

3 Steps to Break the Cycle of Overwhelm

Hi, I'm Suzy and I'm a recovered busyness addict.

Years ago, after selling my brick-and-mortar business, I embarked on an intentional year-long sabbatical - "My Year of No."

After 40+ years of "working," waking up in the morning with nowhere to go and nothing "to do" was blissful... until it wasn't anymore.

You see, I had made an agreement with myself to not "do." To no longer judge my day by accomplishment. To discover what my natural rhythm was. To learn what was really driving my busyness habits.



Without distraction and the false motivation of caffeine, I often felt like a loser for not working hard. I bumped up against myself, my beliefs, my socially conditioned training of "do it all for everyone" - all day long! Without "busyness" to avoid myself, I fell in and out of doom and gloom.

Slowly I began to shift... clarity replaced mental chaos - colors became brighter, conversations became richer, and an idea bloomed. I thought, "I can't be the only one who has struggled with overwhelm."

So I hired a firm to guide me in qualitative research and began interviewing busy women from around the world. *The following are a few of the common traits they all shared (which ones are familiar to you?)*

The women I interviewed were:

- Tired (if not downright exhausted) and finding it increasingly difficult to get going in the morning.
- Addicted to adrenaline... from winding themselves up tight and from caffeine.
- Beginning to isolate themselves socially - too tired to go anywhere.
- Saying "yes" to volunteer requests not because they wanted to, but because they felt obligated.
- Gaining weight, were experiencing digestive issues and even skin problems.
- Easily pushed to the emotional edge and felt anxious most of the time.
- Having difficulty sleeping and waking up at 3:00AM was common.
- Feeling resentful of other people who were not doing as much as they were.
- Recognized that life held many good moments, but the underlying feeling was of being stuck in a rut.
- Stuck in the loop of "I'm so busy", and used this phrase with others often.

There's a better way...

Your 3-Steps to Break the Cycle of Overwhelm!

The steps I share here began during a very overwhelming, stressful period - guiding my business through the recession.

Shared in the spirit of YES, you can do this!

Step 1: TAKE TEN - Rewire your mind to relax.

*The truth is, years of being busy has literally wired your brain (and your parasympathetic nervous system) to always be "on". **There is no (healthy) "on", without "off".***

Here's how: Set your timer (if using your phone, put it in airplane mode). Take three deep breaths - *in through the nose, out through the mouth*. Thoughts will float in, but I liken this to cloud watching. Instead of fixating on the thought, let it pass through.

Most important – no self judgement. If ten minutes is too much, start with try 5-minutes. *The key is daily practice. Within two weeks my "ten" quadrupled to forty minutes. It became balm for my stressed soul.*

TIP:

Keep a pad & pen near by. If a thought floats in that you're having a difficult time releasing - write them down and then go back to your breathing & relaxing.

Step 2: Ask yourself, "How can I do this differently?"

I love this question! A few years back, "How can I do this differently" became my theme for an entire year - this question is powerful. **A few years back, "How can I do this differently" became my theme for an entire year - this question is powerful.**

You possess an inner guidance system that has likely been numbed out with a busy lifestyle that perpetuates monkey-mind and overwhelm.

Try this: Next time you're frustrated, angry, sad, fed up, feeling overwhelmed, or about to 'lose it,' take a deep breath in and a slow releasing breath out, and ask yourself, "*how can I do this differently?*"

This question helps you press the pause button. It takes you out of a reactive state of mind and helps you see things from different angles and perspectives.

TIP:

Depending on the situation, try these versions of this question:
How can I do/feel/see this differently?

SOURCE: ACIM (A Course in Miracles) "Above all else I want to see things differently." Lesson 28

Step 3: “Everything after ‘I should’ is a lie.” -Athena Burke

This concept was a game changer for me.

Until I began noticing how often I habitually responded to my "I should's", I didn't realize how rare it was for me to be following my "wants and desires."

How about you?

***NOTE:** Women especially are socially trained to care for others, which is why caring for yourself may feel foreign and uncomfortable.

Remember this: The more you nourish your soul, the more you have for others - but not from a place of resentment and depletion - from a place of health and happiness. *By the way, this is called "Sacred Selfishness".*

TIP:

Begin a mindfulness practice,- focus attention on your "I should's" and ask yourself daily, "how Can I Do This Differently?"



I truly walked my talk—right into a new chapter as an abstract artist! While I'm no longer coaching, I'm happy to recommend a few amazing coaches I know personally. Feel free to visit www.suzycarroll.com to learn more!

TO VIEW ARTWORK: www.suzycarroll.com



“Stepping out of the busyness, stopping our endless pursuit of getting somewhere else, is perhaps the most beautiful offering we can make to our spirit”.

~Tara Brach