Why Does Everything Feel So Overwhelming?

Six Questions Worth Asking Yourself

When even the smallest things begin to feel like too much.

There are people who need you, things that must be done, decisions waiting to be made, and responsibilities that never seem to end.

Sometimes you are managing everything reasonably well. And sometimes, without much changing on the outside, it all feels overwhelming.

These six questions invite you to notice what makes life feel overwhelming for you, and what your answers might reveal about what matters most to you.

There are no right or wrong answers. You may want to write your answers down, or simply sit with them. There is no timeline. Take your time with each question.

1. When does life stop feeling enjoyable?

Do I become overwhelmed when there is so much to do that I no longer have time for the things I enjoy?

Perhaps you naturally enjoy activity, variety, people and new experiences. But when everything becomes an obligation, even things you once looked forward to can begin to feel exhausting.

Something to notice: What brings enjoyment and energy into your life, and when did you last make room for it?

Your thoughts:

2. Am I carrying too much for other people?

Do I feel overwhelmed because I am constantly thinking about what everyone else needs?

Perhaps caring comes naturally to you. You notice when someone is struggling, remember what needs doing and want the people around you to be happy and well. But sometimes the needs of others can fill so much of your life that there is little room left for your own.

Something to notice: What are you doing out of love, and what have you come to believe you must do?

Your thoughts:

3. Do I feel responsible for making everything work?

Do I become overwhelmed when there are too many things depending on me?

Perhaps you naturally like to contribute, accomplish things and make a difference. You may be the person who organises, encourages or keeps things moving. But when every task feels important, it can become difficult to know what deserves your attention first.

Something to notice: Which responsibilities are genuinely yours, and which have you taken on because you know you can?

Your thoughts:

4. Do I need to understand everything before moving forward?

Do I sometimes feel overwhelmed by too much information, too many decisions or not knowing enough?

Perhaps you naturally like to understand things thoroughly, think through possibilities and make well-considered choices. But when there is too much to work out, your desire to understand can leave you feeling stuck.

Something to notice: Where might knowing enough, rather than knowing everything, allow you to take the next step?

Your thoughts:

5. Do I need more room to do things my way?

Do I feel overwhelmed when my time, choices or activities are constantly directed by other people?

Perhaps you naturally value independence, freedom and the opportunity to follow your own interests and instincts. When life becomes a series of demands and interruptions, you may feel that you have lost touch with yourself.

Something to notice: Where in your life do you most need space, freedom or the opportunity to choose for yourself?

Your thoughts:

6. Have I lost touch with what really matters to me?

Do I feel overwhelmed because everyday demands have crowded out what gives my life meaning?

Perhaps you naturally seek depth, understanding, purpose or a sense of connection to something greater than everyday routines. When there is no time to reflect, even a full and successful life can begin to feel strangely empty.

Something to notice: What helps you reconnect with what gives your life meaning, peace or a sense of purpose?

Your thoughts:

What do your answers tell you about you?

Overwhelm does not feel the same for everyone. You may miss enjoyment, be carrying too much for others, feel responsible for making everything work, need clarity, want room to make your own choices, or long to reconnect with what gives your life meaning.

Sometimes overwhelm really does mean there is too much to carry, and support or practical changes are needed. Sometimes it also tells us that something important to us has been crowded out.

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