

Career Crisis Response Guide

A short, honest read for the high-achieving professional who is quietly unraveling at work

1. You are not imagining it.

If you are reading this, something at work has shifted. Maybe slowly, over months, or maybe in a single defining moment. You feel exhausted in a way that no weekend repairs. You are second guessing yourself in rooms where you used to lead. You wonder, quietly, whether you can keep doing this. Or whether you even want to.

This is a career crisis. It is real, it is more common than anyone admits, and it is not a personal failing.

2. The numbers, briefly.

Eighty two percent of employees worldwide are at risk of burnout. Over half reported feeling burned out in the past year. Women are burning out at significantly higher rates than men, and that gap has more than doubled since 2019. For racialized professionals, work related stress is compounded by bias, lack of sponsorship, and the daily cognitive tax of navigating spaces where their full personhood is contested.

Resilience, stoicism, and indestructibility should not be job requirements.

3. This is not the job you interviewed for.

You have worked incredibly hard to get here. Long hours, a never ending list, showing up and doing extra. That is what you signed up for. The rest of it, though? The daily friction. The weird vibes that twist your stomach. The polite exclusions, the quiet diminishments, the slow erosion of the version of yourself you used to bring to work? When did your life turn into *Get Out*, the corporate edition?

It is not in your head. The systemic and structural barriers you are running into at work are not yours to fix. (In my view, professionals from marginalized groups should never do unpaid, psychologically harmful, politically dangerous, and often futile corporate DEI work.) What you can do is learn to navigate around, through, and beyond those dynamics, and manage your career with purpose and intention.

4. Unnecessary suffering is not the price of admission.

There is nothing noble or inevitable about sacrificing your health and identity for a job that extracts more than it gives back. Betraying your own values, abandoning your boundaries, and staying in a workplace that makes you miserable (or offers no real path of advancement) is **unnecessary suffering**. Western work culture glorifies the corporate hustle and conflates achievement with pain. Too often, women are expected, or willing, to wear the cape of invincibility and carry the weight of the world with a smile.

Our parents and ancestors suffered and sacrificed precisely so that we would not have to. **This ends with us.** It is time to divest from unnecessary suffering and invest in your career on your terms.

Honour the ancestors. Make your joy and peace a condition of success.

5. Three questions to ask yourself this week.

Before you do anything else, sit with these three questions. They will not solve your situation, but they will sharpen what you are actually dealing with. Be honest. The temptation to soften your own answers is the temptation to stay stuck.

a) **What is the one moment, recently, when you thought “I cannot do this anymore”?**

Not the worst moment of your career. The most recent one. What did it tell you about where the friction actually lives, and who or what is producing it?

b) **2. What are you tolerating that you would tell a friend not to tolerate?**

If a woman you loved described your situation to you, what would you tell her? The gap between the advice you would give and the situation you are still inside is the gap where unnecessary suffering lives.

c) **3. If your situation does not change in the next twelve months, what does it cost you?**

Not just professionally. Health. Sleep. Confidence. Relationships. The version of yourself you are still able to bring home at the end of the day. Sit with that cost. Name it specifically. It is what you are paying for staying.

The clarity you get from answering these honestly is where the work begins, not where it ends.

6. What strategic action looks like.

Insight alone does not change a career. I have watched too many brilliant women sit with clarity for years and still wake up in the same job, in the same dynamics, paying the same cost. Crisis situations and festering tensions at work do not go away on their own. They morph into something else, usually worse for you.

Coming out of a career crisis on your own terms requires three things working together:

- **A clear diagnosis** of where you actually stand. Not how it feels, but the real situational picture: your leverage, your exposures, the energy you have to draw on, and the constraints that shape your timing.
- **A strategic plan** with a defined timeline, sequenced moves, and the specific conversations and assets you will need to execute it.
- **Structured accountability** so you actually do the thing, on the timeline you set, without losing momentum to fear, doubt, or the daily noise of the job that is depleting you.

*A career in which you feel celebrated, elevated, valued, and empowered should be the norm. Not the exception. **READY TO STOP SURVIVING AND START EXECUTING?***

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