**The Pause Technique**

**Purpose**: Teach users a simple and effective method to pause during emotionally intense moments, giving them time to regain control, reflect, and choose intentional responses.

**What is the Pause Technique?**

**Understanding the Power of Pausing**
When emotions run high, it’s easy to react impulsively, often in ways we might regret later. The Pause Technique helps you create a moment of space between an emotional trigger and your response. This intentional pause allows you to calm your mind and body, reflect on your feelings, and make choices aligned with your values and goals.

**Why It Matters**
Reactions are automatic, but responses are thoughtful. By pausing, you regain control over your emotions, avoid escalating conflict, and make decisions you can feel good about. This practice also builds self-awareness and emotional resilience over time.

**REMEMBER:** You have time, even if it feels that you must make a decision right in this moment. You can always take time to recollect yourself.

**Reflection Prompt**
Think about a time when you reacted impulsively. How did it feel in the moment, and what was the outcome?

**Step 1: Recognize the Trigger**

**What Sets Off Intense Emotions?**
Triggers are events, interactions, or thoughts that spark strong emotional reactions. Reflect on common triggers in your life:

**Signs You Need to Pause**
What physical or emotional signals tell you that it’s time to take a pause? Examples might include:

* Racing heart.
* Tight jaw or clenched fists.
* Feeling overwhelmed or out of control.

Write your personal signals here:

**Step 2: Practice the Pause**

**How to Pause Effectively**
Follow these steps to create a moment of space:

1. **Stop and Breathe**: Take a deep breath in through your nose for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and exhale through your mouth for 6 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times.
2. **Acknowledge Your Emotion**: Silently name what you’re feeling (e.g., “I’m angry,” or “I’m hurt”).
3. **Ground Yourself**: Focus on the present moment. Use grounding techniques like noticing five things around you or feeling your feet firmly on the ground.

Write down which grounding or breathing technique you’d like to use during your pause:

**Step 3: Reflect Before Responding**

**Ask Yourself These Questions**
Once you’ve calmed down, reflect on the situation before responding:

1. *“What am I feeling, and why?”*
2. *“What do I want to achieve in this situation?”*
3. *“What response aligns with my values or goals?”*

**Your Example**

* *Trigger*: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* *Emotion*: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* *Intentional Response*: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4: Practice in Real Time**

**Daily Practice Challenge**
Choose one situation each day where you’ll intentionally practice the Pause Technique. Use this space to reflect on your experience:

1. *What was the trigger?*
2. *How did pausing help?*
3. *What did you learn about yourself?*

**Step 5: Building the Habit**

**Tips for Remembering to Pause**

* Create a reminder: Use a phrase like “Pause, then act” or “Take a breath” as a mental cue.
* Use physical prompts: Wear a bracelet, ring, or watch that reminds you to pause when you notice it.
* Practice during calm moments: Regular practice makes it easier to apply the technique during intense situations.

Write one way you’ll remind yourself to pause:

**Reflection and Moving Forward**

**Celebrate Your Progress**
Reflect on a time when the Pause Technique helped you respond intentionally instead of reacting:

* *What did you do differently, and how did it feel?*

**Commit to Growth**
Write one way you’ll continue incorporating the Pause Technique into your daily life: