

OVERCOME OVERWHELM BY REWIRING YOUR PANIC BUTTON

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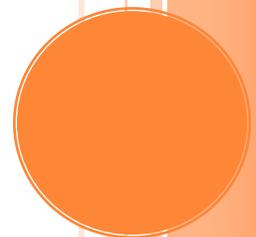
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OVERCOME OVERWHELM

BY REWIRING YOUR PANIC BUTTON

Here's what I learned from neuroscientist, David Rock about how the brain works.

Any time you perceive a threat to your

Status

Certainty

Autonomy

Relatedness

Fairness,

you leave sense of yourself and head in to fight or flight.

In David Rock's easily readable book called "Your Brain at Work", he uses the SCARF acronym to explain how the brain functions.

When you are feeling calm and peaceful and present you are using the pre-frontal cortex.

When any of the aforementioned areas are threatened, you head runs for the hills and your body freaks out. You're now in fight or flight mode and not using the clear decision making part of your brain, the prefrontal cortex. You've gone into the pre-historic part of your brain called the amygdala and your sympathetic nervous system is signaling danger. Your adrenal glands fire up, your breath becomes shallow, you are secreting stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol.

That is how your body responds to your mind.

It's essential to rewire your panic button so it doesn't go off unnecessarily. A system that is in dis-ease, overstressed can overtime cause disease which is why stress is so harmful...

You can rewire your
Panic Button on
four levels:

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Mental
4. Spiritual

1. Physical rewiring = Breathing
2. Emotional rewiring = Feel & Deal to Heal
3. Mental rewiring = Give yourself a Reality Check
4. Spiritual rewiring = Plant a prayer/mantra for your psyche

Rewiring the Physical Panic Button

Breathing: *elixir for your life.*

Completely underrated, breathing is the number one way to let the sympathetic nervous system know it is not being attacked and can calm down. It signals the parasympathetic that you are safe and then hormones such as oxytocin and other feel good chemicals can course through your veins to calm you.

Don't underestimate the breath...It will save your life.

Let me teach you a breathing exercise you can do to relax you.

I use it when I am in a perceived stressful situation and I also use it before I fall asleep and when I wake up. It's Dr. Andrew Weil's technique:

[Watch a video of Dr. Weil demonstrating the 4-7-8 Breath.](http://www.drweil.com/health-wellness/body-mind-spirit/stress-anxiety/breathing-three-exercises/) <http://www.drweil.com/health-wellness/body-mind-spirit/stress-anxiety/breathing-three-exercises/>

Exercise: The 4-7-8 (or Relaxing Breath) Exercise

This breathing exercise is utterly simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere. Although you can do the exercise in any position, sit with your back straight while learning the exercise. Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there through the entire exercise. You will be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue; try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of eight.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

Note that you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. The tip of your tongue stays in position the whole time. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation. The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice, you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Unlike tranquilizing drugs, which are often effective when you first take them but then lose their power over time, this exercise is subtle when you first try it but gains in power with repetition and practice. Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently. Do not do more than four breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to eight breaths. If you feel a little lightheaded when you first breathe this way, do not be concerned; it will pass.

Once you develop this technique by practicing it every day, it will be a very useful tool that you will always have with you. Use it whenever anything upsetting happens – before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep. This exercise cannot be recommended too highly. Everyone can benefit from it.

Rewiring your Emotional Panic Button

Feeling & Dealing for Healing: *The theory here is if you don't feel and then deal you won't heal.* Feeling your feelings is likely the last thing you want to actively do. Overwhelm, panic, chaos are the last feelings we crave. However, the reality is the only way out is through and so many times looking straight at what you're feeling is the way to move the energy.

Dealing is accepting how you feel right now without any judgment. It's not how you'll feel forever and it will move thru a lot quicker if you are compassionate with yourself vs. intolerant.

It wasn't until I allowed myself to feel the shame blame guilt and terror of my daughter's experience with anorexia that and I was able to access the compassion for myself. During this time that I began to release overwhelm, detach from the outcome and take it one day at a time.

FEEL & DEAL TO HEAL WORKSHEET

FEEL

1. Recall a situation or upsetting circumstance that had you feeling overwhelmed or uncomfortable in some way
2. Write about that:
3. When I think about this, part of me feels _____ for example: overwhelmed, panicked, not capable, underqualified, put upon, overworked.
4. Where can you locate that feeling in your body? _____ For example: I feel that as a knot in my stomach or as weight on my shoulders, a lump in my throat, pain in my heart etc.
5. Observe and note how that feeling is residing in your body.
For example: it hangs like a wet rag, it clouds over every other thought. Can't speak, taking my breath away _____
6. Now personify that part: i.e. Using overwhelm as the feeling
 - a. How would you describe the characteristics or qualities of that part _____ for example: the part of me that feels overwhelmed is old, dark, hunched over, wearing old clothing, etc.

b. What name would you give it? _____ i.e. nervous nelly, exhausted Evelyn, anxious Annie

7. Using your breath, breathe into that part of your body. See the breath entering and expanding in that part of your body. What do you notice about the feeling? _____

DEAL

What we resist persists so take a moment to think about the part of you that is suffering and how the truth of who you are, a Loving, Conscious, Compassionate being, would respond if it were your child or closest friend/family member?

Compassion is the way to reintegrate the parts of you into the whole. Having compassion for the part of you that is feeling _____ (i.e. overwhelmed) will open up a way of relating that feels completely different than judgment about how it feels.

1. If that part (i.e.: part that feels overwhelmed) had a voice what would it say?

2. Ask it (part that feels overwhelmed), in what ways has it protected you or otherwise been of service to you? _____

3. Ask it (part that feels overwhelmed) what it wants to bring to your attention?

4. Ask the following questions from the voice of compassion.

Answer the questions from the voice of the part (that feels overwhelmed)

a. Compassion asks: What are you feeling?

Part answers: i.e. I'm feeling _____ i.e. overwhelmed

Compassion responds: I hear you're feeling _____ overwhelmed

b. Compassion asks: What do you need?

Part answers: i.e. to feel supported

Compassion responds: I hear you need to feel supported

c. Compassion asks: How can I support you in creating what you need for yourself?

Part responds: i.e. You can give me a word of encouragement (in courage meant for me) every time I do something to move forward on this project.

Compassion agrees

5. What else does this part need from Compassionate Consciousness in order to shift out of overwhelm?

6. Write at least one other compassionate statement that your consciousness can say to this part?

Rewiring your Mental Panic Button:

Reality Check: *New thought: events, circumstances and situations have no meaning.* In and of themselves, they are neutral. You as a human being with a life of experiences, attaches meaning to these events, circumstances and situations. You determine based on your past and your idea of what is good or bad, what everything means. For example, today's temperature and weather is what it is, you determine if it's good or bad. Here is a parable for some context:

PARABLE OF THE CHINESE FARMER

Equanimeous Farmer

Once there was a Chinese farmer who worked his poor farm together with his son and their horse. When the horse ran off one day, neighbors came to say, "How unfortunate for you!" The farmer replied, "Maybe yes, maybe no."

When the horse returned, followed by a herd of wild horses, the neighbors gathered around and exclaimed, "What good luck for you!" The farmer stayed calm and replied, "Maybe yes, maybe no."

While trying to tame one of wild horses, the farmer's son fell, and broke his leg. He had to rest up and couldn't help with the farm chores. "How sad for you," the neighbors cried. "Maybe yes, maybe no," said the farmer.

Shortly thereafter, a neighboring army threatened the farmer's village. All the young men in the village were drafted to fight the invaders. Many died. But the farmer's son had been left out of the fighting because of his broken leg. People said to the farmer, "What a good thing your son couldn't fight!" "Maybe yes, maybe no," was all the farmer said.

<http://www.whatilearnedwhen.net/parable-of-the-chinese-farmer/>

Here's a tool to help you find a new perspective and regain your footing to move forward

“You can’t solve a problem at the level it was created. You must learn to think anew.” Albert Einstein

– THE REALITY CHECK –

SEVEN QUESTIONS TO FREEDOM

1. Get excited and realize your upset means you have an opportunity to learn something or to change something to make it better.
2. Get curious and ask *“What meaning have I linked to this in order to feel upset?”*
“The meaning I’ve linked to this is
3. Ask: *“Could this be a misinterpretation or misperception on my part?”*
Remember that no matter how thin you slice it, there are always multiple perspectives: *“Do I have all the possible information to know what this really means?”*
4. Ask: *“What else could this mean?”*
5. *“What do I need in order to feel good now?”*
Do I need to:
 1. Change my perception?
 2. Acquire more information?
 3. Understand their view.?
 4. Know they care?
 5. Change the way we are doing something?
 6. Get a commitment from someone?
 7. Apologize?
 8. Remember who this person is and how much I love them?
6. *“How can I communicate my needs in a way that empowers my relationship with this situation or with this person or group?”*
7. *“What’s great about this?”* or *“What could be great about this if I wanted it to be?”*

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4. Rewiring your Spiritual Panic Button

Prayer/Mantra: *With prayer/mantra*

“THANK YOU FOR...

OR

“I FEEL GRATEFUL FOR...

Ex. Prayer *“Thank you for helping me navigate this uncertainty with ease and grace”*

Ex. Mantra *“I feel grateful for the ease and grace with which I am able to navigate uncertainty”*

Put yours here: _____

