

Shift Three Boulders Weighing Down Your Overwhelm

eWorkbook by
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Rock Your Overwhelm: Live in Clarity, Balance and Freedom

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How successfully do you juggle your overwhelm? In what ways does overwhelm weigh down your life? Ready to shift some overwhelm off your shoulders?

Although it probably does not feel like it in the moment, the idea of ‘managing’ overwhelm is somewhat humorous. Given the power we have to manifest in our lives, we basically co-create the factors that overwhelm us, and then we aim to manage these same factors - ironically! So, despite potentially avoiding the initial creation of overwhelm, we manifest it anyway. What are we doing!?

Please know that you are the expert in YOUR overwhelm experience – no one else! I would never wish to take that ‘joy’ off your list! It is all yours to do with as you choose...so, what do you choose?

Together, let’s focus on and play with three key boulders that could be adding to your overwhelm, and some related tools that could help ease your overwhelm. Utilizing this eWorkbook as a book to simply read or as a guided journal to write in, we will work with techniques to build your awareness and reduce the components of overwhelm - whether physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual - so you can enjoy your life with greater clarity, balance and purpose.

What is Overwhelm?

To start, let’s acknowledge that overwhelm, or its common partner in crime ‘stress,’ are a natural response to life situations, and can actually be a good thing. However, too much of it or the wrong kind of it can send our bodies, minds, emotions, energy and lives into a tailspin.

Understanding overwhelm is a great starting point. It is an automatic reaction that happens in our bodies when there is a 'perceived' threat. It may not necessarily be a 'real' (actual) threat, but the sense or mere idea of a threat. When this occurs, various physical functions turn 'on': muscles tense, heart rate rises, blood flow rushes, breathing quickens, adrenalin pumps.... We often call this the 'fight or flight' response - a great thing in times of true danger!

However, most of our everyday overwhelm is not a life or limb debate. Instead, we live surrounded by deadlines, traffic, financial worries, endless streams of information, family responsibilities, perfectionist tendencies, a long list of expectations, etc. This overwhelm grows with layers upon layers weighted upon us. Beyond a mere 'stress' situation, we can become overloaded with the weight, and in turn it can short-circuit our lives, leaving us stuck in the rut of overwhelm.

Certainly some aspects of overwhelm can help challenge us to grow and change. Nevertheless, over the long term on-going excessive or even low-level overwhelm takes a toll, with a detrimental impact on our quality of life:

- Physical 'dis-ease'/illness
- Mental overload
- Emotional fatigue
- Relationship breakdown
- Loss of self

It is hard to enjoy life when buried in a pit of overwhelm, or possibly even worse, under a boulder of overwhelm, unable to budge or breathe.

The Overwhelm Story

Personally, I like to play with language...tweaking it! For me 'stress' is not a complete description of my experience in those moments where everything in life feels weighted down, slowing my pace, numbing my senses, feeling pulled in a million directions, yet not moving anywhere!

In fact, 'stress' is such an overused word today in society, work, health and even relationships. I prefer the term 'overwhelm,' mostly because it more aptly describes the overall general feeling of stress. I'm all about 'feeling' aspects!

To me, 'overwhelm' encompasses the holistic experience of stress – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually/energetically. With so many people experiencing 'stress', it may look and feel different for each person. However, overwhelm seems to spark a connective understanding.

For example, a few months ago as I met with a client (who will remain anonymous), I observed the layers of overwhelm, in her lived reality, and my response to her 'story'. I asked her about her typical day...

She began by talking about her three children (all under six years of age): how she juggled their schedule of various activities; how she had no family help; how she was tired; how she doubted she was a good stay-at-home mother; how she wished she could do more for her children; and how she loved each child dearly.

I found myself nodding my understanding (the Social Worker bobble-head nod!). Then, she continued talking about her partner working long hours. As

the only one of them 'working for money' she didn't want to expect more of his help at home. My throat tickled and caught a bit - Hmmm?

She expanded on the topic of work, stating that she does actually 'work outside the home,' but in fact, it turns out she works two part-time jobs – one she loves, but it isn't enough money, and the other job because this 'lower-level' job allows her time to decompress, to turn off her brain and laugh – a tolerable compromise for her. I could feel my shoulders tensing, and I repositioned in my seat.

So where was her life purpose that she was so passionate about six months ago?? "Oh yeah...that!" Apparently, she was still fully engaged in it. However, it was tough to 'get her foot in the door.' She was involved in a great project, but there was no money. So she was basically spending lots of time volunteering. I blew my nose, because it was twitching, making it harder to breathe as I felt congested, like the air was thicker.

However, she was also actively pursuing credentials in her chosen field. In fact, she was taking two courses with the goal of 'earning' her certificate. When was she studying? Apparently, she studied in the wee hours of the night/morning...in bed...with her laptop. I stifled a yawn, because I was tired just listening to her day. When did she sleep???

Yet something intuitively still felt unsaid. So I asked...is there anything else? "Hmmm...." Oh yes, she also volunteers on a Board of Directors for a non-profit society. Although she is not planning to continue this role, she feels relieved that her term ends next year. An understatement?? My chest tightened empathetically feeling her dread. And I was simply listening...she was living this overwhelm everyday!

Are you able to relate to her story? Do aspects of your life reflect the holistic overwhelm of living full-on in today's complex society? How does overwhelm appear in your life? What does overwhelm feel like for you?

Consider your typical day. It may include work, school, children, intimate relationships, family, friends, exercise, meditation, hobbies, food, chores, errands, cleaning, emails, Tweets, and so on and on and on.

Envision your 'To Do' list - you may have several lists! As you read down your 'To Do' list(s):

- Feel into your physically being - feel your body respond as you read.
- Observe your thoughts - pay attention to where your thoughts go as the list grows longer.
- Feel into your heart space - witness (without taking on) the emotions as the list consumes your day.
- Pay attention to your energy level - as you continue through this day, with each activity.

Experience your sense of overwhelm at all or some of the items on your list. Sense what days upon days of this overwhelm feels like, wondering when or if will it ever end....

What Are Your 'Overwhelm' Beliefs?

Consider that the seeds of your beliefs (on almost all topics) were planted when you were a child. Often it was loved ones (well meaning people, like

parents, teachers, etc.) who shared and modeled their beliefs to you with the best of intentions. These beliefs live on in your adult life through your values, feelings, needs, desires, choices and actions. They are YOU!

When thinking about overwhelm, contemplate:

- What beliefs about overwhelm did you learn growing up?
- How do these beliefs shown up in your life now?

Think back to your childhood, and recall your parent(s) or family conversations:

How did they speak about...

- time?
- work?
- responsibilities?

How did they respond to overwhelm...

- physically?
- mentally?

- emotionally?

How did they talk about overwhelm?

How did they speak about and measure 'success'?

What did they do with their time?

What activities did they do in their 'free' time?

What filled their lives?

Now think about your teenage and young adult years:

As you became more independent, what activities did you do?

How did you organize your many different activities? (i.e. school, work, friends, hobbies, etc.)

What filled your time?

What did you 'make' or 'save' time for?

What words did you use to describe your schedule?

How did the media influence your overwhelm?

How did peer pressure influence your overwhelm?

How did you feel at times of overwhelm?

What words did you use to describe your overwhelm?

Now think about your current life:

How do you organize your many different activities?

How do you factor in other people's needs? (i.e. children, partner, friends, employer, etc.)

What fills your time?

What do you 'make' or 'save' time for?

What words do you use to describe your schedule?

Who influences your overwhelm?

What influences your overwhelm?

How do you feel at times of overwhelm?

What words do you use to describe your overwhelm?

What do your words represent about your beliefs and values about overwhelm?

Is there something you want:

- ...to change about your beliefs?

- ...to release about your beliefs?
- ...to forgive (including yourself) about your beliefs?

If so, what are you willing to change, release and/or forgive?

Three Overwhelm Boulders

That is, as I see them to be! In dramatic reverse order with a drumroll...

3. *Busy-ness Does Not Equal Purpose!*

For some people, overwhelm is measured by busy-ness. How often do you tell people: "I'm sorry, but I'm busy?"

Some of us value being busy as a way to feel, be and model a purpose. In this way, busy-ness is a justification or evidence of our purpose on earth. It can create a sense of fulfillment.

For other people busy-ness fills time. We look for ways to fill our time to avoid other responsibilities, fun, connection, etc. It serves as a tool to foster drama, excitement, and/or a sense of being needed.

Still for other people, busy-ness allows distraction. We fill time to distract us from other things in life...more serious things: pain, loneliness, grief, fear, etc. Busy-ness has the ability to be a wonderful coping technique.

In almost all these cases, busy-ness keeps us away from what is most important: knowing our inner selves. Whether as a distraction, a drama or a sense of purpose, busy-ness can be like an arm, safely keeping our inner wisdom and self-love at bay, protecting us from knowing and trusting our true nature, and from allowing greater connection with the wisdom and joy within us.

The question is: what does busy-ness do for you? What function does it serve in your life? What beliefs do you have about your busy-ness? How can you choose to make a shift?

Indeed, you are busy – we all are. It has become a huge part of our everyday lives. So, how about starting by owning that it as part of your lived reality? However, how much of your reality? You choose! Yes, you have the power to reclaim your time, your focus and your purpose!

How? Become more conscious of what you are doing and the choices you make in what you do. Assess the importance of what you are doing and the value it brings to your life. Be conscious of what you truly want in your life.

By focusing on what is important to you, you will find some activities on your 'To Do' list move down the list, or even fall off it! Ask yourself:

- Is this in my best interest or is it simply keeping me busy?
- Is it on purpose?
- Does it honor who I truly am and my deepest desire?

Basically...

- What is negotiable in your life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- What is NON-negotiable in your life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

You will be surprised by how much of what you do is 'busy-ness.' Now with this awareness, use your valuable time to focus on your dreams and align with your purpose! Seek clarity and discern what is in your best interests. Your time is a treasure – value it!

2. *Shoulds...No More!*

I love this quote:

*It is a curious thing, the ability to forgive self. My realization was that I created a self that could never be fulfilled because she was made of other people's ideals, values and beliefs. She existed outside of me. (Karen McGregor, author of *The Madonna Code*)*

To me, that 'self' was a creation of 'shoulds.' My question: When is it time to say goodbye to that 'self'? For me, the 'bon voyage' to this 'other socially-created self' starts with letting go of the 'shoulds' of life!

Do you find yourself living the expectations of others? Do you feel a lack of self-investment, self-identity and self-empowerment? Do you know the 'shoulds' in your life?

Consider your 'shoulds':

At the top of a sheet of paper (or use page 22), please write the words: I SHOULD... Now finish this sentence in 5 different ways with whatever comes to you...intuitively! For instance:

- I should get up early in the morning.
- I should exercise more regularly.
- I should laugh more.
- I should think more compassionately of people.
- I should be more patient.
- I should...

You may have a hard time listing 5, or you may want to write 5 pages! Please limit yourself to only 5 items...for now.

Personally, I feel that 'should' is one of the most damaging words in our language. Every time we use the word 'should,' we are making ourselves or someone else wrong - either we were wrong, we are wrong, or we are going to be wrong.

Plus, we get clever with our 'shoulds,' by disguising them with other words. Maybe you are like me, substituting my 'shoulds' with 'must,' 'needs to' and 'ought to.' These are basically equivalent to 'should.' Being aware of how we get around saying 'should' is important to no longer saying 'should.'

Preferably, it would be wonderful to move away from 'shoulding' on ourselves, as if we are wrong. Instead, giving ourselves choice! How about this...how about changing every 'should' to a 'could'? The word 'could' gives us choice. In fact, with 'could' we are never wrong, for we can always learn from each choice, and we can then make another choice.

On a new sheet of paper (or use page 22), write: I COULD... Write the same 5 previous items from your 'shoulds' into 'coulds,' by basically replacing your 'shoulds' with 'coulds.' For instance:

- I could get up early in the morning.
- I could exercise more regularly.
- I could laugh more.
- I could think more compassionately of people.
- I could be more patient.
- I could...

Now review both lists and consider:

For each 'should,' ask yourself: which of these can I let go of?

For each 'could,' ask yourself: why haven't I?

What did you discover?

How does 'should' feel different than 'could'?

How can you release your 'shoulds'?

How can you live your 'coulds' more?

1. *You Deserve!*

One of the most challenging aspects of living in today's overwhelming time is the disconnect we experience from ourselves, and most importantly, the disconnect from valuing ourselves...just as we are! For many people this arises in various forms of undervaluing ourselves or forgetting our worth.

Each of us are worthy and do deserve to experience our greatest and highest good! It is Universal Law for each of us to experience our true selves in all our glory. Of course, this means we need to each value this for ourselves (in our own unique ways), and this step rests with our own sense of worthiness or deserve-ability.

What is YOUR 'deserve-ability'? What is your ability to see, value and receive your deservingness?

Consider some questions:

What meaning does the term 'deserving' have for you?

What words come to mind?

What emotions come to mind?

What memories come to mind?

What were the messages/beliefs about 'deserving' you learned as a child?

What was your experience of 'deserving' as a child?

When did you feel 'deserving' as a child?

What is your current experience of 'deserving'?

What do you feel you 'deserve' now?

What is standing in your way of 'deserving' more?

Imagine your true 'deserve-ability' at its fullest:

I love and approve of myself, just as I am. I do deserve. I deserve great goodness. Not 'just' some, not 'only' a bit...but ALL good! I recognize the beliefs of myself and others that were holding me back, keeping me in a rut, and feeding my overwhelm. Without judgment, I release and let go of any and all limitations that weighted me down previously. I value myself as worthy of my greatest and highest good. My refreshed thinking welcomes new experiences of deserving to me. I now claim that: I deserve life... I deserve love...I deserve joy and happiness...I deserve great health...I deserve to prosper in all areas of my life...I deserve to embrace my life purpose...I deserve to engage my gifts, sharing them with the world...I deserve freedom to be my true self...I deserve contentment, balance and peace...I deserve the abundance of ALL good...for which I graciously receive with my deepest gratitude.

Do you? Please know that living fully as you truly desire is your right – you do deserve! Your life reflects your sense of your own self-worth – it starts with YOU!

Shift Your 'Overwhelm' Beliefs

Taking into account the three boulders, it is time to decide – ready to shift from your rut, or not?

What beliefs about ‘overwhelm’ do you want to release?

What is keeping your ideal life at bay?

Could it be...

- a particular belief or criticism you have?
- a sense of elevated standards?
- the voice of ‘should’?
- a fear of missing your purpose?
- a fear of lost opportunity?
- a feeling of lack?
- a belief you are not good enough?

How do any of these beliefs benefit you?

If you let go of these beliefs, what will happen?

If you could change/release anything about your current ‘overwhelm’, what would it be?

What else would you change/release?

Now, think of three changes/choices you 'could' make this coming week. They may be small (subtle), medium (manageable) or big (sizably noticeable) changes. Focus on only three changes/choices – do not add more to your overwhelm! Write these three changes/choices down (possibly on several pieces of paper), and place the paper(s) somewhere you will see it/them regularly (i.e. daily):

1.

2.

3.

To inspire your focused intentions, consider freeing yourself with positive affirmations, such as:

“I let go of the busy-ness that does not serve me.”

“I release the 'shoulds' in my beliefs.”

“I celebrate my deservingness.”

“I chose my ideal life by releasing overwhelm.”

If these affirmations are too bold for where you are at in life right now, tweak them by adding: “I am willing to....” Do not bite off more than is do-able for you at any one time – be gentle and respectful to yourself.

Also, please consider that settling for a compromised life will not make you happy - rather it could lead to greater overwhelm, and even 'dis-ease.' To live your daily life to the fullest, with the greatest joy, involves taking steps toward

welcoming your ideal life, free of overwhelm. Feeling and living your ideal life in body, mind, heart and spirit has the power to vastly enhance your quality of life, and your ability to support other people.

If you truly **desire** to have your ideal life of balance, clarity and purpose, if you **believe** that it is possible for you to live your greatest and highest good, and if you are willing to **accept** joy, happiness and fulfillment, then you can and will realize your ideal life, as you value it to be. Breathe in your power of choices...of co-creation...of change.

Of course, at times difficulties with 'overwhelm' can continue, or even increase. This may be a message to you that a deeper level of healing is needed. You may benefit from more support, for which I strongly suggest you find the right coach or counselor for you. You are worth the investment – YOU deserve to be free of overwhelm!

Shoulds...No More! Exercise Tool:

I Should...	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.
I Could...	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.

Rock Your Overwhelm:

- Are you overwhelmed with living a hectic full-on life?
- Do you feel you are living other people's expectations?
- What would it be like to live your life fully with clarity, balance and freedom?

As overwhelm becomes more common in our lives, it consumes how people live. But how is this really living? With people increasingly expected to carry a huge weight of responsibility and pressure in various areas of their lives, the toll of overwhelm wreaks havoc in relationship breakdowns, challenging family dynamic, unsatisfying careers, financial stress, and/or failing health.

Utilizing her proven 7-step Rock your Overwhelm process, Whitney supportively guides you to own your overwhelm, release it, and then move forward with clarity, purpose and self-trust. Your life improves by applying the practical tools and empowering techniques to repeatedly, easefully and successfully shift out of overwhelm. Find your focus, passion and inner wisdom to ignite your vibrant, balanced and purpose-filled life. Now that's freedom!

Living her values of curiosity, gratitude, presence and humour, Whitney passionately and sassily empowers people to get out of their own way by releasing their overwhelm 'boulders', clarifying their life purpose, embracing their vision, and listening to, trusting and living by their inner wisdom. In doing so, she aims to positively awaken the world by inspiring and facilitating people to consciously create their ideal lives based on inner wisdom. You can too!

About Whitney:

Whitney transforms overwhelm! Whitney McMillan, BSW, MSW, HYLTC, RP-CRA, is a multi-passionate life coach, workshop facilitator, motivational speaker, business coach, intuitive consultant, and author. As the Overwhelm Freedom Coach, she supportively guides you to the delicious, fear-free, authentic purpose-path you crave.

During her 20 years in social work, Whitney focused on supporting people, often at the expense of her own personal and professional overwhelm, directly experiencing the stress of divorce, generational family addiction, cancer, and career dissatisfaction. Whitney merges highly effective coaching techniques and proven life strategies with her natural intuitive abilities and her sassy personality, offering engaging workshops, content-rich online programs, and liberating one-to-one sessions.

Walking-her-talk of curiosity, gratitude, presence, and humour, Whitney supportively empowers you to get out of your own way by releasing overwhelm boulders, and embracing greater clarity, balance and freedom. Consciously create your bold, brilliant, shining life with awakened inner wisdom, self-trust, and courage, as you

surrender struggle and find flow in your life. It's time to turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones – Live Overwhelm Freedom!

Whitney's first best-selling book, *Rock Your Overwhelm: Live in Clarity, Balance and Freedom* was released in November 2011. It was an instant success reaching #1 in Self-Help, Transformation, Health/Mind/Body, Spirituality AND New Age. As well, it became the #3 Best Seller of ALL books in Canada on Amazon.

I welcome hearing from you to discuss how I may support you to Rock Your Overwhelm to live a fabulously authentic kick-butt life!

Looking forward to our adventure together!

Cheers...

Whitney

*Rock Your Overwhelm Author, Coach & Facilitator
Heal Your Life Coach & Workshop Facilitator
Inner Wisdom Mentor
Reiki - Energy Practitioner*

Rock Your Overwhelm: Live in Clarity, Balance and Freedom available via:

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