Recalculating

A two-minute reset for the call, the email or the report that just knocked you sideways

The Autonomic Wheel
Robert Fuge

Your alarm is built like a smoke detector: it would rather go off for burnt toast than miss a fire. You don't need to stop it. You need to keep your hands on the wheel while it rings. Go in order, and skip any step that isn't helping.

1 Hands on the wheel 20 seconds

Grip the steering wheel, a desk edge or a wall and push for ten seconds, then let go. Feel your back against the seat and your feet on the floor. Then three **physiological sighs**: two breaths in through the nose (the second a short top-up), one long breath out through the mouth. *Driving? Pull over first, or just breathe out slowly.*

2 Wobble Check 10 seconds

WHICH STATE AM I IN? CIRCLE ONE.

Overdrive | Underdrive | False Okay | Safe Enough

HOW BUMPY? 0 SMOOTH, 10 WORST

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Overdrive (Grind Culture): racing, wired, reactive. **Underdrive** (Withdrawal): heavy, foggy, numb. **False Okay** (Flipper's Special): polished outside, old wiring inside. **Safe Enough** (Move-In Ready): steady enough to think.

3 Match a body tool to the state 1 minute

Overdrive (Grind): bring it down

- Long exhale: in 4, out 6 to 8
- Wall or steering-wheel push
- Cold water on the face, 15 to 30 seconds (see note)

Underdrive (Withdrawal): lift it

- Orient: slowly name five things you can see
- Movement snack: two minutes of walking or stairs
- Water and some protein

False Okay (Flipper's): notice

- Unclench your jaw, drop your shoulders
- Say it: *"I'm not actually fine right now."*
- Then use the tool for what's underneath

Cold on the face: skip it, unless your doctor has okayed it, if you have a heart condition, a slow heart rate, very low blood pressure, Raynaud's, cold-triggered asthma, a history of fainting or an eating disorder, or take a heart-slowing medicine such as a beta-blocker.

4 Weather Check 10 seconds

Before you blame your head, check the weather. Tick what's true today.

☐ Fed ☐ Rested ☐ Moved ☐ Daylight ☐ Talked to someone who likes me ☐ Body feels okay

5 Read the voice on the GPS 30 seconds

WHAT'S THE VOICE SAYING? WRITE THE EXACT SENTENCE.

WHICH READING FITS? Old map → test drive it | Wrong voice → swap the voice | Road closed → reroute

THE BORING-TRUE VERSION: THE PLAINEST ACCURATE SENTENCE

6 Next move 20 seconds

Not in this state: no big decisions, no long replies, no quitting. Just one small step.

ONE SMALL STEP BY WHEN

LINES THAT BUY TIME

"I hear you. Let me check with the lender and get you a real answer by noon."

"Got it. I'm with my family tonight. I'll be on this at eight and you'll hear from me by nine."

Drills

Practice on easy days, so the reset is already in your hands on the hard ones

Nobody learns to brake in a skid. These drills take a minute or two each, and you do them when nothing is wrong. Pick two for this week. Tick a box each day you do one. Missed days don't need making up.

1 · The parked-car push

20 seconds, every time you start the car

Before you turn the key: grip the wheel, push for ten seconds, let go, then one physiological sigh. You're linking a move you already make many times a day to the reset, so it's there on the day the report lands.

☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

2 · Five minutes of sighing

5 minutes, once a day

Set a timer and repeat the physiological sigh (two breaths in through the nose, one long breath out) for five minutes. This is the daily practice used in the 2023 study, and it's a good one for a parked car before your first appointment.

☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

3 · Wobble Check bookends

10 seconds, twice a day

At your first and last appointment, name your state and a 0 to 10. Write the two numbers below. In a week you'll know what your normal looks like, which makes an off day easier to spot.

☐ Mon ___ / ___ ☐ Tue ___ / ___ ☐ Wed ___ / ___ ☐ Thu ___ / ___ ☐ Fri ___ / ___ ☐ Sat ___ / ___ ☐ Sun ___ / ___

4 · Replay a hard moment

3 minutes, once this week

Pick a call from last month that knocked you sideways. Run steps 5 and 6 of the reset on paper, calmly, now.

WHAT THE VOICE SAID

OLD MAP, WRONG VOICE OR ROAD CLOSED?

THE BORING-TRUE VERSION

THE ONE SMALL STEP I COULD HAVE TAKEN

5 · Say your line out loud

2 minutes, with a colleague if you can

Write the line you'll use to buy time. Say it out loud three times, in the car or to a colleague playing your most demanding client. Lines you've already said come out more easily under pressure.

MY LINE

☐ Said it once ☐ Twice ☐ Three times ☐ Role-played it

Your State Card

Fill it out on a good day. Cut it out, fold it, and keep it in your visor or bag.

In a hard moment, the part of you that plans goes quiet. This card is a note from the calm version of you to the rattled one. Write in your own words: what each state looks like on you, and the one thing that helps.

✂ cut here

When the alarm goes off

1 Hands on the wheel · 2 Which state? 0 to 10? · 3 Body tool · 4 Weather Check · 5 Read the voice · 6 One small step

In Grind Culture I...
Overdrive: my signs _____

What helps
my best tool _____

In Withdrawal I...
Underdrive: my signs _____

What helps
my best tool _____

My Flipper's Special looks like
False Okay: my tell _____

The call that knocks me over most _____

My time-buying line _____

My green person
name and number _____

My boring-true reminder _____

After-action log

A line or two after each reset. In a couple of weeks you'll see which situations hit hardest and which tools work for you.

DATE	WHAT HAPPENED	STATE · 0 TO 10	TOOL I USED	AFTER	KEEP?