



*Living* **Im** *Perfect*  
be happy be present be clear take action



**END**  
**OVERWHELM**  
in just  
**5**  
minutes

by Stacy Nelson

# What the Heck?

Feeling overwhelmed and behind, like there's too much to do and not enough of you to do it all is like a self-inflicted disease. We run around piling more and more into our brains until we collapse, and the things on our list actually get harder and harder to do. Waking up feeling stressed before your first cup of coffee is no way to enjoy your day. Multi-tasking ourselves into bed at the end of the day is no way to live, no way to be happy.

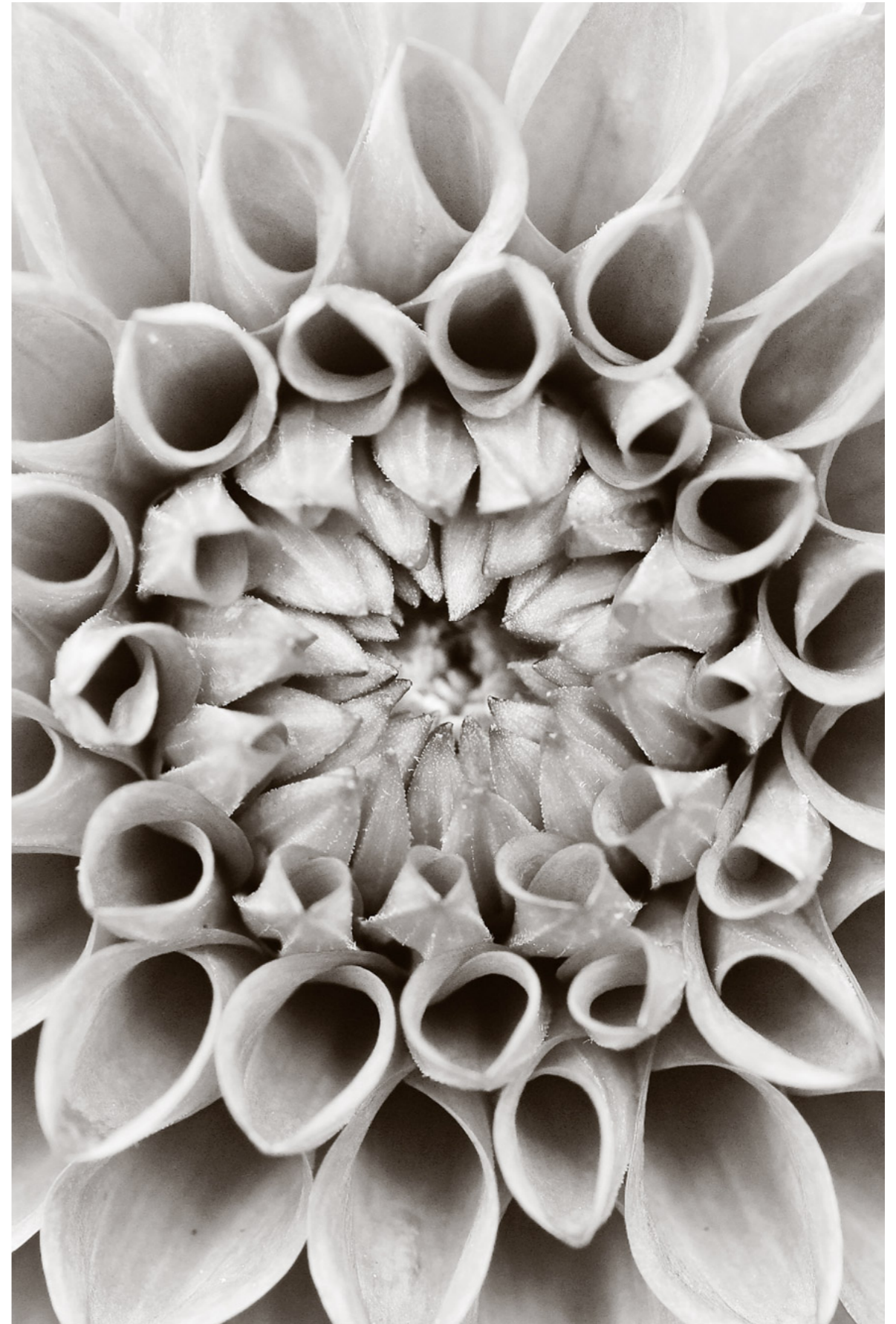
What the heck?

***You know there is more to life.***

Knowing that, would it be worth your time to spend 5 minutes to stop that cycle? To heal the sickness that plagues us? To step out of your chaos that you've created and feel focused and powerful again?

It's totally possible. The next 5 Minutes will change your stress level, will help you get through your day and can change how you approach your life.

So take a nice deep breath and begin...



# Whine

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Get a piece of paper and a pen
2. Read the **Ground Rules** on the next page
3. Set a Timer for 1 Minute
4. Write in quick succession EVERY single complaint that comes to mind
5. STOP when the timer goes off

Best tool in my belt is giving permission to be a total whiner. That's right. You get complain about everything you can possibly complain about, from that chipped nail to the fact that life hates you. Get it all out - I dare you. No one is watching. No one is judging.

There's this scene in 'French Kiss' (yes, one of my favorite chick flicks of all time) where Meg Ryan's character is telling Kevin Kline's character to Express not Repress or he would turn out to be a little prune of a man all bitter smoking a cigarette saying "These people make my ass twitch". This exercise is kind of like that.

However there are some **GROUND RULES**...

- \* Do NOT write stories. We don't care right now about WHY your nail chipped or the long version of the fight you had with the store checker. Just write a few words for each complaint. You don't have time to get it all down
- \* You only have ONE minute... so your pen has to move. Now, if you type faster and want to do that then go for it
- \* Do NOT edit... improper grammar, misspellings, incomplete sentences, horrible formatting doesn't matter. The point is to let it out. Express, not repress

# Laugh

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set your timer for 30 seconds
2. Check out that list of complaints and read through it
3. Laugh at the really silly complaints... you know, the ones that you can't even believe was an issue.
4. If you don't feel like laughing at them, do it anyway. Fake it - I don't care. Give a little giggle.
5. Pick ONE complaint you can fix TODAY

Sometimes you can feel better after just complaining. Just dumping all of the crumbs that are rattling around at the bottom of your purse (or the crud rumbling around in your head) can give a huge release.

But it's not the whole solution for getting rid of overwhelm.

See it's like cooking with the lid closed. Steam builds up in the pot as it boils and if you lift the lid for a second the whole pot doesn't cool down. You let out the steam but unless you turn off the heat it's going to continue to boil.

So you've lifted off the lid by complaining and whining. Now laughing at yourself helps turn down that burner. And you might feel too stressed out to want to laugh - it's the part of you that's rolling your eyes at my suggestion.

But fake it. Fake it like your life depends on it. Just a chortle at one of the complaints. You can do it - I know you have a sense of humor in there somewhere.

And then there is one complain on that list that you can actually fix... perhaps it's fixing that chipped nail? There might be a few things you want to tackle but **resist that urge**.

Just pick ONE... one LITTLE thing that can be crossed off that list of silliness.

***You only have 30 seconds so don't over-think this. read, laugh and choose... go!***

3 MINUTES

# Brain Dump

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Flip to a new sheet of paper and get your pen ready
2. Set your timer to 3 minutes
3. Create a master to-do list with EVERY single thing you think you have to do
4. Stop when the timer goes off even if you're not done

The brain dump rocks... you thought you were holding onto lots of complaints? Wait until you realize how many commands and 'have tos' you were holding in that pretty little head of yours.

This more than anything else is the source of our stress... that insatiable need to be SuperWoman and fry it all up in a pan with a few other visuals tossed in as well. The amount of things we have to do or the world will collapse today is RIDONKULOUS.

It's never going to happen and we know it, but we insist on carrying it all around with us anyhow. Worse? We keep adding to it too.

So even though you probably already have a list somewhere of all the things you need to do, this brain dump is to get it all out at once. You're basically going to vomit all of those thoughts onto your paper.

One task - one line. Go to the next line and repeat.

3 minutes doesn't last very long so don't dwell. Don't tell yourself the story of how your dog is going to get into the food and destroy the house and then you'll spend all night cleaning it up and then he'll get sick and vomit and you'll have to steam clean the carpet if you don't get the door on the pantry fixed right now. Just write down 'Fix the Pantry Door'.

Got it? Dump it all out now...

# Pick Your Poison

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read through the whole list without adding stories - just look at the tasks
2. Cross off things that you know aren't going to happen today or are just silly
3. Pick 3 things to do today... yes ONLY 3
4. Read to the right to calm down the panic going on in your head that you're only going to do 3 things
5. Set the list aside for later
6. At the end of the day, throw the list out

Holy cow... look at that list! Is it realistic to expect that you are capable of doing absolutely everything on that list today? In 2 days? In 3?

I'm going to guess that the sheer amount of stuff you expect yourself to do is unrealistic. You're just setting yourself up for failure and disappointment. Stop that.

Just read through the list and cross off anything that is totally not going to happen today. You're not going to take a vacation today so why is that on your to do list? And you know, the cat will live if you don't cut her toenails.

Now look at what is left. If you could do just ONE thing today and only ONE what would it be? Pick the one thing that will get you closer to your goals or that legitimately is due today.

Now do that 2 more times... Pick TWO more things that are imperative.

**Those are the 3 things you are going to do today. Everything else is extra. You only have 30 SECONDS to make a decision.**

Why so little time? Because your instincts have to take over when your brain doesn't have time to think. You're not saving the world - you're picking what you're going to do today. Force yourself just to pick.

See here's the thing - sometimes you have to really force yourself to pick the jewels out of the dirt. If you were to get those 3

most important things done today how would you feel at the end of the day?

You'd feel AWESOME! Like you actually accomplished something BIG.

So take a big huge breath, maybe two and go get your 3 things done.

Now if you're panicking about everything and can't believe I'm forcing you to limit yourself so much just breathe. I'm not telling you you can't do anything else at all, I'm just calling your hand and making you choose your most important tasks to do first.

That's it. It's that simple. Do the important stuff first and your brain relaxes. The little stuff is just extra because you got sh\*% done today!

Now, if you have time and energy left over AFTER you do those 3 things then you can pick ONE more thing. But this thing isn't a mandatory - it's a want. Meaning you're going to choose something on that list that you really WANT to do. Perhaps it's painting your toes or weeding the garden to 15 minutes.

Still need to do more... great! You can pick ONE more thing from the list. ANYTHING you feel compelled to complete today.

See how this works? You got your big fish out of the way so now you're free to do some other stuff... **ONE bite at a time.**

The point of both the minute of complaints and the brain dump was to make space in your head so you can have room to take action.

And the best way to take action is to take the big steps first.

OKAY, NOW...

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# Breathe

That's it... We get overwhelmed when we have too much rattling around in our heads. It's like trying to find your keys when your purse is overflowing. It isn't a smooth process. And I can make 1 guarantee to you...

**DOING MORE DOESN'T MAKE YOUR LIFE BETTER**

I promise.

So here's the thing, we have a purpose to our lives and it's not complicated. We teach in Living ImPerfect that there are 4 pillars to living,

Be Happy - Be Present - Be Clear - Take Action

But the purpose of our lives is first... and it's so simple. The purpose of our lives is to BE HAPPY.

How can you be happy when you can't even find your purse? This 5 minute exercise is one that you can use all of the time. It can be a part of your every day routine if you want. But with practice what happens is I wake up now and think to myself "What is the most important thing I can do today?"

I don't go start listing everything under the planet. I go to the thing I know will make me feel accomplished. And once that's done I think "Okay, what is the most important thing I can do today now that the last thing is done?"

It will give you the room to wiggle around in your head, make your thoughts clearer and will propel you forward towards your dreams, not into the black abyss.

So take a breath and stop beating yourself up for not checking off every item on that unrealistic list of yours. Be ImPerfect and start actually living your life...

Make it a GREAT day!

**-Stacy Nelson,**

Head Coach & Imperfectionist at Living ImPerfect