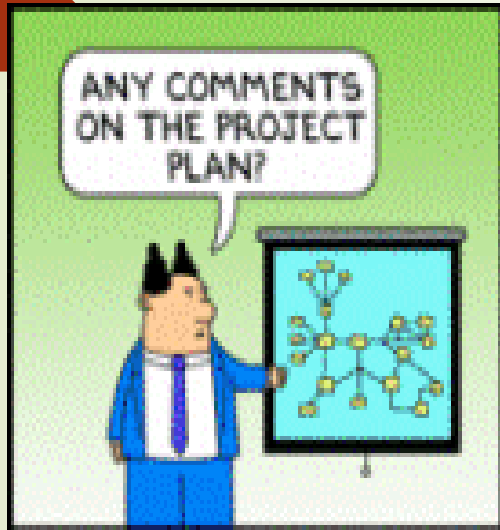


“My teacher says little girls can grow up to be anything they choose! Why did you choose to be an old lady?”



Wellness: Social

- Keep track of when you need to catch up with someone or when a friend or family member is due for a visit.
- Organize a calendar of events that would be good ways to connect, or reconnect, to friends, like a public concert or a class reunion.
- Pick up the phone and connect with others.
- Look in the newspaper to find out what is happening in your area that could be an opportunity to make friends.
- Keep an open mind and exercise your curious inquiry when meeting new people





Wellness Activities: Occupational

- ▶ Think about where you are in your career and life and pursue jobs that will work well within that framework.
- ▶ Talk to your employer/ coworkers about how they like to communicate so everyone can be responsive to individual needs and work styles.
- ▶ When something is not working at work, let people know what would help.
- ▶ Research careers/employment that involve the activities you enjoy most yet provide the flexibility for a balanced life.
- ▶ Keep a calendar. Be sure to look it over and schedule time for activities that you enjoy.
- ▶ Use tracking tools to balance your workload. Ask for help if your workload becomes overwhelming.
- ▶ Take the time to think of what you enjoy most, and research careers/ employment in that area.



“ Life is Truly
Reflection
of What
We Allow
Ourselves
to See &
Be ”

Erudite Venues



Questions for Reflection



- What attracted me to my current job?
- What attracted me to the counseling profession?
- How long have I been involved?
- How do I handle change?
- How much change is going on in my life?
- How is my personal life?
- When did I last take a vacation (not a conference)?
- When do I need to change?
- What can I change on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis?




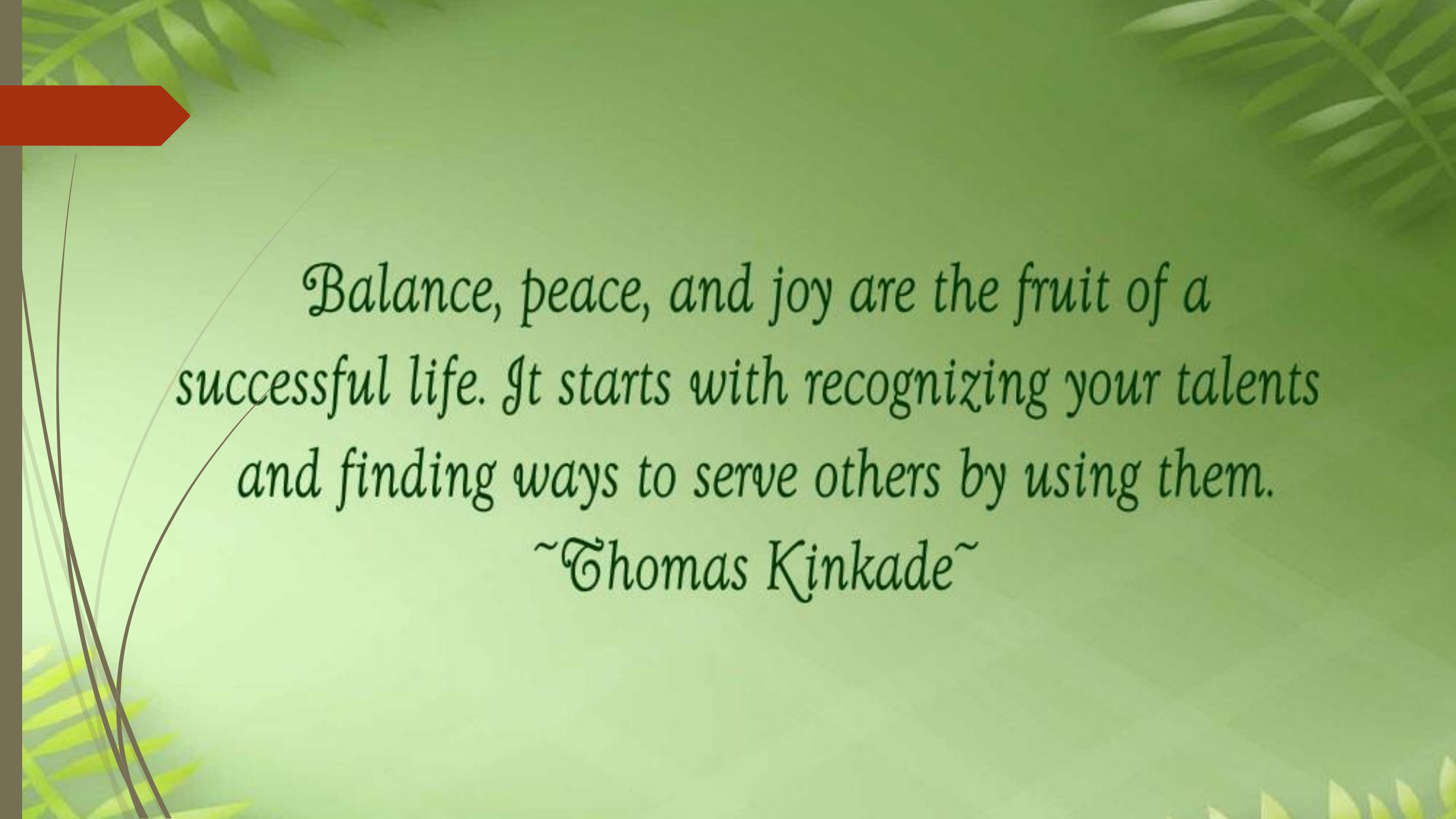
Analogy of a Battery

“The battery keeps getting energized or drained. When drained enough, there is no spark, no life,” (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2014, page 153).



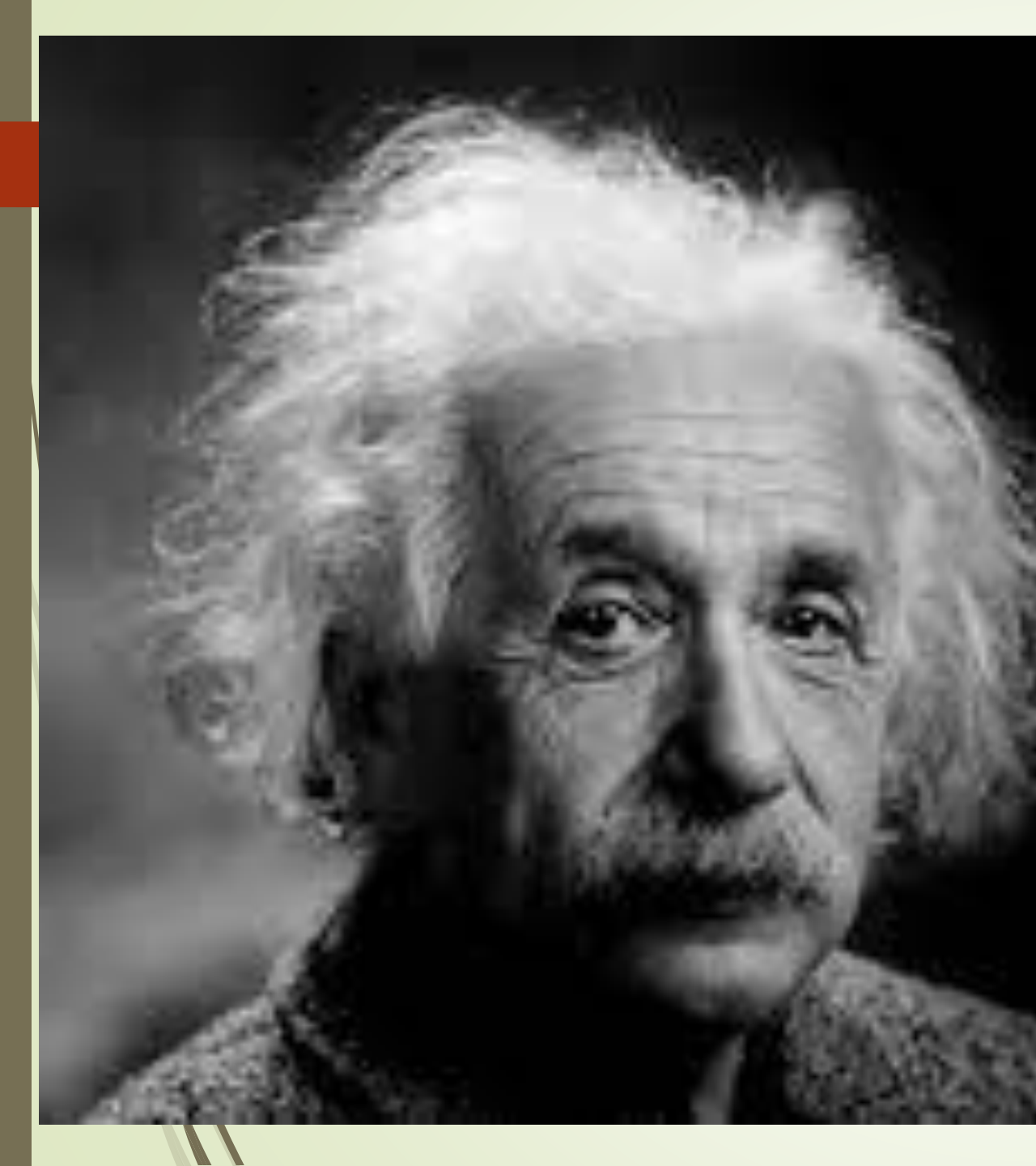
Recharging Our Battery

- Take a few minutes to ask yourself, “At the end of my workday, what do you do to recharge your battery?”
 - How do you plan on achieving satisfaction?
 - What helps you address stressors?
- 



Balance, peace, and joy are the fruit of a successful life. It starts with recognizing your talents and finding ways to serve others by using them.

~Thomas Kinkade~

A black and white portrait of Albert Einstein, showing his characteristic wild, white hair and mustache. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a thoughtful expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

If I had an hour to
solve a problem and my
life depended on it,

I would use the
first 55 minutes
determining the
proper questions to ask.

Albert Einstein



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