HSP Survival Guide

From Overwhelm to Super Power in 9 Steps

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About The Author


She is the CEO of 2BelInBalance, in which she combines acupuncture with coaching to help HSP’s cope with their high sensitivity, too much stress and/or a burnout.

She is also the CEO of The HSP Entrepreneur Coach, where she helps Highly Sensitive Entrepreneurs to use their sensitivity as their Business Super Power to achieve better business results, while having more fun and more energy.

That is why she is known as the “High Sensitive Super Power” expert.

She has dedicated her life to help HSP’s embrace their sensitivity, accept themselves fully and to use their sensitivity as their super power.

Through her powerful webinar workshops, books, and programs, she has helped millions of highly sensitive people turn their lives around (in a BIG way) and achieve great success in record time.

You can join her Highly Sensitive Super Power Academy:
www.HSPowerAcademy.com

Or visit one of her other websites for lots of information and free content.
www.2BelInBalance.com
www.HSPEntrepreneurCoach.com
# Contents

Copyright....................................................................................................................................1  
About The Author.......................................................................................................................2  

## Introduction

Welcome to the HSP Survival Guide.......................................................................................4  

## The Guide

- Step 1: Acknowledge to yourself that you are an HSP...........................................................9  
- Step 2: Make contact with your feelings...............................................................................10  
- Step 3: Feel what you want..................................................................................................11  
- Step 4: Use your heart..........................................................................................................12  
- Step 5: Speak up. Let yourself be heard!..............................................................................13  
- Step 6: Reflect regularly!......................................................................................................15  
- Step 7: The power of SILENCE!..........................................................................................15  
- Step 8: Letting go................................................................................................................16  
- Step 9: Attention..................................................................................................................18  

## Summary

Summary of all the 9 steps.......................................................................................................21  
What to do next?....................................................................................................................22
Introduction
Welcome to the HSP Survival Guide

Did you know that 20% of the population is highly sensitive? From my own experience I know that this can be very difficult sometimes. A lot has changed these last few years, life has become faster and we are being overloaded with external stimuli. For instance:

- Always having to be reachable by telephone, social media and e-mail.
- Lots of sound all around you, for instance in public transport, during shopping in the city, but also at home on your couch with all the loud TV commercials.
- More and more is asked of us on the job. We need to be pro-active, we need to withstand stress, we need to work with speed and with deadlines etc. And we need to do all this even if we are not so extrovert and also not good at performing under pressure, even though most of the time we are very good at our jobs.
- Often you feel a bit shy, socially awkward, misunderstood or alone. Different than others.
- Everything you feel can drive you mad. You often respond to this, sometimes unasked and the consequence of this is that you don't have time for yourself. You bypass yourself completely and you have to watch out for over exhaustion or even a burn-out.

Everything needs to be better, prettier, faster and more. Even more stress, even more pressure.

As a highly sensitive person, you are wired slightly different than less sensitive people. Your nervous system is more finely tuned as it were and this makes it so that all the stimuli (from the senses) hit you harder. You can arrive somewhere and immediately smell what they had for dinner, while at the same time registering that the music is very loud and the mood is tense and instinctively you also know why the mood is tense.

A less sensitive person might only register the smell and maybe that the music is a bit loud, but all the other things they won't even notice. It is a challenge to remain standing in this world and sometimes also a struggle.

What can bother you as a highly sensitive person?

- Tensions
- Restlessness
- Headaches and other aches & pains
- Problems breathing, hyperventilation
- You start to avoid things more and more
- You get confused, you don't know where to start solving problems.
- You have trouble concentrating and you have lost your focus.
- You feel tired and listless, you don't know what you want anymore.
- You eat increasingly more or increasingly less.
- You don't want to have sex anymore, because you would rather be left alone.
- You develop vague complaints.
- You don't feel comfortable in your own skin, you don't feel like yourself anymore

Maybe you have other complaints or experience other problems, but I have found these complaints to be the most common.

You too want to be able to enjoy yourself again right?

That is why I wrote this survival guide! With 9 practical and applicable steps I am hoping to provide you with tools to get a grip on your high sensitivity so that you can enjoy your life (again).
High sensitivity can also be something really great and amazing!

I wrote the steps in such a way, that you can immediately apply them into your own life by doing the corresponding exercises.

My Story

When I was growing up I often got told, by my parents and my teachers, that I was too sensitive. They told me I shouldn't take everything so seriously and that I needed to grow a thicker skin. They also told me not to take everything so personally and that I had to learn to let things go.

In hearing those words I create this story that I am not good enough and that there is something wrong with me, that I am weird or strange. I decided to suppress my sensitivity and to survive through my powers of reasoning to prove that I am a normal person just like everybody else so that I could get their approval and their love. I forced myself to be big and strong and to show a brace face to the outside world and to do what was expected of me.

The breakdown...

Fast forward, I am now 32 years old and I am working as a project manager for this IT company. The company is struggling and as a result I am under a lot of pressure to make the project succeed. The customer is difficult, my boss is not giving me the support I need and I am responsible for my team and things are not running smoothly.

At the same time my boyfriend of 7 years ends our relationship totally unexpected. There were no warning signs, we did not even have a fight. One night after watching a movie he just stands up and tells me that he no longer wants to be with me and that I have to move out by the end of the week.

Consequently, I end up in a severe burnout and totally loose contact with myself. It feels like I have lost everything and that my reasoning and my feelings are no longer in touch and definitely not communicating with each other. Being able to think things through intellectually is no problem at all, but when it comes to my feelings, I just can't keep up anymore.

The All Time Low...

I suddenly have all these emotions I don't know how to handle. I cannot stop crying and I am so so tired and all I can think is “Why is this happening to me, I work so hard and I am a good person.” It also reinforced the story I created when I was little that there was something wrong with me.

I am angry with myself, because I collapsed and cannot handle anything anymore and I am angry at my body for failing me. I am doubting myself, I am doubting my own abilities and I have serious doubts about my future. I think “How am I ever going to get out of this burnout? How am I ever going to feel like myself again? And who will want me?” I sleep 18 hours a day and those moments that I am awake I am angry or I am crying.

During this time my boss tells me that he thinks I am an HSP, because his wife is one and he recognizes a lot of her in me. I did not know what he meant with “HSP” and I thought maybe he was calling me a name, because he was disappointed in me for failing and ending up in that burnout. This makes me feel even worse and I decide to “park” his remark for now…
The turn-around…

But the term HSP stuck with me and one day I decide to Google it. Boy did that open up a whole new world to me, I recognize so much!

Hungry I read every book I can find on high sensitivity and I become a member of all the forums I can find about high sensitivity too. And then I realize: I am not weird, I am not strange, there is nothing wrong with me and, most of all: there are other people like me!! It really felt like coming home to myself and the more I read, the more I understand myself and the more insight I get into my own sensitive user manual.

The transformation…

And while reading and learning, the process suddenly takes me back to my childhood and the things people told me. I now understand that they told me those things to help me, because they love me and want the best for me. They care so much that they want to shield me from the pitfalls of being highly sensitive and they want to make life easier for me.

Little by little, bit by bit I start to allow my sensitivity back into my life. And, finally, I feel whole again. My head and my heart have found each other again and I realize that it is OK to be me, sensitive and all!

The insight…

Looking back I am glad I ended up in that burnout. It forced me to take a good look at myself. It taught me to stay in touch with my own body more. To pay attention to the messages my body sends me AND to do something with them.

I know now that I can trust my body and my intuition, I know now how to protect myself and my energy and I know now how to feel my boundaries and how to protect them.

From that moment on, I honor my sensitive side because of the beautiful things it brings me. I know that you too will appreciate these beautiful aspects of being highly sensitive: Compassion, deep intuition, authenticity, empathy and the ability to heal.

I now also know how to handle the ‘Achilles heel of high sensitivity’, such as being discouraged easily, taking things personal, being overwhelmed easily, having a hard time setting boundaries, feeling tired or tense.

The realization…

The moment I take charge of my inner self, I realize that the only reason I never accomplish what I want in life is because I never fully accepted my high sensitive gift. By not fully embracing my sensitivity, I am actually sabotaging myself over and over again.

That realization, that is the moment I not only decide to embrace my high sensitivity completely, but I also decide to follow my heart and start my own company! A dream I have had for a very long time, but one I keep on postponing.

In hindsight, because I did not have enough confidence in myself. And because it is scary to step outside of your comfort-zone. And because it seems safe to keep working for a boss.
The result...

But I do not regret for even a moment having taken that step to start for myself. On the contrary, I am happier now than ever, now that I finally have my own company. The freedom that having my own company gives me to lead the life that I want is indescribable. I am doing what my heart tells me to do and it does not even feel like working. And this feeling, this is what I want for you too!

By getting to know myself and my sensitivity really well, by getting valuable insight into my pitfalls and my qualities and by having the tools to keep myself in balance no matter what, I now have a solid basis for my company and am using my sensitivity as my (business) super power!

This helps me to achieve better business results and I run my company with much more energy and I am having much more fun!

My Mission

It is my mission to help you to heal yourself by embracing your high sensitivity, so that you can become your effortless self, connect to your hearts desires and use your sensitivity as your super power.

I believe you are a very special, very beautiful person and that you have a truly amazing gift, your sensitivity. Once you connect to your hearts desire, embrace that sensitivity and learn to use it as your super power you will feel like your effortless self and have a massive impact on the world.

You will have the power to change the life of millions with your good heart, great empathy for others and infallible intuition.

And the best part of it is that it won’t even feel like working if you do what you love!

You will be able to have a lifestyle friendly job, doing what you love, having fun while doing it and with plenty of energy to spare.

If I can do it, so can you!

Let's get started.
Step 1: Acknowledge to yourself that you are an HSP

Do you already know that you are highly sensitive, but are you afraid to come out and say it?

That is very understandable, because it kinda feels like coming out of the closet.

Who wants to be perceived as sensitive in this day and age?

But don't for one minute think you are a wimp! No Way!

That is the biggest misunderstanding there is.

Because you, with your wise eye and your sharp intuition can see through every situation.

You already know what's at play and how to solve it. It is time that you find your voice and let yourself be heard!

Only when you recognize that you are highly sensitive and allow your high sensitivity to be a part of you, that is the time you can start living it.

Then you can breathe a sigh of relief, stop being who you are not and finally start living your life the way it suits you.

Being highly sensitive is not something that will pass. You don't have it, you ARE it.

Exercise:

Being in the present is done with your whole body.

Listen to your body, feel your body, breath in and out, feel the contact your body makes with your bed or chair and feel the contact between your feet and the ground.

Pay attention to these details every day, as often as possible.

Look around you, observe where you are and feel safe and secure with yourself.

And when you feel overwhelmed, consciously concentrate on your breathing.

Feel how you breathe in and out, breathe deeply in towards your belly and you will re-connect with yourself.

Feel how stress and tension leave your body via your feet, feel how they flow back into the earth.
Step 2: Make contact with your feelings

Making contact with what you are feeling should not be that difficult, if it weren't for the fact that your feelings probable overwhelm you regularly.

Because of this you tend to live in your head.

You try to explain your feelings with your mind or you try to avoid them all together.

You can also get emotional.

In short: you are not finding your safety within yourself (step 1), but in your head and in your head things happen that do not or will not happen in real life.

Still you can experience a lot of emotions about this.

Why would you run away from what you are feeling?

Your feelings are yours and they have something to tell you.

Feelings have two flavors: a yes-feeling and a no-feeling, it feels good or it does not feel good.

When you think about your feelings too much, or an emotion triggers a feeling, you tend to go back up in your head.

When that happens, try to get back to your core (your underbelly) and to your feelings.

Your core is the area for enjoyment, your life-energy, your strength, your power, your passion and your sexuality.

When you connect with your core, then you are in your power and that will give an extra boost to your energy and your creativity.

With which you no doubt are full off, so let it flow!

Exercise:

To really experience your feelings, it is important to train yourself to breath deeply (from the belly).

You either lie down or you sit and you let everything go for a minute.

When you take a breath, your belly gets big and round, nothing else is moving.

And when you breath out again your belly drops and flattens.

This is something you can practice anytime, anywhere.

This will help you to calm down and connect with yourself.
Step 3: Feel what you want

Feelings have two flavors: a yes-feeling and a no-feeling, it feels good or it does not feel good.

From the yes- or no-feeling, you can start to formulate what your needs are and what it is that you want.

What do you need? And what do you want?
Do you want to leave a busy gathering early?
Have you reached a limit?
Do you want to be alone?
What can you do to make life more pleasurable for yourself?
What are you in the mood for?

From your feelings you are going to feel what you want.

Trust your intuition, your gut-feeling.

Maybe you still find this scary?

Then it also comes down to daring to do what you want.

Start really small. This way you can avoid the fear.

They don't have to be life changing things straight away.

Start small, respect even the littlest of needs you have and ask for it, make a suggestion or just say no.

Try to trust your intuition more and more and before you know it the big things will happen naturally.

By trusting your intuition you work on increasing your self-confidence, you too deserve your place in this world.

You are already there, so occupy your personal space with all your heart and soul!

Exercise:

Visualize a burning flame and place that flame in the little indent just below your diaphragm.

This is your solar plexus.

Whenever you breathe in, imagine the flame getting bigger and whenever you breathe out let the fire spread.

Let this fire cleanse and recharge your solar plexus.
Step 4: Use your heart

This step is about connecting yourself by means of your heart.

First you connect yourself with yourself (see previous steps) and then you connect with your environment.

This connection is about love, relationships, family bond, friends and your self-worth.

If you love yourself, than respect your own feelings and connect with them.

As a highly sensitive person you feel these connection intensely.

This is why it hurts so much when these connections are severed.

The moment you connect to your surroundings from within yourself, that connection feels very pure to others.

You see yourself first instead of the other.

Because of that, the other does not feel the need to defend him/herself and you will be accepted for who you are.

You showed your vulnerable side and the other can only accept this.

Exercise:

To come into contact with your heart and its 'love-energy', you only have to focus your attention on your heart.

Your heart is located in the middle of your chest.

Breath slowly in and out via your heart area en feel what this does to you.

You can do this anywhere and anytime, without others noticing.

See how your energy transforms in your surroundings and in your contact with the people you are with.
Step 5: Speak up. Let yourself be heard!

If you have read and applied the previous steps, than a lot has happened.

From being, feeling, wanting and loving, you will now express yourself.

Let the words flow past your heart and what you then pronounce is a pure expression of yourself.

Maybe you will notice that you need fewer words to express yourself.

The quality of the words you think of in your head are different from the words that come from your deepest self.

There is a lot of fear regarding expressing yourself and naming things.

Take it one step at a time.

You are not yet used to speaking from deep within yourself.

To see clearly what it is that you want or need and to express those wants and needs.

But practice makes perfect.

Especially because your communication is pure, from within yourself, without judging the other, it will become easier.

It is your way of communicating.

And this will encounter little resistance.

Exercise:

Sit down and slowly breath in and out.

When you exhale, try to produce a sound: like 'o', 'a', 'e' or something else that feels comfortable.

Let that sound flow up from within your belly and core and release it via your throat.

Keep doing this until it feels natural and comfortable.

You can also sing mantra's or songs or recite 'ohm'.
Step 6: Reflect regularly!

Reflection is another word for your inner consciousness, the voice of your intuition.

When you reflect, there is peace in your head and no worrying.

And when there is peace in your head, as a highly sensitive person, you will get flashes of insights.

You are somewhere, you come into contact with something and suddenly you get an insight.

You receive images, you hear words or you just suddenly KNOW.

This can be very confusing to deal with and can be a process all on its own.

And, sometimes, it will not make you happy. It did not make me happy at all!

Why couldn't I just be’?

Why did I see things differently from others?

I also found it scary.

I was afraid of being alone, afraid to do stuff, afraid that others might find me strange.

I saw strange things that I could not explain and I felt things other people did not.

Not a picknick I can assure you.

But I have learned to close myself off to those impressions.

The moment I decided for myself that I did not want to see, feel and know everything, it stopped.

And when I do need it, for instance in my job, I turn 'it' back on. It is exhausting otherwise and you can do nothing with it.

Everybody is responsible for themselves and has their own lessons to learn.

No matter how much you want to protect others from pitfalls, that just is not possible.

When you are able to use your impressions in your work, use your intuition to make important decisions or map a path, then it becomes fun and you have an extra toolset that can make your life easier.

That is why you need to listen to your intuition, it knows the way and it is a great advise giver!

Exercise:

To activate your third eye, light a candle and look at the flame for a while.

Then close your eyes and still see the flame on the back of your eyelids.

“Look” at that flame until the image fades and then you can repeat it if you want to.
Step 7: The power of SILENCE!

Pure consciousness, a peaceful mind, SILENCE.

For you as a highly sensitive person it is very important to guard your personal space and to fill that space as well.

It is feeling yourself in your most purest (light) form, while you remain firmly in contact with your earthly body.

Often plan time to relax, to be alone and to recharge your batteries.

Remember this peaceful feeling and surround yourself with it.

This is your safe place, that you guard constantly.

Whenever you lose this feeling, you will know that something is happening that crosses your boundaries.

Consciously reconnect with yourself.

Use the previous steps or meditate, this will help you get into a positive vicious circle.

By doing this often, each time you will be able to reconnect with yourself faster.

This will help you maintain yourself with joy in the most busiest or craziest of situations, just like me.

**Exercise:**

Often take the time to experience pure silence.

Find inner peace and balance within your body and your soul.

Let go, feel the space that that creates. Feel your pure consciousness and feel what it does to you.

This state of being can be achieved by meditating often for instance.

Before you meditate, ground yourself firmly.

This will help you to stay connected with yourself while meditating and prevents you from floating off.

I myself can be found in nature quite often, this helps me tremendously.
Step 8: Letting go

How to let go?

Yes, that is a good question.

Letting go is one of the hardest things there is.

Try to not think of the color red. The only thing you will see then is red.

All day we try to hold on to this and that tightly, while we think this gives us a measure of control.

Letting go is nothing more than knowing what you are holding onto and then putting it down beside you.

It will still be with you, but you can now move separately from it and look at it from different sides.

This enables you to make a choice. When what you are letting go disappears, than it did not fit you.

When it stays with you, than it belongs to you and you don't have to hold on to it so tightly.

Exercise:

Letting go is not something you suddenly do, it is a process.

First you will get:
• Insight (what am I holding on to?)
• Than you will become conscious (I have to start letting this go)
• Then comes acceptance
• and then you are ready to let go

If you know what you are holding onto, than you know what it is that you need to let go and then you accept that you are going to let it go and then actually letting it go is not that hard anymore.

It will happen automatically.

The first step is to become aware of what it is that you are holding onto.

And then you can ask yourself:
• What does this 'holding on' do to me? It costs me a lot of energy, it occupies me the entire day, it is on my mind constantly.

• What happens when I let it go? Can you imagine this? Can you feel what it does to you when you imagine letting it go? Does it feel like you are getting more air, more space etc?

To further help yourself to let go you can:
• Instead of worrying: write. When you write it organizes your feelings. While writing you get new ideas and you create an opening in your specific situation.

• Come more in contact with your perception and see what is really going on. Get out of your head and more in the here and now. Is it true what I am thinking? Do I see this correctly? Am I indeed feeling what I am feeling?
• **Be active, dance, exercise, be creative.** Use your energy to create, to do the things you can do and to get strength out of that.

• **Realize that the world keeps spinning.** Regardless of the people surrounding you and the situations you encounter or hold on to. You only have control over yourself and not over other things.

• **Doing relaxation exercises,** for instance doing guided meditations or silence-walks in nature.

I have been doing the above for several years now.

It really works.

And sometimes suddenly it doesn't and then I find myself in a new process.

The process of letting go.

Again.

Until one day, it's gone.
Step 9: Attention

The key to finding your own unique way is attention and that is less difficult than you think.

By reminding ourselves time again to be more careful, slower and aware, we can teach ourselves to quiet our minds.

Being quiet, meditating, being consciously aware.

When you show attention to a certain activity, then you will notice that that activity, however simple it may be, is starting to look differently and it becomes valuable.

It gets a life of its own.

It is separate from you, but still connected to you.

By doing normal, day-to-day things with your complete attention, the rush for the next thing dissipates and the need to do something disappears.

Being in the moment, paying attention, feeling with attention, looking inside yourself and asking the question: What goes on inside me?

..........for ourselves

Treat each moment, each thought, each feeling carefully.

Keep worries at bay.

Sincere attention for yourself and your own needs is not, as so many people think, selfish.

On the contrary, respecting yourself and understanding yourself can go hand in hand with respecting and understanding someone else.

When you are true to yourself, you will probably also see others better for the persons they are.

..........for the other

The more you find your soul, the more you will confront others with their souls wishes.

A shift will take place on many levels in order to reach the core.

For some highly sensitive people this goes without saying, but for others (the ones that don't know who they are to their core) this is a picture of the future.

Attention is in the small things in life.

A smile, a compliment, offering help to someone.

Think to yourself that every positive gesture helps shift the universe.

A tree blends into the forest, but a forest consists out of trees.
Exercise:

For the next 3 days, take at least 3x10 minutes to sit on the couch undisturbed and do nothing.

And with nothing I mean absolutely nothing!

Not reading, puzzling etc do absolutely nothing else but sitting.

If you had a really busy week, all the better.

Set an alarm and place pen and paper within reach.

Do nothing and just observe.

Which unrest presents itself when you do nothing?

Which thoughts and feeling try to push you away?

What keeps taking you out of the here and now?

Write these things down if you want to.

Investigate your physical, emotional and energetic findings.

Try to separate them from each other as best you can and after 10 minutes write down what you noticed.
Summary
Quick Summary
All 9 steps of the HSP Survival Guide

1. Acknowledge to yourself that you are an HSP
   Accept that you are highly sensitive, embrace it and learn as much as you can about it. You don't have it, you ARE it.

2. Make contact with your feelings
   Don't run away from your feelings. Instead connect with your feelings and listen to what they have to tell you.

3. Feel what you want
   From your feelings you can start to feel what it is you want and then you can start to formulate what your needs are. Trust your intuition, your gut-feeling

4. Use your heart
   If you love yourself, than respect your own feelings and connect with them. Use that love to connect to your surroundings from within yourself, that connection feels very pure to others.

5. Speak up. Let yourself be heard!
   Let the words flow past your heart and then express yourself. You will need fewer words and the quality of your words is much better, allowing people to hear what you are saying.

6. Reflect regularly!
   Reflect is another word for your inner consciousness, the voice of your intuition. When you reflect, there is peace in your head and no worrying.

7. The power of SILENCE!
   As an HSP it is very important to take good care of yourself and to guard your personal space. Often plan time to relax, to be alone and to recharge your batteries.

8. Letting go
   Letting go is something you do for yourself, because you no longer want to carry the burden of holding on to everything. It will create room to be yourself.

9. Attention
   Energy flows where attention goes. By being more aware, we can quiet our minds. Try to live in the here and now and focus on those things you do want in your life.
What to do next....

If this book was valuable to you and you want to learn even more about high sensitivity, what it means for you and how you can start using it as your super power, I would recommend you have a look at my HSPower Academy (www.hspoweracademy.com).

I designed the HSPower Academy especially for you, you beautiful highly sensitive person!

*In the academy you will find all sorts of wonderful things, ranging from meditations/visualizations to books to e-courses to amazing on-line programs.*

There is a wonderful on-line program designed especially for the sensitive people who are at the beginning of their journey into discovering their high sensitivity called High Sensitive Very Normal.

It will answer all the questions you have about high sensitivity (and if not email me your question and I will make a movie about it and add it to the course).

And it will help you to embrace this part of yourself and to start seeing it as an asset, so you can start using it to your advantage, instead of struggling with it.

There is also an on-line program designed especially for the Highly Sensitive Entrepreneur.

It's called Just High Sensitive Business and it not only teaches the HSE how to use their sensitivity as their business super power, to achieve better business results with more fun and more energy, it will also teach them how to reach their clients through their message, their sales & their marketing in a way that feels authentic, real and from the heart.

There is something there everyone and also for every budget.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Are you not sure what you want and do you need a little help with deciding what is right for you?

Plan a free Your Effortless Self session with me and take that very important first step towards discovering who you really are!

www.2beinbalance.com/yes

I look forward to meeting you!

Love,

Barbera
HSP SURVIVAL GUIDE

The HSP Survival Guide is a practical step by step guide that will help highly sensitive people to accept their sensitivity, embrace it and start using it as their super power.

Every step is accompanied by exercises that can be used in daily life for great results, more fun & more energy.

Barbera Schouten