CALM YOUR BODY BEFORE YOU REPLY

Two small resets for when choosing yourself suddenly feels alarmingly serious.

You say no. Or ask for time. Or send the perfectly reasonable message. Then your heart speeds up, your chest tightens and you get the powerful urge to send a second message explaining that you are, in fact, still a lovely person.

The discomfort does not automatically mean the decision was wrong.

Sometimes your body is reacting to doing something unfamiliar: disappointing someone, not fixing the mood, not answering immediately, or allowing another person to have feelings you do not rush in to solve.

You do not need to argue with the feeling. Give your body something simple and present to do instead.

1. THE ROOM ROLL CALL

Look around and quietly name:

- 5 things you can see.
- 4 things you can physically feel.
- 3 things you can hear.
- 2 things you can smell.
- 1 thing you can taste — or would like to taste. Coffee remains eligible.

The point is not to perform calm perfectly. It is to remind yourself: I am here, in this room, right now. Not inside the argument I am predicting for next Tuesday.

2. MAKE THE EXHALE LONGER

Try four slow rounds: breathe in gently for 4, then out slowly for 6. Let your shoulders drop if they are currently trying to become earrings.

Then do nothing for a few minutes. No apology sequel. No “just to clarify” paragraph. No emergency reopening of a conversation that was already finished.

Your job is not to remove every uncomfortable feeling. Your job is to stop letting the feeling make the next decision for you.

Use this when: you feel guilty after saying no, you are about to answer a charged message too quickly, or someone is disappointed and you immediately want to fix it.

One important note: if you are actually unsafe, feel medically unwell, or think your symptoms need medical attention, grounding is not a substitute for appropriate support. Get help.

Otherwise: feet on the floor. Look around. Breathe out slowly. Give yourself ten minutes before you do anything else.