

The Steady Reset

For the moment it's all on you and you don't know your next move

You're not reading this to plan. You're reading it because right now it's too much and you need your feet back under you. Do these five things in order. It takes about five minutes.

1. Get your body back first. You can't think your way out while your body is in alarm. Start there. Breathe in for four. Out for six. Make the exhale longer than the inhale. Do it four times before you read the next line. The long exhale is what tells your nervous system the threat is handled. Nothing else works until this does.

2. Name what's actually true. Overwhelm runs on a story, and the story is always bigger than the facts. In plain words, say what is actually happening right now. Just what's real. Not what it means, not where it's heading, not whose fault it is. The facts are almost always smaller than the flood.

3. Find the one thing that's yours to move. You're carrying a pile, and most of it you can't touch this minute. Find the single thing that is actually in your hands right now. One. The rest can wait ten minutes. It has to.

4. Take the golden second before you act. The worst moves get made from the flooded state. Before you send the message, make the call, or make the decision you can't take back, stop for one second. Ask yourself: am I moving because it's right, or because I can't stand the feeling? If it's the feeling, wait. That second is where you get to choose instead of react.

5. Remember you're not the only one carrying it. What makes overwhelm unbearable isn't the load. It's believing you're alone with it. You're not. Name one person you could tell the truth to today, even one sentence of it. Then tell them. Carrying it alone is the part that breaks people, not the weight.

That's it. You don't have to solve the whole thing. You just have to get your feet under you and make the next right move. Then the one after that.

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The Hard Truth - weekly writing for leaders who carry more than they show.