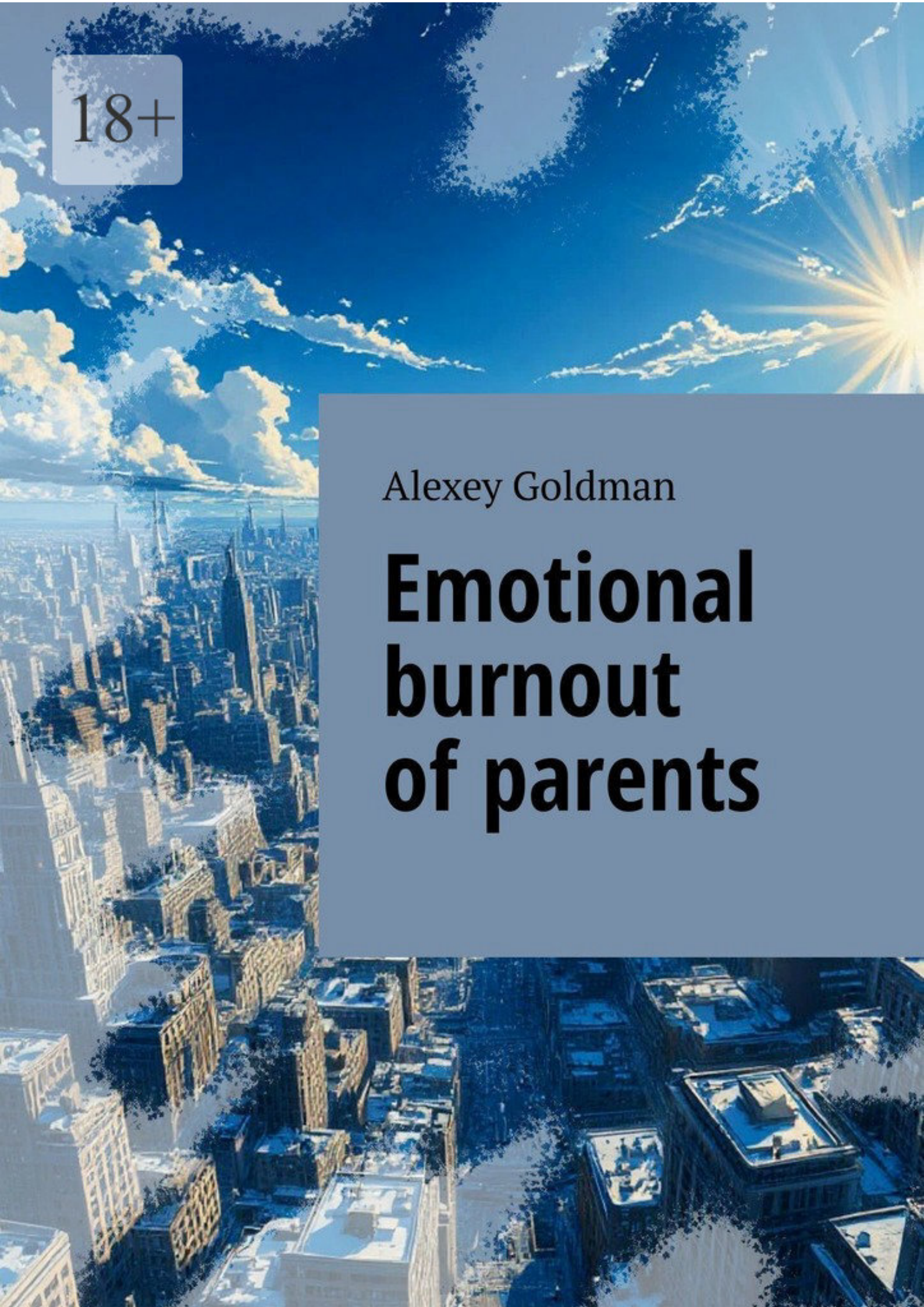


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Alexey Goldman

Emotional burnout of parents



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«Издательские решения»

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Running on empty? Feel like you're a bad mom or dad because you have no energy for your kids? You're not — you're burned out. This lifeline of a book offers you a clear plan and simple techniques to reclaim your energy, joy, and sense of self. No guilt, no complex jargon — just practical strategies that work. Your happiness is the greatest gift you can give your children.

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Chapter 1: Warning Signs: How to Know You're on the Brink?

Core Idea: The first step to solving a problem is to see it. We will learn to assess our condition without panic or self-recrimination so we can take timely action.

You will learn to: Accurately identify the early signs of parental burnout, distinguish ordinary fatigue from a dangerous state of exhaustion, and apply a simple «Stop-Moment» technique for daily self-check-ins.

Why it matters: We often ignore the body's first signals, brushing them off as «just being tired.» But this is precisely the moment when it's easiest to pause and recharge. If you keep ignoring your condition, you can reach a state of complete exhaustion, which is much harder to recover from.

Practical Part:

Imagine your body and mind are a sophisticated alarm system. When something is wrong, it doesn't blare a siren right away. First, it sends quiet but persistent signals. Our task is to learn to hear them.

Traffic Light Signals: From Green to Red

Green Light (All is well): You wake up, if not fully rested, then with a sense of «I can handle this.» You find joy in hugging your child, you have the energy for jokes, and minor difficulties don't upset you. You periodically find time for your own little joys.

Yellow Light (Time to rest): These are our «warning signs.» It's crucial to catch yourself at this phase.

Irritability: You get angry at things you used to ignore: spilled water, a child's sluggishness, loud noises.

Constant fatigue: You sleep 7—8 hours but wake up exhausted. It feels like your energy isn't being restored.

Anxiety and forgetfulness: You constantly feel like you've forgotten something (turning off the iron, making an important call). You obsess over the same anxious thought.

Escape mechanisms: You increasingly want to «escape» into your phone, social media, TV shows, or just lie down to avoid interacting with anyone.

Physical symptoms: More frequent headaches, back pain, catching colds easier than usual. This is your body crying for help.

Red Light (Stop, crisis!): Complete exhaustion. A feeling of emptiness, hopelessness, indifference towards your children and family. Panic attacks or thoughts like «I can't cope and I never will» may appear. At this stage, professional help (from a psychologist or doctor) is often needed.

Technique: The «Stop-Moment»

This is your daily training for recognizing your signals. You can do it anywhere: while making tea, stuck in traffic, washing dishes.

Stop. Literally, for just a second, pause what you're doing.

Ask yourself: «How am I feeling right now? Not what am I doing, but what am I feeling?» (Anger? Fatigue? Anxiety? Emptiness?).

Name the feeling. Say it to yourself or whisper it: «Right now, I feel irritated.» Without judgment! Not «I'm bad for getting irritated,» but simply «I feel irritation.»

Ask: «What am I missing right this moment?» (Silence? A minute of peace? A sip of water? A hug?).

Example:

You're cooking dinner, the kids are screaming and running around the apartment. Everything inside you is clenching into a knot.

Stop. You freeze for a second with the ladle in your hand.

Question: «What do I feel?» -> «I feel anger and hopelessness.»

Name it: «Yes, I am angry.»

Question: «What am I missing?» -> «I am missing silence and 5 minutes where no one touches me.»

Just this simple action alone takes the initial edge off. You're not suppressing the emotion; you're acknowledging it. This is self-care. You've heard the «yellow light» signal. Now you know you need 5 minutes of silence. How to get it – we'll learn in the following chapters.

Why it works: The «Stop-Moment» technique is based on the principles of mindfulness. It shifts your focus from external chaos to your internal state. Simply naming an emotion reduces its intensity and helps you stop reacting automatically, on autopilot. It's like catching your breath before a difficult conversation. It's a tiny but crucial pause for yourself amidst the daily chaos.

Chapter 2: The Root of the Problem: Finding the Main «Energy Drainers»

Core Idea: To stop the energy leak, you need to find the holes it's leaking through. We will learn to analyze our day and pinpoint the exact actions, thoughts, and responsibilities that drain us the most.

You will learn to: Create your personal «list of energy drainers» to understand exactly where your strength is going. You will learn to distinguish real priorities from imposed ones and reduce the load where possible.

Why it matters: We often fight fatigue like it's a windmill, not understanding its source. You can try to meditate every morning, but if the main drainer is, for example, the idea of perfect cleanliness, the fatigue will keep coming back. You need to work on the cause, not the effect.

Practical Part:

Our energy isn't a bottomless well. It's more like a daily battery charge. And many of our habits and beliefs act like powerful energy consumers that drain this battery by lunchtime.

Creating Your «List of Drainers»

Grab a notebook and pen. Don't rush, think about each point. What exactly makes you feel drained?

Action Drainers:

Morning routines for daycare/school.

Going to the store with the kids.

Cleaning the entire apartment every evening.

Cooking elaborate dinners every day.

Tasks you do only because «it's necessary» (e.g., driving your child to a club they dislike, which you sense and get stressed about).

Thought & Mindset Drainers:

«I must be the perfect mother/father.»

«I have to do everything myself; asking for help is shameful.»

«The house must always be sparkling clean.»

«I'm a bad parent if I get angry at my child.»

Comparing yourself to other parents on social media («But look at Maria, her kids are always in clean outfits and eat broccoli»).

Obligation Drainers: Anything done under duress and against your own desires.

Technique: The «Priority Pyramid»

This exercise will help separate your true desires from the imposed ones.

Draw a large pyramid on a piece of paper, divided into three sections:

The Top (Most important): Here, place your family's 2—3 core values. What is truly important to you? Health? Close and trusting relationships? Inner peace? Shared adventures?

The Middle (Important but not critical): Things that are significant but can sometimes be postponed.

The Base (Everything else): Routine, chores, social expectations.

Now, take your «list of drainers» and sort them into the levels of this pyramid.

Example: Cleaning the entire apartment every day. This belongs in the base of the pyramid. It's not what life is about. The main thing (the top) is your peace of mind and good relationships with your children. So, you can safely simplify cleaning: mop the floors every other day, buy a robot vacuum, delegate some tasks to your partner/children.

Example: Perfectly folded clothes in the closet – that's the base. Your desire to nap during the day with your child instead of cleaning – that's closer to the top (health and rest).

Real-Life Example:

Anna mopped all the floors every evening after putting the kids to bed. It took her last ounce of energy and made her angry. Using the «Priority Pyramid,» she realized: clean floors were in the base of her pyramid, while her own rest and peace of mind were at the top. She decided to mop every other day and bought a good self-wringing mop, which cut the cleaning time in half. The freed-up hour she started spending reading a book or taking a bath. Her irritation level decreased noticeably.

Why it works: This technique is based on a cognitive-behavioral approach. It allows you to re-examine your beliefs and «cognitive distortions» (harmful thinking habits), such as «should» statements («I should be able to do it all»). When you see your priorities on paper, it's easier for your brain to let go of perfectionism in unimportant areas and give yourself permission to focus on what matters. This reduces internal conflict and saves a tremendous amount of mental energy.

Chapter 3: The Lifeline: How to Quickly Recharge Here and Now

Core Idea: When a wave of irritation, fatigue, or anger hits, you need simple and quick tools for emergency recovery. We are going to master «first aid» for your nervous system.

You will get: A set of specific techniques that will help you reset in 5—10 minutes without leaving home (or even without leaving the room). These tools will help stop the avalanche of negative emotions and prevent a meltdown.

Why it matters: Recovery isn't just about big breaks (vacations, weekends) but also about small, local resets throughout each day. These short reboots prevent tension from building up to a critical point. They act like a pressure valve, releasing excess steam.

Practical Part:

In moments of peak stress, we don't have time for long meditations or gym sessions. We need something we can apply right now, before the cup of patience overflows.

A Parent's «First Aid» Kit

Choose 2—3 techniques that resonate with you and practice them when you're calm. This way, it will be easier to remember them in a moment of stress.

1. The «4-7-8 Breathing» Technique (The Relaxing Breath)

This is a powerful, scientifically-backed way to quickly calm your nervous system. It acts as a natural tranquilizer.

How to do it:

Inhale quietly through your nose for a count of 4.

Hold your breath for a count of 7.

Exhale slowly and audibly through your mouth (with pursed lips) for a count of 8.

Why it works: The long exhale activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for relaxation and rest. It signals the brain: «Everything is okay, there's no danger, you can calm down now.»

Example: The kids are fighting over a toy, the screaming is making your head split. Instead of yelling at them, you take a step back, turn towards the wall, and do 3—4 cycles of this breathing. After that, you'll be able to respond more calmly and rationally.

2. The «Window Escape» Technique (Shifting Focus)

When the brain is overloaded, it gets stuck on the source of stress. You need to abruptly switch its attention.

How to do it: Go to any window. Feel the cold windowsill with your hands. Now start looking at what you see outside in minute detail. Find 5 objects of a certain color (e.g., 5 green things: leaves, a bench, a car). Listen to the sounds outside. Count how many people have walked by. Stay in this state for 2—3 minutes.

Why it works: This is a form of mindfulness that switches the brain from internal dialogue to neutral, external sensations. It gives the nervous system a breather.

Example: After a difficult work call, you feel like you're about to explode. Go to the window, open it, take a breath of fresh air, and just look at the sky. Even 60 seconds of this break will help you «cool down.»

3. The «Glass of Water» Technique (Grounding)

A simple but incredibly effective practice to return to the «here and now.»

How to do it: Pour a glass of cool water. Sit down. Drink it very slowly, concentrating only on this process. Feel the water's temperature, how it flows down your throat, how you hold the glass, its weight and smoothness. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the sensations of drinking.

Why it works: This is an act of self-care in its most basic form (quenching thirst). Plus, focusing on bodily sensations (tactile, taste) helps you break out of the cycle of anxious thoughts and return to the present moment.

4. The «Three-Minute Hug» Technique

This helps not only you but also your child.

How to do it: Hug your child tightly and silently. Don't pat them, don't talk, just stand there and hug. Try to relax and feel each other's warmth. Stand like this for 2—3 minutes (it's longer than it seems!).

Why it works: Prolonged hugging promotes the release of oxytocin – the «love and bonding hormone» – which reduces stress and anxiety levels for both you and your child. It's a mutual reset.

Important: Don't beat yourself up if you forgot to use a technique in the heat of the moment and lost your cool. It happens. Just promise yourself you'll try next time. Every successful attempt is a huge victory.

Why this works: All these techniques are scientifically proven methods of self-regulation. They work directly with the autonomic nervous system, quickly switching the body from «stress» mode (fight or flight) to «rest and digest» mode. This isn't magic; it's physiology. Regular practice teaches your brain and body to handle stress more effectively.

Chapter 4: More Than Just Mom/Dad: Reclaiming Your Identity

Core Idea: Your personality is not just your parental role. Self-care begins with remembering who you are outside the playground and the parent chat. This chapter is about reclaiming your sense of self-worth and uniqueness.

You will: Remember your interests, character traits, and dreams that aren't related to your children. You will learn to find time and opportunities to express your personality amidst total busyness and shed the guilt for doing so.

Why it matters: When your entire identity boils down to the word «parent,» any difficulty in this area feels like a total personal failure. This is draining and leaves you with no support. Recognizing your multifaceted nature makes you more resilient and, paradoxically, a more confident and calm parent. A child doesn't need a perfect robot-mom; they need a living, passionate person by their side.

Practical Part:

It's common that when asked «Who are you?» we automatically answer: «A mother of two» or «Sasha's dad.» That's wonderful, but it's not the full answer. Let's find the other parts of you.

Exercise: «Who Am I?»

Take a piece of paper and a pen. Set aside 10 minutes. Answer quickly, without overthinking. Write down 10—15 answers to the question «Who am I?». Important rule: you cannot use words related to your family role (mom, dad, husband, wife, daughter, son, etc.). Describe yourself as a person.

Example answers: «I am a lover of interesting books,» «I am someone who adores hiking,» «I am a great pasta cook,» «I am a joker,» «I am someone who values silence,» «I am a person who always helps friends,» «I am a viewer who cries over heartfelt movies,» «I am a novice gardener.»

Don't worry if it's hard at first. It's like exercising a forgotten muscle. If you only get 5 items – that's already great! This list is your foundation, your reminder of yourself.

Technique: «A Window to the Past»

This exercise will help bring back the feeling of joy from long-forgotten activities.

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Think back to yourself 5, 7, 10 years ago. Before you had kids.

Ask yourself:

What brought me genuine joy? (Not what was «useful» or «trendy,» but what I personally liked).

What activity made me lose track of time?

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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