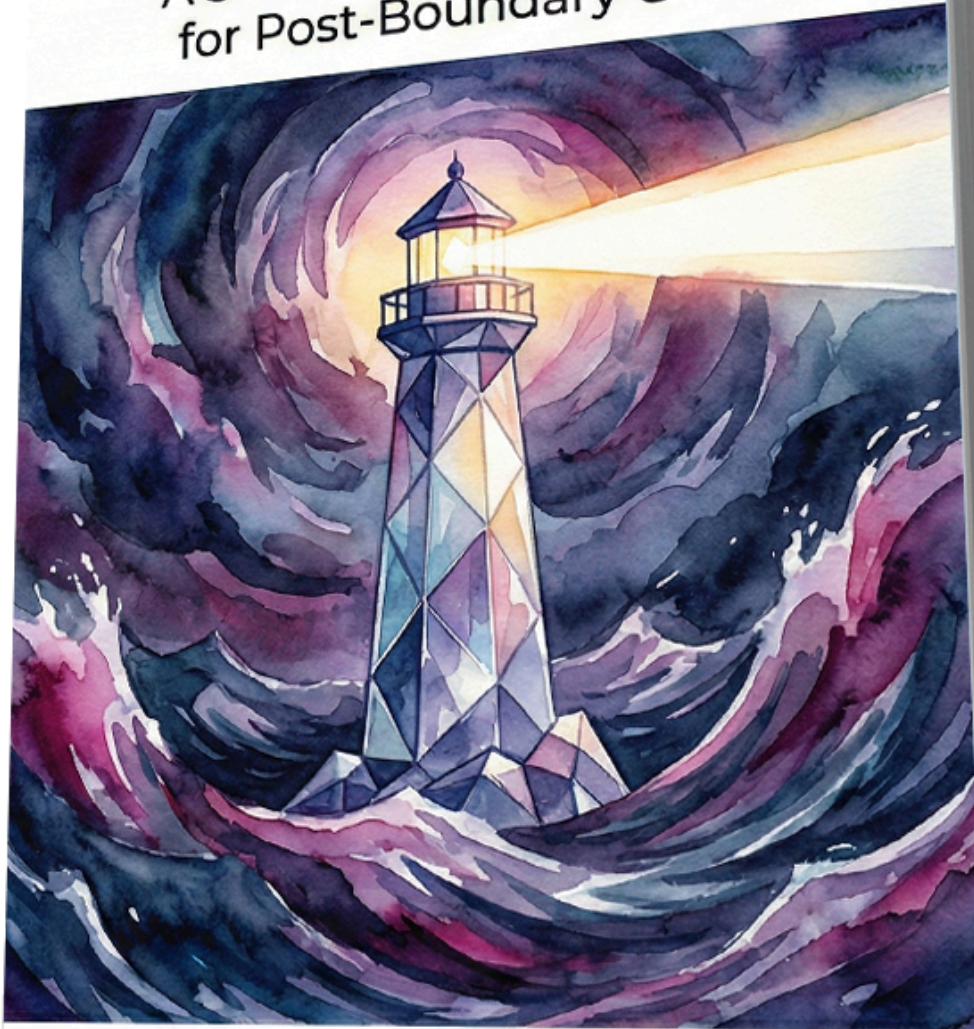


THE "AFTERSHOCK" PROTOCOL

A 30-Minute Rescue Plan
for Post-Boundary Guilt



re:think

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Just So You Know, You're Safe, and You're Not Wrong

Okay, take a deep breath with me right now. In through the nose... out through the mouth.

I know exactly where you are. Your heart might be racing, your stomach might be in knots, and your brain is likely screaming that you've just done something terrible. You just set a boundary. Maybe you said "no" to a crisis that wasn't yours, or maybe you ended a phone call when it got toxic.

You did something incredibly brave, but instead of feeling proud, you feel a tidal wave of guilt and panic. This is the "Aftershock."

Please hear me: **This feeling does not mean you did something wrong.** It only means you did something *new*. Your nervous system is conditioned to believe that disappointing this person is dangerous. The guilt isn't a moral compass right now; it's just an old alarm bell ringing because you stepped off the established path.

You don't need to fix anything. You just need to get through the next 30 minutes without undoing the progress you just made. This protocol is your safety rail. Let's hold onto it together.

The 30-Minute Rescue Protocol

Do this immediately after setting a hard boundary when the guilt hits.

Phase 1: The Physical Disconnect (Minutes 0–5)

When the aftershock hits, your brain's impulse is to "repair" the connection you just disrupted. You need to physically prevent yourself from doing that.

- **Step 1: Put the Device Down.** Do not hold your phone. Put it in another room, under a pillow, or turn it completely off. If you are in person, leave the immediate area (go to the bathroom, step outside).
- **Step 2: The "No-Contact" Seal.** Make a pact with yourself right now: For the next 30 minutes, you are forbidden from texting, calling, or emailing the person. No "just checking in" texts. No clarification emails. Nothing.

Phase 2: Regulate the Body (Minutes 5–15)

Your body is in a fight-or-flight state because it thinks setting a boundary is life-threatening. You cannot think your way out of this panic; you have to soothe your body first.

- **Step 3: The 4-7-8 Reset.** Do this breathing exercise three times: Inhale for a count of 4. Hold for a count of 7. Exhale slowly for a count of 8. This physically forces your nervous system to downshift.
- **Step 4: Change Your Temperature.** Splash freezing cold water on your face, or hold an ice cube in your hand until it melts. This shocks your system into focusing on physical sensation rather than emotional panic.

Phase 3: The Truth Check (Minutes 15–30)

Now that your body is slightly calmer, your brain will try to trick you with the "guilt script." We need to override it with facts.

- **Step 5: The Mantra of Truth.** Repeat these three sentences out loud (yes, out loud—your brain needs to hear your own voice saying it):

1. *"I am allowed to have limits."*
2. *"My 'no' was not an attack; it was self-care."*
3. *"Their disappointment is not my responsibility to fix."*

- **Step 6: The "Do Not Enter" List.** Until you are completely calm (usually several hours later), you must avoid these three traps:
 1. **DO NOT Apologize.** (You did nothing wrong).
 2. **DO NOT Over-Explain.** (Your "no" is a complete sentence. Adding reasons just gives them openings to argue).
 3. **DO NOT Ask for Validation.** (Do not call a mutual friend to ask if you were "too mean." You know why you did this. Trust yourself.)
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Final Thought: Riding the Wave

The Aftershock is incredibly uncomfortable, I know. It feels like an emotional flu. But like a flu, it has a lifecycle. It will peak, and then it will subside.

Your only job right now is to ride the wave without drowning. You don't have to feel good about the boundary yet; you just have to hold it. Every time you survive an Aftershock without collapsing and apologizing, you are rewiring your brain to realize that you are safe even when others are displeased.

You are doing the hardest work there is. I am so unbelievably proud of you. Keep holding on. The storm will pass, and you will still be standing.

And as always, we want to remind you that we're all on this “[AVAIYA](#) Journey” together.

We're all life explorers here, but—we aren't always moving at the same speed. And you know what? That's completely okay.

At AVAIYA, we believe we're all on our own individual "AVAIYA Journey," yet we're traveling side-by-side.

You're gonna love the days when you're piloting a rocket ship, breaking barriers, and flying high. But there're also going to be days where you feel like a car stuck in traffic.

You might even have days where you break down on the side of the road and just need to sit there for a while, feeling a little frustrated or sad. And hey, that's okay, too. Whenever you're finally ready, you just lace up your sneakers and walk the path—one step at a time—back toward your best life.

We'll Meet You Where You Are.

At [AVAIYA](#), we don't care if you're speeding down the highway or taking the scenic route. We just want to make sure you have exactly what you need to keep moving.

Think of us as your roadside support and your launchpad all rolled into one:

When you're walking, we're the bridge to get you over the gap.

When you're driving, we're the premium fuel to keep your engine running.

And when you're finally ready to fly? We're the runway.

How We Support You

Every single week, we send out supportive resources designed to meet you at the moment.

Keep an eye out for our free **Tuesday Tune-ups** and our **Thrifty Thursdays**.

Take advantage of the resources that'll support you right now, and if one week doesn't speak to you, don't worry—next week will most likely have just what you need.

Plus, we'll continue to create our [Deep-Dive Free Online Conferences](#) and other supportive materials to keep your tank full.

No matter where you're trying to get to—or how long it takes you to get there—we're building new pathways to help you arrive.

Keep ReThinking,

iKE ALLEN & Ande Anderson, MS, RD

Co-Founders of [AVAIYA](#) University

