

The Mission Trap Audit

“The mission is real. The trap is too.”

For service-forward professionals — nonprofit, ministry, government, healthcare, education, social work, first responders, and others. The mission attracts the most committed people. It also has the highest collapse rate. These five traps are how it happens.

HOW TO TAKE THE AUDIT Fill in one bubble per statement. 0 = rarely / not me · 1 = sometimes / kind of · 2 = often / yes, that's me
Total each trap (out of 8), then add for your total (out of 40). Scoring guide on page 2.

1 The Martyr Trap — *Overwork as virtue*

I genuinely believe rest is selfish when people are hurting or work is undone.
I wear my exhaustion as proof that I care more than others do.
I skip vacations, breaks, or sick days because the work "can't wait."
I quietly resent teammates or peers who leave on time or take their PTO.

TRAP TOTAL _____ / 8

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2

2 The Identity Fusion Trap — *I am the mission*

If I lost this role tomorrow, I would not know who I am.
I introduce myself by what I do before anything else — every time.
Criticism of the work feels like criticism of me as a person.
I can't picture a life where this isn't the central thing.

TRAP TOTAL _____ / 8

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2

3 The Guilt-Around-Boundaries Trap — *Saying no feels like betrayal*

Saying no to a request makes me feel like I'm letting people down.
I keep agreeing to things I don't have capacity for because the cause is good.
I have a hard time naming a boundary out loud, even to people I trust.
I feel guilty when I'm not working — even on weekends or after hours.

TRAP TOTAL _____ / 8

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2

4 The Savior Trap — *Nothing works without me*

I believe key things would fall apart if I stepped away for two weeks.
I struggle to delegate — it's faster, better, or safer if I just do it.
I take on work that isn't mine because I don't trust it'll get done well.
Imagining the team or org thriving without me feels threatening, not freeing.

TRAP TOTAL _____ / 8

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2

5 The Silent Suffering Trap — *We don't complain about something this meaningful*

I downplay how hard the work is because the cause is bigger than my comfort.
I rarely tell my leader, team, or family how depleted I actually am.
I've internalized that struggle is the price of doing meaningful work.
If I'm honest, I haven't asked for help in a very long time.

TRAP TOTAL _____ / 8

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2

YOUR TOTAL _____ / 40
Sum the five trap totals. Carry this to the scoring guide on page 2.

Your Score, Decoded

Find your total below. The mission is real. So is the trap. Knowing which one you're in is the first step out.

SCORE 0–9

Mostly clear of the traps.

You're operating in a healthy relationship with your work. Stay alert — these traps tighten quietly. Watch the trap with your highest score; it's the seam where pressure will show up first.

SCORE 10–19

One or two traps are starting to tighten.

You're not stuck — yet. Look at where your score concentrated. The trap with the highest count is the one currently shaping your decisions. Name it. Tell one trusted person. Loosen it before it loops.

SCORE 20–29

You are caught in the mission trap.

Multiple traps are active at once. The mission isn't the problem — the way you're carrying it is. This is where most purpose-driven people break down. Begin Part 2 of Replenished. Start with Faith (Ch. 7).

SCORE 30–40

Systemic mission trap. The cost is compounding.

Every trap is firing. Your identity, your boundaries, and your body are all paying for the work. You can love the work and still need to leave the way you've been doing it. Talk to your doctor and one trusted person this week.

If you're in crisis, you don't have to wait.

Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) — free, confidential, 24/7. You can also text HOME to 741741.

You can love the work and still need to leave the way you've been doing it.

— Jessica Pierce, Replenished

Want to go deeper?

Read Chapter 4 of Replenished for the full story behind each trap and the way out. Take the companion 8-Area Burnout Inventory to see where the cost is showing up across your life.