

# My Puzzled Self

Category: Stress and Burnout

written by Donna Doyle | May 4, 2017

*"It is no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society." -Jiddu Krishnamurti*

How many times have I tried to begin writing about my experience of stress and burnout?

I've lost count.

Each time I begin to write, detachment renders me into pieces like a jigsaw puzzle. Where are the straight edges? Where is the frame? What is supposed to be where all of these empty spaces are? Where is the box lid with a picture to guide me?

A few years ago the medical library where I had worked for six years relocated from a building outside the hospital to a space inside the busiest area of a busy hospital. Prior to the relocation, I rarely entered the hospital or did so only when my energy felt sufficient to handle whatever I might see, hear or smell. It helped that I worked an evening schedule. After 5:00 p.m. the hospital was almost unpopulated.

After about two weeks working in the new location – and on a new day schedule – I felt overwhelmed. The hospital was crowded. The pace was fast, at least among the healthcare professionals. Most of them looked at their smart phones, the floor or some focal point straight ahead. Patients and visitors wandered slowly and were often lost in what felt like a maze to them. Security codes sounded over the intercom. All of the Code Blues gave me the blues. Every time there was a code for a violent person I flinched.

One day I saw a physician friend in the hallway. Without even saying "hello," I walked up to him and asked, "How in the world do you stand it here? How do you manage?"

Other than getting home as quickly as possible at the end of the day, he didn't have an answer for how to deal with the ongoing stress.

I'm still looking for answers.

After a while, trying to make something work – whether it's a relationship or work – becomes exhausting, and feels like too much work. And work is a relationship of sorts.

I'm trying to focus what little energy I have on finding a healthier work relationship, visualizing the pieces of the puzzle coming together into a beautiful, serene landscape. When all of my detached pieces are reunited, I'll rediscover the peace that makes me feel whole.

*Donna Doyle*

*Knoxville, Tennessee*