

## **Surviving CEO Burnout**

### **Shifting from symptoms to solutions**

When former CEO Rebecca Morris found herself struggling to reach top gear she knew something was amiss.

“When you’re a driver in a leadership role you have to be passionate and inspiring, you need to be in that fourth or fifth gear for a lot of the time. I felt I was slipping back into second, maybe getting to third and occasionally fourth, but getting to fifth was beginning to be a real struggle.”

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, and Rebecca says that when she looks back, the warning signs of her burnout were all there – extreme fatigue and tiredness, the never ending “to do” lists, the constant feeling of overwhelm and living the façade that everything is fine.

“I was chugging along, trying to get into fifth gear, but nothing seemed to work anymore.”

A consultation with renowned speaker, motivator and health expert Dr Frances Pitsilis was the turning point for Rebecca, and her prompt for a catalytic change.

“It was my experience with burnout that allowed me the space to look at my patterns and behaviour over time, not just in my CEO role, but in the roles throughout my career.”

Rebecca’s experience was also the catalyst for her business, Paradigm Shift - Energising and Empowering Elite Business Performance. There are three components to the business – Consulting, Mentoring and 360.

Paradigm Shift 360 is about providing solutions by blending practical skills, emotional intelligence and physical wellbeing. It's about making long-term sustainable change, with solutions tailored to each individual's unique situation.

Rebecca's 22 years of commercial experience hold her in good stead to lead others through their own paradigm shift. She has worked across a number of industries and international markets, including roles in client solutions, business development and more recently as a Chief Executive Officer.

It's professionals at this senior management level who are susceptible to CEO burnout. Contributing factors include a lack of support structures, strategies and tools to identify and manage stress, the need to be seen to be coping, and the feeling of isolation when it comes to discussing these situations.

Rebecca says it is important to recognise the symptoms of burnout, and immediately take action. Symptoms include those Rebecca experienced herself, such as a lack of fitness, impaired concentration and the inability to function in top gear for a sustained amount of time.

She says that often a person will appear to be coping in their professional and personal life – while on the inside they are slowly losing form. Excuses are made to explain the tiredness and fatigue, such as 'it must be a virus' or 'I didn't get much sleep'. Diminished adrenal and cortisol function, frequent illness and high emotions are your body's way of saying enough is enough.

"Rather than trying to get back on the treadmill, you feel like you can't get off!" says Rebecca. "There's that feeling of needing to return life to a more reasonable speed."

Conflict between who you are as a person and your values versus your professional role may also contribute to burnout.

“You need to look at how you have changed to fit the requirements of the professional role,” suggests Rebecca. “Identity is destiny. When you embrace who you were born to be, and are in a role that comes naturally to you and that you’re passionate about, then it all becomes much easier.”

Making positive changes before you hit the proverbial wall is the best action to take – and that’s where Paradigm Shift. Rebecca’s passion is working with people to enable them to make the necessary changes to move forward in their business and in their life.

So, if you feel like your gears are slipping and are looking to make a positive shift, contact Rebecca on [info@paradigmshift.co.nz](mailto:info@paradigmshift.co.nz) or 09 413 7615.