

Deactivation Plan (Printable)

Almost everything written about deactivation explains it. Explanation is useful at 3pm on a calm Wednesday and close to useless at the moment it starts, when the person deactivating has already concluded the relationship is wrong and the person on the other side has already concluded they are being discarded.

Who this is for: You shut down and cannot talk when it matters most, or you are living with someone who does and the silence is doing more damage than the argument did.

The three pages

Page 1: The first ten minutes

For the person deactivating. Do less, not more.

My agreed phrase, word for word (short enough to say while shut down):

The duration I will name, in hours:

Where I will physically go:

The thought I am not allowed to act on while deactivated:

Page 1 continued: The re-entry

The return has to be scheduled, because it will not happen otherwise.

Return time I will name up front:

What I will say when I come back, sentence one:

Sentence two — the true internal thing:

Sentence three — what I want now:

Page 2: For the partner

What actually helps, and what reliably extends it.

What I will do with the time instead of monitoring:

One sentence I will send, then stop:

What I need from the return, stated as a request:

The point at which open-ended silence stops being acceptable to me:

Page 3: The shared agreement

Four lines, agreed while calm, signed by both.

The phrase either of us can say:

Default duration:

How the return happens — who speaks first, and where:

One thing neither of us does during a pause:

The review, one month on

Judge the plan on numbers, not on atmosphere.

Episodes this month vs last:

How many ended at the stated return time?

How many repairs were actually spoken out loud?

One line of the plan to change, and why:

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.