

A.C.A.L.M.E.R.M.E

**R IS FOR RESET AND
REWARD**

A.C.A.L.M.E.R.M.E

R IS FOR RESET AND REWARD

Challenging and changing our emotional responses to stressful situations is a life-altering achievement. Whether we choose to exit or stay, by the time we reach this seventh step, we are ready - ready to reset and ready to reward ourselves for the courage and determination we've shown.

Here's what you need to know: we don't always need to exit to reset, sometimes the greatest reset happens when we stay put, breathe, regulate and choose peace over panic. In the workplace one of the best habits I developed was imagining people's faces comically change as they critically 'appraised' me. I once imagined an ex-boss's nose growing so long it reached the other side of the room. I'd people-pleased and perfected my way through that job for 3 years. During my appraisal he told me I was 'difficult to manage'. No, I'm not, Pinocchio, you're just a terrible manager.

This "Pinocchio Method" still puts a smile on my face today. It resets my brain, soothes my fear-based memories, and gives me a healthier, more conscious perspective on the everyday nonsense we all experience as humans.

Resetting our emotional selves gets easier with practice. Before long, even after stressful encounters, you'll naturally realign your emotions with peace and composure.

And once you've reset? It's time to reward yourself!

WHY REWARDING YOURSELF MATTERS

Rewarding ourselves is an act of self-validation and self-validation encourages us to keep pushing forward on our road to emotional freedom.

Start by recognising that you deserve a reward for everything you've already done: the work, the healing, and the bravery it's taken to get this far.

Then, reward yourself consciously. Choose something meaningful. It doesn't have to cost a lot or anything, but it must feel good to your soul. And if it does cost money and you feel guilty, pause and ask yourself:

- Who taught me that I didn't deserve to reward myself?
- Who taught me that good things were rare, and nice things were a waste of money?
- Who taught me that I had to go without or work hard for what I had?

If the words 'deserve' and 'reward' trigger uncomfortable emotions, you're not alone. When I was growing up, I was told I didn't deserve nice things, but it seems that I did deserve *bad* things. As an adult, when good people praised me, I felt like a fraud. I felt like I'd "duped" them into thinking I was worthy.

If your story is anything like mine, please know that you can rewire those old beliefs. You can create new neural pathways that say:

- I deserve kindness.
- I deserve peace.
- I deserve to celebrate myself.

Change begins when you challenge what's no longer working.

YOUR BRAIN ON RESET AND REWARD

Our brain has a huge role to play in whether we think we deserve reward or not. When it's hijacked by fear-based memories, the reward circuits go to sleep. But when we shift ourselves out of fear and into conscious awareness our brain's natural reward system wakes up again. Healing the fear response heightens our ability to experience joy.

Remember:

- Reward yourself every time you say YES to awareness, conscious conversations, acceptance, and logical perspectives.
- Reward yourself every time you interrupt an autopilot habit that made everything mean something terrible about you.
- Reward yourself BIG every time you exit a toxic situation or walk away from someone who would have once had power over your peace.

You matter. Recognise your progress and reward yourself for it. The courage it takes to do these things is heroic.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

R IS FOR RESET AND REWARD

- Growing up, what did you learn - directly or indirectly - about deserving rewards? Example: rewards had to be earned through perfection, or I was made to feel guilty for wanting nice things.
- How were you rewarded as a child?
- Were rewards consistent, loving, chaotic, conditional or absent altogether?
- How has your childhood understanding of rewards affected how you treat yourself today? Example: I don't celebrate my achievements because I worry it looks selfish.
- Who's in charge of your rewards now – your Wounded Inner Child or your Conscious Adult Self?
- What do your patterns around reward and self-recognition reveal about your healing journey?
- Look closely at your responses and you'll see the patterns, and you'll also see the power you have to change them.
- When you're faced with overwhelm, criticism, or confrontation, what will you now say or do to consciously reset yourself in the moment? Example: deep breath, mental image of Pinocchio, silent mantra: "I choose peace."

- What is your new truth about deserving and rewarding yourself? Write a short, powerful affirmation or statement you can come back to whenever old guilt or doubt creeps in. Example: I deserve to be celebrated just for being me.
- List three meaningful rewards you will give yourself this week when you successfully reset - no matter how big or small the challenge. Example: a coffee in the sunshine, a new book, an early night.
- What have you learned about resetting and rewarding?

Reset Mantra: I don't need a reason to be kind to myself.
Peace is my reward.

Reset and reward is our seventh step towards emotional freedom.