

INSIGHTS

Rutgers researchers uncover new knowledge in the sciences and humanities.

Slow Burn

STRESS DEMORALIZES SERVICE WORKERS

From day one, Eugenia Barton hated everything about her new job as a high school business teacher: The students were rude, her colleagues weren't supportive, and the principal ignored her. Even when things went well, her natural shyness made group discussions and classroom lectures sheer agony. Alice Harris, however, loved teaching: She was delighted with her students, who were bright and well behaved, and enjoyed the support and kindness of her colleagues and school administrators.

Almost anyone would predict that—based on their first-year experiences—Barton would abandon teaching and Harris would retire in the profession. Anyone but

Cary Cherniss, that is; he reports in his latest book *Beyond Burnout* (Routledge Press, 1995) that Barton is still teaching after 12 years while Harris has changed careers. The reasons behind the women's career choices are detailed in the book, a study of 25 profes-

sionals who originally took jobs in the public sector because they wanted to serve others. "I learned about the stresses they experienced as their idealism collided with the realities of public schools, legal-aid clinics, and mental-health centers," says Cherniss, a professor in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers-New Brunswick. "I witnessed how, in response to these stresses, many public servants lose much of their idealism and commitment."

The idea for the study came when a reader of Cherniss's first book, *Professional Burnout in Human Service Organizations* (Praeger Press, 1980), approached him at a conference. "In that book," explains Cherniss, "I had followed professionals in their first year on the job, and this person wanted to know how they were doing now." Curious himself, the psycholo-

gist decided to track down his original subjects.

With grants from the Rutgers University Research Council and the National Institutes of Mental Health, Cherniss conducted face-to-face interviews with each of them. More often than not, he found just the opposite of what he expected: Professionals who had experienced high degrees of stress in their early careers tended to remain in the field, whereas those who had seemed content often made dramatic career changes.

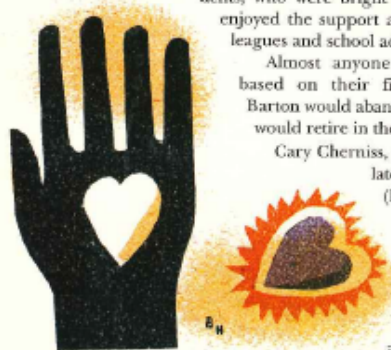
"I found that while each case is unique, relationships, status, and intellectual stimulation—more than money—were the factors that led people to make or not make changes. These moves were easier for most people to make sooner than later," says Cherniss, pointing out that once a person has a family to support, choices become limited. But there were exceptions, says Cherniss, singling out a woman who, bored after teaching for two years on an Indian reservation, returned to school and now directs an oncology center. Cherniss found that professionals who remained committed and satisfied in their careers shared one disturbing trait with their colleagues who had burned out: They, too, no longer talked about their work as meaningful or morally significant.

Remote Control

SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY SEES THE SITES

Time is running out for archaeologists who have spent the past 20 years piecing together the puzzling history of the Arroux River Valley region of Burgundy, France. They know that in the first century B.C., Julius Caesar and his army occupied the region, where they founded the city of Augustodunum, now known as Autun. But missing pieces of that history lie buried underground, threatened by the digging of gravel mines along the banks of the Loire River.

Keeping the archaeologists several steps ahead of the miners are Scott Madry, director of Rutgers' Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis, and Bob Wienock, a graduate student in anthropology. The pair have used advanced satellite technology to identify the sites of 35 to 40 hillforts and



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