

# Pause and Reset Checklist

Use this checklist in the heat of the moment. It will guide you to pause, regulate your body, and reconnect with your partner in a calmer state.

## Step 1: Pause

Choose one of these pause phrases to stop the spiral without stonewalling:

- "I'm starting to feel overwhelmed. Can we pause for five minutes?"
- "I don't want to hurt this moment. I need a short break."
- "This matters to me. Let's take a quick pause so we can come back better."

## Step 2: Reset

Use one or more of these tools to calm your body and reset your mind:

- Take five slow breaths (inhale for 4, exhale for 6).
- Step outside or into another room for fresh air.
- Do the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding exercise (5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste).
- Repeat a calming phrase: "I am safe. We are on the same team."
- Place your hand on your chest or a solid surface to ground yourself.

## Step 3: Reconnect

When you are calm, return to your partner with one of these bridge-back statements:

- "I'm back now. I really want to hear you."
- "Thanks for giving me space. I'm ready to continue."
- "That moment was tough, but I care more about us than being right."

## Reflection Prompt:

What pause phrase, reset tool, and reconnect statement feel most natural to you? Write them down here so you're ready next time.

Pause phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Reset tool: \_\_\_\_\_

Reconnect statement: \_\_\_\_\_