

The Comeback Plan

A workbook for recovering after setbacks, overwhelm, disappointment, or a difficult life event.

A setback is not the end of the story. Your next safe step still matters.

A practical, supportive workbook for individual reflection and clinician-guided skill building.

Take your time. Skip any question that does not feel helpful. Asking for support is always an option.

READ THIS FIRST

A note about your well-being

This workbook provides education, personal reflection, and coping skills. It does not replace mental health assessment, counseling, therapy, medical care, or emergency services.

You may skip any activity, take a break, or ask a clinic staff member for help. If an exercise makes your distress worse, stop and use a different support option.

Need help now?

If you are having a mental health crisis or thoughts of suicide, **call or text 988** in the United States. If someone is in immediate danger or experiencing a life-threatening emergency, **call 911**. In a clinic, tell staff immediately if you feel unsafe.

You do not have to finish this workbook to deserve help. Safety and connection come first.

UNDERSTAND THE METHOD

Your six-step comeback

A comeback does not require a dramatic change. It starts with stabilizing, seeing what happened without self-punishment, and taking a manageable next step.

1 Pause

Give yourself a moment before acting.

2 Stabilize

Support your body and immediate safety.

3 Tell the truth

Describe what happened without attacking yourself.

4 Choose one move

Pick a realistic action you can take.

5 Connect

Ask for help rather than facing everything alone.

6 Repeat

Return to the plan with flexibility, even after another difficult day.

Why setbacks can feel so heavy

Stress, shame, conflict, grief, and returning to an old coping behavior can make it difficult to see available choices. Your reaction is something you can notice and work with; it is not your whole identity.

☐ I want to withdraw from others

☐ I am criticizing myself

☐ I feel overwhelmed or numb

☐ I want to abandon my routine

☐ I am tempted to return to risky coping

☐ I keep replaying what happened

☐ I need help with immediate safety

☐ I am having trouble with basic needs

Which reaction is strongest today?

What might help me feel steadier without denying what happened?

PERSONAL CHECK-IN

My starting point

What brought me to this workbook today?

How intense does this feel right now? (0–10)

0

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2

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3

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6

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7

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10

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What feeling or physical sensation do I notice most?

What would help me through the next five minutes?

Step 1 — Pause before reacting

You can choose to wait, step back safely, or ask for help. A pause is not avoiding responsibility.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Put my phone down | ☐ Drink water |
| ☐ Notice my feet on the floor | ☐ Sit in a quieter space |
| ☐ Ask for staff or personal support | ☐ Use gentle, comfortable breathing |
| ☐ Wait before responding | ☐ Choose another safe pause |

What am I tempted to do immediately?

What could change if I pause before choosing?

My pause sentence:

Step 2 — Stabilize my body

Notice what your body needs. Breathing, grounding, rest, and sensory exercises are optional; choose what feels safe for you.

☐ Water or food

☐ Quiet or reduced stimulation

☐ Rest

☐ A brief safe walk or stretch

☐ Prescribed medication as directed

☐ A comfortable grounding skill

☐ A safe space

☐ Someone to sit with me

What do I notice in my body?

One body-care action I can try:

What changed, even slightly?

How intense is my distress after trying the skill?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 — Tell the truth without shame

Describe the event in plain language. You can leave out details that feel too distressing. You do not need to disclose trauma to complete this exercise.

What happened?

What was happening around me before the setback?

What did I feel or need at the time?

What do I wish someone understood?

STEP 3 CONTINUED

Responsibility without self-punishment

Accountability can lead to change; shame can keep you stuck. You can acknowledge your part without assuming responsibility for everything.

What part of the situation is my responsibility?

What part was outside my control?

Is there a repair, boundary, or lesson I want to carry forward?

What would I tell someone I care about in the same situation?

Step 4 — Choose one next move

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Contact a supportive person | ☐ Return to an existing care plan |
| ☐ Schedule an appointment | ☐ Attend a group or meeting |
| ☐ Eat, hydrate, or rest | ☐ Do one small task |
| ☐ Move away from an unsafe situation | ☐ Ask for help with a practical need |

The next action I choose is:

The smallest possible version of that action is:

A reasonable time to try it is:

An obstacle that may get in the way is:

Step 4 — Choose one next move (continued)

My backup plan is:

Step 5 — Connect instead of disappearing

Support may come from trusted people, a clinician, a peer-support service, or crisis staff. You can choose who feels appropriate and safe.

One person or service I can contact:

How to reach them:

How they could support me:

The words I can use to ask for help:

If this person is unavailable, I can contact:

Step 6 — Repeat with flexibility

Small repeated actions matter. Aim for realistic supports, not a perfect streak. If your plan does not work one day, adjust it rather than using the setback as proof of failure.

One body-care habit I want to keep:

One connection or support habit I want to keep:

One manageable daily activity I want to keep:

What I can tell myself when I want to give up:

PRACTICE AND NOTICE

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 1

Use this page when you can. Skipped days do not erase progress.

Date (optional):

One thing I did today to support my recovery:

My stress level today (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A support I used or could use:

One thing I will not punish myself for:

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 1 (continued)

One gentle next step for tomorrow:

PRACTICE AND NOTICE

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 2

Use this page when you can. Skipped days do not erase progress.

Date (optional):

One thing I did today to support my recovery:

My stress level today (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A support I used or could use:

One thing I will not punish myself for:

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 2 (continued)

One gentle next step for tomorrow:

PRACTICE AND NOTICE

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 3

Use this page when you can. Skipped days do not erase progress.

Date (optional):

One thing I did today to support my recovery:

My stress level today (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A support I used or could use:

One thing I will not punish myself for:

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 3 (continued)

One gentle next step for tomorrow:

PRACTICE AND NOTICE

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 4

Use this page when you can. Skipped days do not erase progress.

Date (optional):

One thing I did today to support my recovery:

My stress level today (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A support I used or could use:

One thing I will not punish myself for:

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 4 (continued)

One gentle next step for tomorrow:

PRACTICE AND NOTICE

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 5

Use this page when you can. Skipped days do not erase progress.

Date (optional):

One thing I did today to support my recovery:

My stress level today (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A support I used or could use:

One thing I will not punish myself for:

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 5 (continued)

One gentle next step for tomorrow:

PRACTICE AND NOTICE

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 6

Use this page when you can. Skipped days do not erase progress.

Date (optional):

One thing I did today to support my recovery:

My stress level today (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A support I used or could use:

One thing I will not punish myself for:

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 6 (continued)

One gentle next step for tomorrow:

PRACTICE AND NOTICE

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 7

Use this page when you can. Skipped days do not erase progress.

Date (optional):

One thing I did today to support my recovery:

My stress level today (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A support I used or could use:

One thing I will not punish myself for:

Seven-day comeback tracker — Day 7 (continued)

One gentle next step for tomorrow:

After the setback — What I learned

What helped me feel safer or more grounded?

What made this harder?

What pattern do I notice?

What would I try earlier next time?

What ongoing support would be helpful?

My personal comeback statement

Choose words you can believe. The statement can be short, imperfect, and entirely your own.

My comeback statement:

Three reminders I want to keep:

Remember

I can begin again without denying what happened. I can make the next safe choice and accept support along the way.

My safety and support plan

This is a personal reminder, not a substitute for a clinician-developed safety plan.

Signs I need more support now:

A safe person or clinic staff member I can tell:

A place or service where I can seek help:

What I can say when I need immediate help:

In a crisis

Call or text **988** for crisis support. Call **911** for immediate danger. Tell clinic staff if you cannot stay safe.

Credits & Additional Resources

Author: Bobby Perrine

Original publication: Bodhi Life Balance

Edition: 2026 revised workbook

Additional mental health workbooks:

<https://bodhilifebalance.com/mental-health-workbooks>

This workbook is an educational support resource and can be used independently or with a behavioral health professional.