



I Get Overwhelmed So Easily

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“I GET OVERWHELMED SO EASILY”

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Everybody gets overwhelmed sometimes, but those of us with ADHD too often live in a constant state of feeling that way. The 19 simple rules we’ve outlined so far should help with this problem.*

*Compulsion alert: Try to resist the temptation to go back and count them up.

But there are some additional rules as well as some reminders that may be important in gaining control over ourselves and our feelings.

Simple Rule #1:

Give every disturbing feeling a name.

Think of the Bible. How did God give Adam dominion over every living thing? By giving him the power to name everything. It’s true: Naming something gives us power over it. Whether or not you choose to put the names of those feelings onto a written list is up to you. (See Simple Rule #1 for Problem II.) But if you’ve got them named, they’re more amenable to being pinned down under your control.

Simple Rule #2:

Ask yourself what’s the worst thing that could possibly happen.

Go ahead; indulge your fear and imagine the worst-case scenario. What will happen if you miss a deadline? Are you fired, homeless, and in the gutter? No, more likely you’ll have to ask for an extension or make up the time on the next task. What will happen if you forget an appointment? Prison, torture, or execution? No, more likely you’ll face embarrassment, have a lot of explaining to do, and reschedule the meeting. What will happen if you leave your wallet behind? Washing dishes in the restaurant all night? No, more likely someone else will have to pay the bill; oh, well.

Simple Rule #3:

If you get angry with yourself, don't take it out on anyone else.

If you screw up—and you surely will, because we all do—it's natural to berate yourself. But don't take it out on your family or friends or co-workers, or blame your significant other, or kick the dog. It's not their fault. In fact, it's not anyone's fault. You may be the one who screwed up, but you didn't do it on purpose; you didn't do it because you're mean or stupid or ugly or lazy; you did it because you're human, even with our without ADHD. So take a look at what happened; name the problem that caused it (see Simple Rule #1 above); and move on.