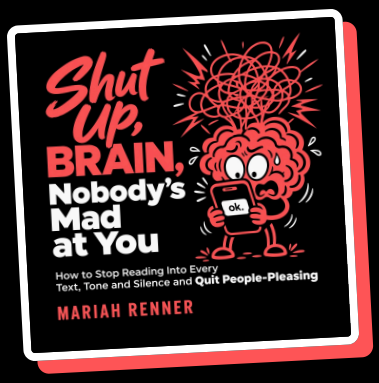
your free companion kit

# Fact, Feeling, Fix Kit




The tools from this book, written down, for the next time a text, a tone or a silence sets off the alarm.

Inside · a pocket card · the Fact, Feeling, Fix card · a one-pass sheet · the Neutral Read · the boring list · one question, one hour · the sorry swap · the No Scripts · the conversation card




THE PRINTABLE COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

**Shut Up, Brain, Nobody's Mad at You**

How to Stop Reading Into Every Text, Tone and Silence and Quit People-Pleasing

MARIAH RENNER

PRINT WHAT YOU NEED · FREE, NO SIGN-UP

start here · read once, then print

# How to use this kit



**Fact, Feeling, Fix, the Neutral Read, waiting an hour, the short no: all of it is meant for ordinary moods and ordinary silences.** Here they are on paper: eight tools, each with its own page, in the order the book teaches them.

### A few ground rules

1. Print what you need. Cut out the cards and fill in the blanks on a calm day. Nothing here is homework.
2. **One pass. Rough is fine.** Then do the fix, even if you're not sure you got it exactly right.
3. Some cards ask you to say a line out loud. Please only do that when you're alone and you feel safe doing it.
4. If you're driving, just listen, and try it once you've parked. Nobody's timing you.
5. There's no prize for doing it in the moment. It'll still work on Tuesday.

**IN YOUR WALLET**

The There's the alarm pocket card and the small Fact, Feeling, Fix card.

**BY YOUR DESK OR YOUR PHONE**

The Neutral Read card, the sorry swap and the No Scripts practice sheet.

**FOR QUIET DAYS AND HARD TALKS**

The boring list, one question, one hour, and the conversation card.

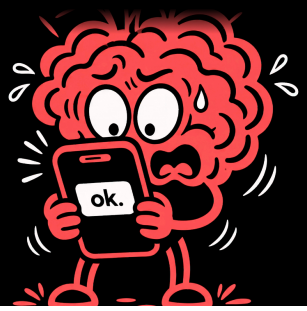
**If someone in your life frightens you or punishes you for saying no, that's different, and the help page on page 13 comes first.**

### Inside


1. There's the alarm pocket card 3
2. The Fact, Feeling, Fix card 4
3. The Neutral Read card 6
4. The boring list card 7
5. One question, one hour card 8
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7. The No Scripts practice sheet 10
8. Having the conversation card 12
+ If it's more than the alarm: help 13
+ One last thing, and the kit page 14

tool 1 of 8 · say it, breathe, give it a number

# There's the alarm pocket card




The next time a message arrives and your stomach drops, say quietly, to yourself:

FRONT · SAY IT QUIETLY

## "There's the alarm."

Then take three slow breaths.
About fifteen seconds in all.




BACK · THEN ONE PLAIN QUESTION

## what is it actually asking me to do?

- If it asks for a call, make the call.
- If it asks a question, answer it.
- If you can't do it right now, say when you can.

**You don't have to work out what they meant first.**

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots  Wallet size, one side each

FRONT · A NUMBER, THEN A MINUTE

The next time the alarm fires, give it a number from one to ten.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Just say the number in your head. "That's a seven."

BACK · ONE MINUTE, HANDS STILL

**Don't reply. Don't apologize. Don't offer anything. Don't go looking for clues in old messages.**

When the minute's up, deal with whatever the situation actually asks of you.

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots

### The scale, both ends

One is barely there. Ten is the full strap-across-the-chest, can't-hear-the-checkout-machine version.

A two out of ten situation gets a nine out of ten reaction.

### It's a reason to check

So the alarm isn't proof that something is wrong. It also isn't proof that everything is fine.

**Not "ignore it." Not "believe it." Check.**

### This week's alarm, once

**What set it off:** _____

**What it actually asked of me:** _____

**My number:** _____

**What I did:** _____

**Notice it, give it a number, and let it be loud for a minute without letting it make your choices.**



tool 2 of 8 · pull the lump apart

# The Fact, Feeling, Fix card



Inside that lump there are three different things, squashed together so tightly they feel like one. **It has three steps. I call it Fact, Feeling, Fix.**

## Fact

**what you could actually see and hear, the way a camera with a good microphone would record it.**

**SOUNDS LIKE**

"She texted 'fine' with a period."

**NOT**

Not "she was short with me." Not "he's fed up." Just what happened.

## Feeling

**The first part is your emotion. That's real. It's allowed.**

**THEN**

The second part is what the alarm added. The story.

**SAY BOTH**

"I'm frightened. And my alarm is telling me she's furious, which I don't actually know."

## Fix

**The fix is a decision about the situation. It is not a way to make the feeling go away.**

**ASK**

what does this situation actually call for?

**SOMETIMES**

"The fix is nothing."

FRONT · ONE PASS ON ONE MOMENT

## Fact. Feeling. Fix.

what the camera caught, what you feel and what the alarm guessed, and what the situation actually needs, even if that's nothing. One pass, then act.




BACK · THE QUICK CHECK

### "Is this fix for them, or for my feeling?"

- Does this fit the facts I've actually got?
- Is it the right size?
- Would I stand behind it on a calm day?
- Is it fair to them and to me?

**If the answers are yes, go ahead, mixed feelings and all.**

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots  The blank sheet is on the next page

### A fix can be

You can say yes. You can say no. You can say "yes, but Monday," or "I can do one of these, which matters more?"

**A request deserves a response. It doesn't automatically get your evening.**

### Already said a quick yes?

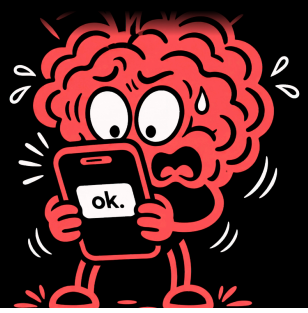
the fix can be a correction: "I agreed to that too fast. Looking at my week, I can't do it well. Can we work out another way?"

## You can respect the fear without believing the forecast.



tool 2, continued · print as many as you like

# One pass, then act




**One pass. Rough is fine.** You only run it again if something new happens: they reply, someone tells you something, a fact changes. Another wave of the same worry isn't new information. It's the same alarm, going off twice.

## The traps

**READINGS IN THE FACT**

"He ignored my message." Or: he hasn't replied yet.

would someone who walked in with no history and no feelings about anyone write down the same thing? If not, strip it back.

**THE FASTEST FIX**

choosing a fix because it ends the discomfort fastest. These fixes often look kind.

**THE BIG FIX**

Big fixes feel safer. They usually aren't needed.

**A NEW RITUAL**

Going through all three steps five times on the same text. That's just checking with a new coat on.

### When the fact is real

This time the fact includes their feelings, because they've said so in words. The fix is about the situation, not about switching off their feeling. The conversation card is on page 12.

**THE MOMENT**

Something small from this week. A text, a look, a pause on the phone.

## Fact THE CAMERA VERSION, JUST A SENTENCE

## Feeling FIRST YOUR EMOTION, IN A WORD OR TWO

**"and my alarm said…"**

## Fix THE SMALLEST HONEST RESPONSE

☐ "The fix is nothing."

## Then do it EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT SURE

**Done at:** _____ **My number after:** _____

tool 3 of 8 · for texts without a voice

# The Neutral Read card



**A text message has no voice.** Your brain doesn't like that gap. So it fills it in. And if you've got a loud alarm, the tone it chooses is usually the worst one it can find.

FRONT · READ IT PLAIN, OUT LOUD

**You read the message out loud in a plain, matter-of-fact voice.**

The voice you'd use to read out a grocery list, or to confirm an appointment time.

**No rise at the end. No edge. No sigh.**




BACK · ONE MESSAGE, ONE DRAFT

**Write your reply once, read it through once for typos, and send it.**

No rewriting for tone. No extra exclamation point to sound friendly, or one taken out to sound calm.

Send it anyway, then put the phone face down on the table and go make yourself a coffee.

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots  Keep it by your phone

## Hear it plain

A MESSAGE

"Did you get my email?"

READ IN A PLAIN VOICE

And it's just a question. Did you get it? Yes or no.

**This isn't the "true" sound of the message. There isn't one.** It's not a mind-reading trick.

## So there are three kinds of thing.

1. **A tone you've guessed at, like "ok."** Read it plain, then answer what it asks.
2. **A pattern you can see** over weeks. It names what she noticed, not what she fears. It leaves room for any answer. And she sends it once.
3. **And a feeling someone has actually named, which needs you to talk to them.** See page 12.

## Try one, once

**The message:** _____  **My first-draft reply:** _____

**Read plain, it asks:** _____  **Sent at:** _____

## So we judge our own messages by what we meant and other people's by what we fear.

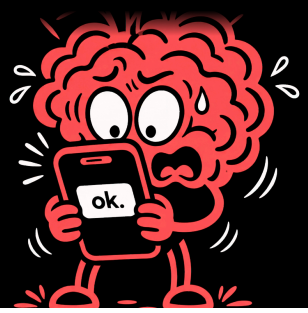



**The first draft is usually fine. It's often better.**

Out loud only when you're alone and feel safe. If you're driving, just listen, and try it once you've parked.

tool 4 of 8 · for silences

# The boring list card




**Silence doesn't explain itself.** What the gap can't tell you is why. The list is already written, so you never have to make one.

**FRONT · SOME OTHER POSSIBLE REASONS**

- They're busy.
- They're tired.
- They're sick.
- Their phone is on silent, or at the bottom of a bag, or charging in the other room.
- They forgot.
- They're overwhelmed, and your message is one of forty-three things they haven't gotten to.
- They're dealing with their own stuff. Money worries. A fight with their partner. A test result. A kid who won't sleep.
- Or they assumed you were fine, so it didn't occur to them that there was anything to reply to.

**BACK · OUT LOUD IF YOU'RE SOMEWHERE YOU CAN**

## "I don't know yet."

**Let it sit for a breath or two.**

Then carry on with exactly what you were doing before you noticed.

I'm not saying the boring reason is always the right one. Sometimes the worse one is true.

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots  Read the front once, then flip it

### A warning about the list

It was a new ritual. The list is useful for one thing: reminding you that the alarm's story isn't the only story. But the real skill isn't finding a better explanation. It's not needing any explanation at all.

### The announcement never comes

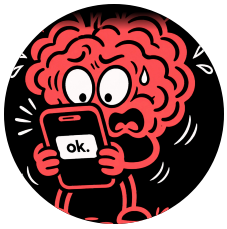
People don't announce that they're not mad, for the same reason they don't announce that they're not on fire.

### When the gap does ask something of you

A quick test, if you want one: would a calm person in my shoes do something here? If yes, do the ordinary version of it. Send the confirmation. Make the call. Ask the neighbor to knock.

**If a child is missing or someone you can't reach might be in danger, don't wait: call your local emergency number now. And keep following up until you know they're safe.**

## You can not know why someone is quiet, and still do the dishes.




**Out loud only when you're alone and feel safe. If you're driving, just listen, and try it once you've parked.**

tool 5 of 8 · before any checking-in message

# One question, one hour card



**A specific question is worth asking; a general "are we okay?" is usually worth waiting on.**

FRONT · WAIT FIRST

## Not forever. An hour.

1. Name it: "There's the urge to check."
2. Put the phone in another room, or face down somewhere you can't reach from the couch.
3. Give your hands something to do: do the dishes, fold the laundry, walk to the store.
4. Now and then, notice where the urge sits and give it a number on that one-to-ten scale.

BACK · WHEN THE HOUR'S UP, TWO QUESTIONS

1. **Is there a specific thing?**
2. **And am I willing to hear the honest answer?**

If there is, ask about that thing. Name it. Leave room for an honest answer.

If there isn't, don't send anything, and let the hour you've just got through count for something.

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots

### Passes, or not

"I've got a feeling she's off with me" doesn't pass the first question. "I forgot to call her on her birthday" does.

**Soft packaging doesn't change what's in the box.**

### Three lines for your back pocket

I don't know how they feel right now. I can handle not knowing. I'll ask if there's something real to ask.

### Company, not a verdict

"I'm having an anxious evening. Could you call me for ten minutes and tell me about your day?" That asks for someone's company, not a verdict.

**So: no screenshots for verdicts.** You still get a friend. You just don't get a judge.

**The question I want to send:** _____

**Hour starts at:** _____

**A specific thing?** ☐ yes ☐ no

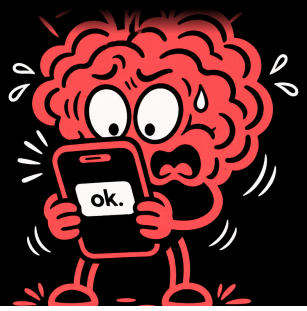
**My number at the end:** _____

## Both are better than sending it at the peak of the wave.



tool 6 of 8 · for the sorry that just falls out

# Swap sorry for thank you card




There's a simple swap that works in a lot of these moments. **The "sorry" version is about you being a nuisance. The "thank you" version is about the kind thing someone did.**

**FRONT · THE SWAP**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ~~Sorry this is taking so long~~ | → | **Thanks for your patience.** |
| ~~Sorry to bother you.~~ | → | **Thanks for your help** |
| ~~Sorry, do you mind if I sit here?~~ | → | **Is this seat free?** |
| ~~Sorry, I think that's my coffee~~ | → | **I think that's my coffee** |

Thank you for waiting. Thank you for your patience. Thanks for listening.

**BACK · WHEN A SORRY IS OWED**

## "Sorry I'm late. Thanks for waiting."

If you did, say so, once. If you didn't, you don't need to pay for it.

**The swap is for apologies that aren't needed. It isn't for the ones that are.**

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots

### A clean apology

**"I said I'd bring dinner Thursday and I didn't, and I didn't tell you. I'm sorry. Could I bring it tonight at six, or is another evening better?"**

- It names what she did.
- It says sorry once. Once is enough when it's meant.
- And it offers a repair, with two checks built in. First, can she actually do this? Second, does her sister want it?

**The repair is what counts.**

### One sentence

Say what you need or what's happening, plus one sentence of context at most. Often you won't need any.

**"I need to leave at three on Friday for an appointment."**

**"I'll be ten minutes late. Start without me."**

**"Could you send the file by Thursday?"**

### Manners stay

That's ordinary politeness. Everyone does it, and it doesn't mean anything deeper. Keep those.

**My most common sorry:** _____

**My thank you instead:** _____

### If the urge to add more is loud

Give yourself five minutes. Write the long version in your notes, with every sorry and every reason. Then copy only the sentence that matters into the real message and send that. **This is a bridge, not a new routine.**

tool 7 of 8 · practice out loud, then use it for real

# The No Scripts practice sheet



These scripts are for ordinary disagreements, with people who might be disappointed, push a bit, or sulk for an afternoon, not for threats or anyone you're afraid of. For that, the help page on page 13 comes first.

### Before you answer, a pause

Do I want to? Do I have the time and energy? How does this rank against the other things that matter to me? And how much of the pull is fear?

**The body tells you to slow down. The questions do the deciding.**

### What a short no looks like

- It's clear.
- It can be warm, if you like.
- It doesn't need an excuse.
- And it offers an alternative only if you mean it.

**"Thanks for thinking of me. I can't this week."**

**And then it stops.**

**SCRIPT ONE · A FRIEND**

"I'm going to pass on the trip this time, but I'd love to see the photos."

your turn _____

"Come on, it won't be the same without you."

"That's sweet. It's still a no for me this time."

your turn _____

You didn't say why. You thanked her and held it.

**SCRIPT TWO · FAMILY**

"I won't be able to host Christmas this year. I'm happy to bring dessert."

your turn _____

"But you always host."

"I know. This year I'm not. I'll bring dessert."

your turn _____

It agrees with the true part, doesn't argue about whether she should, and repeats the offer.

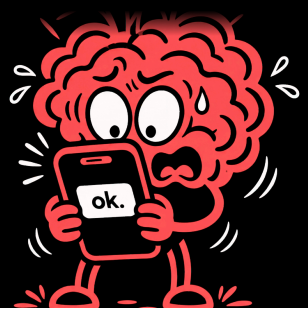
### My own small no

**Who asked:** _____ **If they push, my repeat:** _____

**My short no:** _____ **The itch after, 1 to 10:** _____

**Out loud only when you're alone and feel safe. If you're driving, just listen, and try it once you've parked.**

# When they push




**SCRIPT THREE · SHARED CARE**

"I can't keep doing all of Mom's appointments. I'll do Tuesdays. Can you take Thursdays?"

"I'm really busy at the moment."

"I get that. I can't do Thursdays either, so we need a plan. Can you do some of them, or help pay for a taxi?"

your turn _____

**SCRIPT FOUR · THE BOSS**

"I want to do this well. With the client report due Friday, which deadline should move?"

"Can't you just fit it in?"

"Not without one of them slipping. Which one matters more to you?"

your turn _____

## When the boss pushes back

| | |
|---|---|
| **"You managed it last time"** | "I did, and it meant working late all week. I can't do that again. What should come off?" |
| **Staying late** | "I can't stay tonight. I can start on it first thing tomorrow." |
| **Covering a meeting** | "I can't cover that one. Could someone else, or could I send notes on my part instead?" |
| **A pile of work** | "I'm at capacity right now. Can we go through my list together and decide what comes first?" |
| **If she looks disappointed** | "I know it's not what you hoped. I'd rather tell you now than miss a deadline later." |

**Afterward, in a short email:** "Just confirming: the report stays Friday, the project draft moves to the following Wednesday." That's not being difficult. It's a record, so nobody's relying on memory.

**THE CALM REPEAT**

Say the same thing again, kindly, at the same speed and volume as the first time.

**"I know. It's still a no this time."**

"I'm going to leave it there. Have a great weekend."

Two repeats is plenty.




## The guilt wave

The guilt wave is a bad moment to decide anything. Say something plain to yourself: **"This is the guilt wave. It feels urgent. It hasn't told me anything new."** A lot of take-backs happen by text, late at night.

## When it stops being ordinary

If someone keeps going after you've closed it, or starts making you pay for the no, that's not ordinary pushback anymore. The help page on page 13 is the one to read.

**Out loud only when you're alone and feel safe. If you're driving, just listen, and try it once you've parked.**

tool 8 of 8 · for when someone really is upset

# Having the conversation card



**When there's a real thing to talk about, here's an order that helps.** We're talking about ordinary anger in ordinary relationships.

FRONT · THE ORDER

1. **Listen first.**
   Before you explain, defend or apologize, let them say it.
2. **Ask what happened for them.**
   what it was like from where they were standing.
3. **Reflect it back.**
   Say what you heard in your own words, and check you got it right.
4. **Own your part.**
   The part that's actually yours.

BACK · A LINE FOR OPENING IT

"I can tell you're upset about this, and I want to understand. Can you tell me what it was like from your side?"

IF IT GETS TOO MUCH

"I want to keep talking about this, but not like this. Can we pick it up tomorrow?"

**A pause with a time on it isn't running away.**

Cut along the dashes  Fold on the dots

## When part of it isn't yours

AT WORK

"I can see this was frustrating. The part that's mine is the late notice, and I'll flag things earlier. I see the rest differently. We can talk it through if you like."

ABOUT A NO THAT WAS FAIR

"I understand you're disappointed. My answer's still the same."

You acknowledge the feeling. You own only what's yours.

## What isn't yours, and what is

**Their feelings aren't yours to fix.** And whether they forgive you, and when, isn't on your schedule.

What is yours: listening, owning your part, doing the repair, and getting on with your life while they have their feelings.

**What you don't do is collapse into the over-apology. And you don't owe them agreement with everything.**

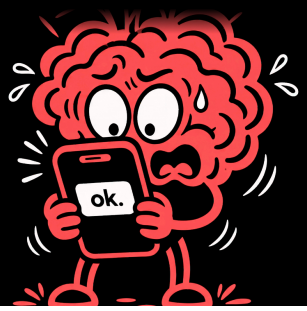
## It's letting someone be upset with you without abandoning yourself.




**Out loud only when you're alone and feel safe. If you're driving, just listen, and try it once you've parked.** Threats or being made to pay for a no: the help page on page 13.

*read this first if it fits*

# If it's more than the alarm




**If someone actually punishes you for saying no, that is not your overthinking.** So everything in this book about checking calmly, saying a short no and sitting through someone's bad mood is for ordinary disagreement. It is not for threats, coercion or intimidation. Those need a different kind of help.

**DISAPPOINTMENT**

What makes it disappointment is what comes after. They accept the answer, and things go back to how they were.

**PUNISHMENT**

- It can look like threats.
- It can look like anger that frightens you.
- It can look like checking up on you.
- It can look like turning other people against you, so you end up with nobody on your side.

**Disappointment lives with your answer. Punishment keeps pushing, or keeps costing you, until you change it.**

**Don't test anyone.** If there's a chance it isn't safe, an experiment could put you at real risk.

If you ever catch yourself using this book to convince yourself that something frightening is fine, stop listening to this book. It wasn't made for that.

If someone checks your phone, computer or accounts, assume your calls, texts and browsing history might be seen, even after you delete them. Where you can, use a device they can't get into, like a trusted friend's phone or a computer at a public library.

If this feels bigger than a habit, it's worth having someone qualified look at it with you. That isn't a failure. If it's hurting, that's reason enough to ask.

I'm not a therapist. I'm not a doctor. This kit shares everyday tools from the book. It isn't medical or legal advice.

## Where to start

**911** — If you're ever in immediate danger, call your local emergency number, that's 911 in the US.

**988** — If you're struggling and need to talk to someone now, call or text 988.

In the US, the National Domestic Violence Hotline is free and confidential. You can call 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. They talk with people who aren't sure whether what's happening counts.

Outside the US, search for your country's domestic abuse helpline and crisis line.

Your doctor can also listen and point you toward a therapist or counselor. And telling one trusted person can make it feel less like something you're imagining.

Lines get busy. If the first place isn't right, ask them who else to try. **"I'm not sure if this counts" is a perfectly good way to start.**

## One last thing to carry with you



Next time you're waiting to find out how someone feels, do what's called for and leave the rest alone. Then put the phone face down somewhere you'd have to get up to reach it. Give yourself twenty minutes by the clock, and spend them on something that's yours.

If the alarm pipes up halfway through, tell it, quietly or out loud if you're alone:

# "Shut up, brain. I don't know if anyone's mad at me. And if they are, I'll be okay."




Not calm. Less checking, and that counts. Then go back to whatever you were doing, and use the minutes that are left. They're yours.

## Mariah

THE KIT PAGE, FREE

**kalderno.com/notmad**

Scan it to get this kit again or to print a fresh copy. If the book helped you, a rating on Spotify helps the next listener find it.

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