



DESIGN : AZMIN AZRAN

Coming to terms with YOUR BURNOUT

Even if they aren't burned out, they will most likely understand what you're going through. Share your feelings with them, and they should be able to sympathise with you to some extent.

NAMREEN SHAIYAZ

Burnouts have become an unavoidable part of all of our lives. Whether it's due to stress induced from academics, work, or even a beloved hobby, we're all plagued by it no matter how hard we try to avoid it. But the biggest issue with burnouts isn't just having it. A lot of people are stuck in the denial stage, as they refuse to accept that maybe they're exhausted.

Knowing you might be burned out is one thing, but accepting it is an entirely different concept. There might be a myriad of reasons for this denial, and a major one can be you are unable to accept the significance of it in your life. Maybe your burnout was caused by something with a strict deadline, and you are ignoring your declining health to get it done, since it's crucial that you submit it on time.

However, forcing yourself to work through it will impact the final result, and take your

wellbeing down as well. By the end of it, you'll probably feel even worse. So, take a step back, and assess your current situation. If you can see that you're genuinely feeling too overwhelmed, try to do things that will lessen your burden, like requesting an extension. If that's not possible, reach out to someone who has the ability to help you out with your work. Asking for a bit of extra help doesn't make you lesser, and you have no reason to feel bad about it.

This is why so many people can find it hard to validate their burnout: because they feel like they haven't worked hard enough to "earn" it, and feel guilty about it. They might compare themselves to others who are in the same situation as them, and assume that since those people aren't burned out yet, they don't deserve to be either.

But just because someone doesn't seem tired doesn't mean that they actually aren't. Chances are that if you talk to them, you might

find out that they're in the same place as you. You'll probably feel more validated after it, and the other person might as well, so it's a win for both of you. Even if they aren't burned out, they will most likely understand what you're going through. Share your feelings with them, and they should be able to sympathise with you to some extent. If it's possible for you, communicate these emotions with your superiors as well, and see if they can find ways to cut you some slack while you recover.

The number one step of getting better is to accept that you have a problem in the first place. It can be difficult at first, the more you choose to ignore it and put it off for later, the worse you'll feel. Being so emotionally and physically drained from work isn't a natural state for any of us. So, for your own good in the long run, instead of working through your burnout, give yourself time to recover first.

Namreen is sick and tired. Send a reminder that life goes on at: namreen.shaiyaz@gmail.com



Jawad Araf Khan's pathway to success

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Jawad Araf Khan, a business student at North South University (NSU), has recently been crowned as the "Young Entrepreneur of the Year" at the Global Platform Icons of Asia Awards 2022. He won this recognition beating 1500 other nominations from across 40 Asian countries.

Jawad's journey as a young entrepreneur was supported by one of his school teachers who helped him as an early investor and provided him with the guidance and resources necessary for starting an online business. He began this journey with the small-scale business called "Badge Troopers" and later launched a personalised gift store called "Gift Theatre BD" which brought in bulk orders from various businesses, different art galleries, educational institutions, and even the Prime Minister's Office. He then expanded his entrepreneurial expertise to launch the event management company "Splendid Soirees".

After the pandemic, Jawad, along with two other friends, launched "TrustUs International", an export-based online business. They import various items from China, Thailand, Singapore, the UK and the US and generate over BDT 2 lacs in revenue each month by selling them locally.

Jawad secured his first international job through LinkedIn as he joined the content marketing team of an Australian HR company. He is presently working as the administrative and business development lead at a law firm and as the assistant manager of a tax consulting company. Both of these companies are based in the US.

Jawad's debut book *Let's Start with an E* emphasises on the skills a successful entrepreneur needs. In 2020, his book *Bishonnotar Choddonam* was launched at the *Ekushey Book Fair* which earned him the "Best Emerging Writer Award".

Jawad also ran a talk show on Facebook called "Let us Amaze with Araf" where he invited successful people from various fields from around the world to share their stories. Due to the show's popularity on social media, an American e-magazine named *Your Success* published an article about Jawad's journey as a young entrepreneur. This feature paved new avenues for him as he was approached by Never Personal Always Purpose LLC (NPAP), a California-based company for joining its team as an admin assistant. Jawad was also approached by a Spanish radio station to join as a podcaster and production manager.

At present, Jawad is working on his upcoming book, which he says will be on entrepreneurship and based on both his own experiences and those of other entrepreneurs he has gotten to know.

Peace Café – How a student-led platform is transforming thousands of lives across Bangladesh

MD. WAHIDUL ISLAM AND ARAFAT REZA

Tahmina Akhter Habiba was always disturbed by the sufferings of others. She helped whomever and whenever she could, but her individual efforts could only benefit a few people.

It wasn't until a few years later when she enrolled in Brac University and founded the Peace Café that she and many others like her understood what they really had to do and how they would do it as a team.

Tahmina is now the President of the Peace Café at Brac University, which has grown to over 150 members within just two years since its inception.

Peace Café was co-created by the Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ), a multidisciplinary academic institute at Brac University, and UN Women Bangladesh. However, its expansion has not been kept limited to Brac University.

Apart from Brac University, Peace Café is present at four other universities in Bangladesh including Begum Rokeya University, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, University of Dhaka, and Asian University for Women.

Decoding the concept of Peace Café and its objectives

With the support of UN Women, CPJ has been implementing a flagship programme called "Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities" since 2018 in Bangladesh. CPJ facilitated the establishment of Peace Cafés as an innovative and pioneering initiative to promote peace and social cohesion as part of the project. Peace Café nurtures and mentors student-led civic engagement and social entrepreneurship activities for peacebuilding and social cohesion.

Speaking about the initiative and key objectives of Peace Café, Shahariar Sadat, Director for Academic and Legal



Empowerment, CPJ said, "The Peace Café provides a forum for developing youth leadership in a non-political way. Young people can learn about the communities they are from and live with. It is an opportunity for any educational institution to create its relevance for the community around it."

"One of the key objectives is to develop soft skills like leadership, digital literacy, and social entrepreneurship and create a better understanding of peace, social cohesion, diversity, plurality, inclusivity, and tolerance among other issues. Students and communities in and beyond the campus can use the Peace Café as a hub of civic engagement and experiential learning," he added.

Notable achievements of Peace Café

So far, Peace Café has trained around 1067 students in skill development, while also implementing 18 student-led community

welfare initiatives, and creating content for knowledge generation.

Tahmina, however, believes that the greatest success of Peace Café has been in inspiring a large number of students to participate in and initiate various community welfare initiatives on their own.

"Since we began operating, we have observed a great change in the mindset of many students at our university," said Tahmina. "This has happened because we were successful in getting them to understand how crucial it is to address the problems we are trying to solve."

"We can see that they are taking initiatives by themselves to solve these issues in the areas where they live, and they occasionally approach us with new ideas to work on. This eagerness was largely absent before the establishment of Peace Café," she added.

Faijah Omar Turna, Vice President,

Women Peace Café, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, expressed a similar sense of relief and pride in highlighting the success of Peace Café at her institution.

"We've gathered more than 400 members in just three years. I've noticed a significant shift in their attitude towards resolving social issues since joining Peace Café," said Turna. "They have grown more confident, cautious, and knowledgeable because of the training we have provided them thus far."

"The fact that both members and non-members come to us with new ideas almost every day demonstrates that we have successfully piqued their interest in resolving social issues, and it also gives me the confidence to tell you now that we are on the right track. I've also noticed and received equal enthusiasm and support from male and female students for our initiatives and this motivates me even more," she added.

Marching full steam ahead to transcend borders

When asked what direction he would like to see Peace Café take in the future, Manzoor Hasan, OBE, the Executive Director of CPJ stated with high hopes, "It is a growing network of young men and women working to create a society that is inclusive, tolerant, modern, and skilled. In the next ten years, CPJ aims to build on existing foundations and explore new avenues to bring youth voices to the centre. We hope to inspire people of all ages to come forward and work for the community through the youth."

He added, "CPJ plans to continue to work with university students across the country to strengthen their skills and facilitate spades for their participation in local, national and global discourse on relevant issues (e.g., peace, social cohesion, climate change, gender equality, human rights)."

"In parallel to its in-country work, CPJ wants to explore the potential to collaborate with universities and organisations in other countries in South Asia to build a regional Peace Café network," he concluded.

Indeed, if the youth can gain leadership knowledge, skills, network and mentorship support through the work of Peace Café, they will be able to become active citizens. Furthermore, this will give them credibility in their own communities and provide them with opportunities to share their perspectives with various government actors, resulting in more participatory and inclusive decision-making and policy formulation at multiple levels.

Md. Wahidul Islam is a communications officer at CPJ and Arafat Reza is a consultant at CPJ.