

ROADWORTHY · FREE SELF GUIDED PROGRAM · MODULE 4 OF 7

Regulating before the redline.

You can read your dash (Module 2) and you know what trips it (Module 3). This week: what to actually do when the needle climbs. Not willpower — willpower is the tool everyone tries first and the one guaranteed to fail when it matters. Something better: levers that work on the body directly, when it counts, in under a minute.

Why willpower fails exactly when you need it

Think back to Module 1. Willpower — the deliberate, effortful “stay calm, don't bite” — lives in the control room. And the control room is precisely the system that loses resources when the alarm fires. So a regulation strategy that depends on willpower is a fire plan stored inside the burning room: fine in the drill, gone in the fire. This isn't a verdict on your discipline. It's the architecture, and it's true of every man in this program and every judge, lawyer and copper they'll ever stand in front of.

The way through is body first. Your nervous system has two branches: an accelerator (the stress response you know well by now) and a brake (the calming branch — the parasympathetic system). You can't think the brake on. But you can operate it mechanically — and the best lever runs through your breath.

The physiological sigh

Two breaths in through the nose — one big, then a short top up right on top of it — then one long, slow breath out through the mouth. That's one round. Do three. The double inhale pops open the small air sacs in the lungs; the long exhale is the part that matters — it directly activates the brake. This is one of the fastest evidence supported ways to bring a spiking body down, which is why versions of it get trained into elite athletes and tactical teams. Not yoga. Machinery.

You can't think your way calm. You breathe your way back to thinking. The sigh doesn't make the problem smaller — it hands the keys back to the control room so the problem gets your best driver.

The gap

Between what happens and what you do about it there's a space, and everything this program teaches is about widening it. Breath buys you seconds. Naming the feeling (Module 2) buys you more. Stepping away buys you minutes. The other side of a family law matter cannot control a man who owns his gap — every provocation not taken is a decision made in that space, and over months those decisions become the steadiest evidence there is.

WORKSHOP EXERCISE 4.1

Install the reps.

A tool you only reach for in emergencies won't be there in one — access under pressure comes from reps in calm. This week the sigh runs three times a day as maintenance, attached to things you already do. Pick your three anchors now.

MY THREE DAILY ANCHORS (E.G. FIRST COFFEE · IGNITION ON · LIGHTS OUT)

Grounding — the second lever

When the head is spinning faster than breath alone can catch, drop into the senses: feet flat on the floor and pushed down, five things you can see, the temperature of the air, the steering wheel under your hands. Grounding works because attention is a spotlight — pointed at the body and the room, it can't simultaneously floodlight the story. Pick your default now so it's pre loaded:

MY GROUNDING DEFAULT

Sleep is maintenance, not luxury

One more piece of the machinery, because it decides how much regulation capacity tomorrow even has: sleep. Broken sleep measurably shortens the fuse and shrinks the gap before the day begins — you've lived this. The basics that actually move it: a consistent wake time (the anchor the whole system sets to), no case files or legal emails in bed, the phone charging out of arm's reach, and real movement during the day. Boring on purpose. Boring is what works.

MY ONE SLEEP CHANGE THIS WEEK

Changeover is the grand final of regulation — highest stakes, biggest audience (your kids), most provocation potential. Grand finals get a game plan. Turn the page and build yours.

WORKSHOP EXERCISE 4.2

Build your changeover service check.

Five phases, your words, specific enough to run on a bad day. If changeovers aren't your highest stakes moment, build this for whatever is — the hearing, the phone call, opening the inbox.

PHASE	THE STANDARD MOVES	MY VERSION
Night before	Protect sleep: no case files in bed, phone out of reach, same wake time.	
One hour out	Eat something real. Ten minutes of movement. Engine serviced before the drive.	
Ten minutes out	Sigh × 3. Shoulders down, jaw loose. Arrive in your body, not your head.	
During	One job only: safe and warm for the kids. Every comment, every look — it can wait.	
After	Debrief on paper or with a mate, never in a reply text. 24 hour rule on anything written.	

Why boring wins

This checklist is deliberately unexciting. Boring is regulated, and regulated is what your kids remember — and what everyone else reads. The plan isn't for the good days; you don't need one then. It's for the morning after a rough night, when the alarm is already flickering before you've left the driveway. That's the day the written version earns its keep.

If it all goes sideways anyway — the provocation lands, the fuse goes — the plan hasn't failed and neither have you. Mine it: which light was already on before you arrived? That's next week's earliest tell, found the hard way. Reps, not verdicts.

THIS WEEK'S TOOL

The wallet card and the reps tracker.

Copy your service check onto the card, photograph it, and run the sigh at your three anchors daily. Tick the tracker honestly — a missed day logged beats a perfect week invented.

MY SERVICE CHECK							
PHASE	MY MOVES						
Night before							
One hour out							
Ten minutes out							
During							
After							

SIGH REPS	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Anchor 1							
Anchor 2							
Anchor 3							

Knowledge check – Module 4

T / F Willpower based calm fails under pressure because willpower lives in the part of the brain that goes offline.

T / F In the physiological sigh, the long slow exhale is the part that activates the calming system.

T / F Regulation tools work best used only in emergencies.

T / F Broken sleep reduces tomorrow's capacity to regulate before the day begins.

T / F “The gap” refers to the space between stimulus and response where choice lives.

BEFORE MODULE 5

Sigh at three anchors daily, service check built and photographed, dashboard word rolling. Next week is the deepest water in the program: grief with no funeral. Take it slowly, and pick a quiet hour for it.

Psychoeducation, not clinical treatment or legal advice. If things get heavy this week: MensLine 1300 78 99 78 · Lifeline 13 11 14 · Dads in Distress 1300 853 437 · Emergency 000.