

Hello, you guys, welcome to the podcast of Finding Your Whelm. And I have to tell you right away that I have a big smile on my face because I am literally in the practice right now of finding my whelm. And I'll tell you why. Because I have a little puppy in the background who keeps barking. And I've started to record this a couple of different times because we're trying to keep her quiet. And I started to realize that I was starting to feel really frustrated about what's going on, and in fact, starting to feel overwhelmed. And how interesting is that? Because that's exactly what this podcast is all about. So, I'm going with it. I decided I'm not going to feel overwhelmed that I'm in the whelm. And so, if you all hear her barking in the background, that's just part of this podcast today.

So, the other reason that this is juicy is because the topic of finding your whelm has been floating around in my mind for a while because as I'm working with people, I'm noticing that there are two general states that block us from being our best selves, and one of them is being underwhelmed. So, if you've ever heard somebody say, whoa, that presentation was underwhelming. It means it wasn't impressive, right? It wasn't exciting, wasn't fulfilling. And when we feel underwhelmed, we may be checking the blocks doing what we need to do professionally and even personally. But maybe it doesn't feel fulfilling. Maybe it looks good from the outside, but you know that you're not doing your best or that you are not challenging yourself, or there is more for you to do.

And we can experience this in our relationships when they start to feel a little stale, or we feel like we know what the other person is going to order a dinner or we know what they're going to say about something, it can feel a little underwhelming. And we can also experience this professionally when we've been in the same position for a while, and we feel like we can run the numbers with our eyes closed. Or we can go through the motions, you know, without giving it a lot of thought. When we are no longer growing. When there's no thrill in the experience. And we're not learning new skills, or we just don't have this exciting sense of possibility that is underwhelmed.

And then there's the overwhelm, which I think many of us are very familiar with, we all know what this feels like. And I want to give you two examples to illustrate overwhelm. I was talking with someone recently who is highly scheduled, she would say that she is too busy. She gets up at 430 in the morning, she gets her family ready to get the kids ready for school. And immediately she starts on Zoom calls and working with clients and getting work done. And then she comes home and she's handling the kids again and dinner and cleanup and putting them to bed and then going back and finishing up emails and then basically falling into bed at the end of the night and then getting up and repeating that over and over and over again. And for her it feels like she has

no control over her schedule. That is overwhelming for her.

Now, she's talking with somebody else who just quit their corporate job. And they're going to start up their own tech company. And so, there's a lot of space right now. There's nothing scheduled, nothing that this person has to do. Now they know that they are going to create some strategy around business development, and that there needs to be some marketing and some sales and some phone calls and some updating to LinkedIn profiles and other things that need to happen. But they're not really sure where to start. And so even though they're not highly scheduled, they're also overwhelmed. He doesn't know the answer for where he needs to start.

And so, in those two examples, we can see that the schedules are very different. But what is the common denominator, they both feel overwhelmed, one of them feels stuck in their schedule, and the other one feel stuck in not knowing what to do next. So, the common denominator is not the situation. It's not the schedule. It's not the scenario. It's not the external environment. The common denominator is the feeling of overwhelm. And when we are overwhelmed, that can lead to being stuck as a not taking our next action. We freeze right where we are, we're not sure if this is the right thing to do, or if that's the right thing to do. Or we are running around doing all sorts of things and we're extremely busy, that maybe we're not moving the needle towards the result that we want. Whether it is life fulfillment, or project fulfillment, or doing something new in a relationship or professionally.

So those scenarios of feeling overwhelmed and feeling underwhelmed really are all about the feeling and how we are experiencing life. Now, all of us are experiencing overwhelm right now, to some degree or another with the current situation in terms of COVID and the new variation of COVID and the conflicting opinions and advice about COVID and several people that I've been speaking with are dealing with employees who are out. And so, they're understaffed, and the production is down, then they need to strategize new solutions and trying to do more with less people. And so, it's easy to see how that is overwhelming. And, and, and it is so helpful to know that the overwhelm that we are feeling the underwhelm that we are feeling is not related to external events. Our feelings are always related to the way that we are thinking about those events. And that is where the idea of whelm comes in.

And so, when I looked up whelm, there were two definitions. And this is the one that I really liked. It is an act or an instance of flowing or heaping up abundantly. And in my mind, I like to equate this concept of whelm with being at the beach and being in the water. So, imagine that you're at the beach, and you're out in the water, and you're trying to catch the perfect wave. And when you

catch the perfect wave, you are flowing, or you are heaping up abundantly you are on the top you are in the flow. There's lots of stuff going on beneath the surface, but you have caught the wave just right. But if you don't catch the wave, just write or you miss read it, you can catch like a little blip, and of going really slowly or not at all, and just kind of fizzling out, that's underwhelming. Or sometimes, the wave might catch you and you end up being tossed in the water, you know, with water up your nose and sand in your bathing suit. And that also does not feel good at all. So, the idea is to catch the perfect wave. To not be underwhelmed, and to not be overwhelmed, but to be whelmed. to find your whelm. And so, the question is, how do we do that. And I'm going to give you three specific ways to catch your whelm, to find your whelm.

When you find your whelm when you're riding that wave. You are living at the edge of your ability. You are in the moment you've got to balance you have to be aware of the environment and the waves and what's going on and you're reacting. But it's fun, it feels good, you're energized, you have found your whelm. So today, I want to talk about three ways to find your way home, and to stay in it. And as you all know, after my overwhelm with Emmy, for me, I know when I start to feel overwhelmed, and I want you to think about when you start to feel overwhelmed or underwhelmed.

I know that when I have a tightly scheduled day, as I do today, I know that I have one hour to record this podcast. And then I have time to create a video and then I have a meeting and then I have administrative tasks that I get to take care of that if that starts to get interrupted. And Emmy's barking or something is happening externally, there is an email or a glitch with my website or something that comes up that, that's when I start to feel the overwhelm. And for me that harkens back to my WestPoint days when we had to be somewhere at exactly 1400 hours and not a minute later. Or if I had to land a helicopter on an LC within a two minute timeframe. Time is part of my history and being on time is really important to you. And I know that's true for many of you as well. And so, if I'm not paying attention, I can go from energized and excited and loving what I'm doing to this energy of overwhelm. And I noticed that when I feel that energy in my body, and when I'm pointing outside of myself. When I'm pointing at me when I'm pointing at the schedule when I'm pointing at somebody else being late. And I don't like that my brain doesn't like that because if things are out of sorts, then I think that mean that I'm not in control, or that things won't get done or it's going to be stressful. And then like it's hopping, and it feels fast, I you we need to be able to notice that and to notice our tendencies of overwhelm, or even the tendency of underwhelm and be able to identify it so that we can change it.

Then I'm going to share one other thing this other visual is that when we are pointing to our

external environment. I literally want you to point at something right now like the way that you'd normally point you've got your pointer finger pointing out, you've got your thumb wrapped around your other three fingers, and notice that those three fingers are pointing in towards you. And that's a cue to say, okay, if I've been overwhelmed or underwhelmed This is how I can find my whelm because those three fingers pointing towards you stand for constraint, choice, and commitment. And those are the three ways that you can stay in your whelm or get back in your whelm.

So, let's start with the first one constraint has to do with being selective and your commitments and basically taking on projects and goals that really speak to you into your values and that they really aren't important to you that they're related to your vision. There is a great story that my son Kyle would really like because he is a math genius. And he might have even told me this story, but it's a story about a 10-year-old boy who came across an unsolvable math problem. And this unsolvable math problem came from the 1600s. And I might be butchering the name, but it's Fermat's Last Theorem. And he wrote in the margins of a book that was called Earth Medica. He wrote that he had proof of this theorem. But there wasn't room in the margin to write out the proof.

So, nobody could ever find the proof. And so, for 360 years, people have been trying to solve the proof. And so, this boy, Andrew Wiles, vowed to solve it. And he did. And finally, in 1993, he submitted proof to the theorem. But here's what happened, someone found a flaw in it. And so, what did Andrew do? He went back to the drawing board for a year, until he had the solution. And he solved the greatest math puzzle ever. He solved it. And this is what's so interesting about it. When they asked him why he even bothered to solve it. His answer was that he loved the challenge. And he loved math. And he was curious, truly curious. And so that energy, that curiosity, that connection to what's important, and intriguing and valuable to him, kept him in his wealth, he was persistent, precisely because it was important to him.

And so, part of constraint is about looking at what you are currently spending your time on. And what is truly important to you, where you can best spend your time. Now I know that sounds like a very obvious solution. And I speak to so many people who are wrapped around the axle about answering every single one of their emails, when they know logically that if they just stood back and waited for their colleagues or the expert in that particular arena to answer the email that they wouldn't have to spend time chiming in. But they do chime in, and they end up spending time on things that really are not that important to them, or where they can make the most difference.

So, it takes pausing, and getting creative and really thinking about what it is you want to spend your very precious time on. And so of course this is related to time blocking and organizing how much time and exactly when you're going to work on something, is it related to something that's important to you, and what is the result that you want. It's also related to boundaries in terms of who you are spending your time with, or who you're accepting meetings with, what events you're going to go to and which ones you're going to say no to.

And the interesting piece here is that so many of us plan our vacations or the details of a project, but we don't plan our own constraints, we don't plan our days. Or if we do plan our days, then we let other things like barking dogs, interrupt them, or emails or phone calls or other people's challenges. And we basically let ourselves get distracted. Sometimes we do that on purpose, right? Someone comes in the door, and you're like, ooh, this challenge is a lot more interesting than the paper that I'm working on or these sales calls that I don't want to do. So yes, let me go ahead and work on that. And so, there's no boundary or constraint.

And this is directly related to the second way of finding your wealth, and it has to do with choice it is making a decision and being decisive. And this is a big one right now. I'm sure you've seen many things about decision fatigue. And as leaders, you are making a lot of decisions and choices about work about your family what to do on a project what not to do on a project what to spend money on what not to spend money on who to see who not to see what emails to answer what emails not to answer, and that takes energy. And right now, in addition to all of that, we also have access to more information to more products and more options than we ever have before.

Just think about the options that you have to watch on Netflix. Do you guys ever do that? You spend an hour trying to figure out what you're going to watch, I remember when I had to get down off the couch and go over to the TV. I'm totally dating myself now and change the channel, right? There's 26 channels. And so, it's much more complicated now than it ever has been. And that is especially true when it comes to our health and our wellness and the food that we're going to eat. Think about going into the grocery store. I don't eat red meat or chicken. So, I eat a lot of beans and a lot of vegetables. If you go down the aisle grocery store and look for beans. Think about how many now there are to choose from. It's crazy. There's black beans, garbanzo kidney, Lima Pinto black eyed, and then on top of that there are different brands. And that's true for every overarching idea in terms of being healthy. Are you going to be vegetarian? Vegan, are going keto, intermittent fasting. Are you going to try this diet? I'm gonna try another one. My daughter sends me all the time all sorts of information that is constantly coming across her phone from Tik Tok - vitamins, juicing, what diet you should try what movement you should engage in. How do you

lose fat? How do you make your behind a bigger How do you tone up? How do you work out but still have energy?

And all of that is also so overwhelming. And it can be so overwhelming that we hop from one thing to another, and we never figure out what is right for us. Or we just freeze, and we don't do anything. I mean end up eating what we always have eaten, we end up moving the way that we always have, we end up doing the same things that we've done that don't work for us. And people ask me these questions all the time, what should I be doing in order to get x? And so, the answer to that is constrained in the way that I constrain that, in terms of how you're fueling, resting, and moving your body, we're just looking at those three areas. And within those, what is the quality, quantity, and frequency, and then we make educated decisions based on that. And if you are interested in learning about that, you can download the free checklist that I use with all my clients that constrains our choices from the very beginning. And the main reason that I did that is because the information can feel overwhelming, it makes it easier to decide.

So, give yourself fewer options, whether we're talking about your food, your movement, your rest, what type of beans you're going to eat, what are the steps you're going to take for the project that you have coming up, how you are going to make your business thrive, constrain your options, so that your choices are quicker, and it is easier to decide.

I also want to say that this is true for many other things. And Steve Jobs and Tony Robbins come to my mind, in terms of what they wear, they always wore black, they never had to think about or decide what they're gonna wear, they already knew what they're gonna wear. And I'm similar in that regard, my favorite store is White House Black Market, and I pretty much wear white and black. It's the only store that I really go to. So, every single day, you pretty much confined me in workout gear, Lululemon black pants, or dress pants, and a white or black top for the most part when I'm working.

So, when you constrain yourself, it makes it easier to choose you narrow it down and you choose. And the other thing about choice is the idea of deciding ahead of time that's linked to your calendar and what you're going to do throughout your day. It's linked to your wellness and your wellbeing protocol; you decide ahead of time at least 24 hours in advance what you will do. And so, then when it comes time, all you have to do is show up and do what you said you were going to do.

Now, this is when your brain is going to start to say things like, oh, it is time for me to work on

this project. But you know what, I could probably push this off until a little bit later in the day, I've got a few minutes here. So, I'm just going to check on email, I'm going to check social media. Or you know what, I didn't know that so and so it's going to be in town so one drink is not going to hurt. And this is where your brain is going to start to undecide your decision for you.

And that is where the third piece of all of this comes in and that is commitment. So, the first is constraint. The second is choice. And the third is commitment. And the bottom line for commitment is that you follow through no exceptions. There's no option B or C or D you're not changing things at the last minute. And the reason that this is so important, is because when you follow through on what you plan to do, when you stick to it, when you are committed to it beyond a shadow of a doubt, what you were doing is you were teaching yourself, integrity, and trust and respect. You are building your relationship with yourself. When you do what you said you were going to do. Especially when no one else knows whether or not you're going to keep that commitment. That is exactly where you want to keep your commitment. This is you supporting your own decision long enough to follow through. It's about you having your own back and creating integrity with yourself.

So, I'm not going to dive into that because I'm going to talk more about that in our next episode, because commitment is a really big deal. So, in summary, if you hear yourself thinking or saying out loud things like I am just too busy, or I can't think straight, I'm so overwhelmed, this is impossible, I have no idea how I'm going to get this done. Notice that and know that those thoughts are not about your external environment, those thoughts are about you. And those thoughts serve no purpose whatsoever. And so, when you hear that, and you're pointing at the world, and either how boring it is, and how underwhelming it is, or how there is so much to do and how overwhelming it is, remember the pointing of the finger, and that we're pointing one finger to that external world and blaming it. But really, there are three fingers pointing back towards you. And this is where your power lies. And remember that those three fingers that are pointing back to your inner world stand for constraint, and choice and commitment.

And that you have the ability to constrain those options to narrow things down. And to use your ability to take a stand, make a decision, and then to be willing to stick to it to commit to it. So, we always have the choice to be in overwhelm. I was choosing it earlier today with me. We also have the choice to be an underwhelm. And we also have the amazing ability to be in the whelm, to find our whelm to be a part of the solution.

And I want to leave you with this is I was researching this idea of being on the wave and being

in the whelm. I asked someone what does it mean when you are on the way when you're riding the wave when you're surfing, and they said I think it's called hang 10. So, I looked up hang 10 And I didn't know this maybe you know this, but I thought this is really interesting and apropos that the concept of hang 10 means you are perfectly balanced on your surfboard, and that the back of the board is covered by the wave. And that when the back of the board is covered by the wave and you're balanced, you can walk to the front of the board and hang all 10 of your toes over the front of the board. And that's where the idea hang 10 comes from. So, we can go from pointing outwards with our finger to hanging 10 with our toes, and that is how we can find our whelm. So that's it so go forth, create a hang 10. Create your whelm, release the overwhelm, release the underwhelm and enjoy being in the whelm and finding it enjoy living on the edge of your growth. Find your way home and enjoy it.

Hey there if you are ready to take your Wellbeingness© to the next level. Come visit thewellness.coach where I've got lots of free resources and make sure that you type in thewellness.coach (not .com) and I will see you there.