

The Re-Entry Plan

It has been four days. On day one there was a reason. On day two there was a reason and some relief. Somewhere around day three the silence stopped being about the original thing and started being about the silence, and that is the part nobody plans for. Every extra day adds material the return now has to account for, so coming back gets harder at exactly the rate it gets more necessary, and the easiest option available each morning is to leave it one more day.

Who this is for: You went quiet four days ago, you have opened the message thread every morning since, and the longer it runs the less possible it feels to say anything at all.

The five steps

Step 1: The day count that says go

A number, decided now, because the feeling will not tell you.

My day count:

What I will do on that day if I still do not feel ready:

Where this sheet will live so that I see it:

One person who could ask me whether I have done it:

Step 2: The first message

Three lines. Not the full account.

Line one, naming the silence without explaining it:

Line two, the one true thing:

Line three, what I am asking for, small and specific:

What I am cutting from the draft:

Step 3: The question you will be asked

What to say to "where have you been".

My honest one-sentence answer, no case attached:

What I will not say, however tempting it is:

If they are angry, what I will do in the first minute:

What I want them to know that can wait until later:

Step 4: The first time in the same room

Same room, short, with a built-in ending.

Where, and for how long:

What has to be said in person rather than by message:

The natural end point that stops it expanding:

Step 5: The repair, a week later

The account, a week later, not in the first message.

What I did, described as behaviour:

The effect on them, in their words if I have them:

One change with a mechanism, not an intention:

What I will do the next time I feel it starting:

This worksheet is free to print, photocopy and share, including with clients. It is self-reflection material, not a diagnosis, an assessment or a substitute for professional support. If a relationship involves fear, control or coercion, or if working through this raises more than feels manageable, please speak to a doctor, a therapist or a domestic abuse service.