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Followership

When it is good to follow the leader

In this Issue EDITORIAL: Embedding trust in the Canadian health care system
OPINION: Leadership, followership, and peak team performance
Coaching competencies for physicians: change the conversation, change everything

CSPL
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BOOK REVIEW

Stop Physician Burnout: What to Do When Working Harder Isn't Working

Dike Drummond, MD
Heritage Press, 2014

Reviewed by Johny Van Aerde, MD, PhD

Research shows that 50% of physicians are suffering from burnout, and close to 100% have experienced some degree of burnout sometime during their career. *Stop Physician Burnout* is a great book in terms of prevention, but even those who have gone too far down the spiral and need professional help will find new habits to cultivate and maintain during the healing process.

After experiencing two episodes of burnout himself, Dr. Dike Drummond has spent thousands of hours helping hundreds of doctors. In *Stop Physician Burnout*, he elaborates on the causes, diagnosis, and pathophysiology of burnout, explaining in simple terms how to recognize it.

The selection process for medical school and the type of training we physicians receive as med students and during residency shapes us into perfectionists; the process is then reinforced continuously by the high expectations of

patients and society. All these elements contribute to burnout, which appears as exhaustion, depersonalization (with lack of empathy), and low efficiency — all because our physical, emotional, and spiritual energy bank accounts are running a negative balance.

The book dives into treatment, starting with taking out the “head trash” that prevents us from even starting to heal. That “trash” is a set of five changes in awareness that must be addressed to enable the burnout prevention tools to work. For example, Drummond explains how to deal with the omni-present inner critic.

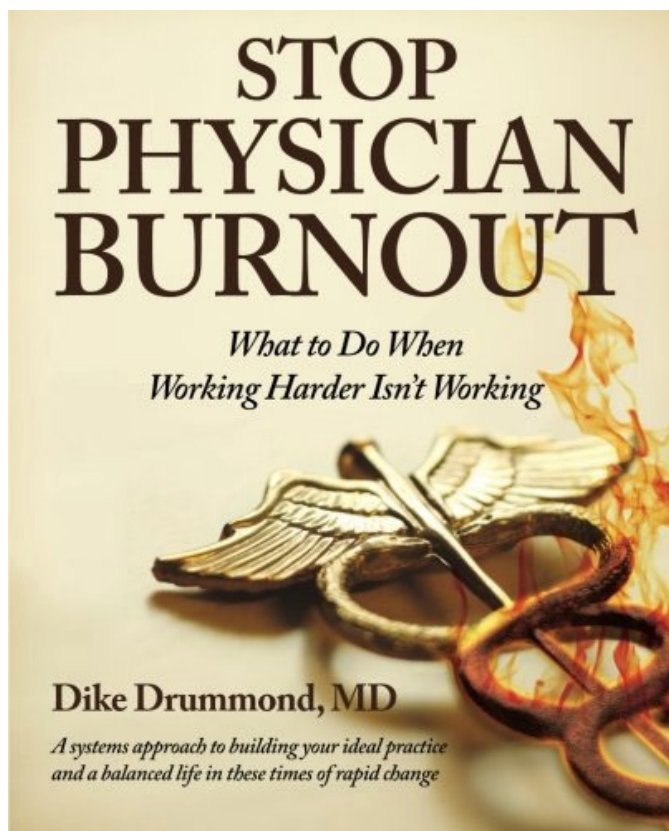
Another necessity is realizing that we are trained to approach everything as a problem that can be solved. Unfortunately, burnout is not a problem for which there is one solution; it is a dilemma and

dilemmas are managed. This topic is difficult to grasp for “experts,” but Drummond deals with it, nicely and comprehensively.

After helping us develop a blueprint for our life, a vision of our future, Drummond elaborates extensively on a series of tools to prevent burnout. All are simple, some have been proven by research to be effective. He organizes them into a “burnout prevention matrix,” which has four categories: tools to decrease personal stress, tools for personal recharge, tools to decrease organizational stress, and tools to facilitate organizational recharge.

Most important, each tool is usable and understandable, not only for those who want to prevent burnout, but also for those who are already experiencing it. For example, the “squeegee breath,” a mindfulness tool, does not require much effort to use, and, most important for busy doctors, it doesn't take much time. It has been tested in small groups, and preliminary evidence indicates that the stress level of those in the group decreased after eight weeks.

At the end of the book, Drummond presents a set of case reports with various scenarios. One



drew my attention, because it dealt with changes and stresses around the time of retirement. Drummond provides some good insights that made me see how our lifestyle as physicians, over the decades from entering med school until retirement, has also skewed our thinking about retirement.

The Canadian health care system does little to keep doctors healthy and reduce work stresses. In the years ahead, the most successful health care organizations, in the context of succession planning and sustainability, will be those who take excellent care of their providers and staff. How do we expect physicians to become engaged in the transformation of the health care system, if they barely have enough energy to be experts and advocates for their patients.

Stop Physician Burnout is a good read and a useful handbook, not only for physicians, but also for those who live or work with them.

Note: Dr. Dike Drummond will be a keynote speaker at the **2017 Canadian Conference on Physician Leadership**.

Author

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2017 Call for Nominations CSPL Excellence in Medical Leadership Award (Chris Carruthers Award)

Nominations are being sought for the CSPL Excellence in Medical Leadership Award (Chris Carruthers Award). The Award shall be presented to a physician who has made an outstanding contribution to the development and mentorship of medical leaders in the field of health services leadership and management.

Nominees must be Canadian physicians who are members of CSPL. Nominations may be submitted, accompanied by suitable documentation, by any physician member of CSPL. Documentation will consist of a completed nomination form, a detailed letter qualifying the nominee and the nominee's curriculum vitae. Nominations should be submitted in typewritten form and can be sent electronically or by mail.

Nominations should be addressed to: Chair, Awards Committee, c/o Carol Rochefort, Executive Director, Canadian Society of Physician Leaders, 875 Carling Avenue, Suite 323, Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5P1 or email carol@physicianleaders.ca.

Deadline for Submission: February 20, 2017

Nominee: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Nominated by: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

In a detailed letter of nomination qualifying the nominee, please describe in your letter of nomination how the nominee has demonstrated outstanding abilities in one or more of the following categories:

- Commitment to enhancing the role of physicians in the management of health care delivery organizations
- Leadership in a hospital or health region management role
- Significant contribution to leadership development within CSPL or any related organization or program of provincial/national scope (e.g. affiliate organizations, CMA, PLI etc)

In addition to the nomination form, letter of nomination and curriculum vitae, please provide additional letters of support to the address or email above.