

The Extreme Overwhelm Solution

How to Get Through Life's Greatest Challenges,
So You Can Experience Peace, Happiness and Love

An Introductory e-Book

by Susan Paige Osborn

Life's greatest challenges can throw you for a loop. It could be the multiple demands of motherhood combined with a career. It could be the sudden loss of a job, a divorce, or even death. Perhaps you are part of the sandwiched generation, moving one generation out of the nest while helping to support the transition of aging parents. Perhaps you are physically challenged, living in a body that is like an old house, settled and creaking, or fighting a disease. There are always challenges. This is part of life. But how do you resist going down the drain with the bathwater when the plug is pulled? How do you move from the chaos of the wheels edge as they spin faster and faster on the speedway to the hub where there is reprieve from the centrifugal forces at work? If you want to move from a space of extreme overwhelm to experiencing the life you want, you can do so more quickly, with less pain, and even create more than you ever imagined, by developing a few key skills. And you will be gifted again and again as life reveals its natural capacity to heal and evolve.

You can consciously choose to move forward even as the challenges you face stop you in your tracks. I know, because the same skills I developed after losing a job, led me to the work I love. They further developed and served me again when my relationship of 23 years ended and I built a new life with the man of my dreams. They were ultimately tested a third time with my husbands sudden death three minutes into our one year anniversary. In even the most tragic of situations, I have been able to heal, and find life's wonder, with the gift of something more than I had previously known or understood. And you can too.

Change brings both challenge and opportunity. When we're in it, we may not even recognize the difference. But within even the most challenging circumstances there lies the seeds of transformation, the potential beginning for something that has the opportunity to surpass what was before. There is change that we create, and there is change that we respond to. When you create change, it can be exciting, empowering. But when change is imposed, you can become a slave to it or run away from it. Those reactions create a kind of suffering, one in which your spirit becomes buried. It is in

learning to make friends with change, and recognize you always have choice in responding to whatever comes your way that you can begin a powerful transformation.

Allow this mini e-book to serve you by introducing some ways you can begin to deal with overwhelm (Three Steps To Make Your Life Better Now), to help you with the frustration you may be experiencing with change (Using Your Mind to Enhance Connection, Balance and Vitality), to begin the process of creating the changes you desire (Creating a Canvas of Experiences). Congratulations on taking the time to consider how to support yourself in working through your time of challenge, whether now or in the future. You can continue the way you have been, with the same results if you wish. Or try something new, and allow yourself to co-create a new life experience.

How Do You Begin to Deal With Overwhelm?

Three Steps to Make Your Life Better Now

1. Develop Personal Space for Renewal and Reflection

When you create space for yourself for renewal and reflection, you set the stage for everything else that will happen in your life. Without these activities, you are destined to live your life in response to automatic programming, your subconscious mind and others desires. Renewal and reflection equate to the tilling of the soil, the space where nutrients are introduced that provide the conditions for growth. It is from this place that the farmer plans and plants the seeds for what will eventually become his cornucopia, life's harvest.

What is personal space?

Personal space is both an outer location, physical with specific conditions which gives rise to the creation of the second location, inner space. Personal space is a zone around you that you designate for your personal needs. Inner space is where true renewal takes place; it is where mind, body and spirit connect to energize, to tap into the unlimited renewal resources that exist beyond our bodies. From that connection to inner space, you are able to go back to your everyday world and create what you want. The remarkable thing about this inner resource of energy is its vast and limitless abundance. The key is learning to cultivate the conditions for accessing inner space and then connecting to that source.

What are the challenges of creating personal space?

- You need to “let go” of something to create the time and energy for renewal and reflection.

Your life is already full, busy with time and energy spent on activities underway. One of your first steps of conscious living will is to determine

what time and energy obligations you can walk away from, to gift yourself the life you are meant to live.

*Make a list of all the demand on your time and energy. What can you delegate to someone else? What can you just stop doing altogether? What is more important on your list than your life?

If you never learn to let go, you will never have space to grow.

- Others may feel threatened by your changes

When you change, things around you change. There are many people who will be concerned they won't get what they need from you if that happens. It could be a change that shifts responsibilities. It could be a change that someone sees as opening you to other possibilities, and they are afraid that in the process they will "lose" you. Or it may simply be that you making a change mean they naturally look to what changes they perhaps should make, and that prospect stops them dead in their tracks.

*Who are people who are likely to support you in your explorations? Who are likely to make change difficult? Make a list and start to take note of who is truly supportive of your becoming all you can be? Who do you want in your life?

Surround yourself with people you aspire to emulate or support your growth, including your need for personal space and time.

- You do not believe you deserve it, that you are being selfish.

You know you need renewal and reflection time, but your time will come... tomorrow. And tomorrow is always another day, not today. Is there an underlying theme in this response? Do you believe you deserve to have it? Do you think it is selfish? Does it scare you, the idea of looking in the mirror and seeing who you have become?

*Take stock in all the benefits that will come from taking time to renew and reflect. If you continually expend time and energy without these steps, you could be climbing up the ladder, a ladder that is not on the wall that will get you where you want to go. How does lack of renewal and reflection affect your stress level? What kind of example are you setting for those around you? What does your behavior say to those around you about your self-worth? Identify at least three to five benefits that are real to your situation. Take a deep breath with eyes closed and imagine how you will feel with the onset of renewal. Imagine looking at yourself and really liking what you see. Imagine looking at yourself and seeing the results of the conscious steps you took to renew and regenerate your life-energy. Imagine getting really clear on what you want.

You have a gift to give to the world and you alone hold the key to discovering what that is. Begin by honoring the immediate need to take care of yourself so that gift may be revealed to you.

Why is it important to perform the activities of renewal and reflection in personal space?

When you designate time and space for examining your unique needs, dreams and desires, you will get clarity on what you want, and what is blocking your path. It is a statement of you valuing yourself. You will be able to sharpen your arrow and point it towards the target you desire. You will know what is needed to grow yourself into the person you will become, a person you are curious about, who already loves you for where you are today, and can guide you on your unique path. There is no one else in this world that can give you the same insight that is afforded by knowing yourself and growing yourself. It is through this process that you will be able to look back on your life without the doubt of “what if...”, to know you’ve done what you could with what you had, and from which you will determine how you will give of yourself in this world to build towards the next. It requires skills in both growing, and the usually less developed skills of letting go, of learning to release those things that no longer serve you.

2. Nurture and Nourish Yourself

Nurturing yourself means doing those things that revitalize you, that allow you to live your life from a place of strength and vitality. While it sounds like this might be easy to do, it requires self-knowledge, something that will likely require revisiting over your lifetime. As you grow with new experiences and new skills, and release old habits, there will be some activities and practices that will continue to nurture you, and new ones you will find. Nurturing mind, body and spirit are all important.

Physically, it is important to provide for your body, both nutritionally and through exercise. While this sounds obvious, it doesn’t always mean we take the time to consciously look how we accomplish this. Clearly with the obesity issues and diet crazes in the United States, this is a major issue with our lifestyles. There are simple things we can do everyday to get started. Consider the following list and commit to improving your physical experience. Without this, your mind and spirit will be doubly difficult to nurture.

- Drink plenty of water everyday

- Get an annual physical and follow-up with recommendations made by your health care provider.
- Go through your kitchen with a nutritionist. De-clutter your kitchen, and restock your foods to enhance the eating patterns you want to reinforce.
- Set goals to achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Plan a weekly menu and grocery list consistent with your goals
- Eat fresh fruit and vegetables as much as possible, and reduce your intake of red-meats.
- Get outside everyday
- Integrate both cardio and strength training into your lifestyle. (This can begin with a simple ten minute walk twice a day.)
- Create a nurturing sleeping environment.
- Rest

As you begin to find time and space for renewal and reflection, and improve the physical care of your body you will naturally become curious as to how you engage your mind and spirit in ways that improve your life. You might reflect on the following:

How do you engage with your spirit? What keeps you connected to your vitality? Consider the following when looking to nurture your spirit

- Read inspiring literature
- Connect with a community of like-minded individuals
- Meditate
- Spend time in nature
- Paint, play music, garden, ski, travel.....
- Create YOUR list

How do you nurture your emotional and intellectual self? Do you:

- Surround yourself with those you aspire to emulate?
- Take a break?
- Do you allow for others to do what you do, so you are not indispensable?
- Stimulate yourself by exploring and expanding the ideas and people you interact with?
- Go to a play, hear live music, or go to a comedy club?

Nurturing yourself can entail many different types of activities, from feeding and protecting, to nourishing, to developing, training and education. These are only a few ideas to begin thinking about, but a good place to start. Instead of adding more to your plate, in overwhelm it is best to subtract. What is nurturing you, and what is draining you? Bring in more of what is nurturing and eliminate that which is draining.

Depending of what state of overwhelm you are in, the method of nurturing will vary. The need to protect and nourish can evolve to support and encouragement and ultimately to specific training and development. A seedling versus a small plant, versus a mature plant all require changing conditions, conditions which you are best equipped to create the optimal conditions for. First step, protect and nourish.

3. De-clutter Your Life

Clearing space physically is an excellent way to energize your life. By letting go of the things that no longer serve you, and the physical and emotional space they occupy, makes way for the new, the more nourishing, and satisfying. It is an excellent way to look at what is still holding you back, to bless and release those things that can serve others, and to make way for your creativity and imagination to blossom. It is a lightening and cleansing process.

It can begin with something as simple as cleaning out a bathroom drawer, throwing out the three half-bars of soap and unused lotion that has been sitting there for a year. It can expand to the closets, the kitchen, the garage, the yard. As you release the old, and begin to organize what is left, the process continues

to set the stage for what you will create next. Old dreams may begin to rise to the surface, dreams that you can begin to mold into visions, goals and action steps. But for now, just de-clutter, and enjoy the peace that comes with letting go. The rest will blossom as overwhelm subsides, and you clear out the old, to make way for a new way of being in the world, peaceful, flowing and in sync with your everyday world.

In my upcoming book, I share the skill sets that helped me work through both overwhelm and loss, again and again. I share my experiences as an example of how I have been able to move forward both in times of overwhelm and loss to find the wonders of life beyond what I could ever have imagined. These are steps that are detailed through both stories and through recommended exercises in the accompanying guidebook. These initial steps were critical to creating the changes that followed, and I still use them on a daily basis to help guide my life. Creating a safe space to step back and engage a new view is critical to learning how to heal and build trust in both the world around you and yourself again. It is a vital ingredient to create the conditions from which you will grow with this experience.

How Do You Overcome Frustration When Going Through Change?

Use Your Mind to Enhance Balance, Connection, and Vitality

Frustration is defined as a feeling of dissatisfaction, often accompanied by anxiety, resulting from unfulfilled needs or unresolved problems. The experience of frustration can become a gift if it is addressed and becomes a learning tool for you. The feeling itself might be induced by the feeling of a lack of control, particularly when change is imposed. The mere process of working with any frustration, or other negative emotions, can be explored with the idea that there is another way to view things, a way that will open up other possibilities that once followed can be refined, expanded and used in future situations to work through change more quickly and in a more productive manner. If you want to relieve the pain you are going through, this introduction to using your most vital resource, your mind, can begin to assist you in restoring and strengthening a sense of balance, connection and vitality to your life.

- Challenge Your Beliefs about Change-Imagine that change is always happening on multiple levels at once (as in nature, as in your physical being). When you are a beginner, you expect that you will be uncomfortable with change. You do not expect to have mastered what you are just learning to work with. If you are having trouble working with change that is imposed upon you, why not adopt the same mindset. There is something here to learn from. You may not be able to control the change that is being imposed, but you always have choice in how you respond to it. What you may want to develop is a skill set for recognizing the opportunities that surround you. You may not have recognized ingrained patterns

from past responses to situations that might be surfacing. You may not see a filter you have put on the situation. You may not be able to view the statue you are facing from 45, 90, 180, 270 degrees from its center, where a whole new view of what exists might be revealed, views that have nothing to do with what you are able to recognize from your standpoint. You may not have the resources to understand a situation, but you can still send love to it.

- **Connect with the Moment, Connect with Your Breath.** So much of what you may be experiencing is the result of not being present that the most immediate way to filter through overwhelm is to connect to your body by focusing on your breath. You can do this anytime, anywhere, and preferable without other distraction, even if that means going into a bathroom stall. When you recognize your body is taking care of you and you appreciate just being still, the pull from other distraction, anxieties, fears, old stories, subside. This same technique is also used when beginning meditation. Meditation simply means being present, wholly and completely. While there are many types of methods of meditation to explore what is filling your “present” and how to become more and more open to it can begin with the simple act of focusing on your breath. Your body carries so much information in it that you may not be paying attention to. When we don’t pay attention to our bodies signals, what they are trying to tell us, we run the risk of abusing them, and wearing them down before their time. Commit to connecting with your body signals and caring for it in a loving and compassionate way.
- **Commit to Knowing Yourself in a New Way.** You have within you an incredible untapped future. What you have experienced to date has brought you to where you are now. Pause for a moment and consider your life up until now, where you have been and how you have gotten there. Now you have the option of optimizing your conditions for creating what you want next in your life. Growing yourself, and seeing who and what you are able of becoming is a wondrous process.
 1. Begin by making a list of everything you are grateful for right now. Everything. Write down 10 things, stop and review the list. Write down 40 more things. Stop and review the list. Write down 50 more. Stop and review the list. Write a list every night before you go to bed about what you are grateful for that day.
 2. Commit to optimizing your future by letting go of victimhood, cultivating forgiveness, and developing compassion for yourself. You can release judgment, blame and other energy-draining actions by focusing on your positive development as reflected in your everyday thoughts, words and actions.
 3. Commit to becoming a life-long learner, and someone who is willing to live and let learn. This willingness to remain open to receiving the new will become a vehicle for the world you wish to embrace, to enter into your life-stream. Share these experiences with those who wish to learn from yours, and allow those who are going to learn another way to follow their own path. This is not something that is an overwhelming action in itself. It is simply done one day at a time, through a

little reflection, with compassion, and followed by conscious action. When you are quiet and ask yourself what is the best way to support my evolution, what do you hear in response? Follow the leads and see what you learn. There are not wrong ways to learn. Some are just easier ways than others.

How Do I Find What I Need To Change?

Create a Canvas of Experiences

The good news is, the bigger the challenge you are facing, the cleaner the canvas is likely to be where you can ultimately create the new. But whether you are painting over one portion of your life, or starting fresh, you get to decide what to create. This can be difficult to accomplish during times of extreme overwhelm, and is worth taking the time to consider your options, do some exploring, and take the time to learn to trust yourself and the world around you again. Challenging times can be the precursor to incredibly creative and positive life-changing experiences.

If you are experiencing a catastrophic change, it is important to conduct triage. By that I mean, if there is a change in marital status, or income, it is important to get an immediate handle on what your situation and options might be. Death, divorce and job loss are all important times to ensure you have the advice of professionals, whether it be accountants, estate lawyers, divorce lawyers, financial planners, and both insurance and real estate agents. Ideally you should have relationships with all of these types of professionals before there is a serious problem, so that you are already protected before such an event occurs. Beyond these professionals you may want to seek the advice of therapists and coaches, depending on the issues you are facing. If you don't already have these relationships, it may be important to develop them. It will still be critical to understand where things stand and are likely to lead so that you can create a plan to eliminate the stress of financial and lifestyle changes that might be coming.

As you get to know yourself in new ways, you will find the "would of, should of, could of" thoughts a good place to begin to consider letting go of actions that are prefaced by these words. If you are using the words "I can't" stop and think about it. Is it really true that you "can't" try some of the ideas you've read so far, or are you making a conscious choice not to, and what is so compelling about that reason, is it truly serving you? There are many ways to begin to consider what needs to change in your life. Here are a few ideas about how to go about beginning that process.

On a series of post it notes, write down everything that you spend time and energy on. Use a different piece of paper for each item. Begin to arrange the pieces of paper into three piles. One represents that given an option, you would still want to do it. Create a second grouping that includes items you would definitely NOT like to be putting time and energy and/or financial resources into. Allow a third group to emerge that you are unsure about. Leave these notes on a wall, or someplace you can see them. Over a few days, rearrange the groups as you feel inclined to. As you get clearer on your energetic response to these activities let yourself go to sleep with the idea you will wake

up in the morning with some strategies that will allow you to release the items you truly do not want to be performing anymore. You can work with the middle group in many ways, working with your mind to allow you to experience those actions in a way that is less offensive, a skill that will likely serve you in the future. You can begin to work with and trust your intuition, as you sort through what is consuming your time, energy and financial resources so that you can make way to bring what you want into your life.

When you are quiet, whether meditating, or simply sitting in nature, or some other form of solitude, are there recurring issues that continue to occupy your thoughts? Are these life-enhancing recurring items or life-diminishing? Do these same thoughts preoccupy you when you are not quiet, but serve to constantly distract you? You could consider working with these as a way of creating skills for transforming future conditions that do not serve you. These can become your learning tools, even if they weren't invited by you into your life.

Consider this; you are a being, a human being. You have a body, a mind and a spirit, all of which must be fed. The balance, connection and vitality of your life are a reflection of the health of this multidimensionality. If you search inside yourself you will begin to become aware of the needs that are unique to you and your situation to move you into the person you will become next. As you release the things that are blocking your view, and begin to find that which you are drawn towards, that which you will stretch into, that growth will naturally occur. Like the seed that finds it's way into the crack of a rock and flourishes in spite of harsh conditions, tundra or cactus that grow in barren environments, slowly over hundreds of years, or an oak, there are conditions that if fed, will maximize a person growing into their life purpose. If you are here, you have one. Challenging conditions can be the mechanism that allows for a realignment with that purpose, or an unfolding of another way to move forward, on a newer path. Take the time to find the quiet space within, to know yourself in new ways. Clear the way, with compassion for yourself, and you will bloom year after year. Overwhelm can become the gift that gives you new life.

(For more information go to www.empoweredforlife.net or contact susan@empoweredforlife.net, 303-284-1764 to see how she can further support you.)