

Overwhelmed Mom's Rescue Kit

Quick Start Guide

Go From Frantic Activity to Focused Action in 7 Steps

Liz Emmett-Mattox, DreamGarden Coaching

This is the short and sweet version for when you want to cut to the chase without all the explainy bits. Use this as a quick-start guide when the long version is too much; or use it as a review once you've got the basic idea.

1. Slow it down

Tuning into your actual physical, emotional and mental experience is the first step in releasing yourself from overwhelm. Take a few moments to write down what you're experiencing physically, what emotions you're feeling and what thoughts are racing around in your mind.

For the thoughts, ask each one, "Is this true? What would be more true?"

Overwhelm says, "OMG, OMG, OMG! I can't do it, there's just no way, terrible things are going to happen... Gaaaaahhhh!!!!"

Slowing down says, "Even if there's no possible way I can do it all, I can still breathe. Even if there are real consequences to not getting something (or everything) done, the real consequences are very different from my worst-case scenarios."

2. Write it down (the brain dump)

Using the back of this page, a fresh sheet of notebook paper, or whatever you have handy make a list of everything you have to do and anything else that's on your mind right now.

Make a REALLY long list!

Overwhelm says, "There's way too much, I can't even think of all the things I have to do, I'll never get it all done."

Writing it down says, "No matter how many pieces of paper it takes to write it all down, my list is not really infinite."

3. Break it down

Take your list from Step 2 and when you find an item that has more than one piece, break it down into its smallest action steps.

Use VERBS.

Your list will get longer- but it's OK!

*Overwhelm says, "There's just too much to do. These projects are too big."
Breaking it down says, "Even if I can't do a whole big project, I can do one little thing."*

4. Make a Plan

With your master list in hand and your calendar figure out (at least roughly) when you're going to do each of the things on your list.

*Overwhelm says, "I can't do it all and I don't even know where to start."
Making a plan says, "Even if I can't do it all, at least I have a plan."*

5. Make Requests

Which tasks on your master list might you be willing to delegate/ask for help with?

Who could you ask? When will you make these requests? (Hint: put making these requests on your master list!)

*Overwhelm says, "There's no way I can do this all by myself."
Making requests says, "Even though there's a lot to do, I don't have to do it all by myself. There's a small chance I'm not in this alone."*

6. Make adjustments

Here you have to make some hard choices. Given the realistic consequences, what can you postpone, reschedule or re-negotiate? What are you going to let go of?

What do you need to do for this to go as gracefully as possible? Who do you need to call, email, etc? When will you make the necessary arrangements?

How will you make peace with yourself about the things that are not going to get done right now?

*Overwhelm says, "Terrible things are going to happen if I don't do every last thing on my list."
Making adjustments says, "It looks like I really can't do everything. And even if I can't do everything I wanted to do, it's going to be OK."*

7. Make it Happen

Pick one thing- one little tiny thing and just do it. Cross it off your list.
Rinse and repeat.

*Overwhelm says, "I can't do it all."
Taking action says, "Even if I can't do it all, at least I can do this one little thing... and this one little thing... and this one little thing...."*

Congratulations!

If you've made it this far, I hope you're breathing a little easier, stopped the doomsday scenarios running through your head, made a plan, and maybe even ticked one or two things off your list.

If you find yourself living in overwhelm most of the time, I can help. Shoot at email to Liz@dreamgardencoaching.com and we'll set up a complimentary "Out from Under Overwhelm" session. Life is more fun when you're "Out from Under!"