

## TLCS Special Edition: Overwhelm



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**With Your Host**

**Brooke Castillo**

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## TLCS Special Edition: Overwhelm

Welcome to The Life Coach School Podcast, where it's all about real clients, real problems, and real coaching. Now, your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Hello, my friends. Welcome, welcome to The Life Coach School Podcast in Dallas. I am so excited that I'm here and I'm in my new place, in my new house, in my new office, rocking the podcast for the first time. Welcome, and I wanted to create a special edition podcast for you all on overwhelm. I'm going to try and keep it short but I want to tell you a little bit about my story of moving here so I can use it to demonstrate the ability not to overwhelm and how it changes everything.

Let me start by telling you guys this story of how we got here. It was a long, long story, but I will shorten it up. Here's the deal. We decided to move here within about six weeks once we made that decision. We sold our house and we're going to get everything packed up and out here so that we could do a 30-day close on this house that we bought. When we found this house, this beautiful house, to buy, there were some changes we wanted to make. It's a brand new house but everything in it was dark brown. We wanted to take the floor that had been dyed dark brown and we wanted to make it light again and we wanted to paint everything that was painted dark brown in the house white. We laugh a lot that if the question has the word color in it, the answer is always white. "What color?" White, I like white everything. Then we needed to change out some light fixtures and change some carpet out and do a few different things.

We decided to do that when we left here that last time. They had about 30 days to do that. We went back home and I tried to find a moving company. I ended up going with the PODS moving company so I had to hire separate packers, separate loaders, and then the PODS. It was just one thing after another with what happened. It turns out that the packers that we had come to pack the house, I wasn't there, I had left early because I was going to go meet with a colleague and I was going to go to Canyon Ranch and I had already scheduled everybody to take care of all the packing and moving

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and everything so Chris wasn't going to have to do anything. He was just going to have to supervise them.

Well, it turns out that the people who came to pack didn't really know what they were doing so they didn't like disassemble my desk, they didn't disassemble shelving to make enough room. We were like down to the wire basically to having the PODS picked back up. The PODS were full and we did not have enough room for the stuff in the backyard and some of the stuff in the house. Chris ended up, instead of getting another POD, which we couldn't get in time, Chris ended up selling all of the rest of the stuff that wouldn't fit. I'm trying to manage this all from across the country. I'm trying to help Chris out to get this all organized. He's trying to sell everything. It was a wild, crazy ride.

Then we got here. We had an Airbnb scheduled and we got here and we were talking to the builder and he said, "Yeah, it looks like we're going to be about two weeks late in terms of getting the house ready." We were like, "What? That doesn't work for us." We have the stuff coming. We've got to move in. Our Airbnb is only for a week. You know, we've got to move in. We don't have the luxury of two weeks. That's not going to work for us. We have to close on our house and all of that. They scrambled trying to get everything organized so we could close on a certain day. Then the mortgage company, the title company comes to us and says, "No, we can't close on time. We have all these reasons why we can't close on time." They wanted to push that out another three days. Again, we had our stuff coming. We had the unpackers coming. We had our Airbnb expiring. Everything just kept coming up like you're not going to be able to do it.

We decided through that whole process not to get overwhelmed, not to get stressed, not to get mad, just to manage solutions. We got to the place where we had a solution. We're going to move into the house early, wasn't going to be ready, but we would at least be able to get our stuff in. We started unpacking all of our stuff and what we realized is that the people that had packed us had not done a good job. So much of our stuff was treated so poorly and shattered. I mean, we had some glass lamps that

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were shattered. Anything that was glass that needed to be in bubble wrap was not. Stuff that should have been wrapped was not wrapped. It was unbelievable. The whole time I felt like I needed to make sure that I didn't get angry and I didn't get upset and I didn't generate any more stress than I needed to. I just kept telling myself, "There's math and then there's drama. There are things that happen and then there's the thoughts we have about it."

One of the ways that, as we were unpacking all of our things and they had just been thrown into boxes and not organized and not wrapped and not cared for, I just kept saying to myself, "My kids are here. My kids are healthy. Everything's great. My kids are here. Everybody's healthy. Everything's great." It just immediately put perspective on all of the things we had to sell because it wouldn't fit, all of the problems that these packers had caused for us. What I recognized, as I was thinking about all of this as I was unpacking and really seen the way that they had treated our things, is I just kept thinking getting mad at someone who works as a packer packing my things for the way that they packed my things has no upside. Even if I could call those people and yell at them and explain to them how they should have taken better care of my things because that's what I was paying them to do wouldn't serve a purpose. It was so profound for me to recognize that. I wanted somebody to know that they had done it wrong, like this isn't how you pack things. When you have a glass lamp, you have to put bubble wrap around it. You can't just put it inside of a box because it was completely shattered. I wanted to explain that to them. Well, what I recognized is that there's no upside.

The bottom line was we're going to be able to make a claim. We'll probably get a small percentage of what it was worth and then we'll move on with our life. We can either do that with a lot of stress and a lot of yelling and a lot of freaking out and a lot of complaining or we can do it with grace and we can do it without the overwhelm. That's what I did through every single episode that came up. Seriously, every single thing that could go wrong, we just laughed about it. We just said, "Okay, there's another thing. There's another thing." Stuff that was supposed to be delivered on one day came

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on a different day. Things that were supposed to be taken care of were not taken care of.

Now, mind you, the process of moving across the country is crazy anyway because this is what I kept saying to everyone, "I can't find my face." You're out of sorts. You don't know where you live. You don't have a home. Then when you finally do have a home, you don't have window coverings on the windows yet. Nothing is organized and consistent and familiar and your brain is freaking out when this is happening. Your brain likes consistency. Your brain likes familiarity. Your brain likes everything to be the same because that means that we're safe and that we're going to survive, but when you're moving, it is the opposite of that. Everything is crazy. Everything is in disarray. Your brain knows for sure it's going to die. Being able to manage your mind through that process.

I want to say that I think it was important for me to really take care and manage my own mind. Now, that is simply all of the moving that we had to do. That was simply all of the coordination that we had to do with movers and packers and mortgage lenders and title companies and electricians. All of that was like a full-time job. During that time, we also have to manage our business and we also have to take care of our customers and we also have to make sure that scholars is working. We had a couple issues with our website that needed updating and needed taking care of while we were doing that. We had some customers that were having some issues, that needed some help. I still needed to teach classes. I still needed to create content and record videos and take care of all of my scholars that are part of my program.

In addition to that, I had two kids that were moving across country and dealing with their emotional experience of doing that and making sure ... I mean, think about it. We got to get new doctors and we got to get new licenses and the kids got to get registered for school and Conner has camp and Christian wants to do gold tournaments. As soon as we got here, we had to take Conner to a soccer tryout. It was like, oh my goodness, we just kept looking at each other. We're like, "This is some crazy stuff." Then don't

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forget we have no groceries. We don't know where any restaurants are. It was just like one thing after another after the other. I was so amazed at how powerful a deliberate conscious thought process can change everything.

What was fascinating to me is I got on one of my calls with my scholars and so many of them were talking about being overwhelmed and how overwhelmed they are. Then I listened to a podcast from one of my colleagues and she was talking about all of her students talking about how overwhelmed they are. It got me to thinking about overwhelm and how it is one of those indulgent emotions that doesn't serve us in our life. It pretends to be necessary. It pretends to have a purpose but it has no purpose. It has no usefulness at all. It also pretends to be caused by the amount of things that are going on in our lives. I want to tell you that overwhelm is never, ever, ever caused by what is going on in your life. Overwhelm is always caused by your thinking. While I could say all of these things that were happening, all these things that go along with a move to a different state, all of these things that go along with running a business from home, all of the things that go along with having teenagers, all of those things could, I could say those things cause me overwhelm but that would never be true because what causes the overwhelm is my thinking about it. There's the things that are going on and then there are our thoughts about it.

Now, when I was preparing for this episode and I was thinking about, "Why is everybody complaining about overwhelm? Why are my students, why are my friend's students complaining about it? Why do I hear people talking about it all of the time?" What I've come to recognize is that we are at a place in our evolution where we are genuinely faced with more options and more decisions and more things than we've ever been faced with in our lives.

If you think about how the brain evolved, it was basically "survive." There was an option not to survive and there was an option to survive. There was one thing to eat and it was usually an animal or a plant in the near vicinity. We didn't have to decide between 50 brands of cereal. We didn't have to

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decide between cereal and kale. There was one or the other. We didn't have to make the amount of decisions. We didn't have the number of options that we have now.

Our brains feel that lack of skill in terms of how to manage. What I like to say is that our brains just seize up and go into confusion. It's almost like our brains, because they haven't evolved and developed to be able take in so much information and make decisions that the brain just says, "I don't know. I'm confused," and we go and hide in the corner or we go buffer with food or we just go into a complete emotional meltdown, which I was very tempted to do during this move process but I saw that it was just my brain freaking out with the number of options, the number of things that were unfamiliar, and number of things that weren't going according to plan. Your brain likes routine. It like plans. It likes things to go as they've always gone because that means we will stay alive.

I want you guys to think about the number of options that we have now in TV programming. Think about all the channels, all the options, Netflix and Hulu and iTunes, not to mention all the channels on U-verse or DIRECTV and all the movies out there and all the independent films. Think about the number of choices that we have just in TV. That was something that our human brain never had to deal with. Even just think about a couple hundred years ago, your brain didn't have to spend time deciding which show to watch, wasn't even something the brain had to entertain at all. Right?

Think about the number of food options we have. Just think about a grocery store. Think about the job opportunities we have. You can literally work doing anything you want. You can be a butler. You can be a carpenter. You can be a mechanic. You can be a life coach. You can be President. So many options. This is a brand new development for humans to have so many options. I mean, think about the type of phone options you have. There are so many different phones that you can have. Do you want one that plugs into the wall? Do you want one in your house? Do you want an iPhone? If you want an iPhone, there's a lot to choose from. Do you want

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an expensive iPhone? Do you want a big iPhone? Do you want a little iPhone? What kind of service do you want on that iPhone? What kind of apps do you want on that iPhone? What kind of email do you want on that iPhone? Are you kidding me? The number of decisions that we are asked to make...

Now, these options are a beautiful thing. These options are an effect of us evolving as humans and creating choices and creating value and creating products in the world. A lot of people would say that the answer is to have less options, to not have a TV, to not have Netflix, to not have all those things and to go back to a simple life. I disagree. I think the increasing number of options is a good thing, beautiful thing. Our brains just haven't caught up with it yet. Our brains just don't know how to manage it.

Now, the way to train our brain to manage many options is to train the brain. What most of us do instead of training our brain and using the skills that we need to develop when it comes to making conscious decisions and using constraint and really managing the "I don't know" about things and managing the undisciplined thoughts, instead of doing that, most of us just go into confusion and we go into overwhelm. We let our brain completely freak out on purpose and we don't train it to handle the number of options.

Here's what I want to tell you. If you want to make a contribution to humanity, one of the things that you need to train your brain to do is to train it to manage options because they're not going away. Just think about the number of things in the world that never existed before that exist now. I mean, I'm looking around here and I'm thinking about a thousand years ago, right? I'm thinking about what didn't exist that's in my office. Everything. I'm looking at my Apple computer. I'm looking at my microphone. I'm looking at the headset that I have, the lights that I have, the windowpane, the screen. I'm looking at the brick outside and the lawn and the little flag in the lawn. Everything, like the number of things that exist now is so, hundreds and hundreds of times than the number of things that existed thousands of years ago. Right? That's just going to keep perpetuating. I think it's a beautiful thing. I think what happens is creating

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more things creates more problems but then we also create more solutions. That's how we evolve.

What I want to offer you is that overwhelm and confusion is a knee jerk reaction to a number of options, to the number of things not going the way we want, and to the number of decisions that we are being asked to make on a daily basis. You can look at this and run in a corner and hide in confusion, tuck yourself in to a bed of overwhelm, or you can start training your brain to manage a surplus of options, a surplus of challenges, a surplus of issues. Too much of a thing doesn't cause overwhelm. Our brain hardware just simply hasn't caught up with our current environment. It's the way that we think about it that many, many, many undisciplined thoughts that we have around are options and our knee jerk reaction to say that we don't know how to figure out solutions. What I want to offer to you is that you can always figure out a solution. What I want to offer to you is that your brain is designed to think thoughts it's never thought before. It's designed to evolve. It's designed to create new neural pathways, that create new emotions that create new actions and therefore new things in the world. When you hide from it in overwhelm, you are missing that opportunity.

When you're in overwhelm, you are repelling freedom. You're repelling money. You're repelling the options that are available. Overwhelm to your brain is actually a way of staying comfortable. Even though overwhelm doesn't feel comfortable, it feels familiar. When there's so many options out there, confusion feels like a safe place to stay. Just think about the amount of stuff we have. I was thinking about this when I was unpacking and looking at just the things that I own. I'm a minimalist in the sense that I don't have anything in my life that I don't absolutely love or use. I just don't and I still have so much stuff. I have a potato peeler and I have a platter and eight cups, just every thing on top of every little thing. All of the decisions that I had to make on where to put everything in my kitchen.

I'm going to give you a little example of this so you can see this in your own life. When you require your brain to make a decision and to not delay a decision, but to make a decision, you create the ability to make a decision.

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Here's what I did. I decided as soon as I took something out of a box, I decided where it would go in the kitchen and then I put it there. Then the next thing I took out, I decided where it would go and I put it there. Your brain is like, "You don't know where you want it to go and you haven't figured out the kitchen. You need to think about it more." Here's what I decided. I would put that thing there and if it didn't work there, I could change my mind and decide to put it somewhere else. Then I've made two decisions. I've trained my brain to make two decisions instead of making none and being in confusion. This is the exact skill you need to develop when it comes to deciding what job you want to have, how you want to work, how you want to complete something, how you want to create value in your life.

Asking yourself to consistently do thought work and make decisions is what prevents overwhelm. You have to release yourself from constantly believing that you don't know what to do and just do something, because when you start doing something, you will learn whether it was the right or wrong thing for you to do as long as you're doing thought work around it and making sure that all of your thoughts are clean in what you want them to be.

The second thing you need to practice is constraint. Instead of giving yourself all of those options, you have to train your brain to give yourself fewer options. When you go into the cereal aisle and you're standing there and there are 50 options of cereal, you can stand there. First of all, I don't recommend you eat cereal ever. It's a poor example to choose. Hey, that's actually a very interesting thing. If I go in there, those 50 cereals don't overwhelm me at all. You know why? Because I don't eat cereal. Cereal isn't an option for me. I've constrained myself away from it. I don't have to be overwhelmed by the options. If you're someone that eats cereal, constrain yourself to two options. Instead of picking from 50, say, "Okay. I can either have this one or that one." Now, your brain will tell you that you're missing out. Your brain will tell you that there's other things to consider. Your brain will tell you that you should read all of them. Do not listen to your brain. Your brain doesn't know how to constrain. Your brain

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wants to just go into overwhelm. You narrow it down and then pick an option.

Now, the key is you have to support your own decision long enough to be able to execute it. If you pick that and then you second guess it and then you don't follow through on it and you don't taste the cereal, then you're never going to know. That's the same with marketing and picking a niche and picking anything that you do in your life and in your business. You have to really monitor the math versus the drama. You really have to stay on top of: Does the facts warrant stress? Do the facts warrant complaining? Do the facts warrant negativity?

When my title company tells me that they're not going to be able to close on time because they didn't follow through on some things and they didn't get the paperwork in on time, that's the math of it. They promised me they would get it done on a certain date and they're not following through. I can complain to them, I can be negative towards them, and I can stress out about it. Does any of that add value to me, to them, or to the world? Does it get me a better result? Does it make me close any faster? If the answer's no, I immediately let it go.

Now, sometimes, like with my builder, I could come to them and say, "Listen, guys. I know that you're telling me you can't get it done, but you have to get it done or I'm not going to pay you for this, this, and this." Now, that's a very different thing. I can ask them to be preventative and ask them to follow through on what they've told me to do without getting angry, without getting stressed, and without complaining. It's very tempting to complain. It's very tempting to get negative. It's very tempting to yell at people. I'm not saying I never do that. Please don't hear me say that because sometimes my brain just takes over and that's where I go. What I have recognized is that it's never useful. It doesn't add any value. Because I'm committed to loving my experience of moving here and to being positive and to really enjoying the process, I constantly have to remind myself that getting stressed out, getting overwhelmed is not useful. So many of you are

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using overwhelmed as an excuse not to do what you're meant to do in the world.

So just in summary, here's that I want to remind you. Many options are a beautiful thing. We don't need or want to change the number of options in the world. We need to develop the mental skills of constraint, decision making, and deliberate discovery versus confusion. When you hear yourself overwhelming, here's how you'll know. You'll say, "I'm just too busy. I just can't handle it. It's just too much. I'm just too exhausted. I'm just too tired. I can't handle it all. There's too much going on." When you hear yourself, it will always be laced with a little bit of self-pity, what you want to do is separate out what are the facts of what you have to do versus what is your drama about it. What are your thoughts about it? When you look at the facts, when you look at the math separately from the drama, you will have so much more peace and so much more freedom. Immediately stop yourself.

Really manage your vocabulary. I never say, "I'm so overwhelmed right now. I'm so stressed. I don't have enough time. I'm too busy." I find all of those thoughts, especially said out loud, serve no purpose but creating drama. Notice those things. Don't let those things interfere with your life. Be more deliberate. Overwhelm is not something that happens to you. It's something that you create. Constrain your options on purpose by using the power of your brain to constrain and then make decisions and make them quickly and powerfully and then support your own decisions. Do not indulge in regret. Do not indulge in confusion. Do not indulge in overwhelm. Be willing to fail. Be willing to make the "wrong decision" so you can prevent yourself from being overwhelmed and then you will know what the right decision is.

Okay, if you are someone who is using overwhelm as an excuse, here's an example that I give to my scholars. When you go into Netflix, you do not feel overwhelmed by the number of choices because you don't feel like you have to watch every single movie right now. You get to pick the movie that you most want and then you get to watch that movie. It is a privilege to

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have that many choices. I want you to see that in all of your life. The more options, the better. You just have to use your ability to take a stand, make a decision, be willing to commit to that decision. That is a higher level of expectation for the human brain than has ever been asked of it. We are asking more of our human brain than we ever have. You have a choice. You can either indulge in overwhelm or you can be part of the solution of evolving our brains to make higher level decisions with more options than we've ever had before.

I want to encourage you to give up overwhelm and give up confusion. Then you can be like me where you live in your house. Even though all these crazy things happen, you just get to recognize that there's no reason to be overwhelmed, that everything is wonderful, everything is amazing, and you get to appreciate the part of life that is the best part of life, which is everything you get to experience because of all the options in the world.

I mean, think about this, you guys. This is so crazy. You can live in any state or any country, for that matter, that you want to live. We literally just picked a city in Texas and moved here. That is the glorious, wonderful opportunity that we have to be able to choose anything for ourselves and then commit to that decision and follow through without indulging in overwhelm and worry. It has worked out amazing for me and I know that it can work out for you for anything that you want in your life.

All right. I hope you guys have enjoyed this special edition. We'll be back to the regular edition next week. Take care, everyone. Have a good week. Bye bye.

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