

"Overperforming and failing" describes a state where consistent overwork leads to burnout and a decline in actual performance and well-being. Instead of being rewarded, individuals may face exhaustion, resentment, and a sense of futility, ultimately causing them to "fail" in the long term, even if short-term output was high. This can be a cycle where overperforming leads to greater demands, leading to more overperformance and eventually a collapse of performance due to burnout.

How overperformance can lead to failure

- **Burnout:** Pushing oneself to constantly overperform can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of accomplishment. This can make tasks take longer and minor annoyances feel overwhelming.
- **Increased pressure and expectations:** When you consistently overdeliver, others, including managers, may come to expect it, leading to a cycle of higher and higher demands.
- **Poor decision-making:** Burnout can impair judgment, leading to mistakes that wouldn't normally be made when well-rested.
- **Resentment:** A constant feeling of carrying a disproportionate amount of the workload, without adequate recognition, can lead to significant resentment and a feeling of being underappreciated.
- **Unrealistic goals:** Overperforming can sometimes be driven by an unhealthy focus on outcomes at the expense of the process. When a goal is missed, the result can be devastating to an overachiever, who may view failure as a personal indictment rather than a learning opportunity.

What to do about it

- **Talk to your manager:** Open a dialogue about your workload and set realistic expectations before you reach a breaking point.
- **Practice self-awareness:** Pay attention to patterns of over-functioning and the feelings of resentment that may arise.
- **Prioritize recovery:** If you are already feeling burned out, you cannot simply "power through." Intentional recovery is necessary to reset your baseline.
- **Change your mindset about failure:** View failure not as an end, but as a potential for learning and improvement. Analyze what went wrong and how to adjust your approach for next time.