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CULTIVATING THE ART OF UNDERWHELM!

Nardia Norman provides these tips to help you avoid feeling overwhelmed.

As we enter the last quarter of the year, there seems to be a seemingly endless list of things to do, organise and attend.

The additional pressure of work deadlines, Christmas parties, holiday organisations and end-of-year school functions on top of an already busy life can cause even the most sane of us to spiral into some serious overwhelm! The expression 'too much to do, to little time' seems like a modern mantra.

Let's face it: feeling overwhelmed is not a healthy (nor fun) place to be. It is often accompanied with anxiety, stress and exhaustion as the body's defense mechanism kicks in. Our ancient brains are well adapted to ensuring our survival, so in an attempt to help us 'make it through' it will engage the full force of our Sympathetic Nervous System. As the name suggests it is sympathetic to our survival and is responsible for the racing heart rate, jitters, feeling 'wired but tired', tummy butterflies and the non-stop thoughts that play out like a whirlwind in our head (usually at 2am or 3am!). Now while this is perfect for when we need to get out of danger, it's not so great when we cannot manage it.

But is this sense of overwhelm something that we have to accept, or are there strategies that we can adopt to help us feel a little less overwhelmed? Can we bypass our ancient brain?



Experiencing a sense of overwhelm is often due to a mismatch between what you expect you can get done and what you can actually get done.

When we feel that our tasks or stressors are too big for us to manage, we become overwhelmed. Of course, how this presents itself in the body is different for each person.

One of the major culprits for this misalignment in expectations is saying 'yes' to too many things. For every commitment you make, you are depleting your finite energy stores, and unless you have the ability to recharge your batteries along the way, you will quickly run out of energy. For this reason, choose only to commit to things that are truly meaningful to you and that will add value to your life.

Multi-tasking is another prime source of overwhelm, and whilst it has been touted as a great skill to have, it actually does us little favour. This is because, in fact, it is actually better for you, and more effective

to focus on one or two high priority tasks at any one time, and leave the low priority tasks for another day (or another person!).

So why do we do this to ourselves?

Maybe it is because we feel the need to be in control of everything? Maybe we feel like we have to be superwoman at all times, and as a result we put undue pressure on ourselves to perform or achieve. Unfortunately, the result is not a superwoman, but moreso a stressed out, overwhelmed woman!

So, before you start staying 'yes' to everything that comes your way, think about YOU. Put yourself and your needs first. Only participate in highly value activities. Give yourself permission to relax and take time out. Practice the art of letting go and delegating tasks to other people. And most importantly of all – make sure you look after yourself by eating well, moving intuitively, and getting plenty of sleep. **OH!**