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## **QUICK RELAXATION AND GROUNDING TECHNIQUES**

Adapted from Russ Harris

Emotional storms can whip through your mind and body, tossing painful feelings and thoughts in all directions. Here's what you can do to survive, and thrive.

### **S.T.O.P.P.**

**Slow your breathing.**

- Breathe in through your nose, from your **lower stomach** (not your chest), allowing your tummy to expand like a balloon when you breathe in. Breathe in and out (through your nose) slowly in a 6 second cycle. Breathe in for 3 seconds and out for 3 seconds: **in, 2, 3... out 2, 3.**

**Take note.**

- Take note of your experience in this moment. Notice what you're thinking. Notice what you're feeling. Notice what you're doing. Notice how your thoughts and feelings are swirling around, and can easily carry you away with them if you allow them. Notice how you're feeling physically, in your body.

**Open up.**

- Open up around your feelings. Breathe into them and make room for them. Open up to your thoughts too: take a step back and give them some room to move: without holding on to them or trying to push them away. See them for what they are and give them space. You might say something to yourself like "I don't like this feeling, it's uncomfortable, but I can allow it to be there", or "let it be", or simply "yes, this too".

**Perspective and compassion.** How could you support yourself during this storm? For example, speak to yourself kindly, or you might want to have a glass of water, or a cup of

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tea. Perhaps ask yourself things like, will this matter in 10 hours, 10 days, 10 weeks, 10 years? What would you advise a good friend going through something similar?

**Pursue your values.** What sort of mum/wife/friend/daughter etc do you want to be in this moment? What do you want your time on this earth to stand for?

Use this pause as a foothold while you take a look around and decide what to do next. You might not like where you are now, and it might be uncomfortable. But what is important to you to do next, deep within your heart, and what small, easy step can be taken in that direction, now?

### **Further anchor yourself with one of the following techniques:**

#### **Notice Five Things**

1. Pause for a moment.
2. Look around, and notice five things you can see.
3. Listen carefully, and notice five things you can hear.
4. Notice five things you can feel in contact with your body. (E.g. your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air upon your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair etc)
5. Now do this all at the same time.

#### **Plant Your Feet**

1. Plant your feet into the floor.
2. Push them down – notice the floor beneath you, supporting you.
3. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
4. Notice your entire body – and the feeling of gravity flowing down your head and your spine and your legs, into your feet
5. Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you.

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### **Take Ten Breaths**

Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible, until the lungs are completely empty - and then allow them to refill by themselves.

1. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your ribcage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders.
2. See if you can let your thoughts come and go, as if they are just passing cars, driving past outside your house.
3. Notice your breathing still there, breathing you...and at the same time notice your body in the chair – your arms, legs, head, neck, shoulders. And look around the room and notice what you can see, and hear... Noticing that thoughts and feelings may be there as well, and that's okay, letting them come and go as they will.
4. Finally, notice your breathing, your body – arms, legs, head, neck, shoulders. The chair beneath you. Notice the thoughts, feelings...look around the room and notice what you can see, hear, taste, smell, feel against your skin. Press your feet in to the ground.