



Begin Within

3 practical exercises

for more calm and connection



A free mental health workbook to help you
pause, land, and notice the valuable things around you.



Pause. Notice. Choose connection.





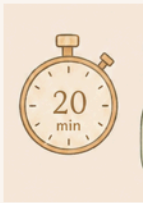
Begin Within



How to use this workbook

Three simple exercises. Three different moments.

This workbook contains three separate exercises. Each one has its own purpose, so you can use whichever one fits the moment.



Not Now, Later

Use this when tension starts to rise during a conversation and carrying on is no longer helping.



The Landing Check

Use this before time together so tiredness, stress, or unspoken expectations do not quietly take over.



The Compliment Jar

Use this to notice small moments of kindness, appreciation, and meaning throughout the day.

Important

These exercises are meant as practical support. They do not replace medical, psychological, or psychiatric treatment. In situations involving violence, threats, intimidation, or lack of safety, safety comes first and additional professional support is needed.

Start with the exercise that feels most helpful today.





Not Now, Later

A practical exercise for moments when tension starts to rise.

Goal: To prevent a conversation from escalating by recognising what happens in your body, using an agreed code word, and consciously creating space.

When can you use this exercise?

- When you notice that you start talking louder or faster
- When you keep repeating yourself
- When listening becomes harder
- When you feel that you need to be right or fix it immediately
- When anger, sadness, fear, or helplessness takes over the conversation

Step 1. Recognise your body signals

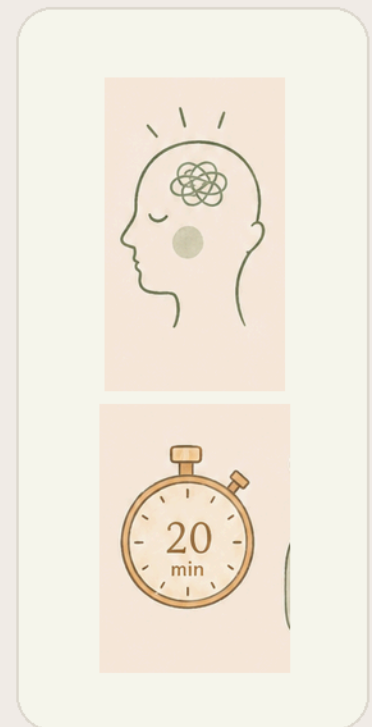
A conflict often starts building before it turns into an argument. Your body will usually give you signs before your thoughts catch up.

- Faster breathing
- Pressure on the chest
- Heat in the face
- Tension in jaw or shoulders
- Restlessness in hands or legs
- Talking louder or faster
- Finding it harder to listen

My body signals are:

My tension level from zero to ten:

Zero means calm. Ten means your stress is at its highest. Decide beforehand at what number you want to pause the conversation.





A pause is not rejection.

You are simply choosing not to carry on while your stress is still high.

Step 2. Choose a code word together

Choose your code word when things are calm. The word simply means: we stop the conversation for now and come back to it later. It can be serious, random, or even a bit silly.

- When the code word is used, the conversation stops
- No one keeps asking questions or follows the other person
- No angry messages are sent
- The pause is not used as punishment
- The topic comes back later

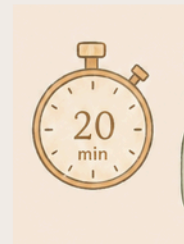


Our code word is:

Step 3. Take a break and set a timer

Set a timer for around twenty minutes. This is not the time to replay the argument or work out how to prove your point. Give yourself a chance to calm down first.

- Go for a quiet walk
- Sit somewhere quiet
- Slow your breathing down
- Take a shower
- Drink water
- Relax your shoulders and jaw
- Jot down what you are feeling



During the pause

Try not to keep arguing in your head, collect proof, or send messages. The pause is meant to create space between what you feel and how you respond.

Step 4. Decide what feels right now

When the timer goes off, check in with yourself again. If the answer is yes, start the conversation again gently. If the answer is no, give yourself more time or agree on another time to talk. Not now does not mean never.

☐ Talk now ☐ Talk later

What do I choose now?





The Landing Check

A quick check in before you spend time together.

Goal: To prevent irritation from becoming the first language when you finally have time together.

When can you use The Landing Check?

- Before an evening together
- Before a weekend off together
- After a busy day at work
- Before dinner out
- During a holiday
- When small things start to feel big

Duration: About five minutes.



1. What am I still carrying from my day or week?

Say what is still taking up space in your head or sitting in your body.

- “I notice that I am still tense from work.”
- “I am tired and easily overstimulated.”
- “I feel a little rejected because we had little contact today.”
- “My head is still full from everything I had to sort out today.”

What are you carrying?





The Landing Check

Slow the start down.

2. What do I need right now?

Say it out loud so the other person does not have to guess.

- “I need a little quiet first.”
- “I need a hug.”
- “I would like to sit together without phones for a moment.”
- “I would like to know what the plan is for tonight.”

What do you need right now?

3. What would help me enjoy our time together?

Keep it simple and practical.

- “If I can have twenty minutes to settle first, I will be much more present afterwards.”
- “If you ask me how my day was, I feel more seen.”
- “If we do not immediately discuss practical things, I stay calmer.”
- “If we talk about what we both expect from the evening, I am less likely to get irritated.”

What would help you?





The Landing Check

A gentle reminder before you begin.

Important rule

The Landing Check is not a moment to correct each other. Not: “Yes, but you always do that.” Instead: “This is what I notice in myself.” The goal is not to win, explain, or convince. The goal is simply to check in with each other.

Phrases that might help

- “I do not feel fully present yet.”
- “I do not want to take my irritation out on you, so I would rather tell you now.”
- “I am looking forward to being together, but I need a bit of time to settle first.”
- “I have just realised I had expectations I had not actually said out loud.”
- “I am not angry with you. My head is just full.”
- “Can we start again?”



You can look forward to time together and still need rest.

Checking in helps you meet each other with more clarity.





The Compliment Jar

For creative people who would rather collect little moments than journal about them.

Goal: To become more aware of small moments of kindness, attention, appreciation, and meaning that can easily pass by during the day.

What do you need?

- A jar, box, or small container
- Small notes
- A pen
- Optional materials to decorate your jar or box

You can turn it into your own little treasure chest and decorate it however you like, or leave it completely plain. What matters is that it feels like something you want to use.



Step 1. Notice the little things during your day

Do not wait for a big compliment. Pay attention to small acts of kindness, things you hear, moments you feel appreciated, or anything that simply feels good or meaningful to you.

- Someone smiles at you
- Someone makes coffee for you without you asking
- You receive a kind message
- Someone holds the door open for you
- You notice that someone is really listening to you
- Something you were hoping for works out
- You have a thought or feeling that turns out to be right
- You notice that you handled something better than you used to

What can go into my jar today?





The Compliment Jar

Notice it. Write it. Keep it.

Step 2. Write it down

Write down what happened in a few words. It does not need to sound good or turn into a journal entry. One sentence is plenty.

- "Someone made coffee for me spontaneously today."
- "Someone smiled at me when I did not expect it."
- "I received a message that made me feel seen."
- "I noticed I stayed calm in a situation that would normally get to me."

Step 3. Put the note in your jar or box

Putting the moment on paper and saving it gives you a chance to properly notice it instead of letting it pass by.

Step 4. Take a moment at the end of the day

At the end of the day, take a quick moment to notice what you added. You do not need to read every note again. The point is simply to become more aware of the good and valuable things that are already around you.

No performance

The Compliment Jar does not have to be full every day. Some days you write several notes. Other days maybe one or none. The goal is not to force positivity. The goal is to train yourself not to automatically let valuable moments pass by.

When can you open the jar?

- After a difficult week
- When you doubt yourself a lot
- When everything feels negative for a while
- On your birthday
- At the end of a month or year
- Whenever you need a reminder of the good things that are still there

Not every valuable moment feels big. Small things count too.



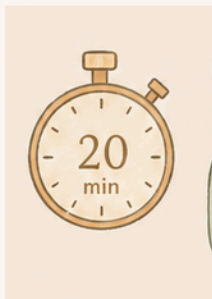


Begin Within

Choose what fits the moment

Each exercise has a different purpose.

Not Now, Later



For when tension is already rising and continuing no longer helps.

Focus:

Pause before things escalate.

The Landing Check



For the moments before you spend time together and want to check in first.

Focus:

Check in before irritation speaks first.

The Compliment Jar



For daily awareness of small moments of appreciation and meaning.

Focus:

Notice what is still kind, good, and important.



Begin Within

Not because you have to solve everything alone, but because becoming more aware helps you notice what is happening sooner and choose what you want to do next.

