AWARENESS & EMOTIONS

Pause Between Impulse and Action

A brief pause, with about 5 minutes to reflect

This workbook offers a gentle introduction to the practice for you to explore on your own; deeper work is best undertaken with the support of a professional counsellor.

Notice an urge before deciding what to do

An impulse can move quickly: to reply, agree, check something or turn to another task. This practice invites you to recognise an ordinary urge and make a little room to consider your response.

The pause can be brief. You do not need to make the urge disappear or reach a perfectly calm state before choosing.

1. Choose an ordinary moment

Start with a situation where it is practical to wait for a few moments, such as replying to a non-urgent message. If something needs immediate attention, attend to it first. You can also look back at a recent, manageable example.

2. Recognise the pull

What do you feel drawn to do? Put it into a simple phrase: "I want to answer straight away." Or: "I want to leave this task." Notice any thought, feeling or sensation that is clear, without searching for an explanation.

3. Take a little time

Let your hands rest for a moment if that is practical. Notice something around you, or the support beneath you. Ask: "Do I need to act on this now?" A few seconds may be enough to consider the question.

4. Consider the options

What matters in this situation? You might follow the impulse, make a small adjustment or give yourself a little more time. Take account of your needs, the practical circumstances and any effect on others.

If you need longer, decide when you will return to the choice. The pause does not have to become an open-ended delay.

5. Choose and look back

Choose a response that seems workable with the information you have. Afterwards, notice what the pause allowed you to consider. You may still choose the action you first wanted to take.

Begin with a low-stakes situation. If you notice the urge only after acting, you can reflect on that moment without replaying it in detail or judging yourself.

PAUSE BETWEEN IMPULSE AND ACTION

Look at one moment

The situation, and what I felt drawn to do:

What I noticed when I paused, or looked back afterwards:

The response I chose, and what informed it:

An ordinary example

A non-urgent message arrives while you are working on something important to you. You want to reply immediately. A pause lets you consider whether a reply is needed now. You might answer briefly, or decide to reply when you finish the task. Either choice can be deliberate.

A pause creates an opportunity to consider your response. It does not guarantee a particular feeling or outcome.

PAUSE BETWEEN IMPULSE AND ACTION

Returning to the practice

Over four weeks

Follow the pace in your Development Map plan if this practice has been recommended. You can work with the same kind of everyday moment throughout.

Week 1 | Recognise the moment

Notice a familiar impulse when it appears, or shortly afterwards. What lets you recognise it? A simple description is enough.

Week 2 | Try a brief pause

When the circumstances allow, take a little time before responding. Notice whether it helps to look around, let your hands rest or ask yourself a short question.

Week 3 | Choose a response

Use one pause to consider the available options. Follow through on a manageable choice, including a decision about when to respond if you need more time.

Week 4 | Review what is useful

Which situations benefited from a pause? When did it become unnecessary effort or delay? Keep the parts of the practice that help you choose.

Where would a little more room to choose be useful?

This practice supports self-reflection. It is not a treatment or a substitute for professional support.

Work with me

If this workbook has opened up something you would like to explore further, you are welcome to get in touch. I offer psychotherapy and counselling in Dalston, East London, and online. We can use an initial session to consider what brings you to therapy and whether working together feels right for you.

BOOK AN INITIAL SESSION	CONTACT ME