

The Overwhelmed Brain
Self-Discovery Series Presents

How To Deal With Irrational People

*What to do When Common Sense Fails
And "Crazy" Behavior Prevails*

By Paul Colaianni

Host of *The Overwhelmed Brain*
Personal Growth Show

Praise for The Overwhelmed Brain Books and Radio Show

Early Reviews of How to Deal with Irrational People

“Thank you for this information. Life saving...”

“Fantastic and greatly needed for me and family. Thank you.”

“Thank you, thank you. Dealing with an irrational sister right now.... Your information helped me a great deal today. I haven't known how to handle this situation at all. Now I have some tools, thanks to you.”

Reviews of Paul Colaianni's previous book, [Clear The Path To Happiness](#):

“A great book for people who think for themselves. So many wonderful stories, tips, advice and inspiration for living your life to the fullest with happiness and joy!”

-Maritza Parra
Author, Speaker, & Trainer
www.maritzaparra.com

“Yes! This author totally gets it! When we "live from our core being" we can find the peace and happiness that everyone craves in life. This is a great roadmap and a tool I plan to recommend to many clients. Practical solutions here. Great read!”

-Amber Hurdle
Speaker, Trainer, and Executive Coach
www.amberhurdle.com

“I loved the book. Really valuable information and clear steps to bring happiness into your life. Thanks so much.”

-Lauri Flaquer
-Creator and Host of the TV show *Focus Forward*
www.successwithsaltar.com

“Outstanding road map to happiness. I love Paul's transparency and authenticity. This is a great E-book that gives definition to happiness and guidance for your journey to find it.”

-Frank Gustafson
Executive Business Coach, Leadership Trainer, Author, & Speaker
www.oneboldmove.com

Reviews of the Internet Radio Show [The Overwhelmed Brain](#):

Dear Paul,

“I’m a faithful listener and feel as if you’re sitting on the couch with me sharing your inner thoughts... You make a difference in lives. In my case, your show causes me to pause, reflect and sometimes have a paradigm shift in one or another aspect of my life”

-Lynn

“I wanted to say thank you for your podcast... I find almost everything I hear from you so incredibly profound, meaningful, insightful, useful and immediately applicable in some capacity”

-Caroline

“Thanks for all you do. Almost everything you say strikes a chord with me somehow... I am finding some startling and moving revelations about things I’ve never addressed within myself. Hope that you keep up the great work and help so many other people find their path to happiness.”

-Brian

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About this book

Anytime a word or phrase is underlined, you can tap or click on the word(s), and you'll be taken to a webpage. For example, my website can be found at <http://theoverwhelmedbrain.com>.

This book contains supplemental content to the episodes of the personal growth podcast, [The Overwhelmed Brain](#) and is updated and revised to contain the latest information and author additions.

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Is This Book For You?

Are you annoyed with affirmations?

Are you tired of being told to “think positively”?

That’s pretty much how I start every episode of *The Overwhelmed Brain*. Since the show’s inception, I’ve covered topics ranging from depression, anxiety, and honoring your personal boundaries, to saving your relationships, expressing yourself freely, and pursuing life with passion.

But one of the most downloaded episodes of the show is on dealing with irrational people. It seems that we all know *at least* one irrational person in our life. Well, maybe they aren’t *always* irrational; maybe they just display irrational behavior every now and then.

For instance, I remember when I was 18 and my stepfather decided to do “donuts” in the backyard with his truck. My friend and I were outside listening to music on my portable stereo. We had to turn it up quite a bit because my stepfather had his own music blaring loudly. We were right next to our own music, but we still had trouble hearing it.

Well, my stepfather turned his music up to make it even louder. In turn, I turned ours up as well.

This irritated him so he got into his truck and proceeded to tear up the lawn doing donuts (accelerating and spinning his car in a circle over and over again). Then after he finished making his statement, he laid rubber on the driveway and took off down the road.

You could say his behavior was completely *irrational*, and likely stemmed from his irritation with us. When we turned up our music, he probably felt he was being disrespected so he got upset. Or maybe his drinking gave him poor judgment and he “lost it”.

Regardless of what the impetus was for his behavior, he was triggered and became irrational. At least, *that’s what it seemed*.

When someone is triggered, they jump into self-preservation mode and sometimes do things that are completely unnatural and unexpected. They quite literally *go unconscious*.

They don't pass out or anything, but it does appear that their conscious mind shuts down and they act without regard or logic because at that time, they *have* no regard or logic - or at least very little of either.

Do you know what to do when someone snaps like this?

If they “go crazy” and stop listening to reason, what choice do you have but to simply hope and pray they don't do something that could hurt themselves or others?

It does seem hopeless I realize, but there are steps you can take and that's what this book is about. Of course, there are also times when you simply stand back and let the pieces fall where they may.

Depending on how much over the deep end someone's gone, you may not be able to pull them back in. When that self-preservation mode kicks in, there's no telling what someone will do or how far they'll go. Sometimes you just have to stay away from them, or call for reinforcements.

This book will guide you on the steps you can take to communicate with someone acting from an irrational or triggered state. Like all the books in *The Overwhelmed Brain Self-Help Series*, I'm here to help you get through the more challenging issues in your life.

I realize the type of behavior I describe seems impossible to stop. And being around irrational people is definitely a gamble because you never know what's going to happen next! But I'm here to help you beat the odds.

So, let's get started.

Keep learning, healing and growing... always.

You are amazing!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Collins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Cold Truth about Irrational Behavior

It's very likely you've known or met at *least* one irrational person in your life, whether they're a relative, a co-worker, or even a friend. Even someone who is completely rational most of the time can suddenly "lose it" because of something that triggers them.

But unless they have some sort of psychosis, there *are* ways to bring an irrational person back into a rational space. For all intents and purposes, we'll call that rational space "reality", if that's okay with you (though, I'm the first to admit that reality is subjective, and probably not *rational* at all! But we have to start somewhere).

Reality can be defined by the meaning you give to your experiences in life. The most important thing to remember about confronting an irrational person is that they are usually attributing an *inaccurate* meaning to a situation causing them to react irrationally.

For example, a restaurant patron could be yelling at the waiter about how cold his food is. Some people would consider his yelling in this scenario to be a tad irrational. I know I would, as I believe the restaurant probably made a mistake and will likely correct that mistake without issue.

I also believe there are more socially acceptable methods of communicating to someone about how dissatisfied you are with the temperature of your food. So in that scenario, I would look over at the person yelling and think about how irrational he was responding about his meal being cold.

I'm sure he was feeling like he was being disrespected and cheated by the restaurant. After all, if he paid twenty dollars for a meal he probably expected it to be hot when it arrived!

There are a number of reasons the food could have gotten cold and it's unlikely that any of those reasons have anything to do with the waiter or the restaurant disrespecting the patron. However, because the unsatisfied customer in this example *believed* that he was being purposefully disrespected or cheated, he become irrational.

Belief is powerful.

Once someone forms a belief in their head, helping them believe *something else* can be very challenging. And if the person has a belief that causes them respond irrationally, it's even more challenging.

When a belief leads to irrational behavior, it can affect everyone in the vicinity. So I want to share with you some methods of dealing with people who become irrational.

Dealing with a person displaying irrational behavior can be a chore as you know!

But if you can learn to get along with an irrational person, you can learn to get along with just about anyone.

People who act irrationally will usually not listen to reason. They won't listen to *rational* explanations. They create a reality in their mind which leads them to believe they now have an unfulfilled need or unresolved fear. This causes them to behave in an irrational manner until they either fulfill the need or resolve the fear.

When an irrational person realizes that their needs or fears *can't* be resolved, their behavior can sometimes go on for years! It may not be every minute of the day but it can be often, especially if the object of their irrationality is prevalent in their life.

By the time you're finished with this book, you'll be more prepared with the tools you need to deal with someone who is acting irrationally. I won't lie: *it won't be easy*.

Reason and logic may not compute to a person who is being irrational. *But* there is a way to get through, which we'll get into shortly.

For now, let me share with you the story of how rationality was thrown out the window on a flight I took a few years ago.

I Need to Get Off This Plane, Right Now

Back in 2010, I went on an adventure. But not the type of adventure where I was zip lining through the rainforest. No, it was a career adventure.

Before becoming a personal empowerment coach, I held a career in computers and technology for most of my adult life. At one point, I was fortunate to be chosen for a technology project that paid well and allowed me to travel all over the US installing computers for a major financial institution.

The work itself was easy and everything was being paid for including my food and lodging. I had to give up much of my family time for over a year, but the work was fun and allowed me to save a lot of money to get me and my wife out of some serious financial struggles.

During the project I would fly a lot. On one particular flight, I sat across the aisle from a woman who enjoyed talking and telling me everything about her life. Even though I really wanted to sleep, she was friendly so I kept the conversation going.

For most of the trip we talked about travel, work, friends and family, and also how she is usually a little claustrophobic when she flies. Because of this, I made sure not mention things that would remind her of being closed in or surrounded. After all, you never know what word or phrase might set someone off. I figured if she was able to get through the flight without getting worried or panicky, it would be a success.

The entire flight went great and she never lost control or became fearful. We had some good conversation and landed without issue.

But something inside her changed as we were taxiing to the terminal. Like I said, she had no fear or anxiety about being inside the plane for the *entire* flight. But as soon as the plane stopped moving and people started talking, pulling out their cell phones, and shifting in their chairs waiting for permission to get out of their seats, she suddenly appeared agitated and worried.

She started to breathe faster and was clearly showing some physical symptoms of fear. Her smile disappeared and her eyes were darting around the cabin. I asked her if everything was okay and she told me that she was suddenly feeling claustrophobic and had to get off the plane *now*.

I said, "Well, alright. The good news is we're safely on the ground, and we can just sit in our seats and relax until the line starts moving. Everything is going to be great! In a few minutes they are going to let people get off the plane and I'll walk with you when it's our turn to go."

She wasn't listening to me.

She looked around for an escape route, then looked at me with a nervous expression. I could tell she was trying to comprehend what I was saying, but she was only getting more and more afraid.

She said in a commanding tone, “I need to get off this plane, *right now*.”

I quickly threw on my coaching cap and told her, “Everything is going great. We’re safely on the ground now and we’re just about out of the plane.

She was starting to panic and began reacting from a more subconscious place. She raised her voice and said, “I need to get off this plane NOW!”

In an attempt to bring her back to awareness, I said, “Okay, we’ll definitely get off the plane in just a minute I promise. Now that we are *safely* on the ground, what do you think is going to happen?”

She said, “*I gotta go, I’m gonna die if I stay on. I really gotta go NOW!*”

That was the moment I lost her. *She became irrational.*

It didn’t matter what I said to her from that point on because her [fight or flight](#) response kicked in. She was reacting from a very primal place of fear.

She had a need that absolutely needed to be fulfilled *right then and there*. And no matter what I said, as long as her need wasn’t being met my words would have no meaning.

Her primary focus at this point was to get off that plane. And if she didn’t get that, she was either going to scream or... I’m not sure what.

Knowing that a screaming woman on an airplane would startle the other passengers, I decided to take the only option I thought I had available to me and that was to give her a *mission* that would fulfill her need.

I told her to look directly into my eyes and said, “Alright, here’s what I want you to do. If you really want to get off this plane, I want you to listen and do exactly what I tell you to do. I will help you get off this plane, but you must do *exactly* as I say. Do you understand?”

She was able to focus on me because I had “a solution”. She nodded yes.

I said, “Good. Now here’s what I want you to do. I want you to calmly tap the person in front of you on the shoulder and tell them you have a medical emergency and need to get to the front of the plane.”

“When that person lets you by, do it again with the next person in front of you. Do this *calmly* and give people time to let you through so that you can move your way to the front of the plane easily and effortlessly. And once you reach the front, you’ll be first in line to

get out. Will you do this for me?” She nodded yes again, then tapped on the first shoulder to start her mission.

There are very specific reasons I did what I did and said what I said to her. First, I realized that she was no longer accessing conscious reasoning. She was closing herself off to anything but a solution to her problem.

If I just said, “You need to calm down and get a grip”, it’s very unlikely my words would have mattered. And she would have panicked.

Second, I was “wordy” on purpose. I wanted to delay as much as possible while the airlines got the bridge attached to the side of the plane. It can take quite a while after stopping at the terminal for them to open the door. The longer she focused on me while I talked, the more time I gave to the airlines to complete their tasks.

And third, when someone reaches a panic-like state, they want a way out of it as soon as possible and will do anything they can to find an escape route. Because I knew she wouldn’t listen to a request such as ‘*relax and wait*’, I gave her a command that her brain could latch on to. I told her right off, “If you want to get off this plane, do exactly as I say.”

When someone is confused or panicky, they *will* listen to, and obey, a command like this. *Anything* that gives them hope for an escape will make them pay very close attention.

When you offer an irrational person a “way out”, they will listen intently and usually follow your “orders”.

When someone is starting to get irrational, they typically become agitated and then maybe start to worry or get irritated. The symptoms will continue to build and as they do, their reasoning will take a back seat to be replaced with a sort of primal fear.

Once someone gets [triggered](#) by any sort of fear, they resort to a fight, flight or freeze response. When they are in one of these places, it becomes extremely difficult to reason with them.

In the case of the woman who wanted to get off the plane, since I gave her a mission that would *fulfill her need*, she stood at attention and followed through with the order like a compliant soldier.

Her need was to get off the plane immediately. I recognized this, so I indicated to her that I was going to help her accomplish that task. I gave her the exact instructions on how to do what she needed to do without causing a scene, or worse, getting arrested by overreacting.

Her irrational behavior was replaced with a specific, logical process that allowed her to focus on something other than the fact that she was feeling claustrophobic.

She had a mission and she complied.

Sometimes irrational people can be brought back to a rational place when they are given a mission. And sometimes... *they can't*.

But it's worth trying! So let's talk about what *you* can do when you need to deal with an irrational person.

Understanding the Irrational Person

Focus on the Need

We've all had to deal with someone who was irrational at one point in our lives, and all of us have the potential of *being* that way on occasion. When we are being irrational, there is usually someone who tells us to calm down or look at things in a different way.

But a funny thing happens when you become irrational, you get *laser focused*. You get tunnel vision and do things that you believe will fulfill a need. Your behavior becomes more [primal](#) than logical.

And that's what irrationality really comes down to: *Fulfilling a need*.

Or, fulfilling something you *believe* you need.

An irrational person believes that what they need is *rational*. The challenge is that they usually believe there is only one way (or no way) to get what they need, and will do whatever it takes to get it.

If a person will do *anything* to get what they need, then they'll do things that other people might find offensive, stupid, or just plain crazy.

The desire for the irrational person to fulfill a need is so strong, that conscious reasoning is blocked out by *pure subconscious streaming*.

In other words, the raw, primal survival mechanisms with which they are born take over. When that happens, irrational people are very unpredictable.

The Point of No Return

So what can *you* do if you come up against someone displaying irrational behavior? What's the best course of action, especially if yelling "Stop, stop!" has no effect?

Unfortunately if they've gone "over the top" and have reached a place where you cannot communicate with them any longer, there really may be no stopping them.

There *is* a point of no return.

Just think about someone who's getting chased by the police. He drives faster and faster to get as far away as possible. He is thinking irrationally if he believes that he can possibly escape, because police officers can call ahead to other police officers for backup.

The longer the chase lasts, the more law enforcement will be chasing him. It's only a matter of time before he's captured.

The perpetrator's irrational behavior is in *full-gear* when he drives faster and thinks he can get free of the pursuit, let alone believe the illusion that he can control the car while going way beyond the speed limit.

No matter what the police do to convince him to stop, he will likely not pull over because *conscious reasoning is not available*.

He is not listening to logic because "logic" is a conscious process. He has gone beyond the threshold of reason and will not stop until he gets into an accident or gets away.

This is what I mean by "pure subconscious streaming". In this example, the adrenaline of getting away has turned off reason and rationality, leaving nothing but his survival mechanisms to get a need met.

There are the moments *before* people go "over the top", before irrational behavior kicks in. This is the time to communicate with someone in hopes to bring them back to a more rational place.

As long as the person is still responding to you and *consciously* aware of what they are doing, there's a good chance you can prevent the irrational behavior from happening in the first place.

Survival of the Species

The most basic definition I give to "Irrational" is:

The mental state you are in when you overreact to something.

When you are overreacting, that means you are making up stories about the situation you are in. You are fabricating your own meaning to circumstances that are probably not at all what you think they are. *Overreacting* usually stems from letting emotions cloud your logic.

It's okay to be emotional about something, but when those emotions cloud your logic and you respond solely from that place of emotion, *you are closing off rational thought*.

I realize this idea skims along the edge of gut instinct, but even gut instinct has a path of logic when you are responding to something. Irrational behavior usually does not.

The path followed to irrationality is solely emotional, leading to any number of possible outcomes.

Logic usually guides us to a more beneficial result with some knowledge of possible consequences. But even logic has an emotional foundation because we won't do something that isn't driven by an emotion of some sort.

If you're an analytical person, you are probably yelling at me through your screen right now, but it's true!

Logic is driven by emotion.

And the way you can test that is to think of something that needs logic in order to process it, whether it's a math problem, fixing your car, or even tying your shoe laces - all things that seem to be only logic based.

But why would you solve a math problem, fix your car or tie your shoelace?

Why you do something is your motivation to use logic, otherwise you'd have no reason to do it. Your "why" is the foundation and motivation to use logic in the first place. "Why" is based on an emotion. Without emotion, you would not even need logic.

For example, why would you solve a math problem if there was no meaning in solving it? If you choose to believe you have no choice, then you are probably forgetting that you always have a choice as long as you are able to accept the consequences of that choice.

The hard part is accepting the consequences for the choices you don't want to make in life. If you chose not to solve math problems in school you would have probably failed Math, but it doesn't mean you didn't have a choice to not do your math assignments, it just means you chose not to fail.

And why not fail?

Because, you probably had *another* reason and another after that. And all the reasons you can come up with have an emotion attached to them at some level.

The reason we do *anything* has an emotion at its foundation, otherwise *we are not driven to do it*.

So when someone becomes irrational, they are overreacting to an event or situation causing them to respond from that place of raw emotion, or what some people may label as the "Lizard Brain".

Our lizard brain is the lowest level of human behavior, or at least the closest we get to responding to the events in life like an animal. It's very survival-driven.

When you witness someone in an overreaction of some sort, you are watching them attempt to *survive*.

We've all seen someone overreact - just watch any road rage video online. Most of the videos involve someone steering their car too close to someone else, causing the other person to feel that their safety is compromised. Then the person they nearly "cut off" gets out of the car to argue or fight.

This is typically a reaction of pure survival:

'You could have killed me, so now I'm going to teach you a lesson because I am in fight or flight mode.'

These won't be their exact words of course, but their behavior, words, and body language are all conveying the message that they felt threatened, meaning they are now at a low-level stage of survival.

This is the place where conscious thought shuts down and unconscious, reaction-based behavior kicks in. This *Lizard Brain* state is a breeding ground for irrational behavior. And it takes special skills to be able to talk or reason your way out of a situation like this.

We'll go over what those skills are shortly, but first let's figure out what role *you* play in someone else's irrational behavior.

Your Role in Someone Else's Irrational Behavior

When someone is being irrational, you play an important part in how far their behavior will go because almost all of your behavior, in some way, influences another person.

Unless you live completely alone or never interact with anyone else, most of your behavior is influencing and being influenced by someone else all the time. Because of this, someone can become more irrational *just by your presence alone*.

You do play a role in other people's behavior whether you want to or not. You aren't *responsible* for other people's behavior; you just influence it because of your existence in their life.

This is actually a good thing because if you have influence, you can help bring an irrational person back into a more rational state. But, do you even want to?

How Involved Should You Get?

There are really only two reasons you may need to learn deal with irrational people to begin with. They are:

1. *You have to.*

You might be in a situation where you *must* get involved in order for things to work out as you need them to.

2. *You want to.*

You want to keep a friendship, protect someone, protect yourself, or maybe you just know that the person being irrational is not normally like this and you are there to bring him or her back to reality.

Remember that "reality" is the meaning you give to your experiences in life. Adding *inaccurate* meaning to a situation is what creates most irrational behavior to begin with.

For example, to one person a pregnancy is a time for happiness and celebration. To another it might be quite the opposite. The same situation can have two completely different meanings.

The meaning you give to a situation will dictate your behavior.

Knowing that everyone perceives reality from their own, unique perspective, you might begin to understand how some people might overreact to situations that don't seem that important.

If someone starts overreacting in front of you, just ask yourself some questions like:

Do I have to deal with this right now?

Do I want to deal with this right now?

Should I just walk away and come back when things are better?

Do I really need to stay to make sure all goes well here?

Should I just walk away and never come back?

The reason you want to start off with these questions is to remind you that most of the time you *do* have a choice.

Of course, if you don't see a way out then you must deal with it. But here's the trick, if you truly believe you that you have no choice but to deal with it then you *must accept it* then deal with the person rationally.

What usually happens though is that when someone overreacts, *we* react to their overreaction. This is typically called arguing or fighting. And the toughest part about that is what leads to our first important step in dealing with an irrational person:

Don't Take it Personally

When someone is being irrational, almost everything they do or say is *not personal*. In fact, what they are expressing is usually a repressed emotion of some sort.

But even if what they say *does* hurt you, *the worst time to respond to them is in that moment*.

I realize it's a challenge to not get triggered, because the person could be saying some very mean things to you. But the most effective time to respond to anything they say is after you bring them back to a calmer, more reasonable space.

Of course, make sure you don't confuse a raised voice or highly emotional state with irrationality. Sometimes people just get heated or excited and really need to discuss something immediately so they will do so while emotionally charged.

It's important to distinguish the difference between being emotionally charged and irrational. In one state, rational decisions can still be made. In the other, it can easily escalate to panicky, unpredictable behavior.

For example, I remember when there was a bomb threat where I worked. I was in charge of informing everyone in my department of the threat. I told most of the staff to leave the building, then gave the remaining staff the option to stay or leave. (We were an alarm company that had to be manned to protect businesses and homes.)

The only people left in the building were me and a few members of the staff that chose to stay. To say it was an emotionally charged moment was an understatement.

Later on, it was pointed out to me how clear, direct and focused I was—instead of dramatic, fearful, and panicky.

I could have run into the room and cried, “There’s a bomb in the building! We’re all gonna die!” ...or not.

Instead, I chose to stay in a conscious, rational state so that I could make clear decisions based on the highest interest of everyone, *not* the highest interest of my own survival.

The irrational person has only the highest interest of their own survival in mind.

It’s not that they’re selfish; they’re just scared and reacting from that primal place of survival. I *do* remember being scared when we got that bomb threat, but also extremely focused. I responded to the threat knowing that no matter what, my job was to ensure that everyone was out of harm’s way (except for those who volunteered to stay).

When you are emotionally charged and still in control, you are not irrational. When you are triggered and start saying and doing things that seem excessive for the circumstances, you will be viewed as erratic and out of control—in other words, irrational.

Another example of the difference between emotionally charged and irrational is when I was a teenager. I was around 17, and a friend of mine sold me some tires for my car.

I distinctly remember him telling me that he’d take ten dollars for each tire. So the next day he asked me when I was going to pay the forty dollars for the two tires I got from him.

I said, “You said they were ten dollars each.”

He replied, “No, I said they were twenty dollars each.”

I laughed, because I thought he was joking. I then said something like, “Very funny. I’ll give you twenty dollars because that’s what you told me.”

I could see his face get red, and his expression went blank, then angry. He quickly ran up to me. His body tightened up and he said something to the effect of, “If you try to rip me off, I’m gonna punch you in the face!”

I was caught off guard, because I’d never seen him act this way before. The first thing I said was, “Whoa, we don’t need to do this. I remember you said ten dollars for each tire, but if you really believe you said twenty, then I’ll give you twenty for each. We’re friends and I don’t want this to come between us.”

He calmed down immediately then apologized that he got so angry.

It doesn’t even matter who was *right* in that situation because the point I am making here is that he was bordering on irrationality, but wasn’t necessarily irrational. His body and temper were on high alert, but he was still listening and responding to reason.

If he wanted to he could have simply followed through and punched me right then and there. And even though he was angry, he was *still* behaving reasonably. If he had just swung at me, that would have led to a different outcome for sure.

He was really upset, but still open to communication. And, *it wasn't personal*. He was protecting himself, but his anger wasn't really about *me*. It's true that I triggered that anger in him. After all, he felt as if he was being cheated. But his reaction was more about survival than anything.

If he believed I was lying or trying to cheat him, that would certainly have caused him to feel unsafe around me in some way.

When you feel unsafe, you respond to the world more out of self-protection.

Don't take someone else's behavior personally. Keep a level head to keep the peace for as long as you can so that *you* are not responding out of self-protection. Someone else's emotions are always personal to *them* anyway, not to you.

Another person's emotions do not define who you are. If someone gets angry at you, it is anger they feel inside due to the story they've convinced themselves of. If you take it personally, then you get sucked into that story and their emotions.

I realize it's easier said than done to not get offended or sucked into the drama, but just hearing this now may help you next time you are about to respond to someone else's behavior.

When you get involved in their drama, *you* start to become irrational *too*, or at least emotionally charged with less of a chance of staying rational.

Now I don't recommend you say, "Well, this is about you, not me; so good luck with it." But just being cognizant that the other person is reacting out of some primal survival need will help you to stay in a more objective place when they are in that state of mind.

Trying to figure out if someone is overreacting is harder when *you* get triggered and react too. But if you can learn to exhibit some self-control when someone gets into this more excited state, you can usually calm the situation by helping them fulfill whatever need they have.

Since I preferred not to fight and chose to *keep* my friendship with the guy who sold me the tires, I chose to *submit* and just pretend he was right. It was a reasonable course of action to get the *best possible outcome*.

It helps to keep a level head in order to get that best possible outcome. Otherwise, you do more *hoping* that the situation will get better than *doing* something that might actually make the situation better.

Just like with the bomb threat, I decided to take action instead of *hope* that no one would lose control or “freak out”.

I realized that this situation could make people become irrational, but by keeping a level head myself, I was able to direct everyone to the best possible outcome.

The best possible outcome *did* happen that day because the bomb sniffing dogs never found a bomb. It turns out that a disgruntled employee was just trying to ruin our day.

As a result of that event however, we did update our Standard Operating Procedures with regard to bomb threats. Fortunately, we never needed to use that process, but it was a good lesson to go through regardless.

Now let’s get into a few effective, practical steps that will help you deal with irrational people.

Agree to Agree

If there's anything I've learned with the clients I've worked with over the years, it's that everyone has their own distinct perception of reality. People have their own unique belief systems and reasoning that leads them down the paths they take in their lives.

Because of this you have to come to the realization that there is no such thing as "common" sense. After all, there cannot be common sense when we all have slightly (or radically) different belief systems.

Beliefs stem from a lifetime of references (events in our personal history) and assumptions about the world. We will never all share the same history, therefore we will never all have the same belief systems. This is important to remember as we talk about the two most powerful, practical steps to take when dealing with irrational people.

The first one has to do with letting go of what you know to be true.

You're Absolutely Right

If you embrace that your own belief system is not the only one everyone should adopt, you will be able to be more flexible in your behavior. The more flexible you are, the more likely you will be able to bring someone back from an irrational state.

Here is the first powerful, practical step to take when dealing with an irrational person:

Don't disagree with them

Yes, even if they are completely wrong! If they have overreacted to something and are now acting irrationally, don't disagree with what *they believe to be true*. I'm not saying you should out and out agree with them, I'm saying *don't disagree*.

The most important step to take with someone in this state is to keep the line of communication open. The way you respond will determine if that happens or not.

When someone is being irrational, reason is thrown out the window and logic doesn't exist. In that state, all they want to do is fulfill a need. So if you *don't* disagree with the person's point of view, you will be able maintain [rapport](#) with them. This gives you time to talk with them some more and figure out what they need in that moment.

By maintaining rapport, you can eventually lead them *out* of irrationality and into a more conscious state of awareness. But first, you need to synchronize with them by doing something called "pacing and leading".

Pace Their Experience

There's a technique called '*pacing and leading*' that I want to teach you. It involves understanding a person's point of view first and foremost, then slowly guiding them into another point of view. With practice, this technique can be used quite effectively to deal with irrational people.

Pacing is what you do to gain trust with another person by verbally reflecting back to them what they just told you about their perception of the world and what they're currently experiencing.

For example, if you are dealing with an irrational person who is angry at someone, you can acknowledge that they are angry at that person by saying something like, "So you're pretty angry with them, aren't you? What happened?" This shows that you hear them and understand what they are going through.

To pace someone is to let them know you are listening and you hear them—without expressing judgment.

When you want to learn more about what they're thinking and you *aren't* judging what they're saying, they will realize they you are absolutely listening to them. You do this by staying present and giving them the space to speak what's on their mind.

The trick is to *not* disagree with them. If they are scared about aliens coming to abduct them, ask them to tell you more. If they are worried that their doctor is working for the CIA and is tapping their phone, ask them what else they know about the doctor.

Act as if you believe what they are saying. And repeat it back to them on occasion to prove that you are listening.

"Whoa wait, your doctor is in the CIA? Wow! How did you find this out?"

Try not to sound condescending if you don't believe them. Give them the feeling that they are safe to tell you anything. This will allow you to connect with them on their level instead of having them connect with you on yours.

"What else did your doctor do? Do you think the hospital knows?"

The whole point of pacing is to be curious and act interested in *everything* they have to say. It will show them that you care and want to learn what you can about their situation.

Even though you may want to tell them they're crazy and need help, *keep a level head*.

Have you ever talked to a customer service agent who just didn't understand why you were so angry? Or worse, they didn't seem to *care* that you were angry?

You know the type... they always answer your angry comments with things like, "I'm sorry, that's our policy. There's nothing I can do."

And you respond, "I'm telling you that your company caused the problem so it's not *about* policy, it's about *you correcting the issue!*"

And they respond with something like, "I apologize, but there's nothing we can do."

The reason many service-oriented people can get us so upset is that they ignore the first rule of thumb in customer service, which is:

Seek to understand first.

By taking an absolute stance like, 'no matter what you say, there's nothing we can do', a customer service rep will almost always increase a customer's upset.

However, whether you're in customer service or not, so many problems could be resolved a lot faster if you sought to understand another person before doing almost anything else. Stephen Covey talks about this more extensively in his book, [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#).

Essentially, everyone who communicates (which is *everyone*) wants to be understood first and foremost. Otherwise, there really is not communication.

So when you meet someone who makes it a priority to understand you and how you feel, and *wants* to listen to what your beliefs are, you *connect* with that person.

You bond in a way.

Some salespeople are trained in this very technique which is why they can make a lot of money. When you can be, or at least *act*, interested in everything someone else has to say, it goes a long way in developing a trust and is a great method of creating rapport with them.

When someone is being irrational or even just really excited or agitated about something, it can sometimes be hard to communicate with that person because we aren't in the same space as them.

However if you act *extremely interested* in them and their plight, and just want to know more of what's happening inside of them it does a few things:

1. They feel like someone cares
2. They no longer feel like that they have to tackle this problem by themselves
3. They get to release some emotions by venting.

Pacing someone allows the person to ease up a little because they get to release some of their steam on someone else.

I won't lie... you'll need to be ready for the consequences of any type of communication with someone acting irrationally.

You might want to take what they have to say *too* personally and may not be able to handle it. But if you are resilient and *really* want to help them come back to reality, then listen to them and *seek to understand them*.

When they've eased up a little and seem to trust you, it may be time to start the second part of this technique called *Leading*.

Lead the Way!

When you make someone feel understood, they will feel like they are not alone in their struggles. They will feel connected to you in a way because you are listening to them and letting them be themselves. This lets them trust you and listen to what you have to say.

Not only will they listen, but they might actually do what you say as well. When you are in this kind of rapport, they may actually start unconsciously *pacing you*.

Leading is when you behave the way you want someone else to behave.

Just like the story I told of that lady who wanted to get off the plane. I listened and related to her so that she knew I understood her. I was pacing her, walking along the same path as I listened and sought to understand her.

Once I knew I was successfully pacing her (understanding her point of view and not discounting or invalidating her beliefs), I then helped her get back into a calmer state by leading her there because she trusted me.

If I never sought to understand her view of the world *first* and just said, "You need to calm down right now", I wouldn't have developed rapport and she may have had a breakdown.

Who knows? Maybe if I had yelled at her she would have been more scared of me than anything else then acted differently from that point on. But I'm glad I chose the path I did as it led to the best possible outcome.

Another example is a time I worked with someone I didn't like at all. He had a superiority complex and believed he knew what was best for everyone. Well, one day our supervisor yelled at him, putting *him* down in front of other people. I wasn't there at the time, but he relayed what happened to me.

As he told me the story, I paid close attention... *I paced him*. I listened to him and made sure to understand his perspective so I could relate to him and his story. After he shared everything with me, I started asking him questions like, "What do you think you did to make him (the supervisor) so mad?" and "Do you think you deserved it?"

You might think those questions are sort of accusatory, but because I paced his telling of the story and stayed genuinely interested in his perspective, my questions came off as *supportive* of him instead. He knew I understood his perspective already so he believed I was agreeing with him.

If I had not gained rapport first, he might have taken my questioning as a bit harsh towards him. However, since I paced him and made him feel comfortable and trusting towards me, my questions made him think about his role in the situation.

After our talk, he reflected on what happened. He thought that *maybe* he could have acted a little differently. He also realized that his own behavior might have been over the top causing the supervisor to lose his patience with him.

What's funny is that I didn't even like the guy, but I still chose to relate to and understand him. By doing this, he opened up to me. And by the end of the conversation, he wasn't as agitated anymore.

What I really wanted to say was, "Why don't you just quit?" But he was in a vulnerable place and *did* open up to me, so I didn't have the heart to do that.

I realize that **pacing** and **leading** may sound a bit manipulative, but if helps someone go from feeling bad to feeling better, then the outcome isn't so terrible. And of course, you always want to use these kinds of techniques ethically.

Remember, no matter what you do, your words and actions *are* going to influence the irrational person you're dealing with in one way or another, so you might as well communicate with them more consciously to create the best possible outcome for all involved.

Now that you have that tool in your communication tool belt, let's talk about something you probably aren't going to want to do, but it works phenomenally well!

You Think That's Irrational? Watch This!

Probably the most effective method of leading an irrational person back to a calmer, more rational state is to *act more irrational than them!*

It sounds counterintuitive, I know, but now we're really diving into how flexible you can be. Remember a few pages ago when I said "The more flexible you are, the more likely you will be able to bring someone back from an irrational state"?

The reason this works is because of pacing and leading. If you truly want to develop rapport with someone so that you can lead them back to a more calm and reasonable state, you can pace their current experience *then* behave in a similar or even more irrational way.

The more irrational you can be in your behavior, the more likely someone will snap out of theirs.

It's like they become rational because you become irrational. It's similar to reverse psychology.

In the example I shared earlier with you about that coworker I didn't like, I did this very thing. He was upset at our boss and was saying things like, "He's a nobody, he doesn't have the right to talk to me that way."

I replied by saying, "You're absolutely right. I would totally go in there and punch him square in the face. Who cares about your job? Who cares about a stupid lawsuit? It's worth the risk and it saves your dignity and respect!"

I became so agitated and "on his side" by getting all worked up over his issue, he had to actually calm *me* down!

I chose to be flexible. I acted uncharacteristically aggressive and unpredictable. The more volatile and irrational I became, the more rational he started behaving.

Why?

Probably most people will start to consider the consequences when someone we're with seems to be taking things too far.

The more aggressive actions I suggested, the more he started to realize the consequences of the decision he was about to make. I made him imagine what it would be like to go even farther than what he originally considered, traveling beyond the limits of his current irrational thought process *so that I could bring him back to awareness.*

When someone is angrier or more aggressive than you're willing to be, your own fear and survival instincts may kick in and you will likely withdraw your original intentions.

If they intend to yell at someone, but you express the intention of punching that someone in the face or slashing their tires (for example), the irrational person is very likely going to "reel" you back in.

Overpowering their irrationality with your own will decrease their emotional energy and put *them* into caretaker mode. A caretaker will be more likely to keep the peace and make sure everyone stays safe. When someone is in caretaker mode, they will usually return to a more rational state of mind.

Acting more irrational than the irrational person is a really neat trick, but you *do* have to be careful how you use it. If the irrational person has it in them to do what you're suggesting, and they're already very excitable, it's possible they would actually follow through on the things that you're suggesting.

As I think back to my situation with my coworker, I really should have said, "I'm going to wait for him in the parking lot and smash a crowbar over his head. He has no right to talk to anyone like that. I don't care what happens, he deserves it!"

My coworker might have said, "Are you serious?" To which I would have replied, "I'm dead serious. You deserve to be treated better than this."

Of course, I'm *not* serious at all, *it's just an act!* But to an irrational person that you're trying to reel in, this kind of acting may be exactly what's needed to calm them down. It's called [Behavioral Flexibility](#) and it can be useful in all kinds of situations.

If you act more irrational than they do, they will likely just snap out of their irrational trance and figure out a way to calm *you* down. Again, just be careful with this technique.

In fact, you want to be careful with *any* of these steps because when someone is in any type of amplified or erratic state, they have the ability to do irrational things that can be dangerous.

Because irrationality is a more unconscious state of mind where the person has little to no conscious control of their actions, it's important to know when to walk away.

"Conscious control" is when you are fully aware and cognizant of what you're doing. However, most irrational people are not conscious of their behavior and are very focused on one thing, which we'll talk about next.

Unconscious Uncertainty

Irrational people are less consciously aware of their surroundings and more focused on fulfilling a need. When you know what need that is, you can help fulfill it. Or, you can at least give the *impression* that you are helping the person fulfill it.

Remember that irrational behavior sometimes involves you being flexible enough in your *own* behavior to bring the person back to *conscious awareness*.

When someone is in any type of heightened emotional state, they are either more conscious and more aware of their surroundings or *less* conscious and more focused on their immediate needs.

Knowing the difference is important because when someone is consciously aware, they can still be reasoned with. But if they go beyond the threshold of awareness and enter into a more unconscious, primal state of response, they become unpredictable.

This is when it's important to tune into your senses to detect any possible danger.

Axe of Aggression

I had a coaching client who said that one night while she and her husband were arguing, she said something that made him angry. And for the first time in their marriage, she actually feared for her safety.

She said she never saw him look at her the way he looked at her that night. She felt him completely disconnect from her and his face went blank.

He ended up grabbing an axe and walking out the door.

She didn't know if he was going to come back in and use it as a weapon against her or their family, but in that moment she realized that he had the capability to become someone else that might actually be dangerous.

Fortunately, he didn't hurt anyone that night and just blew off some steam outside.

However, there's a fine line between conscious control and unconscious reaction. Who knows how close he was to crossing the line to losing control.

You've probably seen this in people yourself. When someone gets pushed so far that they "snap", they jump into pure survival mode and become laser focused on fulfilling a need. In this case, her husband might have felt that he needed to eliminate a perceived threat.

There may have been no actual threat, but perception is everything!

Fists of Childhood Fury

Like the husband in the last example, *I* experienced this type of “snap” a long time ago when I was around 11 or 12.

There was a bully that lived in my neighborhood that forced me to be his friend. So every now and then he would come over my house and we’d play. At least, *he* would play and I would pretend to be happy and go along with it until he went home.

One night after we play wrestled a bit, I had had enough and sat at the table. He decided that he wanted to keep wrestling, so he said, “Come on, let’s wrestle some more!”

I said, “No, I’m done”

He insisted, “Come on! Let’s wrestle!”

I said, “No, I don’t want to”

“Let’s go, let’s wrestle!” and he started lightly pushing me and play slapping me in the face.

I said more firmly this time, “No, I don’t want to!”

He wouldn’t let up. “Come on, let’s go. Let’s wrestle!”

I was getting angrier with each passing moment and no matter how many times I said “no”, he insisted on wanting to wrestle some more. My blood was beginning to boil.

This was the first time I had felt this kind of rise in me. I had never felt what I was feeling in that moment. The anger was coming to a breaking point.

And when he slapped me across the face one last time, I snapped. I felt like I completely disconnected from reason because I don’t remember *consciously* taking the next step I took, but it happened...

I swung my arm around towards him and slammed my fist into his jaw. His head whipped around from the impact and he fell to the floor. When he landed, he laid there holding his mouth and covering his face. I’m not sure if it was out of embarrassment, hurt, or a combination of both.

But apparently I walloped him good because he didn’t get up for what seemed like an eternity. Immediately I felt all my anger disappear right then and there. And I calmly sat down again and said, “I told you I didn’t want to wrestle anymore.”

When he finally got up, I don’t remember if he looked at me or said anything, but I do remember that he left the house to go home.

Snap Decision

We *all* have the ability to “snap”. We all have the capability of becoming irrational.

When you are pushed and pushed and pushed, you will eventually reach your threshold and push back. It’s hardwired in you.

In fact, over the thousands of years of our adapting and evolving intelligence, we’ve learned to *repress* more and be *more tolerant* when people are pushing us. This can be a good thing, as we don’t want to just react hastily in every situation because we could hurt people when we really don’t mean to.

However, this learned conditioning also makes it more likely that a person who has been repressing and building steam over time will snap when pushed to the extreme.

You have the ability to snap even if you are the kindest, most sincere person in the world. You can become irrational just like everyone else, simply because you have that built-in mechanism that is designed to reach a threshold. Once that threshold is exceeded, the mechanism activates and you might respond with little or no conscious control.

I hold a personal belief that the more subservient, or submissive, you’ve been in your lifetime, the more likely that if and when you do snap, *it’ll be like a nuclear explosion*.

Typically submissive people have a lot of repressed anger because the act of just *being* submissive builds resentment in them. At some level, we all know that repressing our emotions and not speaking up for what we need is not healthy.

Sometimes, there is value in being silent and knowing when to hold your tongue. However, submissive people do this repeatedly throughout their lives. They continually repress their negative emotions, which then buildup over the years and become a ticking time bomb.

So it’s not necessarily the hotheads you need to worry about so much, it’s the quiet ones! At least with the hotheads, you know what to expect; but you never know what the silent ones can bring into a situation.

You’ve heard things like that on the news, right? “Oh, he was always so quiet and nice. He couldn’t have killed all those people.”

I’m not trying to generalize quiet people because I’m typically a quiet person myself. (It’s hard to believe I host a personal growth show!) But I’d like to think my quietness comes from the enjoyment of the present moment and not getting wrapped up in everyday drama.

In the past, my quietness was usually the time I swallowed anger or sadness. During these years of my life, all of that negativity was building inside of me and causing me to behave in ways that I’m not proud of.

However, once most of those negative emotions were released and I became more of an individual who honored his personal boundaries, my bad behavior disappeared.

So there are quiet people who are quiet because they don't have much to say, then there are quiet people swallowing anger and believing they can't speak up for one reason or another, all the while feeling resentful about it. These are the ones that have a lot of power stirring in them, but perhaps we'll cover that topic in another book.

Summary

When it comes down to it, irrational behavior really can seem impossible to deal with. Have you ever watched those police videos where the officer is trying to talk rationally to a really intoxicated person? The officer is doing his or her best to communicate, but the conversation usually goes nowhere. Too much alcohol can create irrational behavior.

I know this first hand actually, as one morning I woke up to find smashed eggs all over the kitchen. We're talking on the floor, the ceiling, the walls... everywhere. It was like a chicken exploded. But it turned out to be the result of my stepfather's indulgence in alcohol the night before.

When alcohol or drugs are involved it's almost pointless to deal with that person's irrational behavior. You'll need to either get out of their way or do what you can to keep them from harming themselves or anyone else.

And if you have to deal with that more often than not, you may want to consider not having those people in your life anyway. People that act irrationally more often than not *can* become dangerous.

I realize there are different levels of rational and irrational behavior, and we have to judge each individual *in the moment*, but we're all observant enough to know when things don't seem right.

Just remember, *irrational people are just trying to fulfill a need.*

So be curious. Find out what they need.

Can it be fulfilled?

Can something else placate them for now?

If you've tried to calm the person down and it's not working, remember that irrationality is a state in which the person is overreacting to something. If the person is *over*-reacting, then you know they've already gone beyond logic, and cannot be reasoned with.

It's just not going to happen.

Well, it won't happen *easily* that is, because if the person has reached the point of irrationality, *reason* left the building a long time ago.

Irrational people let emotion cloud their logic. The tricky part is to get through that cloud and send a message into their brain. Here is a quick reference to the steps outlined throughout this book:

1. **Ask yourself, “Am I dealing with this because I want to or because I feel like I have to?”**

Remember, just because someone is getting irrational doesn't mean you have to be involved. Walk away or stay, but you *do* have a choice.

2. **Don't take personally anything an irrational person says to you**

We tend to remember the mean things that someone said to us instead of all the nice things they said. Irrational behavior makes seemingly normal people do very hurtful things.

Remember to *consider the source*. When someone is being what you believe to be irrational, then they have lost the ability to reason and be logical or practical. What they say and do is based fulfilling a need, and they may not be able to connect with that rational part of themselves at that point.

Don't take what they say or do personally. It's not about what they think of you, it's about the fear they feel inside themselves. When behavior stems from fear, people behave uncharacteristically and unpredictable.

3. **Don't disagree with irrational people**

If they are *already* irrational, then it's time to get a little irrational yourself. *Don't* disagree with what they're saying, at least verbally. This is where pacing and leading comes in.

Pace what they believe by seeking to understand where they are and what they are thinking *right now*. Once you do, they will tend to trust you.

Then when you develop a good rapport with them you can start leading them back to reality. It's hard to get an irrational person to just listen to your commands. But if you build and maintain trust with them, you will have much less work to do when you lead them into a new state of mind.

Remember that seeking to understand someone tells them that:

- You care
- They are not alone
- They have the freedom to vent and express themselves

If you can help them feel a little less frazzled and a tad more in touch with reality, they may come back on their own.

4. **When all else fails, act more irrational than them**

This is where your true acting skills come into play. If they are so irrational that they won't listen to anyone, be *even more* irrational than they are.

It may be *the thing* that snaps them out of it. If you don't think you can do that or you decide that it might be too dangerous to move forward with that step, then go to step 5 right now.

5. **Get you and anyone else nearby out of danger before it's too late**

When people snap, it may seem hopeless. Sometimes you can reel them back in and sometimes you can't. But maybe some of the tools in this book will help you the next time you need to deal with that kind of situation.

Or if anything, maybe this book will help you to communicate with all different kinds of difficult people in your life, not just those who have gone so far as to become irrational.

Pacing and leading are excellent tools when you want to communicate with people that seem a tad challenging, like a specific relative or two during the holidays for example! Or, that one person you need to deal with at work.

Whoever it is for you, I wish you stress-free communication, always!

“Excuse Me, I Have a Medical Emergency”

The woman I sat next to for the entire flight was almost in full panic. But when I told her to look directly at me and listen to every word I said, she did. She found some semblance of security in my voice and stared into my eyes while I gave her the “escape route” she was looking for (an escape from her fears).

Everyone was standing and blocking the exit, and we were quite a ways toward the back of the plane. Getting to the front was going to be quite a chore and was only going to add more delay in her getting to the front of the line, let alone getting off the plane as fast as she could.

But she had a mission. I laid out her escape plan and she accepted the order. She actually handed me her purse so that nothing would interfere with her getting off the plane. I made sure to grab her bag as well.

She tapped on the first shoulder and said, “Excuse me, I have a medical emergency”. The first person moved to the side so she could go by. Then she repeated the process - tapping on shoulders and making her way to the exit calmly telling people that she had a medical emergency.

I eventually lost sight of her but I did notice that people *were* letting her through. It probably wasn't an actual medical emergency but it could have turned into something much worse. After all, a woman screaming uncontrollably on a plane might have caused quite a stir.

She could have been tackled by an Air Marshall, handcuffed, and carried out! That would have done nothing good for her claustrophobia, or whatever she was experiencing.

When I finally exited the plane and walked up to the gate, I saw her standing there. She gave me a hug and said, “Oh my God, I feel so stupid! Thank you so much for helping me.”

I told her she did great and that we all have surprise moments that we think we can't handle. I told her, “You handled it great! You stayed in control and made it off the plane safely.”

I handed her back her purse and bag. She gave me another hug, and I never saw her again. I'd like to think that in the future, if she's ever in that kind of situation again, she'll believe that she can get through it just like she did that day on the plane.

We all know someone who can get a little irrational every now and then. The trick is to reel them back in so that their behavior doesn't escalate.

And if you find *yourself* as the irrational person, well... hopefully a friend has read this book and will save *you* from creating a scene.

Final Thoughts

Even though this book seems to be about how you can help others, it is really about helping yourself. Everything you can do to help someone else *creates a better world for you*.

I realize the steps outlined in this book might sound a little selfish and self-serving, but you are *allowed* to feel selfish, especially if it benefits others! Besides, we are all here to help each other through the challenges in life, so the more tools you have at your disposal, the better off we all are.

I felt so good helping that woman off the plane. She felt better and so did I. Imagine what might have happened to us all if she had spiraled out of control and went into a full meltdown.

When you can feel good about helping someone through a difficult situation, others around you will feel good too. Your feelings dictate your behavior, which creates a ripple effect of positivity extending beyond yourself and to the people around you.

Your happiness creates happiness.

So learning what you can to help others creates a better world. I'm all for that.

I want you to know that you have what it takes to create the life you want. You are unique and powerful, and have so much more potential than you believe.

Keep learning and growing, and keep that light shining brightly in you. The world is just starting to get to know you; and it *wants* to know you because **you are amazing!**

The Overwhelmed Brain

I Appreciate You

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I always appreciate reading book reviews!

Contact Me

If you have any questions, reach out to me on my website here:

<http://theoverwhelmedbrain.com>

About The Overwhelmed Brain

There are a *ton* of personal growth shows out there. Whether you go to a live seminar to see people like Tony Robbins, or buy someone's audio program designed to motivate you to be happy and successful, there's something for everyone.

However, there's a common thread I've seen and heard through most of the programs, seminars, videos, and books... and that's *repackaging*.

Many speakers and authors repackaging what you've already learned and probably tried to apply in your life. So when I created [The Overwhelmed Brain](#) personal growth show, the one thing I wanted to avoid was repackaging what you very likely already know.

However, there *is* a benefit to watching, reading or listening to repackaged personal development content. Sometimes you don't really absorb what's being taught until it's presented in a way that resonates with you. Whether that's because you really connect with the speaker or author, or because it's worded in a sequence and format that makes sense.

For example, for the longest time, when personal growth speakers used the term "energy" or "vibrations", it bothered the heck out of me. In a way, it still does because they are both all-encompassing terms that could mean anything.

"How did Mary get that raise?"

"Why, she just put out the vibration of abundance into the universe, and it came back in the form of cash"

"Oh, that makes perfect sense!"

No, it doesn't.

When I created *The Overwhelmed Brain* internet radio show, I wanted to stay away from abstract concepts like “energy” and “vibrations”, because they weren't a roadmap to learning and growing. They were part of a bigger picture that was missing a lot of the details.

It's like asking, “How'd that person find the love of her life?”

“Oh, she just walked into a bookstore, and the rest is history!”

“Huh? Wait, back up. Who approached who? Who said what? Did they glance at each other? What were the circumstances? Were they both single and was there immediate chemistry?”

Details like this are often left out of many success stories, whether that's success in health and wellness, finances, love, or any of a number of other life events.

It's the details and the step-by-steps that I found lacking in a lot of personal growth teachings. It's easy for someone to get on stage and say, “All you need to do is to think positively, and say the following affirmations a hundred times a day. Now buy my books and CDs to tell you the same thing, only in a different way.”

OK, I'm exaggerating a little bit. The point is I created a personal growth show for critical thinkers. When you think critically, you question abstract concepts because you want to know the “how” and “why” of things.

And when it comes down to it, all you really want to know is what it takes to get from point A to point B, without having to figure out what the teacher actually means when they use highly interpretative words.

If you interpret their words the right way, you win. But if you interpret them the wrong way, you don't. Then you're told you just didn't believe enough, or think positively enough.

The only reason I share this is to let you know that I do my best to avoid giving you abstract advice or highly interpretable information. I *do* believe there is a process to follow to become happier and create more peace in your life. And I do my best to give you the practical steps to get there.

Sometimes those steps involve just asking yourself questions. Other times, you need to change what you're doing to get a different result. Overall, *you are amazing*, and I'm here to help you realize that one episode, or book, at a time.

For a weekly personal growth tip and updates on new episodes, sign up for the newsletter here: <http://theoverwhelmedbrain.com/tips/>

Want to learn what it takes to really be happy? Check out:

[Clear the Path to Happiness: Powerful, Practical Steps to Become Happier, Feel Better, and Enjoy Living](#)

For deeper, interactive learning, look into these workbooks:

[Values Workbook: Discover what's most important in all aspects of your life so that you can stop self-sabotage!](#)

[Anxiety Buster Workbook: Ending the worry and anxiety about unresolved problems](#)

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About The Author



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*Personal Empowerment Coach and
Host of The Overwhelmed Brain*

Back in 2005, I went through a breakup of a 13 year relationship. It was quite a shock to my system. One night she told me she no longer loved me. The next day, she moved out. And shortly afterwards, I fell into a depression.

I got hit pretty hard. I didn't realize how much I took being in a relationship for granted. I was so comfortable (and naive). I didn't see any of the warning signs. The first few months of my depression, I was just trying to stay afloat. I didn't really have my own identity without her in my life. So I wandered around awhile.

I kept working, but it was always dark and lonely inside my head. I thought the best thing to do would be to find someone else with which to share my life. So one day, I joined an online dating site. I figured, maybe this was a good way to meet the woman of my dreams.

Well, I met someone and we hit it off right away. But, she lived 3000 miles away, so I had no clue how it was going to work out. But, after we met in person, we knew we had to be together (none of this long-distance relationship stuff).

So a few months later, I moved to California to be with her.

Well, after living together a while, we realized there was this one big problem:
I was still depressed!

And it was hitting me pretty hard, which made her think she might be better off without me.

She told me she wanted to leave.

That comment was what it took to break me completely. Suddenly, everything I hated about my life came out in tears. I was having a *huge breakdown*.

However, something shifted in me that night. All the crying and talking helped me release so much, that I felt quite peaceful afterwards. It wasn't over, by any means, as I was still depressed. But I realized that by expressing everything that was truly on my mind, it made a huge impact on the both the thoughts in my head, and my emotional well-being.

So I started exploring personal growth, psychology, and communication. I learned and became certified in brain sciences such as hypnosis and neuro-linguistics. I practiced meditation techniques on how to clear my mind and be present. And as I was healing myself, I learned how to communicate with others in such a way that they would also transform.

Unfortunately my marriage did not survive my personal growth journey. By the time I worked through many of my issues it was too late, she left.

The hardest part about the end of my marriage was that we had separated to work on ourselves to be better people for each other when we got back together. And as my issues were disappearing, which was one of the main causes of the problems in our relationship, her love for me was also disappearing. And as I grew closer and more in love with her than ever before, she told me she was no longer in love with me at all.

This was a true test of everything I learned about myself. But even today, I am at peace with just about everything that happens to, and around me. I've learned to stay mindful and present. It's rare that I feel stress or overwhelm, because I address it as soon as I start to feel any discomfort.

I've gotten more in touch with my emotions, and have learned to balance both the nurturing, receptive, feminine side of me, and the assertive, confident, masculine side (we all have both within us). It is this balance, along with staying in the 'now', that has brought more peace into my life than anything ever has.

I now help others break through their own negative thought-stream to live a stress-free life, both by hosting The Overwhelmed Brain and through [private coaching sessions](#) over Skype, on the phone and in person.

I follow my passion of helping others by sharing my knowledge and experience both face to face, and on the air with the entire world.

Thank You

I am grateful for you. **You are amazing!**

Thank you for being there for me listening, reading, learning, and growing. I look forward to connecting with you again.

Why I Do What I Do:

You! There is no reason to needlessly suffer because of your own emotional prison.

If you are suffering, I want to help you. If you have fears, I want you to conquer them or at least understand *why* you have them so you're not crippled by them.

Listen to the show, read [these books](#), and learn to **create the life you want**.

I appreciate you.