

EPISODE 9: HOW TO MANAGE OVERWHELM AND BURNOUT – THE DOS

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Hello everyone. On today's episode we're going to talk about feeling overwhelmed and burnt out. And I know that doesn't sound fun, but I'll try to make it as fun as possible, I promise, and exactly what to do and what not to do to help yourself feel better. You know, we focus on thriving here and you cannot have a five star marriage if you are exhausted. So we're going to talk about that in depth. There are probably a thousand different things that you can do, but for today we're going to focus on the six dos and then the next episode we're gonna cover the five do not dos. As when I started writing this all up to share with all of you, it really became this ginormous mountain of notes and I thought it's really better if we break it up into two episodes so you have the time to listen and think and digest and implement what we're talking about today.

At the time that I started recording this and then I started writing up the notes. We just had a lot of breaking news about the Corona virus and how it really has impacted the entire planet. And as I mentioned, all of these dos in relation to your overall life, into your marriage, I really invite you to think about whatever's on your plate this week, next week, next month, and apply each of these to whatever you need to deal with right now. There's a lot of what I call emotional intensity. So high emotions or strong emotions or emotions that feel intense right now as we all decide how to deal with some things that have just never happened quite this way before. The whole country's shutting down and really adapting to some challenging circumstances and staying strong and centered and loving and grounded in the middle of the midst of all of these things.

So listen to this episode. Start here and if you want more support, join us in The Better Marriage Club on Facebook. I'll put the direct link in the show notes. It's an amazing community of women that I am so proud and honored to lead. So join us there if you're craving a safe space to share whatever's happening for you right now, whether it's in your marriage, whether it's dealing with





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this virus that's affecting us in so many different ways. We are here to support you. I am here to support you. So before we dive into how to think about and manage overwhelm differently, I have an exciting book update for you. Now I know some of you listening to me love to read books. Some of you listening to me have a book dream inside of you, like I had for many years.

So I cannot begin to tell you how exciting and special it is for me to be able to share a book updates about a book that's actually going to come out and you can hold it in your hands. So if you were listening last week, you know that my very, very first book is coming out on April 21st and it's called the Questions for Couples Journal. I announced the launch of the book on Facebook and then my email list and thanks to all of you and all of your support and your excitement for it. It debuted at number 55 out of all of the dating books on Amazon and they consider it a dating book cause you can ask each other these questions when you're dating and it's also in the marriage category and it was at number 131 in the marriage category and 128 in love and romance. Now, I have no idea how many thousands of books are in Amazon, but to be 55 or 131 even for a day, thanks to all of you buying the book, getting excited about it and patiently waiting until April to hold it in your hands is just beyond anything I could have ever imagined when we were working on it.

And I want to just take a moment to thank you from the deepest part of my soul, not just for buying the book, but for wanting to pour love and time into your relationships, into your marriage. I am convinced that this is how we change the world, one loving heart at a time. And it is really my greatest hope and my highest intention for this book that you enjoy using it to get to know your partner better, that it brings you moments of laughter and tenderness and closeness. And really my highest intention for it is that it brings you closer in love. So I promise to give you some behind the scenes as we work up to the big official release day. And here's





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some behind the scenes scoop. My editor on this project is a wonderful woman named Lauren O'Neil. She's really fantastic. She made everything I contributed to the book better.

You all listened to the podcast so you know, I can talk a lot when I get inspired. The same thing happened when I started writing all the questions for the book. They were very verbose. They were very wordy questions. And Lauren came in with her magic wand and she made them shorter and clearer and better, I think in every way. So when you read the questions and you see how short and simple they are, you can say thank you Lauren and have a good laugh with that one and you guys see my face on the podcast cover or my name on the book cover. But I could not do any of these things without help, which I think is so important for you to know because one of the things that I myself first struggled with when I got married was asking for help.

And one of the reasons we often feel overwhelmed, which is our topic today is because we wait too long to ask for help. Have you ever done that? Have you been totally exhausted or exasperated and then asked for help after some of the damage was already done? I for sure have done that. So let's make a pact. You and me, to ask for help sooner and tell each other and our friends the real help we get behind the scenes that demystify what it's really like to be a modern woman with a career or a business and a partner and a family and hobbies and things we love and people we love. So many things in our lives that we're so blessed to have as part of our lives. We have a lot on our plate and the sooner we ask for help, the better our life gets.

Now as I was thinking about this, I want to add a big caveat here. Sometimes we ask our partners for help and they don't help us the way we want them to. Whatever we want isn't urgent for them in that moment, for whatever reason, maybe the faucet is leaking in the bathroom and our partner could fix it and we have asked in the moment when we were frustrated asking



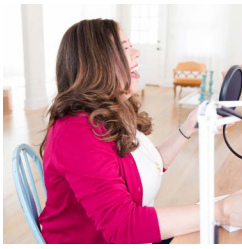


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maybe the second time, the third time, the fourth time, that's when we need to consider maybe calling a plumber. So I see this a lot in my coaching practice. When we finally ask for help, we only want one kind and then we get stuck or we feel stuck when our partner doesn't give it to us exactly the way we want it. Has that ever happened to you? It's for sure happened to me. If you're just discovering the podcast and this is the first episode you've ever heard, welcome, and if you haven't heard my rethinking the five love languages episode, go back and listen to that one. It will help you so much if what I just described has ever happened to you. Okay. Now let's dive into today's topic, which are dos and don'ts for managing overwhelm and burnout. We have six dos and five don'ts and I'm going to give you a little podcast behind the scenes. When I wrote up all my notes for this episode, I wrote six dos in five fonts like typography, fonts, and now every time I see the five don'ts I think of fonts. I used to love that show on TV of bloopers and practical jokes. There's something about bloopers I just love. So there you go. There's a blooper behind the scenes from the podcast. It's not five fonts, it's five do nots. And you all know that I really like it when you can listen today and apply tomorrow. So as you listen, start thinking about which one of these you can implement immediately. Something you will stop doing, something you will start doing or any tweak that you're going to make. Overwhelm and burnout are things that I see affecting marriages in my coaching practice just about every day and have definitely affected me at different times. When I left corporate HR to become a life coach, I know for sure it took me some time to really truly recover from burnout. So this is something that I'm familiar with, not just from helping my clients, but really from living through and processing it for myself. One of the most important themes that we will come back to over and over on this podcast is how our thoughts create our feelings, and I'll have some in-depth episodes on that coming up, but the main idea is we often think our circumstances create how we feel when in reality it's what we are thinking about our circumstances that really, really matters.





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So when we're feeling the feeling of overwhelm, we often have to take a step back and really look at how we're thinking about work or kids or family or any other commitments in our lives and see what our current thought process is and how do we tweak it. Now, I'm a big believer that before we start looking for fancy solutions to things, we start with the simplest ones first. We can often find so much relief and healing with just some simple tweaks. I think about Elizabeth Gilbert who wrote *Eat, Pray, Love* and she shared this story when I heard her speak, which I heard her speak at Oprah, so it must've been when she was speaking with Oprah and people come up to her all the time and tell her that they wished they could spend a month in Bali or eat their way through Italy and her response is something like, do what you can where you are.

Go get a relaxing massage and spend the day at a beautiful place. Whether it's a park or a spa or some place that inspires you. Don't wait to be able to take a month off, just start with a day or a weekend. And I love that perspective so, so much. And I think that's so important. Just start where we are and do what we can with what we have. It doesn't have to be the biggest version of what we want. It can just be a step in the right direction. And I mentioned how when I left corporate work, I was so burnt out. I went to get my annual wellness physical and I was absolutely convinced that I had adrenal fatigue and I had my sweet, very kind doctor said, let's run some tests. How about we start with the basics, how are you sleeping? And he asked me that question and it was such a simple question, how are you sleeping?

And when he asked, I realized I was waking up tired very often. So he ordered a sleep test for me where I had to check out this box. I don't know if guys have ever heard of this, but instead of going to a clinic and having the sleep test at the clinic, I had to check out this box and had to sign my life away if anything happened to that box, which is hilarious. I felt like I had the nuclear codes or something. I was afraid of that box. Anyway, for the sleep test, you took out this box,





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you put on some monitors when you're going to go to sleep, they collect some data and a few days later you get the results and when I returned the box, I made sure there were witnesses. I was signing it over to the nurse. It was hilarious. Anyway, as it turns out after my sleep test, what they found was that I have a mild form of sleep apnea.

So of course I was waking up tired. So my main doctor me up with a sleep doctor and I got a sleep machine, which I use religiously and I now wake up so early. I rarely use an alarm anymore, which is fascinating to me cause I used to be the person who would like hit the snooze button, you know, not once, not twice, maybe three times, but now my sleep was so deep and so restorative that my body just wakes up on its own, which I think is just absolutely fascinating. To me, when that started happening, it really felt like a miracle, which by the way as I was thinking about this, it's so similar to what happens in coaching and they just really want to draw that parallel for you. So first the doctor asked me some really simple but really powerful questions. Same as coaching.

Then we focused on solving the right problem, solving for the root cause, you know I'm a big fan of that. And then to me it felt like so much relief, like a miracle, but there were really specific measurable steps involved that created what looks like a miracle on the outside. But it's just really methodically solving for the right problem. This is exactly what we do and one on one coaching. And I just love that so much. It was such a clear parallel. Okay, so here are the dos, not the don'ts, and you know I like to lay them out for you first, one by one, and then we will go deeper into each one, one by one. So if you really want to manage overwhelm and really minimize overwhelm and make it not be something that affects you, and of course excessive amounts of overwhelm can then lead to burnout.





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So these two really go together in my mind, these are the six things that I highly, highly recommend that you do. I'm going to lay them out for you as I mentioned, and then we'll go through them one by one and I'll give you some specifics and some examples. So number one, go back to basics like my doctor did with me. Are you sleeping? Are you eating? Are you resting? Check in at the most basic level. Number two, if you're an introvert, are you getting alone time? If you're an extrovert, are you getting people time? Number three, define your top three to four priorities. For me, they're my marriage, my business, my friends and family. And this year I'm really adding my health to that cause I really wasn't focusing so much on my health before and I see how important it is. Anything that isn't directly related to those things, my marriage, my business, my friends and family and my health is going to go through some scrutiny before it gets onto my schedule or before I prioritize that.

And that leads me to number four, which is say no way more often. And the way I like to think about it is top priorities are highly likely yeses. It's like they get to you. They're already a predetermined yes, most likely. Everything else is a predetermined no unless proven otherwise. So that's number four. Then number five is release the need to attempt to control other people's opinions. I'm going to say that one again. Release the need to attempt to control other people's opinions. We can't actually control other people's opinions, but a lot of us spend a lot of time attempting to, and if we're going to eradicate overwhelm as a problem and make burnout almost impossible to happen, we will be disappointing some people at some point when we're saying no to them. And so we really need to release the attempt to control what we think their opinion of us is going to be.

And then number six, and I have a very fancy term for it goes like this. It's slow the heck down. Pause and breathe. Look for ways you're being reactive and stop them and commit to being





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proactive instead. Slowing down will absolutely transform how you live your life and how you experience your life in the best possible way. So now we're going to take these one at a time. Start with the basics. Are you sleeping, eating and resting? I had a client a while back where she was really tired and cranky very, very often. And when we dug a little deeper, there were all these things disrupting her sleep. There was an alarm that would randomly go off some nights but not others and not at the right times. There were pets coming in and out of the bed. It was just like a train station instead of a relaxing environment for rest and relaxation.

And once we realized that we were able to, you know, make some tweaks to how she was approaching everything, how she was thinking about what her bedroom was for, which is for rest, not to be a train station. And then she was able to start feeling better really quickly, just from checking in on the basics. So start with the basics. Are you sleeping? Does anything need to be tweaked? Are you eating regular meals? Sometimes I know I get excited and I forget to eat. Sometimes that's not a good idea. Are you overeating as well? We need to slow down when we're eating. I've definitely done that too. Are you scheduling time for rest and are you letting yourself actually rest when you schedule that time? Or do you just then add something else to the schedule, which I have also done. Confession time. So something that I learned launching this podcast, was that I vastly underestimated the time it takes to produce at the level of thoughtfulness and quality that I want to maintain for all of you.

I just take the time that we spend together like this really sacred, beautiful thing. And I really have been looking at how I organize my time and I know that I must get better at it. Like it's non-negotiable. I am actually recording this podcast on a Saturday, so that's not the ideal, but I'm doing it because I'm absolutely committed to it. But I also need to tweak that. So have I figured it out 100% yet? No. Am I on it? Am I in it? I am figuring it out, yes. So as you listen to these do's





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and don'ts, I really want you to not worry if you have some stuff to figure out. If you're like, oh my gosh, I'm not doing any of those things where I'm doing all of those things. So don't worry if you have some stuff to figure out, just start where you are with what you have.

Now, number two, very important. If you're an introvert, are you getting alone time? And if you're an extrovert, are you getting people time? You don't realize how important this is until you stop doing it. And then you feel sort of out of sorts, like something's not quite right. And you can't quite put your finger on what it is. That's what happens if you're not getting either your alone time or your people time. So one of my clients is an extrovert through and through 100% and when we were reviewing her year and what she loved and what drained her and what inspired her after some poking around and looking at how she spent her time, she got into this cycle of going out way less than she used to and spending less time with people in person. And when you're an extrovert, that just means she wasn't fully recharging her emotional batteries.

So she was super drained and it felt like this big mystery. And when we figured this one out, it was like Indiana Jones finding a treasure. Yay. So her coaching homework was literally, you must leave the building. You must interact with humans. Now as I record this, we're going through the Corona virus pandemic. And social distancing is a critical, of critical importance to contain the virus. So if you're an extrovert during this moment, find creative ways to still connect with people. Even if you're practicing some social distancing, you can schedule a phone call, a zoom date, or a Skype. One of my cousins plays a group video game with his friends from college and they're all on headsets. And so they're laughing and hanging out with each other and having like the best time. And each of them is in their own house all over.

I think really all over the world they're spread out, so you don't even need to leave the house to





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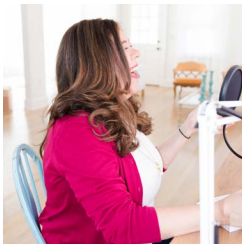
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connect with other people. And if you have to get creative to do that, that's no problem. But just make sure that you include it in your day, you include it in your week. So if you're an extrovert and you're challenged for how to connect with other people, absolutely get creative, but make it a priority to find a way that interacts, that feels nourishing to your soul. Now personally, I am a highly social introvert, which means I can be around people and be super comfortable, but the way that I nourish my soul is quiet time alone and I get jittery when I don't have it. It's like when you drink caffeine and suddenly you stop and you feel a little shaky. It's kind of like that for me.

So introverts and extroverts, whatever you are, if you're feeling burned out and overwhelmed, check in and see if you're spending some time nourishing that aspect of yourself, just check in on it. That's all. Now number three and number four really go together. When you're feeling overwhelmed and approaching burnout, you have to start to say no way more often, but in order to say no, you have to get super clear on what your priorities are, which is why I put them together. Sometimes we think we're clear, but when we slow down and check in, we realize we're focusing on other people's priorities or priorities we made five years ago that may not be equally as important right now in this moment. So right now as you're listening to me, as you're enjoying today's podcast. Take a moment and think about your top three to four priorities. So as I mentioned mine, it's like my marriage, my business, my friends and family and my health, whatever they are for you, right?

You might have a hobby you're super passionate about or you may have some thing that is just your mission on earth that just lights you up. Does your daily schedule reflect what your priorities are and sometimes that's not your daily schedule. Maybe it's your weekly schedule. Maybe there's things you do on the weekends and different things you do during the week. For example, for me, if my marriage is super important to me, am I spending time on it? Right? Am I





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spending time just talking with my husband and hanging out or doing something fun, playing a board game, going on a date, watching a movie, stuff like that. You really would be so surprised at the times that I talk with coaching clients who are frustrated in their relationships and I go back to basics, like I am telling you in this episode, and I ask them how much time do they spend together during the week? And they tell me very little time. So often in life we just need to count things, hours spent together, money that we spend. Money is such a great way to figure out what our priorities are. If we've never checked in or thought about that too deeply, just take a look at your bank account. I wish I could remember who taught me this cause I would tell you about someone, some coach I was listening to probably on a podcast, said to do this and I absolutely love it. Take a look at your bank account and whatever you're spending money on is your priority. There's no need for doubt. You just look at your bank account and you'll know. So if I looked at my bank account, I would see I spend money on trips, we love to travel and we don't travel a huge amount, but it's something we definitely invest in.

So we spend money on trips, we'd spend money on dates, we go to nice dinners or the fancy movie theater with the nice seats. We don't drink, so we spend zero money on alcohol. So that's reflected in my bank account. That's not anything I prioritize ever. I spend my money working with the best coaches. I love spending money on my brain. So I go to retreats and workshops and for example, my business is really important to me. So my business coach is a fabulous woman named Stacy Baymon. She's absolutely brilliant and I love investing my money in being in her mastermind group and growing in my ability to coach my clients powerfully. And to bring you episodes like this one where you can think about your priorities and notice what they are and tweak them if you need to and then literally change up what you're doing tomorrow if you need to course correct.





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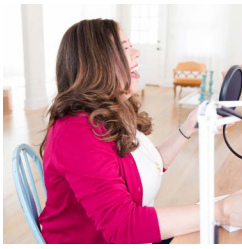
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So once you know your priorities, then you go on to number four, which is to say no. Remember the eighties, just say no, that sounds so simple, but it's so hard, right to say no to your boss, to say no to your honey. Here's the thing, you're either saying no to other people and figuring out how to do that. Or you're saying no to yourself, which can work in the short term, but has a really bad rate of return in the longterm. So eventually if you say no to yourself long enough, you will end up resenting all those people you said yes to. So we need to figure that out. It's something we absolutely just have to check in and just have to look at it. So here's an example of what I did with a boss situation and an example of something I did in a husband situation to give you just some ideas to work with when I'm talking about how do you say no in a way that honors you and honors the other person.

So at one point when I was working in HR, I had several projects with close deadlines and if you asked anyone according to everyone, everything was urgent. Have you ever had those? Everything is urgent moments. Anyway, in HR, you basically have all the department heads from the different areas of the company are all your internal customers, so they only care about their thing. They don't care about the other departments thing. So I went to my boss and I said, which project do you want me to delay? Who are we going to disappoint today? And then my boss, who knew who she could negotiate with and who her top priority was and who her boss's top priorities were in terms of projects and things like that. She could determine which things could wait and which things couldn't. And I want you to notice that I didn't go into that meeting and say I cannot do all these things.

I said, which things do you want me to do, in what order? Which is this very different kind of, no, it's a thoughtful no that's looking for a solution. And we were able to work that one out, prioritize the projects and eventually everything got done or reassigned or re-imagined so that it was





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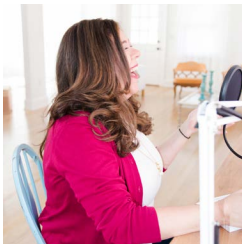
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simpler. But we were able to work on that together as a team as opposed to just missing a deadline without any thoughtfulness. So now here's my hubby example, and he has a very large extended family. So I joke around that there are so many cousins and family members that we could have a family event every weekend. And I grew up with a single mom where it was really just my mom and me when I was a kid. So when I got married, I was not used to all of these family events. It's just not something that I knew instinctively how to manage because I never had that situation before.

And as we established earlier, I am an introvert. So early on in our marriage I went to my husband and I said, I can't say yes to every invitation. At some point I need to rest. And they asked him to tell me which invitations were really important. He wanted me there. He wanted to represent with his wife, you know, like ambassadors of the land of us representing our family unit, and which events it was okay if I didn't attend. And that is what we have done really all these years that we've been together. Sometimes I go to things with him and sometimes he goes on his own and I stay home. And that's an example of also having your partner join you in prioritizing and helping determine how that no goes. I asked him what was important to him and then I prioritized that I prioritized what mattered to him the most, and that's how we made the decision.

Okay, so that's imagine for a moment that you're super clear on your priorities and you start saying no more often. What is one of the biggest barriers to saying no? Very often it's the discomfort we think we will feel and often do feel when we disappoint another person. But if we're going to design our lives so that overwhelm and burnout do not happen, then nos will have to be said and people will have to be disappointed. And that brings us to number five, which is to release the need to attempt to control other people's opinions. And to illustrate this





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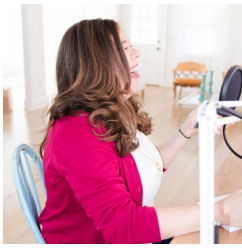
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point, I'm going to share one of my favorite quotes from the late great Dr. Wayne Dyer. I love him. I love his books. I used to watch his PBS specials all the time, and this is the quote. What other people think of me is none of my business, one of the highest places you can get to is being independent of the good opinions of other people.

Let me read that last part again. One of the highest places you can get to is being independent of the good opinions of other people. What do you need to do right now to be independent of someone else's opinion? This might feel hard to answer, and if it does, that is exactly why you need to answer that question because somewhere in that answer is the emotional freedom that will make your life so much better. What would you need to think about yourself to really believe that what other people think of you is none of your business? What if you could say no and someone could be disappointed and that could be okay? What if you could just have a moment of disappointment and move on? Just consider that, and I know for some of you may be freaking you out a little and that's okay.

You're just listening to a podcast. Nothing has to change right now other than you opening your mind to a different way of thinking. You can take it slow, which is the perfect segue to the last point we're going to talk about, which is slow down, pause and breathe. Look at where you're constantly reacting to things from automatic responses instead of thoughtful intention and slow down. Give yourself the moment. It's a moment, it's like a second, maybe 10 seconds to ask yourself a question like, what would the best version or the most loving version or the most confident version of me do right now? You can't ask the question if you're running so fast in your brain. Intention really requires focus and focus requires slowing down long enough to hear your own thoughts. If you commit to pausing and breathing before you reply to anything ever, which is a big order, so just do a little bit at a time, it will absolutely transform how you





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live your life. Okay? So your coaching homework this week is to pick one of these and do them to the measure that you can. Say one no, establish one priority. Pause and breathe once or twice or three times. Just pick one and practice it this week and help deminish the feeling of overwhelm by thinking differently about how you're living your day to day life. I know it will help you so, so much. Thank you all for listening, we're wrapping up this episode. If you are enjoying the podcast, please leave a review on iTunes. It helps more people discover this work. And remember, you need three things to have a thriving, five-star marriage perspective, partnership, and pleasure, and they are all in your control.

