

# The After-the-No Recovery Card

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The next no is coming. You don't get to choose when. You only get to choose what you've already practiced.

## **STOP — the ten-second pause**

**Stop** whatever you're about to do (the email, the reply, the walking out).

**Take** a breath deeper than the last one.

**Observe** the body — tight jaw, hot face, shaking hand.

**Proceed** — only after the first three are real.

*If STOP isn't enough: 5-5-5 grounding. Five things you can see, five you can hear, five you can physically feel.*

## **24-hour cooling protocol**

<b>First 10 min</b>	<i>No email. No text. No social post. Walk, drink water, breathe. Write your protocol move here.</i>
<b>First day</b>	<i>Call the one person you trust — not to vent, to think out loud with someone not in the room with the opposition. Name them.</i>
<b>First week</b>	<i>Run the honest question: "What would have to be true for me to change course here — and is any of it true?"</i>

# Persistence Check + Burnout Signs

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The honest question separates campaigns from grudges. If you can't name what would change your mind, you aren't running a campaign.

## Productive persistence vs. stubborn waste

- Is this person actually the decision-maker, or did F4 / F7 say otherwise?
- Is this vote / mechanism actually the lever — or have I been chasing the ceremony?
- Did I make this ask too early — would a smaller rung have landed?
- Is there a new frame I haven't tried — different audience, different archetype (F3)?
- Is there a new ally I should bring in before re-asking?
- Or: is continuing on this path just a way to feel like I'm still in the fight while losing it?

## Burnout warning signs — ask for help

- ! Sleep that's been broken for more than a few weeks.
- ! Anger that arrives faster and bigger than the situation calls for.
- ! The thought that no one else can do this work, so you can't stop.
- ! A creeping sense that the cause has eaten your other identities.

## Crisis support

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text, US). Text HOME to 741741 (Crisis Text Line). 911 for immediate danger.

The toughest advocates in any room are usually the ones who know exactly who they call when it gets too heavy. That's not a weakness in the armor. That's the armor.