A FREE 7-DAY GUIDE

The 7-Day *Survival Mode* Reset

For midlife women who are tired of being fine

Seven short practices, about ten minutes a day, to help you notice what your body has been carrying, calm things down, and take one honest next step.

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BEFORE YOU START

You're not lazy. You're running on empty.

You keep things going. You show up for everyone. People say, "I don't know how you do it." And by the end of the day, there's nothing left over for you.

If that sounds familiar, you're not weak and you're not failing. Your body has likely been in survival mode for a long time. That is something we can work with.

This reset won't fix everything in a week. It isn't meant to. It's meant to help you slow down long enough to see what's really going on, give your body a little relief, and choose one next step that fits your real life.

What is survival mode?

Your body has a built-in alarm system. It's there to protect you. When life feels like too much for too long, that alarm can get stuck in the "on" position. You stay on guard, push through, and run on adrenaline.

That works for a while. Over time it can leave you tired but wired, short on patience, numb, or far from the woman you used to be. None of that means something is wrong with you. It means you've been carrying a lot.

How to use this guide

- **One day, one practice.** Each takes about 10 minutes.
- **Missed a day?** No problem. Just pick back up where you left off.
- **Keep a pen close.** You'll write a few things down. You can print this or use a notebook.
- **Go gently.** If something brings up a lot, pause. You don't have to finish everything.

Instead of "what's wrong with me," ask "what happened to me."

THE QUESTION BEHIND THIS WHOLE RESET

DAY 1

Name It

It's hard to change something you haven't named. Today, you're just noticing. No fixing yet.

Check any that feel true most weeks

- [ ] I wake up tired, even after a full night in bed.
- [ ] I'm the one everyone leans on, and I rarely ask for help.
- [ ] Small things (a text, a noise, one more question) make me snap or want to cry.
- [ ] I can't remember the last time I did something just for me.
- [ ] My mind races at night with to-do lists and what-ifs.
- [ ] I feel flat or numb, like I'm going through the motions.
- [ ] I say "I'm fine" when I'm not.
- [ ] Resting makes me feel guilty or restless.
- [ ] My body aches or I get sick more often, and I can't say why.
- [ ] I've lost interest in things I used to love.

> **If you checked three or more,** your body may be working overtime. This isn't a diagnosis. It's information, and it's worth paying attention to.

What have I been calling "just a busy season" that has really been going on for much longer?

When was the last time I felt like myself?

Some of these signs can also come from physical health issues like thyroid or hormone changes. If you haven't had a checkup in a while, it's a good idea to see your doctor too.

DAY 2

Listen to Your Body

Your body often knows you're overwhelmed before your mind admits it. Today, check in with it three times.

Set a reminder on your phone for morning, midday, and evening. When it goes off, stop for one minute and ask yourself the questions below. Write down what you notice. There are no right answers.

	Morning	Midday	Evening
Where do I feel tight or tense? (jaw, shoulders, chest, stomach)			
Is my breathing fast and shallow, or slow and deep?			
How "on alert" do I feel, from 1 (calm) to 10 (on edge)?			
What was happening right before this check-in?			

Looking at my day, when was I the most on edge? Who or what was around me then?

> **Why this matters:** Many women in survival mode are so used to ignoring their body that they only notice stress once it turns into a headache, a meltdown, or a crash. Catching it earlier gives you more choices.

DAY 3

The 2-Minute Settle

You don't need an hour of quiet to calm your body. You need a few small signals that tell it, "Right now, I'm safe enough."

You can do this in the car, at your desk, in the bathroom, or at the kitchen sink. No one has to know.

1. **Feel your feet.** Press them into the floor. Notice the ground holding you up. You don't have to hold everything up right now.
2. **Look around slowly.** Name 3 things you can see, 2 things you can hear, and 1 thing you can touch. This tells your brain where you are: here, now, not back there.
3. **Breathe out longer than you breathe in.** Take a full, deep breath in for a count of 2. Fill your lungs all the way, until you feel your chest and belly expand. Then breathe out slowly for a count of 6. Do this five times. A long, slow exhale is one of the simplest ways to help your body downshift.
4. **Put a hand on your chest or belly.** Say to yourself, "I'm here. Right now, I'm okay." If that doesn't feel true, try, "I'm doing the best I can with what I have."

Today's practice

Use the 2-Minute Settle three times today, and make one of those times when you already feel calm. Practicing when you're calm makes it much easier to reach for when you're not.

What did I notice in my body before and after?

If focusing on your breath makes you feel more anxious, that's common for people who've been through a lot. Keep your eyes open and spend more time on step 2 instead.

DAY 4

Find the Leaks

Rest helps. But if nothing else changes, rest can feel like pouring water into a bucket with a hole in it.

Today you'll look at where your energy goes and where it comes back. Be honest. No one else has to see this.

	What drains me	What fills me back up
People		
Tasks and roles		
Places and spaces		
Habits (phone, sleep, food, screens)		
Thoughts I keep having		

Now pick just two things

- **Circle one drain** you could shrink, even a little. Not remove. Just shrink.
- **Star one thing that fills you** that you could make room for, for 10 minutes, sometime this week.

The drain I'm shrinking, and how:

The 10 minutes I'm protecting for myself this week, and when:

DAY 5

Meet the Strong One

You might say, "Part of me wants to rest, and part of me feels like I can't." That's not you being confused. That's you being human.

A quick word about "parts"

In my work I use something called Internal Family Systems, or IFS. It's a way of working with the different parts of ourselves. The idea is simple: we all have different parts inside, like the part that worries, the part that pushes, and the part that just wants a nap. None of them are bad. Each one is trying to help in its own way.

Most women in survival mode have a part that keeps everything running. Let's call her **the Strong One**. She remembers the appointments, handles the crisis, and keeps smiling. She probably learned this job a long time ago, and for good reason.

Today, instead of trying to make her stop, you're just going to get to know her a little. Take a breath, then answer as if you're asking her the questions.

When did the Strong One first show up in my life? What was happening then?

What is she afraid would happen if she slowed down?

Write her one sentence of thanks for how she has tried to take care of you.

If painful memories come up, stop and use the 2-Minute Settle from Day 3. The deeper healing work is best done with a trained therapist, and you don't have to do it alone.

DAY 6

One Small Boundary

A boundary isn't a wall. It's a clear, kind line about what you can and can't give right now.

Go back to the drain you circled on Day 4. Is there one small boundary that would help protect your energy there? Pick one. Just one. Then borrow any of these words to say it.

WHEN YOU'RE ASKED TO TAKE ON MORE

"I can't take that on right now."

WHEN YOU NEED TIME TO THINK

"Let me check and get back to you tomorrow."

WHEN YOU WANT TO HELP, JUST LESS

"I can't do the whole thing, but I can do _____."

WITH FAMILY

"I love you, and I'm not able to do that this time."

WHEN SOMEONE KEEPS PUSHING

"I know you're disappointed. My answer is still no."

WITH YOURSELF

"I'm allowed to rest before everything is done."

A few things to remember

- **Keep it short.** A long explanation invites a debate.
- **Expect some guilt.** Guilt doesn't always mean you did something wrong. Sometimes it just means you did something new.
- **You're in good company.** Even Jesus stepped away from the crowds to rest and pray.

The boundary I'm going to try, and the words I'll use:

If you're in a relationship where saying no could make you unsafe, please don't test that alone. Reach out to the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 first.

DAY 7

What Happened to Me

Survival mode doesn't come out of nowhere. It usually starts for a reason.

Long seasons of caregiving. A hard marriage. Loss. A painful childhood. Years of being the one who holds it all together. The tools in this reset can help calm things down. Lasting change usually comes from gently healing what's underneath, not from trying harder.

Looking back at this week, what did I notice about myself?

Which practice helped the most?

My plan for the next 30 days

One practice I'll keep doing daily	
One boundary I'll keep	
One person I'll be honest with about how I'm really doing	

When it might be time for more support

- You've felt this way for weeks or months, not days.
- It's affecting your sleep, your work, or your relationships.
- You're numbing out more (scrolling, wine, busyness, shutting down).
- Old memories or feelings keep coming up and won't settle.

Needing help isn't failing. It's often the bravest, most practical next step.

YOUR NEXT STEP

You don't have to keep doing this alone.

I'm Yvette Brown. I work with women in midlife who are burned out, carrying old trauma, or healing from hard relationships, including narcissistic abuse. Many of them are the strong ones in their families. They're tired of being fine.

In therapy, we start by helping your body feel safer. Then we get to know the parts of you that have been working so hard, and we heal the deeper hurts underneath. Depending on what fits you, that may include:

- **Internal Family Systems (IFS):** a way of working with the different parts of ourselves.
- **Brainspotting:** a therapy that uses where you look to help your brain and body work through what feels stuck.
- **Neurofeedback:** a kind of brain training that gives your brain real-time feedback to help it settle.

I see clients in person in Redding, California, and by telehealth anywhere in California. I'm a Christian, and I'm happy to bring faith into our work if you want that. If you don't, we'll leave it out completely.

Book a free 15-minute consult

A short, no-pressure call to see if we're a good fit.
Book online: **spruce.care/theancientwell**
Call or text: (530) 444-1522
Learn more: **theancientwell.com**

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This guide is education, not therapy. It's not medical advice and doesn't create a therapist-client relationship.

If you're in crisis: call or text 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). Shasta County 24-hour mental health line: (530) 225-5252 or (888) 385-5201. National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233. In immediate danger, call 911.