Your Secure Pause Guide

In Before Fear Decides, the Secure Pause begins when you notice even a small reduction in fear. You do not need to be completely calm. Until then, you can begin with “A part of me is frightened,” without pushing the feeling away.

1. Recognize the opening
Notice even a small change: the fear may feel a little less intense, or the urge to act may have loosened. You do not need to be completely calm.

2. Check the intensity
Ask yourself how frightened you feel now compared with a moment ago. Notice the difference without turning it into a test you have to pass.

3. Create a little distance
Try saying: “A part of me is frightened.” The feeling is real, but it is not all of you. You do not have to force your thoughts away.

4. Stay with what you are experiencing
Notice thoughts and feelings as they come and go. If fear rises again, you have not failed. There is no need to manufacture calm.

5. Notice what changes in your body
Notice whether your breathing, movements, attention, or urge to act has changed. Do not force yourself inward if that feels uncomfortable.

6. Deepen the pause
Give any genuine settling a little room. Let your breathing change naturally. You might notice the chair beneath you, your feet on the ground, or the room around you.

7. Check that you are not suppressing the fear
Ask: “Am I beginning to settle, or simply holding everything inside until a reply arrives?” The aim is more room for choice, not a ban on feeling or making contact.

Calm is not denial. When you feel ready, return to the facts: What actually happened? What do you need? What is one clear next step?

If turning inward makes you more distressed or disconnected, stop and bring your attention back to the room. Seek qualified support if needed. If there are threats, coercion, or abuse, prioritize safety and appropriate local support rather than using this exercise to tolerate danger.

An educational practice, not a diagnosis or substitute for professional care. Adapted from Before Fear Decides, Chapter 3, “The Secure Pause.”

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