

The RootCalm Reset Guide

A short in-the-moment field guide. Print it, fold it, keep it in a wallet, car door or desk drawer — somewhere you can reach it while you are still angry.

The 90-second rule

The chemical surge of anger moves through the body in roughly 90 seconds. Everything after that is the story you keep telling yourself. Your only job in those 90 seconds is to not make it worse.

Step 1 · Interrupt (0–30 seconds)

- Say the exit line: “I need a minute. I’ll come back to this.”
- Physically change position — stand, step outside, put the phone down.
- Unclench: jaw, fists, shoulders. Anger lives in those three places first.

Step 2 · Breathe (30–90 seconds)

- Physiological sigh: two nose inhales, one long mouth exhale. Five rounds.
- Make the exhale longer than the inhale — that is what lowers the heart rate.
- Cold water on the wrists or face if the surge is still climbing.

Step 3 · Name it

Say silently: “I am angry, and underneath it I feel ____.” Naming the softer feeling takes the charge out of the louder one.

Common answers: disrespected · unfairly treated · afraid · ashamed · unheard · exhausted · out of control · let down.

Step 4 · Choose your next sentence

- “I want to get this right, so I need a short break.”
- “When ____ happened, I felt _____. What I need is _____.”
- “Can we come back to this in twenty minutes?”

Step 5 · Close the loop

- Move your body for 5–10 minutes — unspent adrenaline becomes rumination.
- Repair early if you snapped. A short, specific apology beats a long defensive one.
- Log the trigger while it is fresh, then let the day continue.

My personal reset plan

MY EXIT LINE

MY GO-TO RESET (BREATH, WALK, WATER, MUSIC)

THE PERSON I CONTACT WHEN I CANNOT DO THIS ALONE

If you are ever afraid of what you might do, or someone else is unsafe, stop using this sheet and contact emergency services or a crisis line immediately. In South Africa: SADAG 0800 567 567.