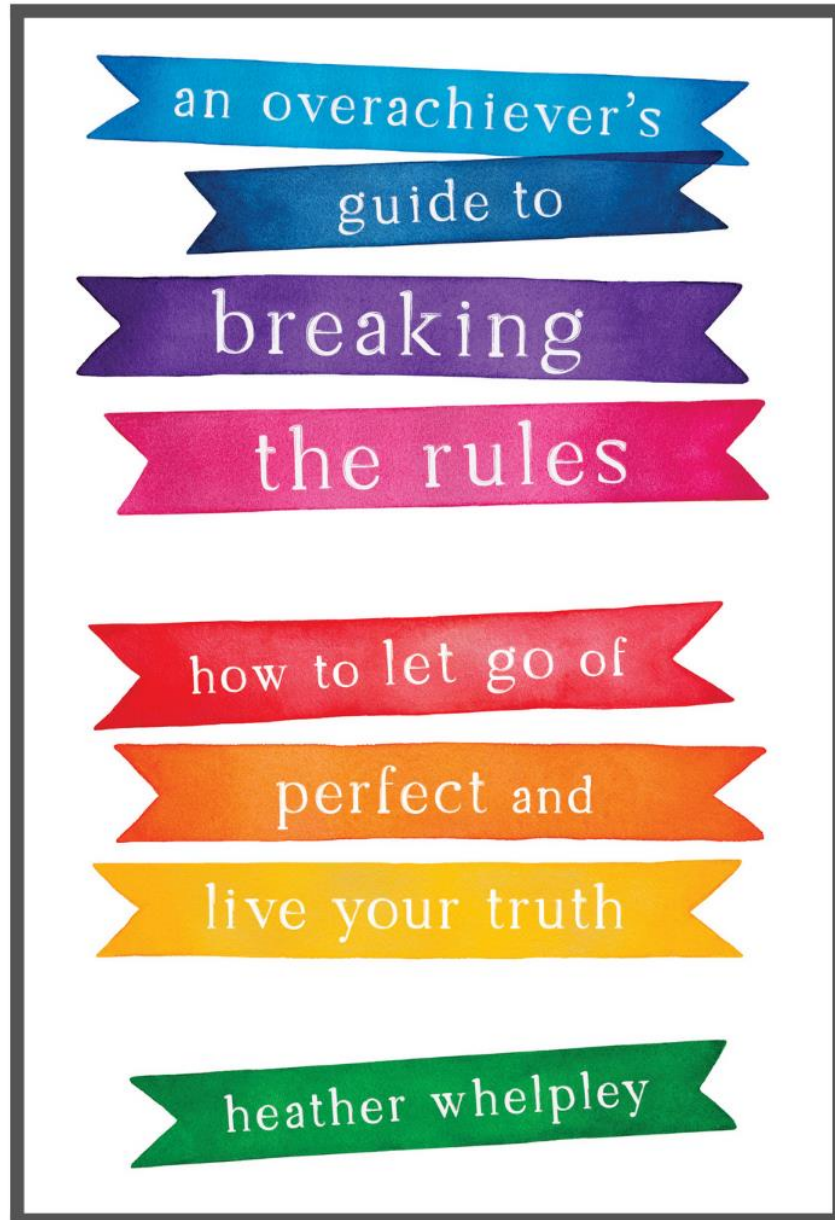


Q&A with Heather Whelpley

*An Overachiever's Guide To Breaking The Rules:
How To Let Go Of Perfect and Live Your Truth*



1. Tell us about yourself



www.heatherwhelpley.com

Hi! I'm Heather Whelpley – a speaker and award-winning author that works with women to break free from proving, pleasing, and perfecting so they can experience more joy and freedom while making a bigger impact with their work. I've owned my business since the beginning of 2018. Before that I worked in corporate HR and leadership development roles across the US, Latin America, and Australia. I don't regret my time in corporate, but starting my own business is the best decision I've ever made. I'm living my truth now – and guiding other women to do the same. In my free time, I love to spend time outside hiking as well as explore breweries, visit farmers markets, and cook and host dinner parties with friends.

2. Give us a brief description of the book

An Overachiever's Guide To Breaking The Rules: How To Let Go Of Perfect and Live Your Truth is a lifetime in the making. It's part memoir of my journey to letting go of overdoing and perfectionism and reconnecting to my truth - and part coaching book for other women to do the same. It's about recognizing the rules you've been playing by – and creating a new set of rules for your life that align to who you really are, the woman free from the weight of expectations, perfectionism, and “should.”

The book is broken into two parts. The first part, *How Did You Get Here?*, walks you through how you got into overachieving perfectionism mode in the first place. We talk about what you're proving through achieving, limiting beliefs, the challenges of asking for help, and imposter syndrome. The second part, *Reconnect To Yourself*, is about just that – getting back in touch with your true inner voice and showing up as your true self in the world. We discuss reconnecting to your body, repairing your pace, reclaiming your joy, rediscovering your creativity, redefining success on your own terms, and resetting boundaries. The re- words are all on purpose! You've had all these things in the past and they are still inside of you. *An Overachiever's Guide To Breaking The Rules* will help you reconnect and bring them forward.

3. What inspired you to write the book?

I was inspired to write the book by a combination of my own personal experiences and what I saw in my coaching clients – and, really, women everywhere. I have been an overachiever since birth, but it really came to a head in ninth grade when I realized I was ranked #1 in my high school class and I fought every day for the next four years to stay there. The habits and beliefs I formed at that time followed me through college, my corporate career, and even into my business. I overdid everything! School, work, fun, eating, exercise – I went overboard with all of it.

It wasn't until I was a year into running my business that I finally stopped to ask myself the question that led to this book: Why am I pushing myself so hard? I realized in that moment I was overcompensating with achievement to make up for other areas of my life where I felt behind, namely in bring overweight as a teenager and single without



children as an adult. This realization finally got to the root cause of my overdoing – which meant I could also finally undo it, reconnect to my true inner voice, and be free (most of the time – the overachiever still pops up from on occasion!).

I saw similar patterns in my coaching clients. These amazing women pushed themselves over the edge, serving everyone at the highest level, and losing a bit of themselves and their joy in the process. Even more, the perfectionism, people-pleasing, and overdoing was holding them back from the full impact they could have in their work – and it was doing the same for me. I wanted every woman to reconnect to her true inner voice so she could start speaking that true inner voice out in the world – and create change in the process. I want to start a rippling revolution of women changing the world, one unhurried step at a time. That's why I wrote this book.

4. *Who will get the most out of reading this book?*

I wrote this book for women that describe themselves as overachievers and perfectionists (or recovering perfectionists!). Having said that, many women have now read the book that don't personally identify as an overachiever or perfectionist and they've told me that every woman needs to read this book. It's appropriate for anyone over the age of 18.

5. *What do you hope readers will learn from the book?*

So many things! I want readers to know they can create their life, they have nothing to prove, that they make the biggest impact by letting go of the rules and choosing to make up their own game. You change the world for the better when you stop playing by the rules that have been handed to you. You do this by letting go of proving, pleasing, and perfecting and reconnecting to your true inner voice – and then forging your authentic path by living that true voice in the world.

I also hope readers will learn to slow down and be joyful again! There is great power in experiencing joy and wonder and reclaiming your desires. And life is more fun when you're connected to your body and living in the present moment rather than worrying about check marks on a to-do list.

6. *What did you learn while writing the book?*

This list is long! On a personal level, everything I talk about in the book was really engrained in the process of writing it. The realizations were already there, but as I wrote the book, I noticed myself slowing down more often, experiencing even more joy, and



overall I felt freer as I wrote. I disconnected my worth from external achievements. Failure didn't feel personal anymore.

Putting my truth down on paper for others to read has been incredibly freeing – and vulnerable. But I've learned that people connect to honest vulnerability. Connection occurs when we know we aren't alone in both our struggles and in our joy – and you have to tell the truth for that to happen.

I also learned how to write by writing! I had no idea how to write a book when I started. After I wrote the first draft, I went back to read the initial chapters and they were terrible! But I could also see the vast improvement in my writing as I wrote. It was fun to see the evolution right in front of my eyes.

7. *What was your writing process?*

My process is going to sound very structured, but know that it was really about 60% structure and 40% let's just sit down and start writing and see what happens. Part process and part magic. Which is also how I live my life ☺

To get started, I used the same technique I learned in 9th grade study skills – I laid out every chapter on notecards on my dining room table, with a separate notecard for the chapter title, purpose, my stories to include, and client stories to include. Once I had that laid out, I sat down and started writing. I very much subscribe to Anne Lamott's advice of "Shitty First Drafts", so I didn't put any pressure on that first draft. I wrote without going back and editing, or even reading, the chapters.

After my first draft, I realized some structural things needed to change, so I literally started writing again from the beginning. I didn't completely start over word for word, but I rewrote A LOT, especially at the beginning of the book. The third draft was more in-depth, cutting out stories that didn't flow well, adding more details where needed, and connecting the dots between all the chapters.

I like to say that the first draft was for me and the second and third drafts were for the reader. I cried many times while writing the book. Stories surfaced out of nowhere that I'd forgotten. I made new connections deep in my soul through writing this book. It was healing. After I had processed all of that for myself, I could turn my attention to the reader and how she was going to experience the book.

After I finished my own drafts, I shared the book with my publisher at Wise Ink as well as three beta readers. Before then, not a single person had read the book. I needed to know what it was on my own before it was subjected to feedback from others. From that point on, the process was pretty typical – copyediting, book cover design, proofreading, audiobook recording, and now final printing!



8. You're also a speaker – how does *An Overachiever's Guide To Breaking The Rules* relate to your speaking?

My keynotes, webinars, and workshops overlap with the themes of the book. Creating Your Own Rules For Success is my signature keynote is based on the personal journey I share in the book and the steps others can take to start their own journey of letting go of perfect and living *their* truth. It's a great keynote – and it combines wonderfully with a book using *An Overachiever's Guide To Breaking The Rules*!

I also speak on Imposter Syndrome – And What To Do About It, Discover Your Authentic Voice – And How To Use It To Lead Change, as well as facilitate leadership development programs.

9. How can people connect with you further?

You can learn more about hiring me as a speaker on my website, www.heatherwhelpley.com. You will also find additional resources for the book on my website, such as a visioning exercise and book club discussion guide.

You can also connect with me on your preferred social media platform:

- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/heatherwhelpley/>
- Instagram: [@heather.whelpley](https://www.instagram.com/heather.whelpley)

Finally, you can email me directly at heather@whelpleyconsulting.com.

