



Focus vs. Overwhelm
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It's easy to slip from a keen focus to a state of overwhelm any time of year, and especially during the Holidays.

The coming weeks present a trifecta of overwhelm opportunities to you: of year-end goals; added family and social responsibilities; and reflecting upon the state of the world this past year.

Overwhelm can have many faces, both positive and negative, whereas focus simply has one.

Overwhelm's positive side appears when your heart expands at the site of a stunning sunrise or the first site of your newborn infant. Positive emotions flow through your mind, heard and body.

More commonly, overwhelm can be debilitating. Motivation, creativity and productivity can seem impossible to attain.

Debilitating overwhelm looks like this: escalating to-do lists; managing multiple projects and deadlines; a boss that only sees your flaws; a mistake you made in haste that plagues you. Ugh!

Each of you reading this article has your own story of both positive and negative overwhelm and the lingering feelings that each produces.

Positive overwhelm, while powerful, is short lived. Negative overwhelm can take over your life both inside and outside of work.

As stated above, 'focus' has only one purpose—to keep you moving forward in the direction of your desired outcome. Focus keeps you in this very moment, certain of what's most important.

How do you know when you're in overwhelm and not burnout? How can you switch from this overwhelmed debilitating state to pure and simple focus?

Here are my Top '7' Tips for you to sail through the end of 2017 feeling focused and accomplished.

Stop, breathe, hit reset. Realize signs of overwhelm as in impatience; racing jumbled thoughts that lead nowhere; irrational assumptions; lack of focus and productivity. Simply step away, take a breath and realize that what you're doing is not working for you.

Tidy up. It's impossible to focus with a messy desk, car, home. Recharge through removing anything in your vision that disrupts your focus.

Get organized. Write your tasks, timelines, and deadlines down. This single task will bring clarity to the muddled mess churning in your mind. What makes sense in your mind does not on paper. Stop churning, start typing or writing.

Self-Respect vs. Self-Expectations. Are you too hard on yourself, expecting the impossible? A common complaint I hear from clients is not feeling respected for their contributions. Yet, my question back to these hard pushing executives is this: “Do your self-expectations reflect self-respect or self-sabotage?” Respect yourself. Set your expectations accordingly.

Identify what truly matters. We all worry about things that are not important. This overwhelms our mind and blocks focus upon what is truly important. What five things are most important to you in life? What five things most overwhelm your thinking? Do these lists match? If not, what areas of overwhelm need to be eliminated?

Focus on the here and now. Ask yourself often throughout the day, “What’s important now?” Your stress and blood pressure build as you think about everything that you need to accomplish tomorrow or next week. Fears build about not getting it all done, disappointing others. These fears serve no purpose. What will serve you is keen focus on the task at hand.

Identify time zappers. Checking email, texts and social media too often. Online shopping and games. These are things you may do to escape stress and worry for a few moments, yet they create more. The stricter you are with your time, the less overwhelm in your day. Other time zappers that you have complete control over are meetings or phone calls that linger too long, people stopping in your office for a ‘quick question.’ Set time limits.

Bonus tip:

Top ‘6’. Before you leave your pace of work today and every day, make a list of the top ‘6’ items you’ll absolutely accomplish the next day. When you come in the next morning, your list is waiting for you you’re off and running. Your day begins focused, confidently and without hesitation. This prevents other less important tasks from taking center stage.

To prevent overwhelming you, please select only one or maximum two of these tips to put into practice, starting today.

I challenge you to make a difference in your own life in creating greater focus.

Then look around at others who may not realize that they’re in overwhelm. They may complain more than necessary or think they’re burned out when in fact they are overwhelmed. Make a difference in their lives by offering a few tips.

Be the leader you know you can be...that those around you crave you to be!

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