

**The Overcome
Overwhelm
Toolkit**

Keeping It Simple



MaryAnn D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.

Toolkit Introduction

“Stop – I want out!” Have you ever had this thought?

If your fast paced crazy-busy life is creating overwhelm, congratulations on deciding to do something about it. Overcoming overwhelm is possible! In the toolkit you’ll find 3 easy steps and helpful tips that give you the go-ahead to breathe easier, feel more relaxed and BE in charge of your life. There’s also a quick assessment tool that addresses a major overwhelm contributor – clutter. You’ll see why this is important in a moment.

Did you know . . . studies have shown that office workers (*and I’m guessing most people*) spend an hour a day looking for things? WOW . . . can you use an “extra” 5 hours each workweek? I know I can. The hours add up quickly! Imagine being able to reclaim 6.5 weeks of “free” time over the course of a year. Now that’s something to get excited about!

Use the toolkit and let me know your results. Go [here](#) to send me an email. I would love to hear your feedback. Who knows, by applying the helpful tips . . . you may end up reclaiming several weeks of “lost” time and using the extra time to enjoy life. Here’s to your success!



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Overcome Overwhelm

Being in overwhelm means being out of your groove. If you were to observe overwhelm from above – it would look like a “broken” vinyl record that keeps skipping as it goes round and round the turntable . . . emitting a strange noise. In our fast paced society, we’re constantly bombarded with information. Hurry up; read this; do that; come over here; quick--create this; finish this first; pick this up; etc. . . . “excess” information has a way of taking on a life of its own. Face it, overwhelm is an energy zapper! The sensory overload in our physical, emotional, and mental bodies can quickly stop us in our tracks. The most debilitating part of overwhelm is constriction of creative juice and internal drive. It’s thinking about all the things that need to be accomplished and wondering how in the world you’re going to pull it off. A key to overcoming overwhelm is to STOP and acknowledge that we’re over the top. This acknowledgement immediately sends signals to the internal body to relieve stress. Now it’s time to turn that mental Ferris wheel and emotional roller coaster into something that is manageable, more productive, and much easier on your overall wellbeing. Are you ready to go for it?

Start with the Basics . . .



Step 1: Remember to Breathe

One of the quickest and easiest ways to overcome overwhelm is to STOP whatever you're doing and breathe consciously. You're doing it all your life (*breathing, that is*) . . . now, put more awareness to it. Conscious breathing is about paying attention to the breath. Simply slowly inhale through the nose, hold for about 3 seconds, exhale slowly through the mouth and feel your breath flow through your entire body -- all the way to your toes. Do this at least three times. Conscious breathing quiets the mind, relaxes the body, and disengages the emotions. When the mind is relaxed, it's more expansive and allows clarity (*as well as creativity*) to become engaged. The expression "*stop and smell the roses*" is a wonderful reminder to slow down and breathe in - the essence of life.



Step 2: Ground It In

Grounding is rooted in stability. Now that you've mastered breathing, you're ready to ground and be present to whatever is happening in the moment. Think of a tree, the roots are implanted in the earth and even during a storm – the tree has the ability to move, bend, and sway while remaining firmly planted in the ground. To ground yourself, *stand tall – picture your head touching the sky, breathe consciously through your body and feel your feet touching the earth. Be present. Sense your connection to the earth.* Continue to ground for at least three minutes. *(HINT: This is a great centering technique that you can use while sitting at your desk or use it to relax at the end of the day.)*

You may already be experiencing a sense of peace. Grounding provides greater clarity, opens you up to “*bigger picture*” thinking, and allows you to make quicker decisions.



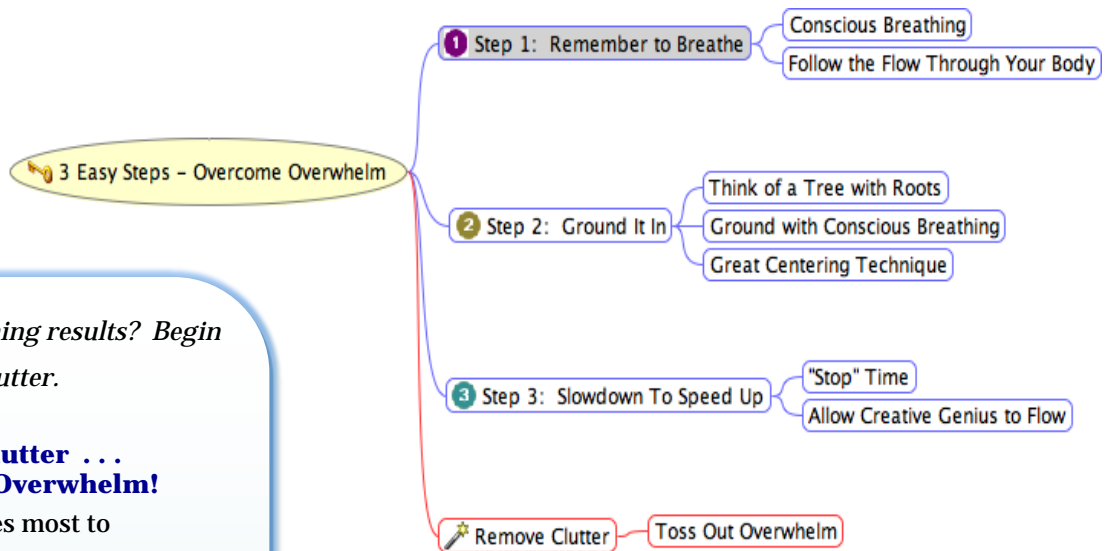
Step 3: **Slowdown** to **Speed Up**

Slowing down to speed up may sound counter-intuitive. Yet, it works! It's like having your own magic button that stops time in order for you to catch-up, re-organize and re-gain focus on what's important. The action steps seem to fall into place once you slow down.

Allow your creative genius to flow (*YES, you have it*) and assist you in identifying priorities and creating an action plan. Get out paper, colored pens and highlighters to create a list or a mind map. It's important to get everything out of your mind, off tiny scraps of paper and onto one sheet. Once you've created your list of "projects," outline the steps and identify items that need to be addressed immediately (*add completion dates & use color codes to prioritize*). You're almost there. Here's an important practice: tune into what you want the outcome to look and feel like. In your mind, picture everything being completed with ease. (*That's how you want it, right?*) Move forward confidently knowing you've got a plan that will take you to the finish line!

The Overcome Overwhelm Mind Map

(I often use [Discover FreeMind](#) a simple easy to use mind mapping software.)



Looking for far reaching results? Begin by clearing out the clutter.

Clean-up Clutter . . . and Toss Out Overwhelm!

Often what contributes most to overwhelm is the clutter we ALLOW to exist in our lives. By simply becoming more aware of what “clutters” exist we can **take steps to remove it** and clear out the feeling of overwhelm at the same time! A two for one!

Directions: Take 3 minutes to identify the clutter that exists in each of the following areas: Physical, Schedule, Emotional, Money, Making Decisions (*see assessment tool on the next page*). Examples are provided to help create a clear vision for you. Make note of the clutter in the spaces provided ... and then take ACTION to remove the clutter and enjoy the feeling of the overwhelm lifting!



Quick Assessment: Identify Clutter Spots Clean-up clutter and toss out overwhelm!

PHYSICAL

(example: desks, email, bookshelf)

SCHEDULE

(example: interruptions, other's priorities)

EMOTIONAL

(example: difficult relationships, boundaries)

MONEY

(example: unpaid/unopened bills delinquencies)

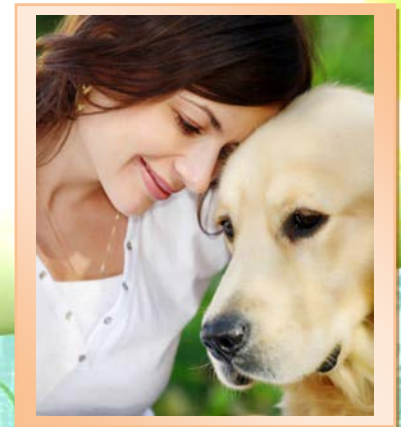
MAKING DECISIONS

(example: not trusting instincts, require more information)

15 Ways to Quickly Shift Your Energy and Ease Overwhelm

By: MaryAnn D'Ambrosio, MBA, PhD

1. Listen to a favorite song or CD
2. Cross one thing off your to do list (without doing it) and shout WooHoo!
3. Go outside and take a walk
4. Write down 3 things you're grateful for
5. Crisscross and wave your hands in front of your body (really works)
6. Read an inspirational passage or poem
7. Watch a funny video or your favorite comedy show
8. Get silly – make funny faces in the mirror
9. Put on some music and dance
10. Play with your pet
11. Attend a Zumba class
12. Go for a bike ride
13. Tap your feet and create a rhythm (feeling adventurous – add your hands)
14. Doodle away using colored pencils or pens
15. Lighten-up . . . smile . . . be playful . . . have some fun!



BONUS Tip:
Physical movement shifts energy quickly!