Creative minds have their own set of rules. Born artists don’t like to confine their working methods to specific guidelines or timelines. But with BlackBerrys and iPhones attached to our hip, it’s physically impossible to get away from the demands work projects place on us, and often, we don’t know how to emotionally get away from them. Stress gets so unmanageable that we can spiral into a burnout, and once that happens, productivity is out the window. When we’ve exhausted all our energies and it all becomes too much to handle, what’s to keep us from becoming a useless pile of punch-drunk mush?
If you’re engaged in a constant battle between trying to be productive and trying to be innovative, it’s time to step back and realize that you can achieve both. A few psychological professionals divulged tips on how to do that. Licensed clinical psychologist and faculty member at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Dr. Daniela E. Schreier said that avoiding burnout is all about being “mindful,” or being “in the moment.”

“Inspiration does not necessarily knock at the door when we are put under time pressure, with deadlines over our head,” Schreier said. “In a corporate business system with little to no understanding of artistic energy and emotionality; it’s easy to burn out, to deplete yourself mentally and physically in an unrewarding hostile environment.”

According to Schreier, if certain triggers aren’t detected, individuals can get caught in a burnout that could result in increased physical and psychological illness which can throw off work for as much as 9 to 12 months. It can also result in decreased self-esteem, she said. “When you’re an artist, you get a lot of your self esteem from your job,” she said. “There must be a diversity — [life] cannot just be your job.”

A working psychotherapist for more than 20 years, Leslie Godwin penned a book specifically for women who are overworked and need to rethink their paths and goals. But the book, “From Burned Out to Fired Up: A Woman’s

**SCHREIER SAYS:**
- Identify triggers
- Be picky about what we can and can’t do
- Manage Space and Energy
- Make your workspace soothing

**GODWIN SAYS:**
- Keep your life “Under Control”
- Enjoy life fully
- Spend time with people who are doing what they love
- Never compromise your values
Her book’s quiz, “Are you inwardly mobile or burned out?” allows people to look at patterns to determine whether they’re at risk for or have reached a burnout.

Kathy Kolbe, chairman of the board and chief creative officer of the Kolbe Corp., is another professional who helps individuals and businesses determine how to avoid burnout. Working as an author and publisher, Kolbe found that writers and contributors hated doing their work for a business because they were forced to apply their talents in ways they didn’t necessarily like to.

“What I have found is that every human being has an equal amount of creative energy, it’s just a different form of energy,” said Kolbe. “In our culture, creativity is considered what goes outside the box. Engineers and accountants are as creative as designers or artists of any type, but the respect for the different forms of creativity has been lacking. It’s this lack of respect and understanding that gives people the wrong assignments.”

In order to determine how to best use individual creativity, Kolbe developed the The Kolbe A™ Index, a diagnostic tool that identifies “conative” talents. Kolbe’s “Conables™ tricks” are ways to avoid stress when having to work outside and go against your own grain.

If it’s too late and you’re already in a burnout, Kolbe advises to simply do nothing.

“Everybody gets stuck; the best way to get unstuck is to stop trying to do what you’re doing,” she said. “Don’t expect anyone else to know you as well as you know yourself. Take charge of the fantastic creative energy you have. One of the misnomers about entrepreneurialism is that it’s a ticket to getting to do it your own way all the time. It’s not. It’s the freedom to self-manage, but in self-managing, we have to make ourselves do what needs to be done.”

Visit boutiquedesign.com to get the full story and more advice from Schreier, Godwin and Kolbe.

Now through July 15th, you boutique DESIGN readers can visit www.kolbe.com/bdoffer2008/ to receive a special offer and learn more about your instinctive talents.

KOLBE SAYS:
• Set aside frustrations and use cognitive skills
• Create systems to help with organization
• Focus on what you do best; know your M.O.
• Recognize you won’t always be able to do it your way