

# Overcome the Overwhelm

Relief Right Now

By Virginia Lang



Part 4

Ditch the Old Stuff

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## Overcome the Overwhelm

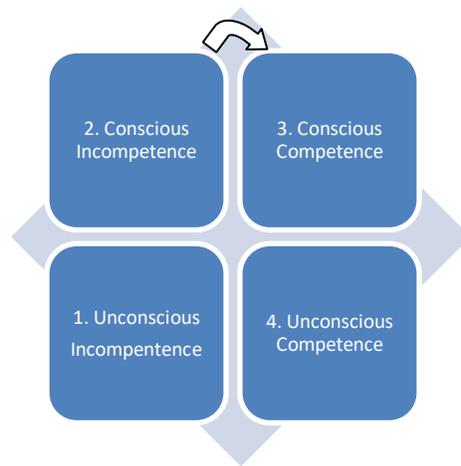
### Part 4 – Ditch the Old Stuff

#### Tip #4. Check your motives and get rid of old habits that sabotage your peace of mind.

We all have *stuff*. We have behaviors and habits that we wish we didn't and that we can't seem to get rid of.

Is it procrastination? Is it micro-managing? Is it perfectionism? What keeps us in a cycle of Overwhelm? The truth is, we only repeat behaviors that give us something in return.

For example, in *Overcoming Underearning* by Barbara Stanny, we learn about the quadrants of learning. They look like this:



- You start out in **Quadrant 1** on the lower left. *Unconscious Incompetence* means that you don't know what to expect from the process and you're probably excited to start something new. So no problem. No Overwhelm.
- In **Quadrant 2**, *Conscious Incompetence*, things get messy. You realize that you have so much to learn and so much to do. Now I'm Overwhelmed! It's the gap between where you are and where you want to be. Resistance kicks in. We feel trapped, panicky – and we react.
  - "I'm too busy. I don't have time to \_\_\_\_."
  - "I'll get to it later." (procrastinate)
  - "This is not my thing." (lose interest)
  - "I meant to do that, but I forgot" (selective memory)
  - "I just can't do this" (stressed and paralyzed)
  - The "yeah, but's" kick in (all kinds of inaction)
  - "This is taking WAY too long!" (impatient)

Look familiar? Sure does to me!

**We all go through these stages with every new project, task and creation. Knowing they are predictable helps us recognize them and ditch them when they land us in Overwhelm.** The key is to push through. The **ONLY** way out is through – or you don't get where you set out to go.

Remember, we don't keep behaviors unless they're giving us something we need.

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Sometimes we stay in the Overwhelm cycle because we won't give ourselves a break until *we* break (remember Against the Grain?). Overwhelm is useful to us subconsciously, so we keep the behaviors that cause it– we know we'll finally get us the time off we need. But it won't be until we've needed it for a long time.

Sometimes we get paralyzed in analysis and seeking perfection (remember Perfection is the Enemy?) because we're really afraid to let go of the work or put it out there to be judged. So we keep rewriting, reanalyzing, rethinking, reworking, and won't let anyone help, even if it's their job. Overwhelm is useful to us because we don't have to risk criticism or failure if no one else works on it or sees it.

Recognize and examine the behaviors that keep you stressed, that keep you from achieving – and DITCH THEM! Change your perspective.

If you continue to work in little steps, from wherever you are, at your own pace (remember *I can Do That?*) pretty soon – sooner than you think – you arrive at:

- **Quadrant 3**, Conscious Competence, where you have multiple “aha” moments and the puzzle starts to make a picture. You begin to realize that you can do it after all. And you pass through, out of Overwhelm and into:
- **Quadrant 4**, Unconscious Competence. Achievement. It's possible, it's familiar, it gets easier and easier, smoother and smoother. Until it's a skill you use easily and well.

To recap:

In Part 1, *I Can Do that*, we talked about making everything into smaller bits – manageable tasks. Make it smaller until you *can* do that.

In Part 2, *Perfection is the Enemy*, we spent some time on the Sloppy First Draft and Asking for Help. Trust yourself and trust your team or tribe to be different and to be brilliant. Delegate. Ease the pressure.

In Part 3, *Against the Grain*, we remembered to be kind to ourselves. Unplug from the stressors. Do something that makes you happy so you're prepared to come back and cheerfully face the work.

Now you've got another tool you can begin to work with for relief *right now*.

- **Examine your motives and ditch the old behaviors that are keeping you in the Overwhelm cycle.**

*So that's the Overcome the Overwhelm series – for now.*

Come to [www.LangConsult.com](http://www.LangConsult.com) and check out the stories from some of my clients. Take a look at the available services, workshops and topic. Contact me at [Ginny@LancConsult.com](mailto:Ginny@LancConsult.com) and schedule a complimentary conversation. Let's see if there's a way I can help you, your team, or your organization avoid the clutter, stress and burnout that's so often the result of our busy jobs and lives. I look forward to talking with you!

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**Virginia D. Lang** is a veteran management consultant who has worked in the corporate sector and the nonprofit community as an adviser on all aspects of community affairs for almost 30 years. Ginny has served as an expert coach, trainer, facilitator and consultant to an impressive array of nonprofit organizations and is an accomplished speaker and teacher.

Lang Consulting specializes in planning, training and development for nonprofit organizations and helps nonprofit professionals and board members develop their leadership skills in the areas of communication, fundraising, outreach, board/ staff development and volunteer management.

Ginny works nationally with nonprofits, and individual private clients; In Bellingham, WA, she is a member of Exploration Academy's Council of Advocates, the Vista Advisory Committee for the Opportunity Council, and she leads business and nonprofit workshops at Whatcom Community College. Ginny also presents for the Washington Nonprofits Training Institute and has served on the Steering Committee for the Whatcom Council of Nonprofits.

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