

The Pause Worksheet

A five-step journal for the moment before you send the text.



Anxious attachment is not a character flaw. It is a nervous system that learned silence means danger. This worksheet gives that system somewhere to go for the eight to twenty minutes an urge usually takes to crest and fall.

Print it, or keep it open. Work one column per episode. Nothing here needs to be shown to anyone — honesty is the whole method.

HOW TO USE IT

1. Page 2 — Name the moment. What happened, and what your body did.
2. Page 3 — The story vs. the evidence. Separate fear from fact.
3. Page 4 — The pause ladder. Ten minutes, five actions.
4. Page 5 — What you needed, and how to ask for it later.
5. Page 6 — Weekly pattern log. Where the spikes actually cluster.

STEP ONE

Name the moment

Write it plainly. No editing for kindness.

What happened (just the facts, no interpretation)

Where I feel it in my body

Intensity right now, 0–10, and what it was ten minutes ago

The thing I want to do this second

STEP TWO

The story vs. the evidence

Two columns. Fear writes fast; evidence writes slowly.

THE STORY MY FEAR TELLS

WHAT I ACTUALLY KNOW

If the story turned out to be true, what would I do about it — tomorrow, not now?

STEP THREE

The pause ladder

Ten minutes, in order. Tick each rung. The urge does not need to be gone — it only needs to be smaller than it was.

- ☐ **0–1 min** Put the phone face down, out of reach. Say out loud: I am not sending this yet.
- ☐ **1–3 min** Box breathing. In four, hold four, out four, hold four. Six rounds.
- ☐ **3–5 min** Write the message you want to send — here, on paper, not there.
- ☐ **5–7 min** Feet on the floor. Name five things you can see, two you can hear.
- ☐ **7–10 min** Re-rate the intensity. Then decide, from this side of the wave.

The message I wanted to send

Intensity after ten minutes (0–10), and what I chose to do

STEP FOUR

What I needed

Under almost every urge is one small, sayable need. Find it, then write the calm version you can bring to your partner later.

The need underneath (reassurance, closeness, clarity, rest, repair...)

What I am afraid asking would mean

The calm ask, in one sentence, for a good moment

What I will do if the answer is not immediate

One thing I did well tonight

Weekly pattern log

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