



3 STEP PROCESS

CONQUER OVERWHELM



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking steps to conquer your feelings of overwhelm.

In this short guide, you'll discover...

- The #1 cause of overwhelm
- 3 types of thoughts you need to avoid
- 1 simple strategy you can use consistently to restore feelings of calm and clarity

Let's get started!



STEP #1: RECOGNIZE WHAT CAUSES OVERWHELM

Believe it or not, tons of research shows that overwhelm isn't caused by your circumstances.

Things like work pressures, parenting demands, church obligations, household duties, and social calendars don't cause overwhelm. Instead, overwhelm is caused by your thoughts.

That's right! Overwhelm is caused by your thoughts about your circumstances.

In particular, three types of thoughts cause overwhelm: should, perfectionistic, and people pleasing thoughts.

In Step #2, I describe each of these thoughts in more detail.



STEP #2: IDENTIFY WHICH TYPE OF THOUGHT IS CAUSING TROUBLE

Many types of thoughts cause feelings of overwhelm.

In this guide, I'll highlight 3 types of troublesome thoughts:

- Should thoughts
- Perfectionistic thoughts
- People pleasing thoughts

Read on to discover more about each type of thought.

SHOULD THOUGHTS

Examples include:

"I should be able to balance everything on my schedule right now."

"I should wake up early because that's what productive people do."

"I should go to the gym a minimum of 5 days a week."

This kind of thinking implies that things have to be done in a certain way to get it 100% right.

These thoughts also encourage you to judge yourself harshly because, obviously, everyone else can do it the right way, so why can't you?

List the should thoughts that are causing your feelings of overwhelm:



Client Success Story: When I started working with Amanda, she was a talented young therapist brimming with ambition and eager to make a difference in the lives of the families she served. But stress and feelings of overwhelm just kept holding her back. She felt confused, unsure, and pressured. She applied this process to discover and clear the should thoughts that were keeping her stuck. Today, she's living her dream, spearheading her own innovative counseling program that's fully booked and even has a waiting list. She's more confident and self-assured than ever before. She has more time and energy for her husband and her 3 children. She even has time to vacation to her favorite destinations!

PERFECTIONISTIC THOUGHTS

Examples include:

"Barbara's working full-time and she's taking care of her parents. She's doing it all perfectly. Why can't I do it perfectly?"

"I don't know how to do it. I'm afraid I'll mess it up. I'll never get it right."

"If I can't do it perfectly, then why bother!"

This kind of thinking implies that you'll never be good enough. That your efforts will end in the worst kind of failure. That you need to keep preparing before you can get started, which leads to procrastination.

List the perfectionistic thoughts that are causing your feelings of overwhelm:



Client Success Story: Brenna is a cancer biologist at a high-ranking university. When I started working with Brenna, she was struggling to balance the demands associated with running her research program and raising her 4-year-old daughter. As a single mom, she was feeling overwhelmed, irritable, and impatient. She applied the process and identified the perfectionistic standards she was unintentionally setting for herself and her daughter. She was able to replace these thoughts with more realistic expectations. These changes lowered her stress levels and strengthen her connection with her daughter. Today, she's making progress toward her career goals and feeling more relaxed and patient when interacting with her daughter.

PEOPLE PLEASING THOUGHTS

Examples include:

"I can't say no to my coworkers because then they'll think I'm not a team player."

"I don't want to go to the party but I'm afraid they'll get mad at me if I don't go."

"I don't have time to do everything for my kids but if I don't do everything for them, then they'll think I'm selfish."

This kind of thinking implies that you have to do everything for everyone!

List the people pleasing thoughts that are causing your feelings of overwhelm:



Client Success Story: When I started working with Kerry, she was a mid-level professional working at a non-profit. She was plagued by self-doubt, unhappy at work, and struggling to find a path forward in her career. She applied the process and discovered how much her goals were based on the values and aspirations of authority figures in her life. Once she realized this, she was able to tap into her own dreams and values. With this newfound clarity, she decided to quit her job and start graduate school, where she's thriving. Today, she's meeting lots of new people, she's engaging in rewarding activities, and she's even dating. She's very enthusiastic about her future prospects.



STEP #3: REPLACE TROUBLESOME THOUGHTS WITH HELPFUL THOUGHTS

In this step, take decisive action to eliminate troublesome thoughts by replacing them with helpful thoughts. Often we can't imagine thinking any other thoughts, even though hundreds of different thought-forms exist in the world. Here are a few straightforward examples:

Should Thoughts:

Original: "As an adult, I should be able to fly without any fear or nervousness."

Revised: "I'm working to overcome my fear of flying. This will take time. Today, I accept myself where I am in the process."

Perfectionistic Thoughts:

Original: "If I can't do it perfectly, then it's not worth doing."

Revised: "It's about *progress*, not perfection!"

People Pleasing Thoughts:

Original: "I need to say yes to everyone and everything."

Revised: "I deserve to take care of myself, too! I can say yes and I can say no."



TO RECAP...

When you feel overwhelmed, you can restore feelings of calm and clarity by following this simple 3 step process:

1. Remember it's not your circumstances that cause feelings of overwhelm, it's your thoughts.
2. Look for should, perfectionist, and people pleasing thoughts.
3. Take decisive action to replace the thought(s) causing your overwhelm.

This 3-step process can be mastered! You simply need to practice!

However, unlike other skills, identifying and replacing thoughts can be challenging because your thoughts are often automatic and imperceptible.

That's why it's helpful to pay attention to how you feel. When you feel overwhelmed, stop and look for the thought that came before the feeling. Then, change the thought, which will change your feelings.

NEXT STEPS

Identifying and replacing thoughts can be challenging! That's where a trained professional can make a difference. To discover how stress relief coaching can help you transform your response to stress and overwhelm, [email me](#) or [grab a spot on my calendar](#). We'll talk about your goals and find a solution that's right for you. The 20-minute consultation is free with no strings attached.

ABOUT DR. LESLIE BOSCH



Leslie Bosch, PhD, is a Developmental Psychologist and National Board Certified Health and Wellness Coach. Dr. Bosch received her training as an Integrative Wellness Coach from the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine.

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