

"A powerful and transformational blueprint for change!"  
– KRISTINE CARLSON, *New York Times* bestselling author of  
*Don't Sweat the Small Stuff for Women*

# Overwhelmed & Over It

Embrace Your Power to Stay  
CENTERED & SUSTAINED  
in a Chaotic World

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## Introduction

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# Awaken Your Fierce Feminine Heart and Take a Stand for Yourself

The first step in changing what's not working for you is *awareness* — becoming conscious of what you are currently blind to. You simply cannot change what you cannot see. But when you do see what was previously hidden, you gain the power to change it.

When you can see both the *systemically created* and the *self-generated* roots of overwhelm, burnout, and self-sacrifice, you become empowered to make changes not previously available to you. In this book we will open up your eyes to both.

The *systemically created* roots are tied to the *collective and cultural systems* for how we work, educate, relate, and operate, as a society and within our families, communities, and organizations. Ignorant that we could do things differently, we ignore our inner knowing by not questioning what doesn't feel good or right inside. We accept things as normal, as just "how it is." As you read on, you'll see that what we've deemed *normal* for how we work, live, and succeed as a collective world is anything but *natural*.

The *self-generated roots* stem from what I think of as your personal "internal operating system." Similar to how a computer has an operating system that runs its programs and drives its functionality, you have your own version of a motherboard chock-full of programs

that drive your emotions, thoughts, and choices. Your internal operating system drives how you design your life, how you approach your work, and how you define and experience success. It dictates how you give and receive in relationships, relate to money, and operate in the face of all the demands and within the diverse realms of your life. The problem is, the programs within you are much more like blueprints for burnout than imprints for self-sustainability and real success.

## **7 Roots of Overwhelm, Burnout, and Self-Sacrifice**

What follows are seven of the root causes at the core of the burnout cycles, self-sacrificing choices, and unsustainable realities women like us haven't been able to free ourselves from — yet. Read each with the intention of increasing both your *systemic awareness* and your *self-awareness*. Consider how each has affected your life. Then we'll illuminate where to find the power to start making changes.

### *Root 1: The systems we work and live in were built for burnout, not to support us to thrive.*

Designed during an era when profit and productivity were king, our current systems lack human sustainability and wellness at their core. Which is why no matter how hard you personally try to maintain sustainability and wellness, you can't.

Take a closer look at the current business, financial, educational, health-care, and government systems and consider the consciousness of the culture and the people when these systems were designed. Created to fuel an industrial revolution and ignite an information age that exploded us into this age of technology, the core intention was not about supporting and sustaining women, families, humanity, or the planet. These systems were designed with a focus on maximizing productivity and profit; minting workers to manufacture more stuff; and training leaders to grow bigger and faster so they could succeed in a world rooted in competition, domination, accumulation, and consumption. Humans were and still are referred to as “resources.”

And in the current collective consciousness, resources are things to be utilized and monetized for short-term gains, not nurtured and protected for long-term sustainability.

Now that may sound sinister. And while you and I both know there have been sinister acts that have exploited people and planet, I don't think there was a clandestine meeting headed up by a Dr. Evil-like dude with the agenda to dominate humans for personal gain. If we look back, we can see both the positive and negative impact of what the former consciousness created — infrastructure, transportation, technology, and advancement in medicine and science. We can't really know if we could have evolved differently as a society. Maybe the pace at which all this growth occurred, and the choices made, was how it had to happen to bring us to where we stand now. Maybe not. We'll never know.

But if you look at the present state of humanity and the planet, and into the future — really look — this knowing becomes crystal clear: *the consciousness that got us here cannot take us to what we need now*. A society and market system that values domination, accumulation, and consumption, where the measures of success are rooted in profit and productivity instead of people and planet, is just not sustainable. “Grow, grow, go, go, more, more, faster, faster” is causing us all — and the planet — to burn out just in order to keep up. And things need to change, now. We need to do things differently.

Now do not get into overwhelm as I start to peel the film off how big a systemic issue we have. Or start feeling like, *Oh great, more I have to do! How am I going to change that? I can barely manage my life now*. I don't want you to take this on or do anything right now. I just want you to become more *aware*.

***Root 2: We accept the ways we work and live as  
how things have to be. But humans made the systems,  
which means we have the power to change them.***

Clarissa Pinkola Estés, PhD, author of *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, refers to our collective systems as the *overculture*: “the dominant and

often power-mad culture we try to navigate without being crushed or over-assimilated into.” Sound familiar?

The truth is, women didn’t create the current systems. *We acclimated* to survive within them, because we had to. In the 1970s and ’80s, when women entered the workforce in full force, we became men in black suits, warriors armoring up, ceiling breakers, and fighters. We put on shoulder pads and bow ties to look like men. We became tough on the outside to play with the boys. We suppressed our feminine presence. We stepped on and over our sisters to succeed in the patriarchal hierarchy. These were acts of survival.

We didn’t have the mass of women in positions of authority or influence even a decade ago or the consciousness to do things differently. We had to play by the rules that were set for us. As a result, we have come to accept how we work and live as “normal,” even if intuitively we know it’s unhealthy and unnecessary. Here are just a few examples that point to how insane our way of working and living has become:

- For doctors in residence, laws require working a *maximum* of eighty hours a week, with no shift exceeding twenty-eight hours. Awake for twenty-eight hours? That’s like working thirteen hours a day, six days a week, for four years. For the people in charge of our physical health, and lives! Is this even humane or safe?
- Forty-one percent of teachers leave the profession in the first five years, citing burnout stemming from the volume of work, lack of enough time to do the work, and inadequate resources. I would add “and insufficient financial compensation.” The people responsible for educating our children — those we give birth to and love — are some of the most underresourced, undersupported, and underpaid. What does that say about what we value as a society?
- Think it’s better to work for yourself? Seventy-two percent of entrepreneurs report mental health concerns, and

entrepreneurs are thirty percent more likely to experience depression than the general public.

- Maybe just get a job with less responsibility or that's mentally less taxing? Employees in packing and shipping facilities for some large internet-based retailers have been forced to wear bracelets around their wrists to monitor their productivity, driving some to pee in bottles so they don't get docked for time going to the bathroom. Really.

We could spend the rest of the book talking about how the policies of government and the organizations we work for still do not support women, or the reality of families, but I think you get the picture. But here's just one more point that really drives home just how not supportive our systems are. Of the 193 countries in the United Nations, 185 have national paid-leave laws. Those that don't are Papua New Guinea, Suriname, a few small South Pacific island states — and the United States. The United States is the only high-income country that doesn't provide paid maternity leave, nationally. While other countries do better in this area, I think it's safe to say that the unsustainability we are experiencing is global.

This is just the tip of a long list of the insanity we've come to accept, results of an overculture that just keeps moving faster, in the name of "progress." The pressure coming from this overculture is real — housing prices skyrocketing, the cost of living increasing by double digits, exorbitant tuition for private education just to give our kids a better future. This all makes it so we must work more and earn more money, just to keep afloat. No wonder we don't have the energy to question why our society and world is working this way.

We've been assimilating for so long that, like goldfish living in a fishbowl, we don't realize we aren't living free. Lost in the frenzy of trying to survive, we forget that other worlds — oceans of possibility — outside the fishbowl exist. And then one day, we go belly-up from all the stress and self-sacrifice. And you know what happens? We get flushed down the toilet and replaced by another fish that looks

just like us and moves into our plastic castle, and the overculture continues without us. And for what, really?

We do not have to live and work this way. Humans made every nonnatural system on the planet. Think about all the systems — the financial and consumer markets, education, corporations, government, health care, agriculture, religious institutions, and so on. These are all *human designed*. Which means humans — of which you, and I, are one — have the power to design and create something new. Just take that in. We can vision and create the new systems and ways of working and living.

Now, here's the empowering wisdom that honestly keeps me motivated to continue showing up and waking up. Systemic change can only start in one place, within yourself. Which, as it turns out, is where you have 100 percent of the control and power. If every woman knew this and embraced her power of systemic transformation through self-transformation, we'd bring about a tidal wave of awakening that would catalyze and change things in potent ways.

*Root 3: Your personal "internal operating system" is programmed to work hard, take it all on, and sacrifice your personal needs.*

*Even if you want to change, your internal wiring is set against it.*

Let's be honest. Even if someone said you could stop working so hard or doing so much tomorrow, you would just find another way to exhaust yourself and fill up your schedule. It has been imprinted into you.

You would go find another fishbowl or create one of your own. I see this often with women who change jobs and organizations or who start their own gig, thinking it's their ticket to sanity. But in reality, it's the same game, different name. They just design another way of working and living that enslaves and exhausts them. Maybe the prison cell is prettier, is bigger, or has more amenities, but they still get trapped in the same crazy pace and race.

Why? Because if you do not elevate the consciousness within you, the reality on the outside cannot change.

Your internal operating system is deeply affected by the environments you grew up in; were educated within; and work, live, and interact in now. Which means you've got a boatload of programming for self-sacrifice and overwhelm, such as:

“I have to work hard to succeed.”

“Taking care of my needs is selfish.”

“If I don't do it, no one else will.”

“I can't rest until all the work is done.”

These internal programs are not just *beliefs* in your mind; they are deeply ingrained *imprints* in your being and body. This is why even if you really want to change, you resist. These imprints are embedded into your emotional, physical, and energetic bodies and your mind. Which is why you cannot mentally think, plan, strategize, or hack your way out of burnout and self-sacrifice. These imprints form your thoughts, feelings, and cellular-body memories. They drive you to unconsciously make choices that cause you to take on too much, work too hard, and give too much — which, as it turns out, your human body was not built for.

***Root 4: Your nervous system has not been conditioned to handle the amount of information coming at you, nor the accelerating pace and intensity of today's world, so you keep short-circuiting.***

The yogis predicted we would come to this period when the human body would not be prepared to handle the technological advances, the onslaught of information, and the increased input and resulting pace of life. They warned that the effects of technology would create living and working environments that our nervous and glandular systems were not strong enough to cope with, sending us into emotional, mental, and physical overwhelm. In a lecture in 1995, before the advent of addictive



technology like social media and handheld smartphones, Yogi Bajan, PhD, who brought Kundalini yoga (which I practice and teach) to the West, shared:

This new pressure on the mind has only just begun. We are sensing the first ripples of a vast tidal wave of pressure on humanity....

The massive overload of information we will all be subjected to destroys the balance of the mind and creates conditions of unimaginable disorientation....

At first people will try to deal with this gap with increased electronic technology. We will attempt to use more sophisticated devices, software, even special intelligent helpers to sort the flood of information....

We do not need new choices. We are flooded with choices. We need an elevated capacity to make choices. We do not need more information. We need the wisdom to use all the information.

Just as the earth can't handle the pace at which we are sucking out its resources, we can't handle the pace at which we are expected to operate. This doesn't make us weak. It makes us human.

You and I are not machines. We are human beings. We would be foolish to keep leading our lives and running our organizations and families believing that the amount of information and stimulation is not having a harmful impact on us all — adults and children — in ways we don't see and have not been trained to deal with. We need to wake up and really look at what technology is doing to our brains and bodies. We need to stop blindly accepting the acceleration and integration of technology as inherently healthy and good for people and the planet. We'd be plain ignorant to keep trying to manage the symptoms of the information and technology overwhelm with the same old strategies.

*Root 5: The solutions and strategies we've been taught to deal with overwhelm, stress, and burnout are insufficient. We haven't been taught the wisdom or tools we need to thrive in these intense times.*

You wouldn't expect a ten-year-old computer to handle the speed and volume required to operate in the current technological reality. It would keep crashing, no matter how many times you rebooted it. If you keep trying to apply the same old equations for success and approaches to self-care and stress management, you will keep crashing, too.

Our traditional job and educational training, as well as the plethora of well-meaning self-care tips, has given us surface strategies to cope, not the wisdom to rise out of the overculture or to cultivate the resilience needed to thrive. The conventional solutions help you *manage* your work and life so you can survive. But they do not possess the power to *elevate* you into a different consciousness from which you can achieve your goals and dreams without burning out. We need new equations, strategies, and focuses that have our sustainability and a much healthier, more harmonious definition of success at the core.

*Root 6: We've come to value and embody the distorted qualities of strength and definitions of success perpetuated by the overculture, and discount and dismiss our innate feminine wisdom and power.*

As women who have had to assimilate into societal systems, we have taken on some of the traits valued in this domination- and accumulation-driven culture that go against our nature as women. Like racehorses bred to be achievers, we've been conditioned to drive, compete, and push. Bred to prize productivity over pausing and action over contemplation, we've learned to value *doing* over *being* and trust logic and scientific fact over our intuitive knowing. Which is why even if you want to slow down or do manage to create space to rest, you feel guilty, lazy, or like you should be doing something. Did you ever wonder why you feel more comfortable telling someone who asks how you are doing, "I have been so busy!" than "I have been resting"?

We've been trained to work like an arrow pointed straight up — set

for exponential growth — to climb ladders and maximize profit, which never seems to get us to a destination where we can rest and receive. Working this linear way is not your first instinct or first nature. It's a learned behavior and a distorted way of thinking and succeeding.

Women work best in ebbs and flows, in cycles, like the natural world. Like a spiral, where things naturally grow over time and the momentum of the organic growth creates the energy, versus us having to expend all our effort pushing. Did you ever consider that if Mother Nature has survived and thrived for billions of years, it might be wiser to emulate her, rather than the human-made market system, with respect to how we work; think about success; and go about designing our lives, systems, and world?

Until we elevate our internal value systems as women; embrace our *feminine* wisdom and power; and begin to value pausing as much as productivity, spaciousness over being busy, and our intuition as much as the intellect, we won't break free from this learned behavior that makes us work unnaturally, and harder.

*Root 7: The reasons we sacrifice and sabotage ourselves are rooted in our hearts — where the feelings and fears we'd rather not experience live.*

We are fine with *talking* about the overwhelm, burnout, and pressure. We'll participate in a conversation about work/life balance or listen to a litany of mindfulness tips. But to go where real change happens? No way! Go into our hearts, where the unconscious fears — of everything falling apart, not having enough, not being needed or valued — have become imprints within our internal operating systems silently running our choices, thoughts, and emotions? Heck, we don't want to admit to ourselves that we even have these fears! We'd rather stay where we can be in control. We hide in our minds, skim the surface, and make small changes to get by.

But if those routes worked, you wouldn't be here with me now, looking for something different, and deeper.

Your heart, much more than your head, drives your choices about how you give your time, energy, care, and resources. The thoughts in your mind follow the feelings in your heart. While understanding brain science and mindfulness is valuable, if you don't possess the awareness of how your *heart* functions — emotionally, intuitively, and spiritually — and the deeper imprints driving you, then your choices are much more likely to come from your weaknesses, wounds, and fears than your innate strength and wisdom.

We just don't link what's happening in our hearts to the busyness, burnout, and pressure we experience in our daily lives. And until we do, nothing can really change.

### **Embrace the Power of Your Fierce Feminine Heart**

As I started to wake up and see the root reasons underneath the burnout, anxiety, pressure, dis-ease, and self-judgment we feel, something inside me ignited. Some deep, primal part turned on. Like a fierce mountain lion protecting her young, I wanted to stand up and roar for all of us, “This is *not* okay with me! We cannot keep sacrificing ourselves for profit, productivity, or other people's well-being. There has to be a different way.”

I've come to call this part that awakens within a woman our “fierce feminine heart.” It's the part of you that empowers you to speak up and take a stand when things don't feel right, even if everyone else seems to be going along with the status quo. It's the courageous and curious part that calls you to seek a different way. It's the wise part that will lead you to find the path. It's the part full of the perseverance and commitment you need to keep going on the days you'd rather not get out of bed. It's the fuel that keeps your inner faith lit that something more is possible.

Your heart is your power center. The path to liberating yourself out of the ways of working and living that lead to burnout and self-sacrifice is through your heart, not your head. Liberation is an act of love; freedom always emanates from the heart. Think of any

significant elevation in consciousness in human history — women’s right to vote, civil rights, the independence of colonized countries. The catalyst always rises up through the human heart. Revolutionary change takes courage, compassion, and commitment to do things differently. Your personal liberation and elevation will be no different.

When my fierce feminine heart woke up to the root reasons why I kept getting trapped in these unsustainable realities, I knew I *had* to go deeper. For two decades, I had tried emulating and applying the models for leadership, productivity, happiness, and success I had been taught — first in my career working for others and then as a social-impact entrepreneur. Filled with passion to make a difference, and perspectives from a top-business-school MBA, I worked *hard* to pursue success and security and make a meaningful difference.

Then somewhere in my thirties, I saw the cycle of endless striving and giving I was stuck in, which drove me to continually sacrifice my needs and wellness for a project, goal, vision, greater good, person, team, [fill in the blank]. I finally saw what I’d previously been blind to — the models for success and how to structure our lives, organizations, and societies were not created by or for women. Nor were they created to support sustainability — mine, yours, the planet’s, or humanity’s overall. Something within me told me if I kept working and managing my life, career, business, and family this way, I was going to get sick.

Awakened to the reality that I had been imprinted with such an unsustainable model for success, I turned my focus to finding a different way that could empower us to be successful in achieving our goals — personally and professionally — in a manner that sustains us on all levels: physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, financially, and relationally. A new reality for success — one that by its nature cultivates wholeness and wellness.

This led me down a path of deep study and experimentation in what’s known as a “wisdom tradition” — specifically, in yogic science, sacred feminine, and indigenous earth teachings, none of which had been talked about in my traditional education or on-the-job training.

In fact, as I learned more *wisdom*, I began to suspect that perhaps there was a reason for the exclusion of this deeper knowledge.

The more I embraced and embodied the “new” perspectives and practices that were really thousands of years old, the more I became empowered to make conscious, wise choices, for myself, others, and the organizations I worked with and created. I became more courageous in speaking up for what didn’t seem right for me, other people, or the planet. I became freer to design a life and a path to professional and personal success that worked for me, even when it defied conventional wisdom and flew in the face of what everyone else was doing.

In the process of my exploration, I found I had a gift for translating deep wisdom into practical “superpowers” for truly succeeding and thriving in these intense, changing times. Not as a mental construct or spiritual ideal but as an embodied reality. I’ve come to embrace this power as how my intellectual-MBA self and my intuitive-mystic self come together to find and create new ways of working and leading that empower us as women to create whole lives, in which we can both *achieve* what matters to us and *receive* what we need. I’ve been teaching and sharing this practical wisdom around the world for many years — and most importantly, I live it myself.

I am committed to showing you how to access a deeper well of wisdom within you that really does have the power to liberate you out of overwhelm. I promise I won’t just give you more “to-dos.” I will teach you how to take what you learn through this book and create a structure, rhythm, and way of working and living that just straight-up supports and sustains you.

I also promise I will do my best not to overwhelm you! Which I know is a possibility whenever we choose to make changes within already-full lives. The parts within you that want the change are gung ho. But the parts that resist like to convince you that you don’t have time, are too busy, or will get back to this later when life settles down — which never happens. I’ve designed this book to be an experience that will stretch you in such a way that you feel *supported* and *sustained*, just like we want you to feel in your everyday life.

## How to Work with This Book So It Supports You vs. Overwhelms You

This entire book is about empowering you to make different *choices* in how you work, create, operate, relate, and approach and design both your day-to-day life and your big life goals. As you make different choices — not just in what you do but also in how you feel, show up, and interact on the inside — your reality and relationships (to your work, people, health, money, home...*everything*) shift.

Think of this like an upgrade to your personal internal operating system — mind, body, spirit, *and* heart. We are elevating the blueprint within you that affects your impulses, emotions, and thoughts, which in turn drive your actions and choices, which determine the reality of your life, work, relationships, health, wealth — everything. Remember, this is more than a set of *beliefs*; these are *imprints* that exist in your emotional, physical, and energetic bodies and your mind. To make lasting change, you have to work on the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual realms — all four, which we will.

### *Set Your Expectations for Success – How Transformation Happens*

Too often I see people fail at making the changes they desire, because they buy into the overculture's promises of quick fixes and seven-step panaceas, which may give a short respite or boost of elation but, like most crash diets, eventually revert back to old programming, and they stay stuck. The truth is that lasting personal transformation and elevation is a path, a practice, and a choice in how you live. Change happens in small increments that lead to bigger changes, *over time*, often following these four stages:

**Stage 1: Awareness.** You see what you were blind to before — habits, beliefs, patterns, relationships, and ways of working that don't serve you.

**Stage 2: Reflection.** You still choose to self-sabotage or self-sacrifice, but you can look back as an observer, seeing the impact and how you could have chosen differently.

**Stage 3: Change in the moment.** You possess the inner strength to change your behavior, thoughts, actions, and choices so that instead of habitually reacting, you consciously respond. Your imprints and neural pathways begin to break as you choose self-empowerment and sustainability over self-sacrifice and sabotage. As you continue to make the harmonious, healthy choice, you begin to trust this new way, and the elevated imprint takes root, in body, mind, spirit, and heart.

**Stage 4: Integration.** The elevated program is installed! How you relate to your work, others, and yourself is different. The choices for how you design your overall life and live your daily life are different. You are freer and more empowered — centered, calm, and clear — within yourself, which your external reality reflects.

### *The Structure*

Over years of research and experimentation, I've homed in on twelve specific imprints at the root of the burnout, self-sacrifice, and overwhelm. In each chapter we will work with one, illuminating the way of working that is *so* not working, so you can consciously *release* it. Then we flow in the practical wisdom to give you a new way of working, relating, creating, and operating, so you can *embrace* a different reality, one that sustains and supports you.

Think of each chapter as an elevation of your self-awareness and systemic awareness, in which you choose to release one way of being, succeeding, and living, and embrace a different way, one that supports you to create a reality that has sustainability and wellness at the core. This empowers you to ultimately make different choices that are aligned; true and right for you; and supportive of what you desire to create for yourself, those you love and lead, and the world.

To make the wisdom personal and practical, I've woven self-awareness *inquiries* throughout each chapter for you, titled "Know Yourself." These are questions and self-assessments whose intention is to help you reveal and feel deeper truths about yourself and the reality around you that perhaps you've sensed but didn't have



words to articulate. You'll also learn and experiment with simple but mighty *practices* I call "harmonizing practices." Like hitting a PAUSE button on the swirl, when you feel the onset of the overwhelm or self-sacrifice, these give you the internal power to elevate out of the fray and reactive mode, to reharmonize on the inside, so you can make a self-supportive, self-sustaining choice.

As we go along I will also share with you what I call "self-sustainability stands" and "self-sustainability principles" — easy-to-remember statements that will support you to make choices that sustain you and to create the realities you desire, rather than sacrifice, drain, and distract you from what matters most. You'll also notice "glyphs" in each chapter, which illustrate the wisdom teachings and self-sustainability principles. I often use this powerful tool of visual thinking in my teaching, trainings, and writing, because it combines image, symbol, metaphor, and words to expand our thinking and consciousness beyond our mental conceptions and embedded imprints. The glyphs in this book were created in collaboration with visual-thinking illustrator Katherine Torrini, whom I often work with to teach and apply this wisdom for individuals and organizations.

The last thing to know about the structure is that I've grouped these twelve program upgrades into five sections to help us focus so this liberation feels enlivening and doable in your daily life and empowers you to take action, now. At the end of each section, I will walk you through a *process* that takes all the self-awareness and systemic awareness you've gained through the section and moves you into supportive action to make structural shifts — in how you relate to your life, work, and others — that sustain you. I call these "daring acts of liberation," because doesn't it just sound more fun to embark on a daring act versus doing a process?

### *Tips to Support You to Receive the Most from This Experience*

**1. Engage with one section at a time. Apply what you are learning and revealing to your daily life and life choices.** I encourage you to take in the

perspectives I share, answer the self-awareness inquiries in the chapters, pause to take the daring acts of liberation at the end of each section, and try the practices in your life. Don't feel like you have to read and get through the book like a race. Choose a time span that feels focused and fluid — read a chapter every week or two and experiment in your life. Focus on completing a section each month.

**2. Approach this not as another “to-do” but as a guide to, and support structure for, a new way to go about your life, work, and relationships.** If you add this to your already-full life as more to do, you will stall before you get started. If you embrace this as a supportive structure — a place that lives outside the chaos and swirl, one you can come home to, like a well where you access deeper realms of wisdom and power — you'll stay committed. And feel nourished by the process. Embrace the book as a permission slip, giving you the juice to create devoted space for yourself in your mornings, evenings, or weekends.

**3. Embrace this experience as something you are giving yourself. Be clear about why this matters to you.** If you are connected to the deeper reasons why are you choosing to embark on this journey now, you will be way more likely to keep coming back to this book. Take a moment right here with me now to ask and answer these three inquiries (use the sentence starters to tune in to what's true for you):

- *Why did I pick up this book?*  
*I picked this book up because...*
- *Why does focusing on myself and taking a deeper look within, now, matter to me?*  
*Taking a deeper look at myself and my life now matters because...*
- *What's the cost if I just keep doing what I've been doing?*  
*If I don't make a change...*

**4. Create a “wisdom journal” for this process to access deeper insight.** A wisdom journal is where you write your thoughts and reflections as

you answer the self-awareness inquiries, record wisdom that strikes a chord, and do the daring acts of liberation. If you are not a “journal” person, what would take this book beyond just a mental exercise? Do that. When you write in your handwriting and see your words with your eyes, change happens differently in your brain, heart, psyche, and body — the power of visual thinking. I created a wisdom journal as a companion for this book with all the inquiries and processes in one place. Go to [www.OverwhelmedAndOverIt.com](http://www.OverwhelmedAndOverIt.com) to learn more.

**5. Ask for and receive support and sisterhood.** Share that you are reading this book with one other person. Invite her to join you. Gather a group of friends and do this journey together. At the end of this book, there’s more information on how to gather other women for real conversation and connection, as well as how to connect with other women within our community. If accountability supports you, at any time you can take my online program that leads you through these stages. And lastly, I created a book readers’ kit with some templates, videos, and meditations to support you. You’ll find it all at [www.OverwhelmedAndOverIt.com](http://www.OverwhelmedAndOverIt.com).

### **Get Curious about Your Burnout Imprints**

To begin opening up your self-awareness, let’s complete this section by looking at common burnout imprints, some of which are likely embedded in your internal operating system. Illuminating them will help you to see how the overwhelm you feel is linked to your current choices, thoughts, and habits. What follows is a series of typical choices that lead to burnout and self-sacrifice.

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the frequency and consistency of this behavior in your life today or in the recent past, with 1 being *never or rarely occurs*; with 5 being *true and occurring sometimes, often in times of stress or stretch*; and 10 being *true most of the time — it’s how you normally operate*. Remember, this is only for you. It’s about getting to know more about how you operate; it’s not a test you pass or fail. So be honest. Don’t think too much about your rating — go with your first instinct.

Behavior	Rate 1-10
1. I say yes to projects and people when I don't have the time, energy, or money to give.	
2. I work harder and longer than needed.	
3. I take on other people's feelings and problems or make it my job to fix them or better things for them.	
4. I try to figure out every last detail so nothing is left to chance.	
5. I try to do too much at one time and then feel scattered, fragmented, and overwhelmed.	
6. I overstretch my financial resources and then feel like I don't have what I need.	
7. I run my inner batteries and body down.	
8. I try to do it all, and feel like I am the only one who can do it.	
9. I feel like I have to keep track of everything or it will all fall apart.	
10. I try to do too much in one day.	
11. I want things to happen faster than they do, so I push myself and others, getting impatient and frustrated.	
12. I compare myself to others and then judge myself for not doing more, not being further ahead, or not being more successful.	

Behavior	Rate 1-10
13. I check my email or go online in the mornings before I brush my teeth, pee, or connect to myself and my body.	
14. I start a second day of work in the evenings after I get home.	
15. I let other people's needs and desires usurp my own.	
16. I react to other people's emotions, stress, and drama and get pulled into their swirl.	
17. I get so busy with work or taking care of others that I don't cultivate deeper connections with other women.	
18. I watch things that are emotionally dramatic, email, or surf the internet in the hour before I go to bed.	
19. I feel anxious when I slow down or create space to relax.	
20. I feel like I am being lazy and nonproductive if I am not doing something.	
21. I have a hard time slowing down my mind when I go to sleep.	
22. I feel guilty when I say no to a request or a need at work or from my family and friends, so I say yes even when I know I don't have the time or bandwidth.	



## *Know Yourself*

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### What are my burnout imprints?

Circle or highlight two to four behaviors that reflect how you are currently operating or that you default to during times of stress or stretch (anything you rated over a 7). Don't freak out if you have more than four; just choose up to four that feel relevant now or that you desire to change. Write these in your wisdom journal as "My Current Burnout Imprints." Then begin to notice when you make these choices in your daily life. For now, just become more *aware*.

Let's dive into the first realm of liberation, choosing to redefine success by making choices that lead to harmony.