



Photo courtesy of Dr. Kevin J. Payne

PRESS KIT

Dr. Kevin J. Payne

Social psychologist and speaker on stress, burnout, and performance under pressure. Author of *The Edge* (November 17, 2026).

Interview requests

inquiry@yourlifelivedwell.com

Subject line: "Media request: The Edge." Replies within one business day.

30+

years of research in social and behavioral science

Ph.D.

Sociology & Psychology,
University of Missouri

600+

skydives, including 370 in 2020,
while living with MS

70+

podcast and live-show interviews

ONE LINE

Dr. Kevin J. Payne is a social psychologist and speaker on stress, burnout, and performance under pressure, and the author of *The Edge*.

STANDARD BIO · ABOUT 150 WORDS

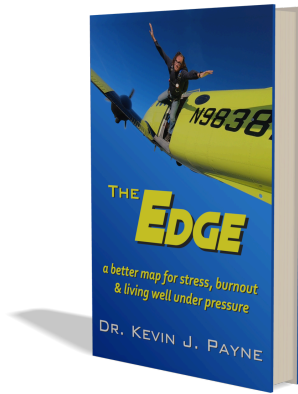
Dr. Kevin J. Payne is a social psychologist, keynote speaker, and the author of *The Edge: a better map for stress, burnout & living well under pressure*. He spent 15 years as a professor and more than three decades in research, specializing in research methods, data science, and why people succeed or fail under difficult conditions.

Then life tested the research. He lives with multiple sclerosis, was primary caregiver through his wife's advanced cancer, and burned out in ways the standard tools couldn't reach. He also ran an experiment of his own: more than 600 skydives, 370 of them in 2020, deliberately cycling his stress response in a body under chronic strain.

The Edge is what came back from that terrain — a more accurate map of the stress signal, why common advice fails where it does, and what people and organizations under relentless demand can actually do. He holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and Psychology from the University of Missouri and lives in the Kansas City area.

Preferred name

Dr. Kevin J. Payne, social psychologist and author of *The Edge*. Short form: Dr. Payne.



THE BOOK · NOVEMBER 17, 2026

The Edge

a better map for stress, burnout & living well under pressure

The dominant frameworks for understanding stress were largely built from a narrower region of human experience: pressure that is bounded and recoverable. *The Edge* is about the rest: the chronic, cumulative, invisible demand that many people live with and the standard frameworks barely describe. It offers a broader map of stress states, a practical account of recovery as a daily budget, and a way to match what you're facing with what will actually help.

AUTHOR	Dr. Kevin J. Payne
PUBLISHER	YLLW Press
PUBLICATION	November 17, 2026
FORMATS	Hardcover, softcover and ebook
PRE-ORDERS	Details will be announced when pre-orders open.
FREE PREVIEW	The first 90 pages: yourlifelivedwell.com
REVIEW COPIES	Complimentary review copies are available to media on request: inquiry@yourlifelivedwell.com

SHORT BIO · ABOUT 60 WORDS

Dr. Kevin J. Payne is a social psychologist who studies stress, burnout, and performance where the usual advice stops working. He has lived that terrain as well: multiple sclerosis, caregiving through his wife's advanced cancer, deep burnout, and more than 600 skydives. His framework, The Edge, is the subject of his new book, *The Edge: a better map for stress, burnout & living well under pressure*.

Host introduction · about 30 seconds, written to be read aloud

Most advice about stress and burnout is built for pressure that eventually lets up. My guest studies what happens when it doesn't. Dr. Kevin J. Payne is a social psychologist who has lived that terrain himself — through multiple sclerosis, caregiving, burnout, and more than 600 skydives. His new book is *The Edge: a better map for stress, burnout, and living well under pressure*. Dr. Payne, welcome.

Story angles

Each angle stands on its own. The human story gets a listener's attention. The ideas are what they take away.

GENERAL AUDIENCES · BUSINESS · HEALTH

Where the usual stress advice stops working

Breathe, exercise, take a vacation. Those tools work for pressure that eventually lets up. For caregivers, people with chronic illness, and workers who never get a real off-ramp, they often don't — and people blame themselves when the tools fail. Dr. Payne explains why the problem is usually the map, not the person.

BUSINESS · HR · HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP

Burnout is a broken relationship, not just overwork

Organizations keep adding wellness perks, and good people keep leaving. Dr. Payne frames burnout as a breakdown of respect, trust, and hope between people and the systems they work in — a diagnosis leaders can do something about, and one that stops treating burnout as a personal failing.

CAREGIVING · CHRONIC ILLNESS · DISABILITY

The weight you can't see

Caregivers and people with chronic illness carry a workload their colleagues never see — broken sleep, medical crises, constant vigilance — and are expected to perform like everyone else. Dr. Payne has carried it as a patient and as a caregiver through his wife's advanced cancer.

Timely: November is National Family Caregivers Month

SCIENCE · HEALTH · LIFESTYLE

Stress is a signal, not an enemy

We are told to reduce stress, manage it, get rid of it. Dr. Payne argues that stress is information: a running estimate of how much is being asked of you compared with what you have left, shaped by whether you believe you can make a difference. Read the signal first. Then decide what to do about it.

FEATURES · HUMAN INTEREST

370 jumps in a pandemic year

In 2020, a stress researcher living with multiple sclerosis made 370 skydives — a deliberate N-of-1 experiment in triggering his own acute stress response, over and over, in a body under chronic strain. What he learned at terminal velocity is part of the framework. As he puts it, physics gives honest feedback.

HEALTH · WELLNESS · WORKPLACE

Tired, fatigued, exhausted: three different problems

We treat them as more and less of the same thing. They aren't. Tiredness responds to rest. Fatigue arrives faster than it should. Exhaustion is the point where ordinary rules stop applying. Telling them apart changes what actually helps.

Seasonal hooks: holiday stress; New Year resets that don't stick; National Family Caregivers Month (November).

Timely commentary: layoffs and return-to-office mandates; anxiety about AI and jobs; new research on burnout, caregiving and workplace wellbeing.

Suggested questions

A starting point. Dr. Payne is comfortable going off-script.

1. You say stress is a signal. A signal of what?
2. Why does the standard stress advice fail so many people?
3. What does “the edge” actually mean?
4. Why do you call burnout a broken relationship?
5. You made 370 skydives in one year. What were you testing?
6. You're a stress researcher who lives with MS. What did the illness teach you that the research didn't?
7. What's the difference between being tired, fatigued, and exhausted?
8. What should a manager notice before someone burns out?
9. What do caregivers need that no one is giving them?
10. If someone is running on empty right now, where should they start?

As heard on & in print

A selection from more than 70 podcast, video and live-show interviews. Clips with captions and transcripts:

yourlifelivedwell.com/media

Wild and Rooted Woman with Heather Webster	Revisit and Challenge Your Edges
A Fighter's Story with Rob Childs	Sky Diving Dr. Kevin J. Payne
Leap of Health with Alex Balgood	Healing to Success
The Be Ruthless Show with Samantha Ruth	Your Life Lived Well with Dr. Kevin Payne
The SwitchPoint Project with Shawn P. Neal	Dr. Kevin Payne — Your Life Lived Well
Brain & Life American Academy of Neurology	“Disability Doesn't Deter These Skydivers” Profiled as the only licensed skydiver in the feature. Sarah Watts, February 2020.

Also: Tough Talks · The Christian Reeve Podcast · From Survivor to Thriver · Talking Taboo with Tina · Revelations with Rowena · Unstuck · That's So Chronic · Chronically Real · Relatively Damaged · One Moment Please · Mentally in Pajamas · Create with Franz Sidney · How to Rewrite Your Stars · Battle2Be · and many more.

Format

- Remote: podcast, video, radio, print, and live-stream interviews.
- In person: studio interviews in the Kansas City area.
- Setup: broadcast microphone, HD camera, wired gigabit fiber connection.
- Time zone: Central (US).
- Book: inquiry@yourlifelivedwell.com

Good to know

- Dr. Payne talks openly about living with MS.
- He isn't a physician and doesn't give medical advice. His focus is quality of life and health, of which medicine is one factor; the framework complements clinical care rather than replacing it.
- Comfortable with live formats, call-ins, and panels. He grew up on stage.
- Can supply data points, framework graphics, and pull quotes on request.

INTERVIEW AND REVIEW-COPY REQUESTS

inquiry@yourlifelivedwell.com

Subject line: “Media request: The Edge.” Photos, clips and bios: yourlifelivedwell.com/media

