



The Pause Between Feeling and Action

A Reflection on Creating Space to Choose

A Quick Reality Check

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|---|---|
| 1. What actually happened?
_____ | 4. What do I want to do because of that feeling?
_____ |
| 2. What story am I telling myself about what happened?
_____ | 5. What will probably happen if I follow that impulse?
_____ |
| 3. What am I feeling?
_____ | 6. What would the person I am trying to become do instead?
_____ |

Values Check

Which principle or value do I want guiding my response?

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Honesty | ☐ Courage | ☐ Patience | ☐ Acceptance | ☐ Responsibility | ☐ Humility |
| ☐ Compassion | ☐ Self-respect | ☐ Boundaries | ☐ Integrity | ☐ Other: _____ | |

What is one thing I can do right now that I am likely to respect later?

Reflection

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Think about a recent situation in which you reacted quickly. What were you feeling?
_____ | 4. What happened afterward?
_____ |
| 2. What did the feeling tell you to do?
_____ | 5. If you could return to the moment before you reacted, what principle would you want guiding your response?
_____ |
| 3. What did you actually do?
_____ | 6. What might you have done differently?
_____ |



The goal is not to stop feeling. The goal is to stop allowing every feeling to become a command.



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Feelings Are Information, Not Instructions

Feelings happen quickly. Sometimes before we have had time to understand what is happening, our mind has already decided what it means and what we should do about it.

Someone says something that hurts and we want to attack back. We feel rejected and want to withdraw. We feel anxious and want immediate reassurance. We feel overwhelmed and want relief. We feel angry and want to prove a point. We experience an urge and suddenly using, drinking, escaping, fixing, controlling, or avoiding seems like the obvious answer.

The feeling may be completely real.

That does not mean the action it is pushing us toward is the right one.

Recovery gives us the opportunity to create something that may have been missing for a long time: a pause between what we feel and what we do next.

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| P | - Pause | Stop and give yourself a moment. |
| A | - Acknowledge | Notice and name what you are feeling. |
| U | - Understand | Remind yourself that feelings are information, not instructions. |
| S | - Stay Present | Breathe. Stay with the discomfort without acting on it. |
| E | - Evaluate | Choose a response that supports your values and your recovery. |

Why the Pause Matters

Many destructive behaviors provide immediate relief.

Using a substance may quiet anxiety. Yelling may release anger. Avoiding a conversation may temporarily reduce discomfort. Seeking reassurance may calm insecurity. Trying to control someone else may make uncertainty feel more manageable.

The problem is that immediate relief and long-term well-being are not the same thing.

A reaction can make us feel better for five minutes while creating a problem that lasts five days, five months, or longer.

Instead of: "What do I feel like doing?"
we can ask: "What choice will I respect afterward?"