

# Emergency Toolkit

When You're Overwhelmed & Need to Reset

Use this 5-step protocol when you feel yourself spiraling. Keep it handy—you'll need it.

## 1 PAUSE

Stop what you're doing. Physically step away if needed. Go to the bathroom. Sit in your car. Find 60 seconds of space. You cannot regulate while you're in the middle of chaos.

## 2 BREATHE

Box breathing: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat 3 times. This activates your parasympathetic nervous system and signals safety to your brain.

## 3 NAME IT

Say out loud: "I am overwhelmed." Naming the emotion reduces its power. Research shows that labeling feelings activates the prefrontal cortex and calms the amygdala. You're not failing. You're human.

## 4 CHOOSE ONE THING

What's ONE thing you can control right now? Drink water. Text a friend. Put on a song. Step outside for 30 seconds. Do that one thing. Small actions restore agency.

## 5 RETURN WITH GRACE

You don't have to be perfect. You just have to be present. Go back to your daughter (or your day) with a little more calm. That's enough. That's always enough.

## Keep This Handy

- Screenshot this page and save it to your phone's home screen
- Print it and tape it inside your bathroom cabinet or closet door
- Share it with your partner so they know how to support you

**"You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first."**