



Overcoming Overwhelm

1. First, practice extreme self-care. This may mean taking time out to get a haircut, pedicure, or massage. It may mean taking some alone time to read a good book, and get out of your head. Exercise and eat right. (This is number one for a reason.)
2. Visualize the finished product or accomplishment, and then make a list of tasks in chronological order that can be accomplished in order to get where you need to be - when you need to be there. As a list maker myself, this is a great suggestion. And by chronologically listing the events, tasks, and priorities that have the most leverage (have the biggest impact) this keeps me from being distracted by details, until all the big stuff is done.
3. Vacation - it is mandatory!
4. Know your Overwhelm Set Point. This will differ for everyone, of course. We all have different thresholds of tolerance for anxiety and overwhelm. Know yours, and recognize when you are not just busy - you are overwhelmed.
5. Ask for help, and delegate responsibilities that others can do - even if there is no way on earth they can ever do them as well as you can :)
6. Do what you absolutely must, and UN-do what you cannot, do not want to, or is not an absolute necessity. (You might need to say no to some things you do not want to or simply renegotiate.)
7. Ask yourself - is it that you truly do not have enough time, or are not wisely using the time you have? This is a biggie for me. Better Time Management Skills!
8. Acknowledge all the things you ARE getting done. If you do not cross out those must-dos on your to-do list, then add all the things you did that were never on the list in the first place. Give yourself some credit!
9. Get Involved and Get Outside Yourself! Be a community member, good friend, and active part of the world outside of your office, your cubicle, or your house.
10. Search for wisdom. Talk to people whom you admire, who are good at managing stress, and ask them for suggestions. What do they do? They may have a great suggestion that is the golden ticket that will help you avoid the overwhelming feelings of obligation and time that too often disrupt our flow and stop our creative processes.
11. Lastly, understand what overwhelm is... my very wise coach in the 90's used to say "Overwhelm is not being responsible for what is possible."