

OVERWHELMED? HERE ARE 10 HABITS THAT WILL HELP

By Dave Luehr | December 12, 2019

It's that amazing time of the year again! You know, family, feasts, giving, being grateful for our blessings in life... the whole holiday thing, right?

For those of you running a business, it can also be a very difficult time of year. If you feel a little, or a lot, overwhelmed during the holidays, this article is for you!

Most of you know me as the "positivity guy," so it might surprise you to know that I am not like that 24 hours a day. In fact, I can be downright surly at times, especially around the holidays. However, being an advocate for a positive mental attitude, I have recently put to use some habits, or "hacks," as everybody is calling them now a days, that massively help to eliminate the feeling of being overwhelmed. I personally use all ten of these habits whenever I start feeling like ole grouchy, stressed out Dave! I believe if you put some, or all, of these 10 habits into use, you will see very positive, immediate results, like I have.

1. **Remind yourself that "this too shall pass."**

Remember, this is not your first rodeo! As a business leader, you have likely encountered this type of pressure before and you always figure things out. Don't you? Summon your confidence, this too shall pass, my friend!

2. **Clean your desk.**

This may sound ridiculously simple, but it's not ridiculous... The next couple steps are about getting organized and getting clarity in your mind. It begins with organizing the space around you, so that your mind can find some space to think. Begin by cleaning your desk!

3. **Write it all out on paper.**

I call this activity a "brain dump" and use this technique on every sizable project whether writing an article, creating a training class, or simply trying to get my life organized. I grab a note pad and just start writing down all the stuff that is either bothering me, needs to be done, promises I've made to others, and so on. I don't worry about getting the information organized at this point; I am just trying to get what is in my brain that is stressing me out or keeping me up at night down on paper. This exercise alone has magical qualities for de-stressing!

4. **Just START!**

Get off social media and get started on something. Do you notice when you have too much to do, you tend to not do anything and, instead, seek distraction? This is very normal, so the smart person instead chooses one small task from their mountain of tasks and gets it started. Don't sit there for an hour trying to choose which small task to start on either, just grab and go! Getting started is the key to building momentum and even a small win at this stage is still a WIN!

5. Focus on important tasks.

As you begin prioritizing your mountain of unfinished tasks, I encourage you to get real about the importance of each task. I like to ask myself, “How will completing this task move me towards my goals?” If the task doesn’t help me, I go to habit 6 below. You see, tasks often have a convincing appearance of being important on the surface, and sometimes scream for your attention. But, when you really get to the heart of the matter, it turns out your time could be better spent on a different task or project.

6. Delegate or eliminate.

As I mentioned in habit 5, your job is to focus on the tasks and projects that are truly important and contribute towards your goals. Assuming you have the resources available, some tasks should be delegated. If it’s not a “must” – and more tasks than you may realize, aren’t – get rid of it! You will begin to feel the weight of the world start to lessen when you embrace this habit and it feels great!

7. Learn to say NO!

As an effective leader, your job is to hire people, train them, encourage them and then get out of their way. Far too often I see managers that allow their employees to place their problems and tasks back on the manager! This is a sign of an un-empowered team and a manager that doesn’t know how to say no. A manager’s job is to coach and lead, not to perform people’s work for them – don’t fall into this trap, say NO!

8. Break big projects into bite-size pieces.

Large projects can feel so intimidating that people often never get started. I know this feeling all too well as an author of a book. I was able to get through it by focusing on only one chapter at a time, and then forcing myself to spend just 30 minutes each day working toward its completion. You would be surprised how easily huge projects can be tackled by thinking small. You have heard about how to eat an elephant, right? One bite at a time is sage old advice that *really* works. The trick, as I said in habit 4, is to get started, so pick an ear, trunk or foot, and get let’s get munching!

9. Block time in your appointment calendar.

This is one of my favorite habits – making an appointment with myself to work on important projects. Most people carry an attitude that they will work on important projects when they can find the time. Guess what? Life doesn’t work this way. These moments must be created with purpose and intention! I recommend that you make an appointment on your calendar, tell the receptionist to hold your calls, lock your office door and then get to work!

10. Be kind to yourself.

When the “you know what” is hitting the fan, it is easy for people to start being critical of themselves. I find this behavior especially true in high-performing entrepreneurs. Successful people push themselves to rise above the status quo, so when things aren’t going well and stress ensues, high performers tend to beat themselves up because they believe they are under-performing versus their standards. All I am going to say is this... You are a bad ass, JUST STOP IT!

Conclusion

So, there you have it: my 10 favorite habits to reduce anxiety and get you back on track. I have learned that the feeling of being overwhelmed is always the body's signal that it's time to get organized. Pick one or two of the habits that seem to resonate with you or use all 10 if you like.

I am cautious when I use the word "habit" because it feels a lot like I am asking you to perform even more work than you are already facing, but this is really not the case. I am simply asking you to do the work you already have, just "smarter." In fact, in habits 6 and 7, I am advising you to get rid of some of your work... yes, you're welcome!

I wish you all an organized, productive and especially happy holiday season!