

When Overwhelm is on the Rise

Overwhelm, like any other uncomfortable feeling, can be either productive or unproductive. It is unproductive when we notice the feeling but don't gain insight from it. Instead we just get "all lathered up" and overwhelmed that we're overwhelmed. It is more productive when we heed the message it is carrying: **that some kind of adjustment is needed.**

If the purpose of overwhelm is to deliver information, then what is the message and what do you do with it? To gain insight into what your feeling of overwhelm is trying to tell you, answer the following 10 questions.

| <p style="text-align: center;">For each question below, answer with:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, this is often true for me. • Sometimes this is true for me. • No, this is not often true for me. |
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| 1. When I feel overwhelmed I say negative things to myself. | |
| 2. When I feel overwhelmed my mind feels so cluttered that I can't seem to focus. I feel like I'm all over the place and easily distracted. | |
| 3. My typical reaction to stress is to speed things up and pack more into my schedule. As the saying goes, if you want something done, give it to a busy person. | |
| 4. I often underestimate how long it takes to get something done. | |
| 5. In the morning, I have a reasonable grip on the day's priorities. Then something comes up and the best laid plans go up in smoke. | |
| 6. Sometimes I stare at my "to do" list, mesmerized. Everything is important and I don't know where to begin. | |
| 7. I have so many things going (responsibilities, ideas, projects) it's hard to keep track of them all. | |
| 8. I often misplace important information. I am frequently late and sometimes forget I had an appointment scheduled. | |
| 9. I find it difficult to say no. | |
| 10. I often feel that my boss, co-worker, client, friend, or family member doesn't really understand how busy I am. | |

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Where did you answer “yes” or “sometimes”? Each question correlates with a specific area:

- Questions 1-2: Mindset
- Questions 3-4: Goal-setting and daily planning process
- Questions 5-6: Making decisions
- Questions 7-8: Organizational style
- Questions 9-10: Communication style

Now, choose the area(s) you want to strengthen:

What is one step you will take today?