



EPISODE NO. 392

Drowning in Your To-Dos

Do you ever feel like you're drowning in your to-do list? You have so much that you think you need to get done and you don't know how you're going to accomplish it all. Well, if you can relate to this, you are going to love today's episode because that's what we're talking about, what to do when you feel like you're drowning in your to-dos. So let's dive in.

Welcome to the School of Self-Image, where personal development meets style. Here's your hostess, master life coach Tonya Leigh.

Hello my friends, and welcome back to the podcast. How are you feeling? How are you doing? Me, I'm doing much better than I was a week ago because a week ago, I felt like I was drowning. I felt like I was drowning in my to-do list. Does ever happened to you where all of a sudden you have this panic, you have this you anxiety, this worry of how am I going to get it all done?

That was me a week ago. And I will say I've come a long way with the emotion of overwhelm. It's something that I don't experience that often because I now understand what creates it. Overwhelm is just an emotion created by the thoughts in your head. And it can feel so real. It felt so real for me last week when I was in it, I had that moment of like, "Oh my goodness, there's a lot to get done here. How are you going to do it all?" But I've been through this process so much that I have tools now that I can

use to navigate these moments and so I spent the day studying myself as I worked through my own overwhelm and it actually inspired this podcast.

So I'm now on the other side of it. I'm grateful that it happened, but I know this is something that a lot of you deal with. And the reason why I know it is I have conversations with you. I coach some of you. And one of the big emotions, especially in our world today, is overwhelm. You think about all of the information we're bombarded with, all of the obligations, the task. Life can feel overwhelming. And that's why it's so important that you have a process that you can turn to when you are feeling that way.

And so I want to share with you what to do when you feel like you're drowning in your to-do list. And the way I'm going to share this is I'm just going to walk you through my process that I had last Friday. So here's what went down for me. It was one of those days where it felt like everything hit at once. I was sitting at my computer in the morning and my parents had just gotten into town the night before, and when my parents are around, I want to spend as much time with them as possible.

But it was a Friday, I was working. And so I came down to this desk right here and I started looking at everything that was on my calendar plus all of the things that weren't my calendar that I had neglected, that I'd overlooked. And I just felt it. I had my builder reaching out to me that morning with some major decisions that needed to be made. My daughter was moving out of her apartment and she realized that her move-out date was two days earlier than what she had originally thought. And so we had to get her out by Saturday and I told her that I would help her with that.

My parents were in town. I told you that. I also have some big work projects that we are working on that there's a lot of moving pieces and it seems like that's always on my mind. On top of that, we are moving soon. And so I was thinking about all of the things that need to happen in order for us to move. And I just felt it. I just felt that big sense of overwhelm. So what did I do? What I did initially was counterintuitive to what my brain was telling me to do. My brain was telling me, you've got so much to do, you need to hurry. You're never going to get it done. And all those thoughts did was increase the feeling of overwhelm. So I did the opposite.

I went and ran a bath. I know. Crazy. But it worked because that's the thing, when you are feeling that sense of overwhelm and panic, you are in a state of fight or flight, your sympathetic nervous system is turned on and you can't think clearly. You literally are trying to survive that moment and you need to be able to access that clear thinking, that level-headedness that clarity. And the way to do that is to stimulate and turn on

your parasympathetic nervous system. You can do that by taking some nice deep breaths and just getting really present, realizing in this moment I'm okay. You can do that by going for a walk. You can do that just by getting outside and getting some sunshine. You can do that maybe by calling a friend and talking about something that's totally irrelevant to anything that's on your to-do list. But anything to calm you down is going to allow you to access answers and solutions and possibilities that you cannot access when you are in a state of fight or flight.

So for me, I went and took a bath, lavender salts and all. 30 minutes of just soaking. And as I sat there, I have this beautiful tree outside of my window and I looked outside and there was this little bird perched on the branch. And it was a little windy that day and the wind was just rushing around this little bird and she just sat there unaffected. And I was like, "I want to be like that bird." I want to be able to find my stillness, my calm even when the world around me feels so chaotic. And so I got out of the bath and the next thing I did before I started doing anything as it relates to my to-do list, I asked myself this very important question. And the question was, "Tonya, who do you want to be today? With everything that's happening, who do you want to be?"

Because that's what we need to understand who you're being is up to you. No matter what's happening around you, you get to decide. And I knew that I wanted to be calm, I wanted to have fun. My parents are in town and I knew I wanted to be productive. And so I used those three words to guide my thinking because in order to feel calm, in order to have fun, in order to be productive, I can't sit around thinking you're never going to get it done. You should feel guilty because you're not with your parents right now. You're going to disappoint a lot of people. That's leading me further away from what I really want because what we want at the end of the day is always a feeling.

And so I practiced getting into that feeling state. Right after I got out of that bath, the next thing I did is I wrote down everything that I thought I needed to get done. Everything. I wrote it all down, a whole list of things. And some of the things are far out. They're the projects that I'm working on, but I wrote it all down. Now a lot of this is in my Asana because that's what we use for our project management, but I still wanted to write it down and get it out of my brain. So wrote it all down.

And then I went to what I used to call the three Ds, but now I call it the four Ds because one of my brilliant School of Self-Image members added an extra D and I actually love it. But the three Ds is my framework of how I go through my list of things to do. And the three Ds, now four Ds are called delete. That's number one. What on that list do I not need to be doing? What on that list am I doing out of a should? That really isn't

something that's going to really make my life better. Maybe it doesn't align with my values, but for whatever reason, I think I should do it. Those are the things we just need to delete. They're not necessary. And if they're not value-based and they're not leading you towards your goals, why are we doing them? Do you really need to go to the PTO meeting?

Now, for some of you, the answer is yes, but for some of you, you're doing it because you feel guilty if you don't. So you really need to just look at what is driving the things that you think you need to do. Is it out of passion? Is it out of love? Is it out of excitement? Is it something that's based on what you deeply value? Or is it driven out of guilt and fear? Because if you take action off of guilt and fear over, over, you're just building a life that feels like a prison. And so go through your list as I did. Is there anything on there that you just need to get rid of that you can delete? The second D is to delegate. You don't have to do everything that's on that list. You can ask your family to help maybe a friend, maybe a team member. But what on there is something that you want to be accomplished to be done, but you don't necessarily need to be the one doing it. So that's the second D.

And then you need to have a plan of how you're going to delegate it. Do you need to send an email? Do you need to pick up the phone and call someone? So delegate. That's the second D. The third D is to delay, meaning, you know want to get it done, but it's not a priority today. You can put it on the calendar for the future, but you know that there's a plan for it. It's in the future so you don't have to clutter up your mind with it and it's going to get done because you've put it for a future date.

And then the final D is whatever is left, delight in it. You are choosing to do it, so why not delight in it? And so that is how I filtered through. And so I had a list of things that I was going to delight in. Now, some of these things are big. They're big projects, right? And a lot of times, and I can see how this can be so overwhelming for people, and it's why I love the Dream Atelier, it's the process of breaking things down into such tiny doable steps that it feels easy.

And a lot of times when I'm feeling overwhelmed, it's because I haven't provided my brain the clarity that it needs. It's a big thing sitting in my head without no plan, without being broken down. And so when I looked at the things that I'm choosing to delight in, I was like, "Okay, which of these just needs to be broken down?" And there were quite a few on there that I needed to break down into easy, doable task that I know I can accomplish. For example, we are working on the member journey within the membership. And it's a big project, but when I break it down and I schedule

thinking time, and then during that thinking time, I know I want to accomplish X, Y, and Z, and I give my brain that clarity, then it doesn't feel so overwhelming. I'm like, "Oh, I can do that one little thing I can do."

And so that's what I did. I broke everything down into the smallest step and then you have to schedule it. Now, fortunately for me, a lot of this was in Asana. So a lot of my work on that particular day was just managing my mind because I'm like, there's already a plan for most of this. But for anything that I had neglected to put on my calendar, I started to look at where it could fit. Now here's what's really important. When you are scheduling, you need to schedule what is the result that I'm going to create during this time because a lot of times we'll schedule things like I'm going to work on my book, for example, and your brain's like, what does that look like? What does that mean? So you sit down during that batch of time that you are going to work on your book, but you don't really know what you're trying to accomplish. Are you going to write an outline? Are you going to write the first chapter? Are you going to write the introduction? Are you just going to use that time as a brainstorming session?

So when I'm scheduling, I schedule results, I schedule, here's what I want to create during this time. And so that's what I did. I looked at all of the things that I was delighting in and I'm like, "Okay, what are the different results that you need to put in your Asana so that you have that clarity?" And I will tell you all, going through that process, it's such a relief because you know you've given yourself a plan. You know that you have provided yourself clarity so you don't have to sit around and think about it. I'm going to work on that on Tuesday at 8 AM, so I don't have to think about it right now.

Now I can go in, enjoy my parents, now I can go help my daughter. But when you don't provide your brain that clarity, your brain's freaking out, your brain's like, oh my God, is she going to get it done? We don't have a plan. We don't know what's going on. And so it's so important to provide clarity for yourself that can help eliminate a lot of the overwhelm because how many of you are just sitting around overwhelmed because you haven't told your brain what you want to create and how you're going to do it. The results that you're going to focus on creating. Doing that just gives your brain and your nervous system so much relief. They're like, oh, I trust that she's got this. Now that you've done all of that, I can tell you one of the big reasons why women are overwhelmed is because of perfectionism.

We overwhelm ourselves by trying to be perfect. And my whole philosophy is that a complete is better than an incomplete. So when I'm scheduling for myself, I give myself

a block of time and I'm like, "I'm trying to complete this." And I trust that what I create during this period of time is good enough for now. Now will I want to improve it later? Yeah, probably depending on what it is because as we grow, so does our capacity and so does our creation, but we have to start somewhere. And so many of you are procrastinating, which just adds more to the overwhelm. So many of you are trying to be so perfect. So you're spending a lot of time researching and taking classes and collecting a lot of information and consuming without creating. And that just leads to more overwhelm because in the back of your brain, your brain's like, are we ever going to get this done? Can I trust you to actually follow through and complete this project that you keep talking about and you keep thinking about?

And so we have to let go of this idea of perfectionism. And I just trust, especially when it comes to my business, I always do the best I can with what I have in the moment and who I am in the moment knowing that I'm going to continue to learn and to continue to grow. And I trust that it will speak to the right people. If someone's looking for the perfect version of me, they're not my people. I don't want to attract people like that because it's an impossible standard to live up to. Now, do I want to do excellent work? Yes. Do I want to give it my best? 100%. And I trust that what I do is my best in that moment. And I will tell you all, giving that gift to myself has released me to create more than I ever thought I could create and to produce results that I didn't think I could ever produce because I was in such a world of perfectionism all those years ago. So that's number one.

The second thing that I want to offer you when you feel like you're drowning in your to-do list, we can begin to fantasize about the day when it's all done. And here we are feeling overwhelmed. And there's this big gap between where we are with all of our to-dos and that fantastical day when we think it will all be done. And that can create so much misery because we want to be there, but yet we're here. And here's what I want to say to you. When you're done, you're dead. Hear me out. A friend told me that years ago, and it was such a light bulb moment.

There will never be a day when it's done until the day you take your final breath. There are always going to be things to do. There's going to be life to live, and sometimes life is hard, and that's okay. We're not here for it to be easy all of the time. Those hard days can grow us.

But when we're resisting them, when we're thinking that there's going to be a day where they don't exist, and then we keep on living being a human and days are hard sometimes, we can start to feel disappointment. We can start to feel overwhelmed. We

can just start to feel a lot of negative emotion because we're wanting to be somewhere that doesn't exist. And so I just embraced, especially last Friday, I'm like, "Oh, here I am living life. And you know what? I have lots of things to do and I'm going to delight in them because this means that I have goals. This means that I'm living my life. It means that I'm a human. And there is never going to be this day Tonya, when you're done. That day will be when you take your final breath."

And just reminding myself of that just allowed me to relax. And then I thought, "What I want to do today, what is most important today?" And there were a couple of work things. I got back to my builder. I went and had some time with my parents and I explained to them, "I'm going to go help my daughter," their granddaughter move. And everything was okay. It was all just a lot of drama in my own head, creating all of it. And so by getting clear, taking that bath, deciding who I wanted to be, sitting down and getting it all out of my head onto paper, prioritizing, deciding what didn't need to be done, what I could delegate, what I could delay until a future date, and then what I wanted to delight in that day, giving my brain that clarity helped.

And then just to remind myself, "Tonya, you're never going to be done. So stop trying to get to that place that doesn't exist and learn to enjoy the day that you're in." And just like that, instead of drowning in my to-do list, I started celebrating all of the things that I get to do that I'm blessed to do, all of the things that I'm choosing to do. And that was a game changer, my friends.

So if you ever feel like you're drowning in your to-do list, you're not alone, and bookmark this episode, come back and listen to it. And know that no matter what is happening around you, you can be that little bird. You can find that inner calm, that inner serenity, that inner peace, and then go get to work.

Have a great week, my friends and I will see you on our next episode. Cheers.

Hey, before you go, let me ask you something. Are you stuck in a loop of dreaming and doing nothing? Are you sick and tired of waiting for your happily ever after? Listen, it is time for you to ditch, waiting for someone to save you waiting for someday, and put that crown on your head. It is time for you to create your own powerfully ever after with my free masterclass. I'm going to teach you three moves to unleash unstoppable desire, make bold decisions, and finally create what you want. So stop wishing and start doing. Go to schoolofselfimage.com/after, and let's kickstart your dream life. It's free, it's fast, and it's way more fun than sitting around waiting for a frog to kiss you. I'll see you in the class.