

10 Steps to Overcome Overwhelm

By Tammy Landau

The Renegade Business Coach & Mentor
www.RengadeBusinessCoach.com

THEN-1977:

I was a latch key kid. When I got home from school in the afternoon and let myself into our townhouse, I always rushed to the TV to turn on one of three channels. Usually the channel with “Gilligan’s Island” re-runs, “that Gilligan” I used to say laughing!

If there was nothing on the three channels, I would go over to my Mom’s eight-track player and put in Fleetwood Mac or Carole King, if I got bored listening to music I would go into our avocado and goldenrod colored kitchen and call one of my friends on the phone. The phone was attached to the wall but my Mom had an extra long cord so you could walk around the kitchen while chatting.

Let me ask you, what did we do with all our time back then?

NOW-2008+:

I pour myself a cup of coffee and begin my day in my home office. I have two home phones-1 business phone and 1 house phone, my cell phone, my fax machine and skype. I check my more than 200 e-mails that come in each day and respond to the most urgent ones.

I have a stack of business magazines and about 52 books waiting to be read this year to help me with my public relations, marketing, clients, e-zine, website, product creation, self-worth, time management, book writing, and how to make 7 figures while you sleep.

I have systems, networking groups, social networking groups, peer groups, and meetings I have to attend this week.

In addition to the groups I attend, I need to work on my products, my blogs, building my list, my 30 second elevator speech, and my unique selling proposition, and my blah blah blah.

I am also working on two separate home study programs right now, both by coaches/entrepreneurs I admire. One is a 21 CD/workbook program and the other is a 17 CD/workbook program.

My daughter comes into my office bored so I suggest she watch one of her hundreds of DVD’s, play her video games, listen to her Disney CD’s or

watch cable TV which currently has over 200 channels to choose from. She could also practice for cheerleading class, her piano class, or her gymnastics class all three of which I have to transport her to this week!

I am OVERWHELMED and it's not even 8:30 A.M.

One of the biggest problems people face today is overwhelm. People are trying to do too many things and are spreading themselves too thin. There never seems to be enough time to get all the things done that you had planned to do.

Important things slip through the cracks. We don't make the time necessary for our personal growth and learning. We let the precious years of our children's life slip away without really maintaining the connection. And perhaps worst of all, we often neglect the one person who should be our closest friend and ally – our spouse/significant other.

We let the urgent rule our lives and put off the important until tomorrow. But tomorrow is filled with more urgent and we never quite get around to the important things in our lives.

All this activity, things left undone, worry about the important things we don't or won't make the time to do, all increase the stress in our lives. And studies have shown that well over 90% of all health issues are stress related.

So what will decreasing overwhelm in your life do for you? More that you might imagine. It will reduce the stress in your life, give you more energy, and improve your efficiency and give you time to devote to the truly important things in your life.

Reducing overwhelm could be the most important thing you will ever do in your life.

If it is so important to reduce the frustration and overwhelm in our lives, why don't more people do it? There are probably a number of reasons for this. For starters, most people are not aware of the root causes of the problem. So many of their friends are in the same boat they assume that it is sort of normal. After all, if everyone else is overwhelmed, then why should I be different is the way the thinking goes.

Another reason it is so widespread is that most people have no idea where to start getting their lives under control. They might know some things they need to do, but they are probably not sure where to start.

They also need someone to hold them accountable. Knowing what needs to be done and doing it are two entirely different things. As Ben Franklin said, “It is the easiest thing in the world for a man (or a woman) to deceive himself.” We all are guilty of making excuses why we can’t do something. It is often easier to make excuses than to do what is necessary. Easier in the short term, but we then get in the habit of making the same excuses each and every day.

Let me confess. There was a time when my life was totally out of control. I thought I was Wonder Woman and that I could manage a career, a family, the household and any number of other things. I felt it was my job and if I did not do it all by myself, then something was wrong with me. If I needed more hours in the day, then sleep was the first thing to give up, next came my relationship with my husband, after that was quality time with the children. Sound familiar? I hope not, but I hear too many people saying the same thing each and every day.

Well one day I decided that life should be more enjoyable than what it was. Life should not be a three-ring circus. Even though I thought I was a good ring master, the clowns were running wild, (no wonder I have a fear of clowns.) The animals were taking over the circus. So I decided that I must try to figure out some system where I could actually get control of my life.

It was not easy and did not happen over night. But eventually I found a system for getting my life under control. Now, I am not about to tell you that there are not days when the unexpected happens. But those days are getting rare. And when they do happen, it is usually because I try to take shortcuts on my own system. I do a gut check and get back on track.

In this report, I want to share with you the basic steps to my system. If you work with these basic steps, you will see a dramatic improvement in your life. You will reduce the stress in your life, you will have more time to enjoy life and you will actually get much more done.

These steps are truly all you need. These are the exact same steps I use when coaching women to get their lives under control. The only difference

is the amount of background information and the detailed explanation I use to help my clients let go of their bad habits and embrace the changes they need to make. While working with my clients I am also in a position to hold them accountable. That is a very important step.

You must find someone to hold you accountable.

If you truly want to get the most from these steps, then you must find someone to hold you accountable. It could be a coach, a mentor or some trusted friend. Please understand if you go it alone, your results are going to be compromised. It is just not possible for anyone to hold themselves accountable as firmly as a compassionate but firm emotionally unattached person, believe me, I tried.

One other thing you need to understand is the value of these steps, or truly the value of the process. What are the results you can expect? More time for doing the things you truly want to do. Making sure all the important things in life are done before devoting time and attention to the less important things in life. Better health. More energy. If you have a business, earning more money while working less and having more fun in the process.

It is impossible to put a price tag on so many benefits.

As Mastercard says in their commercials, “Some things in life are priceless.” I know taking the steps to streamline your life is one of those things. But it is of little value unless you do the work. Follow the steps, take action and implement the ideas presented here.

As I mentioned before, at one point in my life, I was in the same boat. I figured out how to get my life under control. And I am so grateful for having learned the lessons that I am devoting my life to helping others do the same thing. I want to share with others what I have learned. I am giving away what I consider to be my most valuable lesson.

I know you will find this information extremely valuable if you will do just half the steps. If you will really become committed to doing these steps, each and every day, and will find someone to hold you accountable, the results will be beyond your wildest imagination.

All I ask is that you let me know about your results. You see I really live for helping others. There is nothing more gratifying than someone telling

me how their life was changed as a result of following my system. So please let me know about your results. If at first you are not getting the results you want, go back and review the steps. Make sure you are doing each and every one exactly as outlined. And find an accountability partner – someone who will hold your feet to the fire.

10 Steps to Overcome Overwhelm

1. Mindset

Everything starts with the way you think about things. You need to take full responsibility for your life. You will never get things under control as long as you blame others when things go wrong. Understand that we are all slaves to habits. Well over 90% of the things we do, we do out of habit. Understand that you can have good habits and bad habits. You will be a slave to habits. Make sure you are a slave to good habits.

2. Accept Your Limitations

You can only do so much. Quit trying to be Wonder Woman-mothball your Wonder Woman cape. If you expect too much of yourself, you will try to do everything yourself. Learn to distinguish between those things that only you can do and those things that someone else can do just as well or maybe even better. Delegate those things that are not absolutely essential for you to do. Do not get carried away with thinking that no one else can do things as good as you. Let go of your inner control freak.

3. Get Rid of Distractions and Clutter

We all have way too much clutter and too many distractions in our lives. Learn to get rid of some. We have too many material possessions, belong to too many social groups, and take part in too many activities that in the long run are really not that important. Get rid of as many distractions and as much clutter as you can. If you need help identifying what you can keep and what must go, get help from your accountability partner.

4. Time Vampires

We all let time vampires steal our time. It does not take that much, 15 minutes here, 20 minutes there and repeat it a few times a day and you have given up 2 to 3 hours. What are some time vampires? Email is a big one. Reading all those messages that your friend forwarded to you or reading every piece of e-mail so you don't miss out on another learning opportunity spells death to your productivity. Surfing the net – while the internet is a great source of information and entertainment it is also one of the biggest time vampires around. Become aware of the time you spend (waste) reading emails and surfing the internet.

Talking on the phone, especially the cell phone has become a huge time vampire. Are all your calls really important or are you dodging the important things by being on the phone?

Small interruptions – at work and at home can suck away a lot more time than you think. Become aware of the time that gets wasted with small interruptions.

5. Stop Making Excuses

Making excuses is avoiding responsibility for your actions. It allows you to do the things you know you should not do. It permits you to waste untold hours each week. There is only one cure. No more excuses. The next time you start to make an excuse, just stop cold.

Now this is going to be a difficult one for you to accept. But if you truly want to get rid of overwhelm, it is very important you get rid of excuses. As long as you have an excuse you can believe, you give yourself permission not to change. And as long as you have permission not to change, you won't.

You cannot afford to make excuses. They keep you repeating the same behavior. If you continue doing what you have always done, you will continue to get the same results. Do you really want to be where you're at one year from now, how about five years from now?

6. Procrastination – Eliminate it

If you are going to get rid of overwhelm, you must get rid of procrastination. Procrastination allows us to put off doing the important things we know we must do to have the kind of life we desire. But when we procrastinate we normally find something that “must be done right now”. We rationalize that we are not really procrastinating, because we have found some busy work that we engage in rather than doing the important things.

Procrastination has its root in fear. We are afraid that we will mess up the task, that we will fail or, strange as it might seem, that we will succeed. Any time we move toward something that we are not accustomed to doing, we are moving out of our comfort zone. Fear raises its ugly head. We would rather put off some task than face the fear.

If you are truly going to overcome overwhelm, you must overcome procrastination. Here is another area when an accountability partner is absolutely necessary.

7. Perfection Paralysis

Understand that there is no such thing as perfection. But far too many people will spend hours upon hours trying to improve what they are working on. They are striving for perfection.

If you are striving for perfection, you will waste a lot of time and rarely finish most projects.

Learn this lesson: Good is good enough.

This does not mean that you need to be sloppy. It does mean that you should not get bogged down in questioning yourself about how some project or some task can be improved. Learn to accept that good is good enough. You will save countless hours.

8. Waiting for the right time

Often we will put off doing something because we tell ourselves that we are waiting for the right time. This is a cousin to perfection paralysis. There is often no right time to do some things. But when you really think about it, the only time there is, is now.

But putting things off for a better time often robs us of closure, of getting things done, of making money. If we have mastered step # 5, (making excuses) we will not use the excuse that we are waiting for the right time. We will learn to take action.

I will certainly admit there are rare occasions when we would be better off to gather more information, etc. But those are rare. What is more common is we use the excuse of timing for delaying action. When you delay taking action on some task, you build up anxiety about that action. The more you delay, the more difficult it is to finally take the action. The anxiety and fear keep building up. Learn that there is often never a right time. Learn to do it, and if it does not come out just right, make adjustments.

9. Setting Priorities

This is probably one of the most effective tools you can use to reduce overwhelm in your life.

To illustrate this point, let me relate the old story of the Zen master who was teaching his students.

The Zen Master had gathered his students around for the lesson of the day. As the students got comfortable, one of them asked, “What lesson will we learn today Master?”

The Zen Master had a large earthen jar and he instructed the students to gather up some large rocks and fill the jar.

After they had gathered up and filled the jar with large rocks, the Zen Master asked, “Is it full?”

All the students replied, “Yes the jar is full.”

He then instructed them to gather up some pebbles. Once they had gathered up some pebbles, he instructed them to put them in the jar, filling the cracks between the large rocks. When they were finished and the jar could hold no more pebbles, he asked, “Now is the jar full?”

Once again, they all replied, “Yes the jar is full.”

The Zen Master instructed them to gather up some sand. He then instructed them to put the sand in the jar, filling the cracks between the rocks and the pebbles.

When they had finished filling the jar with sand, the Zen Master once again asked the question “Is the jar full now?”

The students all answered that the jar was indeed full. To which the Zen Master agreed.

Then they all sat in silence contemplating the full jar. Eventually one of the students asked, “Zen Master, we now see the jar is full. What lesson did we learn from this?”

The Zen Master thought and then spoke, “If we had put the sand in the jar first, would we have been able to put the pebbles in the jar?”

The students all answered, “No.”

“And if we had put the pebbles in the jar first, would we have been able to put the large rocks in the jar?”

Again the students answered, “No.”

The Zen Master continued, “You see your life is like the jar. The sand pebbles and rocks are like the things in your life. If you fill your life with small things – like the sand – there will be no room for the important things. Therefore you must make room in your life for the major things first. Then add those things of medium importance before you add any unimportant activities to your life. Otherwise, you will never have the room for the very important things in your life.”

You must learn to set priorities and then schedule your life so that the important things get done before the other tasks.

Block out time for the important things in your life. And discipline yourself to work on the important things before you spend any time on the other tasks.

Some tasks can be left undone with no serious consequences. Learn what can be left undone and leave it undone.

10. The Magic Question

You must learn to plan your day before you start your day. If you do not have a plan for your day, you will be reactive to life, rather than proactive. You must learn to be in charge of your time and your life. You do this by planning your day before you start your day. Learn the difference between a high value task and a low value task. When push comes to shove, let someone else do the low value task or let them go undone. Never do a low value tasks when you can be doing a high value task.

As you are planning your day, here is a magic question to ask yourself: **What one or two tasks must I get done today for today to be a successful day?**

Now these tasks that must be done to count each day as a successful day must be the highest value tasks that you can do for that day. Do not cheat yourself by selecting some low value tasks just for the purpose of saying you will have a successful day. Make sure you ask this question and come up with a satisfactory answer. Then make sure you work on those tasks before you work on any lesser value tasks. If you learn to work on the tasks that will define each and every day as a successful day, you will be surprised at how your life will improve.

A similar question to ask yourself when you are not sure what to do next is, “What is the best use of my time right now?” Asking yourself this throughout the day will keep you focused on the important things in life. I doubt that you will be able to answer that question honestly and continue to surf the net.

These steps are very valuable if you follow them. Just reading them will not change your life. And I have found that it is nearly impossible for anyone to have sufficient self-discipline to fully implement these steps as effectively and as efficiently as they could with a coach/mentor or accountability partner.

I have provided these steps because I truly am dedicated to everyone achieving success in their lives. And I realize that overwhelm keeps people stuck, prevents them from moving ahead, from growing, from becoming the person they are capable of being.

I know this will work wonders if you completely implement these steps. Please feel free to pass this report on to others as long as you do not alter it in any way, including the attribution at the end of the report.

Ten Questions

1. What good habit am I willing to adopt today?
2. What can I delegate today so I can focus on the important things?
3. What can I get rid of in order to make room for what I want?
4. What is wasting my time today? What am I no longer willing to tolerate?
5. What excuse am I making that's preventing me from living my dream?
6. What am I procrastinating about-why am I afraid?
7. What standard am I striving for? Is my product, or service good enough? Am I holding myself to a higher standard than everyone expects?
8. Why am I waiting for the right time, or is it just an excuse?
9. What can I schedule that will be of the highest priority to me today?
10. What task do I need to do today for today to be a success?

About the Author



Tammy Landau is a certified coach, author, speaker, humorist, certified marketing professional and renegade.

I am extremely passionate about sharing how YOU can find passion, fulfillment, humor and let's not forget about \$money\$ and fun, in your business.

I am the Renegade Business Coach and Mentor because I believe you can boost business by being bold. Break the rules to make your business work for you.

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