

# DR KEVIN J PAYNE

social psychologist • author of *The Edge* • skydiver with MS

## Speaker on stress, burnout, and performance under pressure

*Stress is a signal across the whole range of human function. But we tend to notice it only as demand approaches what we can currently deliver — near where our operating state changes and familiar rules begin to fail. Dr. Payne gives you a better map to recognize those shifts and adapt to the state they're actually in.*

### SIGNATURE KEYNOTES

available virtually and in person

#### Where the Usual Rules Stop Working

**A better map for stress, burnout, and performance under pressure**

Most stress advice assumes a manageable cycle: effort, recover, repeat. But the stress signal carries useful information across a much wider range, and the rules change as demand approaches what we can deliver. Dr. Payne shows audiences how to recognize those shifts, understand why familiar tools fail under continuing load, and choose responses that fit the state they are actually in.

#### Burnout is a Broken Relationship

**Why your people are leaving — and how to give them a reason to stay**

Burnout is not just exhaustion, and resilience is not enough. Dr. Payne shows why good people and good programs still break under sustained pressure by examining the relationships among people, their work, one another, their systems, and hope. Leaders leave with a sharper diagnosis of what is actually driving burnout — and practical places to rebuild respect, trust, agency, support, and sustainable performance.

#### The Weight You Can't See

**How to live well and deliver under invisible chronic demand**

Chronic illness, caregiving, disability, and other persistent demands can quietly disrupt the adaptive cycle that lets us meet challenge, recover, and return — while everyone else sees only the consequences. Dr. Payne makes that invisible process legible, helping people protect capacity, preserve agency, and stop mistaking struggle for weakness or failure.

*Everyone recognizes  
an edge at 14,000 feet.*

*Most of the edges we  
face look ordinary  
from the outside.*

*But they're still edges.*



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TO YOUR NEXT  
CONFERENCE,  
LEADERSHIP EVENT,  
OR ERG**

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

**This is the book for when the standard stress advice stops working.**

You rested. Set boundaries. Breathed. Reframed. Tried harder. And just... managed. Somehow. Some of it even worked. And then, somewhere inside chronic illness, caregiving, burnout, or trying your hardest under all the pressure, it stopped working. When familiar advice fails, it's easy to conclude you failed.

You have not.

Stress is not simply a "toxin" to reduce or escape. Stress is a signal, and that signal traces a map of human states, from restoration through challenge to the edges of our performance and beyond. When our state changes, our rules change. The same challenge can build or damage. The same advice can help, harm, or outright fail.

A life lived well is not stress-free.

The Edge replaces one-size-fits-all stress management with a better map: what supports you here, and where can you go next?



### Workshops & Training

Applied workshops, leadership sessions, ERG programs, and learning series built from The Edge and Dr.

Payne's broader, interdisciplinary curriculum. His educational approach draws on thousands of hours training thousands of students.

### Organizational Evaluation & Diagnostics

Structured YLLW assessments identify where sustained demand is straining capacity, recovery, relationships, and performance — with clear findings and practical next steps. Dr. Payne's methods identify actionable structural and behavioral factors.

### Learning Series & Ongoing Support

Extend keynotes and workshops through multi-session learning, facilitated discussion, leadership or ERG debriefs, support and learning cohorts, and follow-up or longitudinal assessment using YLLW frameworks and materials.

*"Kevin was one of the most engaging speakers I had at my many analytics conferences. Years later, I remember his talk well. I still think about it and how each number/metric represents a person. Now that I'm working in the hospital setting and I see patients in the hallway I think about it even more. He uniquely combines his expertise in social science and data fluency to provide a memorable and practical experience."*

— David Bertoch, Former Vice President, Analytics, Children's Hospital Association  
Organized CHA National Analytics Conferences, 1997–2023

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**Read everything through Part 1 in the complimentary preview ebook.**

## ABOUT DR. PAYNE

Dr. Kevin J. Payne is a social psychologist, speaker, and consultant who studies how people succeed — or struggle — under pressure. He holds a PhD in Sociology and Psychology, and spent fifteen years as a university professor. As a research methodologist, he's devoted over three decades of study across the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences to his integrative account of stress, chronic illness, caregiving, and performance. That work is also personal: he has lived with multiple sclerosis for decades, spent years as a family caregiver, and endured crushing professional burnout. He remains, weather permitting, an enthusiastic skydiver with a coach rating and more than 600 jumps.

## MORE WAYS TO WORK WITH DR. PAYNE