

HOW DO I CALM DOWN WHEN I FEEL I'M GONNA EXPLODE? (AKO, Your Higher Self)

The Deep Dive Worksheet: Building Your 2% Shift

This worksheet goes with the blog. It has 7 short activities. Each one tells you exactly what to do, and shows you a filled-in example first, so you always know what your answer should look like.

Take your time. There are no wrong answers here.

1. THIS WEEK'S POT LOG

Instructions: *This week, catch a moment when you felt close to boiling over, big or small. Log it as soon as you can: what tipped it over, what was probably already simmering before that moment, where you first felt it in your body, and how the heat level actually moved.*

EXAMPLE ENTRY

What tipped it over: *My coworker asked me the same question for the third time.*

What was probably already simmering before that: *I only slept five hours and skipped lunch.*

Where I first felt it in my body: *My jaw and my shoulders.*

Heat level, before and after I did anything: *8 out of 10 before. About a 6 after I stepped outside for one minute.*

ENTRY 1

What tipped it over: _____

What was probably already simmering before that: _____

Where I first felt it in my body: _____

Heat level, before and after I did anything: _____

ENTRY 2

What tipped it over: _____

What was probably already simmering before that: _____

Where I first felt it in my body: _____

Heat level, before and after I did anything: _____

ENTRY 3

What tipped it over: _____

What was probably already simmering before that: _____

Where I first felt it in my body: _____

Heat level, before and after I did anything: _____

2. SPOT THE STACK

Instructions: Explosions rarely come from just one thing. Most of the time, the pot was already half full before the "last straw" moment ever showed up. Think of a recent time you felt close to boiling over, and check off anything that was true in the 24 hours before it.

In the 24 hours before that moment, was any of this true?

- ☐ I didn't sleep enough
- ☐ I skipped a meal or didn't drink enough water
- ☐ I was already annoyed about something else
- ☐ I felt rushed or behind all day
- ☐ I was around a lot of noise, people, or screens
- ☐ I was holding in something I needed to say
- ☐ Other: _____

Looking at what you checked, how full was the pot before the "last straw" moment even happened?

NEARLY EMPTY HALF FULL ALREADY ALMOST OVERFLOWING

What's one thing on that list you could lower on purpose next time, before the last straw even shows up?

3. WHERE THE CALM WAS BORROWED FROM

Instructions: As a kid, you didn't calm yourself down alone, you borrowed calm from someone bigger and steadier. This activity looks at who that was for you, or wasn't, so you can understand why this skill feels natural, foreign, or somewhere in between.

EXAMPLE

Who helped calm me down as a kid, and what that actually looked like: My grandmother. She'd just sit next to me and breathe loudly on purpose until I matched her.

What happened instead, if nobody really did this for me: My parents usually got louder when I was upset, so I learned to go quiet and disappear instead.

One person today whose steadiness still helps me borrow some calm: My best friend. Just texting her mid-spiral slows me down, even before she replies.

Who helped calm you down as a kid, and what did that actually look like, specifically?

If nobody consistently did this for you, what did you learn to do instead?

Is there someone in your life today whose steadiness still helps you borrow a little calm? Who, and how?

4. NAME YOUR DEFAULT VALVE

Instructions: When the pot gets close to boiling, you default to one of two moves: letting it all out right at the top, or clamping the lid down and pretending the stove was never on. Circle the one you reach for most.

I LET IT ALL OUT

I CLAMP THE LID DOWN

EXAMPLE

Circled: *I clamp the lid down.*

What this valve protects me from: *Looking out of control, or making someone else deal with my mess.*

What it's actually cost me: *A tension headache almost every Sunday night, and a habit of snapping at my dog instead of the actual person.*

Where I use this valve the most: *At work. I've never once raised my voice there, not even close.*

What is this valve trying to protect you from?

What has it actually cost you? (your body, your sleep, a relationship, an honest conversation)

Where do you reach for this valve the most?

5. BUILD YOUR 2% SHIFT MENU

Instructions: You don't need a brand-new toolkit invented in the heat of the moment, you need one built ahead of time. Check off any small action below that sounds doable for you, even on a bad day, and add your own if you've got one.

- ☐ Unclench one part of my body on purpose
- ☐ Slow exhale, like I'm fogging up a mirror
- ☐ Feet flat on the floor, name 3 things I see
- ☐ Hold something cold for ten seconds
- ☐ Say, "I just have to outlast the next 90 seconds"
- ☐ Step outside, even for one minute
- ☐ Other (something that works for you): _____
- ☐ Other (something that works for you): _____

Circle your top two from this list, the ones you'd actually reach for.

Where could you put a reminder of these two (a note, a phone wallpaper, a sticky note), so future-you doesn't have to think of them from scratch mid-boil?

6. A LETTER FROM AKO, FOR THE NEXT TIME

Instructions: AKO is the steady, noticing part of you, the one asking this whole question in the first place. Write yourself a short letter from AKO, meant to be read the next time you feel the pot climbing. Not a lecture. Just something steady to land on.

EXAMPLE

"Hey. I know it's loud in there right now, and it makes sense that it is. You don't have to fix the whole feeling. Just do one small thing, the cold water, the slow breath, whatever you've got, and give it ninety seconds. You've outlasted this before. You can outlast it again. I've got you."

Now write your own letter, in your own words.

Hey,

7. THIS WEEK'S 90-SECOND EXPERIMENT

Instructions: Pick one moment this week when you feel the heat starting to rise. Choose one action from your menu in Activity 5. Predict what you think will happen. Then actually try it, and come back and write down what really happened.

EXAMPLE

Action I'll try: Hold an ice cube for ten seconds the next time I feel my chest get tight.

I predict: *I'll feel silly doing it, and it probably won't change much.*

What actually happened: *It actually gave me something to focus on besides the spiral. By the time it melted a little, I'd stopped shaking.*

Action I'll try this week:

I predict:

What actually happened, after I tried it:

CLOSING LINE

Nothing here proves you have to stop feeling the heat. It proves you're building a small, repeatable skill: noticing the pot, making a 2% shift, and staying in the kitchen long enough to watch it come back down.

You got this! Nobody is coming to save you... you have to save yourself!

HAPPYISH HUMANS