



Inspiring Entrepreneurs to Success in Business and Life

Path of Purpose

... with Helaine Iris

Learn How to Finally Break Through Overwhelm, and Become a Prosperous, Stress-Free Business Owner

by Helaine Iris

Overwhelm is one of the biggest challenges that entrepreneurs experience on a daily basis. The definition of overwhelm, according to The Brainy Dictionary is, "To cover over completely, as by a great wave; to overflow and bury beneath; to engulf; hence, figuratively, to immerse and bear down; to overpower; to crush; to bury; to oppress, etc., overpoweringly." Whew...sound familiar? I've been there, too, so I understand -it's not a fun place to be.

As a business owner, with a full personal life as well, you don't have to look very far to understand why it's easy to often feel over the edge. It's not just that you're simply juggling a lot - as an entrepreneur, you are also risking a lot - your money, your reputation, your future. Being an entrepreneur is a commendable pair of shoes to step into. And, if you don't get a handle on understanding overwhelm you might as well buy stock in Band-Aids to deal with the painful blisters on your feet.

Believe it or not, it is possible to change your relationship with overwhelm enabling you to experience a better quality of day to day life. Before I share my 10 tips with you I invite you do a few things first to ensure you get full value from this program:

First, take a moment - if you want these strategies to work - you have to carve out time to learn, integrate and practice them, that's if you agree with the adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Consider turning off your email and silence your phone. Create a distraction free zone for the next ten minutes. While multi tasking can be a valuable skill, it actually works to your disadvantage when you are trying to learn something new.

Next, before reading any further close your eyes and take five deep breaths. Release the top layer of tension from your body. Now open your eyes.

Here are my 10 tips for turning overwhelm around.

1. Start with a powerful shift of awareness. The unwelcome state of overwhelm is a state of mind, it's NOT who you are by nature. This is important to remember because it was your gutsy and wonderful decision to live a bigger life in the first place. Sometimes it's easy to slip into victim mode and forget that you choose to be a business owner. It's not to say that you should suck it up and deal, it's simply an invitation to remember that taking responsibility for your decisions is actually an empowering thing to do.

2. Remember that the feeling of overwhelm is usually triggered by a perception - true or untrue. Often you perceive a lack. Not enough time, money, resources, confidence - I'm sure you could add to the list. It's your job to determine if what you are afraid of is real or a projection into a future you can't predict. If you're overwhelmed about a real situation bearing down on you - take action. If you're spinning about something you can't know will happen, then it's time to get a grip. Distinguishing between reality and projection is a critical antidote to overwhelm.

3. Recognize your personal symptoms of overwhelm. For me, I know I'm headed down the slippery slope of overwhelm when I'm grouchy and snappy with my husband. You can get tell tale physical symptoms as well: headaches, fatigue, depression - all potentially early warning systems designed to alert you that something is cooking under the surface. If you train yourself to recognize how overwhelm starts to show up for you - you can preemptively strike and try one of these suggestions to minimize overwhelm.

4. Call a time out and admit that you are overwhelmed. Sometimes simply naming the obvious is all you need to stop the cycle. Doing this by yourself is helpful and recruiting someone to tell how you feel is even better. Ask for some venting time. Remind your generous supporter that you just need to blow off steam and let them off the hook for fixing your problem. You can then offer to return the favor. I don't know anyone who couldn't use a good vent session.

5. Prioritize. It's easy to forget this when most of what you do is important. I use the following simple system. First, make a list of everything on your mind you need to do. Then, make a number key that reflects the following: 1 = Urgent, need to be done today 2 = Important, this week, 3 = can be delayed until next week. Then go through your list and assign each to do with a number.

6. Breathe new life into your time management system. If you don't use a system to manage your time, consider adopting one. If you have gotten lax with a system that has worked for you, pull it out and refresh it. You only have 24 hours in each day, that won't change. You have to get a handle on managing your use of time. I find it effective to block out chunks of time for specific tasks. For example, I schedule three hours a week to catch up on paperwork and I put in on my calendar as if it was an appointment with a client.

7. Read and re-read your vision statement for your business. (If you don't have a written vision statement for your business write one!) If you're vision statement is old, write one that's compelling. It's important to remember why you are doing this at all. Re-inspiring yourself will go a long way to helping you move past overwhelm and into action. This is simple yet powerful.

8. Get back to basics. Take a self care moment. Stop what you're doing and take ten deep, full breaths. Walk outside and notice five beautiful things around you. Pick up the phone and schedule a date with a friend. Schedule a massage; take the phone off the hook for the afternoon. Take charge.

9. Ask for Help and get outside perspective. It's awfully easy to loose focus in the whirlpool of your own thinking. Ask trusted colleagues for advice and opinions. For the small business owner hiring a coach or therapist will offer you a sounding board. And, remember, you don't have to do it alone. Asking for help is not a sign of

weakness or failure – it's just plain smart. It also helps you feel less isolated and truthfully, gives others an opportunity to feel good. Bottom line - overwhelm thrives in its own stew. You need to break the cycle and asking for help is the first step out.

10. Imagine in full detail how you would rather feel. What if you weren't overwhelmed? What if you were simply taking care of business and trusting that all was well. When I was building a house, and managing my business it was very easy for me to quickly get into a crazy, frenzy with millions of decisions and details. Personally, I'd rather feel joyful and excited about the choices and opportunities I have in my life rather than overwhelmed, stressed and like a victim. Believe it or not, when I'm in the midst of overwhelm and remember that I'm also excited, it's easier to make the shift to the happier state. Ask yourself, "What would I rather be feeling about my life right now?"

So, what now? Here are some suggestions about how to integrate this into your life. One powerful and satisfying way to engage with these 10 tips is to pick one strategy per week and focus on it. Make yourself an action plan for behavior change. Make index card reminders so you can stay focused and keep your intention front and center. Bring the ideas into your conversations with family and friends, get people involved and on board. In order for you to be successful you'll have to live and breathe the change you want to make. If you do these things, and commit to this practice I guarantee you will notice results and become a sane, stress-free business owner.

It's YOUR life...imagine the possibilities!

**Here are some resources
I find valuable to enhance, embody and embrace my 10 tips**

1. The "Work" of Byron Katie <http://www.thework.com/index.php>
This is a powerful, state of consciousness tool that helps you work with the beliefs that cause you stress.
2. If you don't have a vision statement for your business here's a link to an article that will help you write one.
<http://sbinfoCanada.about.com/od/businessplanning/a/writevision.htm>
3. To help you with managing your time - this is the BEST planner in the world. I can't tell you how many people I've turned onto this. It's simple and powerful and believe it or not – good old fashioned paper.
<http://www.plannerpads.com>
4. Experience the benefits of connected breathing – otherwise known as Breathwork. This is a powerful tool to help you manage stress and be happier. Here's a great offering from Dr Andrew Weil.
<http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/ART00521/three-breathing-exercises.html>

Helaine Iris is a Life and Business Coach, who has been featured in numerous publications, including "O" The Oprah Magazine. Through her dynamic, personal coaching style and her *From Passion to Profit* business development program she helps entrepreneurs accelerate their businesses with tools that empower, build financial success and create personal transformation. Contact her for a free consultation to discuss how she can help you accelerate your own success. You may also visit her website, <http://www.pathofpurpose.com>, or email helaine@pathofpurpose.com