

A GUIDE FOR WHEN IT FEELS LIKE TOO MUCH**Nine steps to move from alarm to action**

A body-first, mind-second way of working through stress, panic, or overwhelm — one step at a time.

1 NOTICE THE TRIGGER

Something happens, and your chest tightens or your breath goes short. This is your body sensing danger — an old, fast alarm system doing its job.

There is nothing wrong with you for reacting. This is biology, not failure.

2 ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEELING

Let your body feel what it's feeling. Speak to it like a friend: "I understand. I feel you. But this is not real danger."

Acknowledging is not the same as believing the alarm. You can validate the sensation without agreeing with its story.

3 CALM THE BODY

Take a deep breath — short inhale, long exhale. Repeat a few times until your nervous system starts to settle.

The long exhale is what tells your body it's safe to stand down.

4 NORMALIZE THE WAVE

Ups and downs are a normal part of being alive. You don't have to trade your happiness or your peace just because this moment is hard.

A hard moment is not a hard life. Let this be one wave, not the whole ocean.

5 SEPARATE EMOTION FROM FACT

Ask yourself: what am I feeling right now, and what actually happened? Name the emotion. Then name the event — separately.

Fear can be real without the danger being real. Both things can be true at once.

6 LOOK CLOSELY AT THE FACTS

Once separated, examine the facts in detail. What exactly happened? What is actually known, versus assumed?

Clarity here is what makes the next steps possible.

7 GET INFORMED

Decide who you could talk to: a trusted friend, a mentor, an expert in the area — or research it yourself in detail.

You don't have to figure this out alone, and you don't have to figure it out instantly.

8 WRITE DOWN OPTIONS

List the possible solutions, even imperfect or partial ones. Get them out of your head and onto the page.

A messy list of options beats a tidy list of worries.

9 TAKE ACTION, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Pick the smallest next action from your list. Do that one. Then the next.

Momentum, not perfection, is what carries you through.

Keep this nearby — on your phone, by your desk, or wherever you'll need it most.