

SPARK 156

(Matrix Code: **SPARK156.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: A lack of authentic relationship produces overwhelm.

NOTES: Do you ever feel overwhelmed? Too many amazing possibilities to choose from? Too many urgent items on your *To Do* list? Too little synergy? Not enough time? Unanswered core questions about why now? Why me? Why at all? Too much physical pain? Too many pressures? Endless low drama around your kids? Neighbors? Boss? Relatives? Holidays? Too many bills to pay? Ever-worsening bad news in the world? Things a mess? Things falling apart? Too many inner conflicts with no resolutions in sight? Where are you supposed to get the capacity to handle all this?

Many symptoms can indicate that overwhelm is happening: irritability, over shopping, over eating, over sleeping, hysteria, panic, depression, isolating yourself, ineffectivity, low resistance to colds or infections, tendency towards accidents, lack of kindness, forgetfulness, headaches, explosive bursts of rage, inexplicable tears, unwillingness to provide hospitality, scattered focus, lack of initiative, avoiding taking care of yourself. Got any of these?

Overwhelm mirrors an internal knot of uncommunicated feelings. For example, frustration (anger) mixed with worry (fear) plus single-fighter solitude (sadness) can lead straightaway to overwhelm. Unexpressed feelings pile up one-by-one like trash when the garbage collectors are on strike. In only a few days you are buried under a mountain of burden that can crush you physically, mentally, emotionally, and energetically. Even if you express yourself through ranting and raving, unless that communication is received and understood by a second conscious intelligence, nothing changes and you continue suffering.

One popular tactic for side-stepping overwhelm is to leave your circumstances by looking for a new partner, a new job, a new place to live, even a new hairstyle. As stimulating as the *moving to the next thing* strategy seems, you may simply be wasting your time. Sooner or later you find the truth in Buckaroo Banzai's words: "Wherever you go, there you are." (And there *they* are too – the ones causing your overwhelm!). The same unsuccessful patterns soon repeat themselves in your new relationship, job, city, or apartment. Is this not so?

After a few escape failures other ways of leaving the circumstances get tempting: a glass of wine or bottle of beer at night, antidepressants or other drugs, debilitating illness, premature-senility, getting yourself locked away in prison, various forms of schizophrenia, suicide, etc. This, of course, only postpones your present personal development work until your next lifetime.

How do you avoid the devil's circle? How do you stop adding burdens that lead to overwhelm? Try a twofold approach. First upgrade your thoughtware. Then pursue authentic relationships by completing communications.

The thoughtware to upgrade are your unexamined assumptions. For example, by assuming: *the future will be like the past*, or: *I am in this moment powerless*, your internal conditions attract overwhelm like cheese attracts mold. Instead of making any assumptions at all, just experience your breathing. Check where your attention goes. Are you repeating those assumptions to yourself? Instead just breathe. Don't allow assumptions to make you so big that you no longer fit into a small now. The assumptions are false. Take them off like too many coats on a hot day. This way you retain the option of making completely new decisions about your life every three seconds. Without assumptions you stay involved in nature's flow and your future can show up unexpectedly.

At the same time you empty your closet full of assumptions, learn to complete communications to bring authenticity to your relationships. Digesting your daily life requires engaging a second collaborative consciousness. Opening yourself to authentic interactions with a second awareness catalyzes mini-transformations. This is an amazing secret.

But the qualifier that the relationship be *authentic* is crucial. Even if you have no role model for this you can do it. You are designed for it. Authentic relationship has two parts. First you make the decision to open your festering innards to sunlight and let your particular neurotic insanity be known. It may feel like you are dying. It may feel like a volcano of embarrassment. So what? You prefer feeling overwhelm? Second, you make up your mind to trust someone else. This might feel even worse.

It can help to recognize that it is not the circumstances that create your overwhelm. *It is the stories you use to arrange your relationship to the circumstances that creates your overwhelm.* Ask people to do the experiments below with you and decide to get radically honest with them. Reveal how it seems: *She is hurting me. I don't know how. He won't let me. It never changes. I am not good enough. Nobody understands me. It is impossible for me!* And so on. When the second person agrees to not judge, not rescue, not heal, and not pity you, but only to listen and repeat back what you say, your stories unravel when they hear them. Some stories may bubble to the surface from deep in your underworld or your ancient past. The objectivity of the second person's consciousness shines light on the convoluted games you have been playing, and you gain the chance to get off it, to quit playing victim. By carrying fewer (or at least different) stories you more easily enter the smallness of the present moment where your power to choose something completely different from what is happening right now originates.

EXPERIMENTS:

Here are three anti-overwhelm experiments to try which can also be combined into a weekly meeting:

1. **SPARK156.01** Have a CCC (*Conscious Complainers' Club*). Come together in a group of at least three people and nonstop for fifteen minutes (or as long as it takes) passionately state in rapid succession everything that is bothering you, who is a nuisance, what insane things they do, whatever is not working. Seethe, tirade, harangue, blame, resent, complain. Say what you hate about what is going on in your life. Plot glorious and outrageous revenge together. Use "I" statements. Be clear and specific. Give names, dates, places, and

detailed descriptions with long strings of colorful adjectives, such as, “Over and over with my bare hands I had to pick up this stinking little old dog, this guilty-eyed yellow-stained crippled blind-and-deaf jaw-twisted tick-ridden flea-infested drooling dog and take it outside to pee...” The only criterion is that you make sure each of you hears and understands everything the others say. You don’t have to agree! You only need to consciously comprehend each others’ sentiments. Each time you understand what another person complains about, shout out, “Yes! That’s damn right! And what I hate about that is...” or, “That’s for sure! And what pisses me off is...” There may, of course, be outbursts of insane laughter during a CCC, but hold the space and keep returning to serious complaining while at the same time having a blast!

2. **SPARK156.02** Arrange once a week to get a fifteen minute holding from someone else, then change roles and give a holding to them. This is done men with men or women with women, one person lying sideways across the lap of another, chest to chest, your head tucked-up into their neck, and their arms around you, no rocking, stroking or speaking. Photos showing the position are on pages 260 and 261 in the book *Conscious Feelings* by Clinton Callahan. In modern culture, since birth, we do not exchange enough healthy physical contact. Regular holdings, plus hugs, plus standing in circles with arms around the others’ shoulders, plus piling up together watching films, plus power naps lying on your back in a circle on the floor with heads to the center and shoulders touching, etc., help each person get in their body and accept their own human frailties and strengths.
3. **SPARK156.03** On a daily basis, make authentic being-to-being contact with another person to complete communications about anger sadness fear and joy. Please note that using completion loops is *universes* away from the typical mind-to-mind opinion-ping-pong so rampant in modern culture. Pages 217-224 in the *Conscious Feelings* book provide explicit instructions and thoughtmaps for making completion loops. In short, one person only listens while the other person speaks. After each key sentence the listener reports back what they heard the speaker say, including BOTH the feeling content (mad, sad, glad or scared) AND the information content. Then reverse roles. If the speaker seems lost, the listener can quietly and openly ask, “What has not been heard?” The point is that when a person repeats back to you what they heard you say it becomes objective that you have been heard. Being understood by the external consciousness completes a communication, *forever*. The emotional knots are gone. You are no longer stuck in the endless loop and you automatically go to the next level. But without the authentic relationship through which communications are completed it won’t be long before you go back into overwhelm. So find the people with whom you can stay in authentic relationship.