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Educational Article

How To Manage Overwhelm

Mitch Savoie Hill

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How To Manage Overwhelm

Do you often feel like the guy sentenced to roll a heavy boulder up the hill only to have it roll back down on him when he got to the top – Every Darn Time?

Do you answer a slew of emails only to find 100 more waiting at your Outlook door?

Do you apply every single Time Management book, webinar, or coaching strategy you can soak up with still no ease to your daily plight – more things on your plate than you can handle?

And here is the toughest question: Do you feel you can't ask for help even though you KNOW you need it?

Many of my executive coaching clients would answer with a resounding, "Heck Yes!"

Some of them toil, struggle, time manage, work and rework their organizing strategies only to find that at the end of the day they still feel like they haven't accomplished much, or at least it may look that way to the bosses, who may be too overwhelmed themselves or too disconnected or lacking sensitivity or empathy for their struggles.

So aside from learning how to be more organized, more efficient, more disciplined in saying "NO WAY" to distractions, how do you deal with just having more on your plate than anyone can comfortably or super uncomfortably handle?

Delegation – The Hard Facts

I teach a class called "The Time Management Myths." At one point, I ask the question: "If you don't delegate things that can and should be delegated, Why Not?" The answers seldom vary:

- *If I give it to someone else to do, they won't do it as well.*
- *It takes too long to show someone how to do it when I can get it done quicker.*

My response to those is: It takes time to make time. It's like investing. You have to put in some time upfront by adequately setting expectations, training patiently (patience being key), and ensuring the person delegated to has time to make some mistakes, learn, get better, and eventually become an asset you can rely on. After that, you have taken some things off your To-do list and bought yourself some time. Isn't that worth it? You're Welcome!

How about this answer (Where are my control freaks?):

- *I feel the need to control the outcome.*

That requires some internal work. Practice letting go, or you will soon be letting go of your sanity, your family, your friends, and any hope of ever having a relaxing vacation. (Vacation Mitch? What's That?)

No One To Delegate To

Now, here are the tougher answers to the delegation question that seem impossible to solve:

- *There is no one to delegate to.*

- *If I tell my boss I need help, I will seem weak, less able than others, whiny, complaining, or not a valuable employee.*

The last can seem like a dead-end – no solution. I invite you to consider what my Cuban grandmother always used to say: “Todo tiene remedio menos la muerte.” (Everything has a remedy except for death.)

The Remedy

It is true. There are solutions to your problem. Sometimes you just don't see them right away. This is why more and more smart businesses are starting to value leadership coaching as a professional must-have. Sometimes we need help seeing the way through. I will give you some suggestions for the above seemingly impossible problem:

1. Track your work: how many emails a day in your inbox, how many hours does it take you to handle, are there repeat offenders – people who constantly clutter your inbox - are you skipping meals and breaks regularly (“Breaks Mitch? Ha! Get Real!), how many cases, projects, staff members are you handling in any given day? I know this may sound tedious and more time-consuming than it is worth. Still, likely properly training someone, this can prove vital. It can expose areas of inefficiency in your daily activities. Moreover, you are building a case. (More on that to follow.)
2. Look around and assess if your counterparts have as much workload as you. Are they struggling with the same problem? If not, can some of your workload be shared? If you can solve the problem amongst yourselves, that would be magnificent! No need to escalate the matter.
3. Are you part of any professional organizations (like the National Association of Women In Construction, Society for Human Resource Management, or Meeting Professionals International?) Professional organizations are great resources for investigating if others in your position are in the same boat. How do they deal with common challenges? What solutions have they found helpful? Lean on your resources!
4. If all else fails, it is time to request a meeting with the bosses. You may say, “But Mitch! If I do that, I will sound like I am whining! I don't want to be seen as the complainer.”

So here is how this conversation will go:

1. Present Your Case. Remember Point 1 above where you tracked your work? I said you were building a case. Here is where it comes in handy.
2. Show What You Have Already Done. List out the things you have already done to be proactive. This shows initiative and willingness to work out your own problems. This proves you are NOT a whiner!
3. Present Your Solution. Leaders don't want you to present them with problems; it's true. So don't. Instead, after showing the facts - the evidence of what you have done to try and resolve the matter - now it is time to propose the solution you need help with. Make sure you have thought it through – how does this solution benefit not only you, but the company at large? What is the ROI for this solution? How will this help the success of future team members that will follow in your footsteps? Remember that if you are on the path to success, you will eventually move up or out. What legacy would you like to forge for the next person who will succeed you? Your solution should be a no-brainer.

What happens if they still don't want to hear it?

4. Have a Plan B. If, after all your hard work, dedication, solution presenting, lack of meals, lack of breaks, and lack of balance, they still refuse to see that they have presented you with unrealistic and impossible expectations, it is time for you to face the harsh and honest fact: it may be time for Plan B - The Transition Plan.

Transitioning may seem terrifying! I know! I have been there myself many times. I have helped numerous clients at this point and beyond with great success! It may not be easy, but it offers an opportunity for you to finally find a position that not only provides you the balance you so badly require but also the sense of accomplishment, of a job well done, of working in an environment where you feel valued and respected. Is that NOT worth making a plan and executing it? That truly is all it takes. I am not saying it will be easy. I am saying it can be simple, strategic, and so worth it in the end!

The point is we are living in highly stressful and hectic times as it is, without you adding more stress to your life, your family dynamics, and your limited time on this earth needlessly. If you can better manage your efforts to find more balance in your life, then do whatever it takes. If you are finding it impossible in your current professional situation, remember what my grandmother said, *"Todo tiene remedio menos la muerte."* (Everything has a remedy except for death.)

Find your remedy. Find your balance.

Finally, find fulfillment!



About the Author:

Mitch Savoie Hill is a Certified Professional Coach, TEDx Speaker, author, and CEO of SavHill Consulting LLC. With over 25 years of experience in Sales, Hospitality, Training, and Leadership, she delivers engaging and energetic presentations as well as 1:1 coaching to help her clients clarify their vision, map out strategies and Stretch Their Horizons!

If you need help, read my book: **VOLAR - How To Turn Roadblocks Into Runways To Success** | Get your copy here -

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