

Bodhi Life Balance

THE COMEBACK PLAN

WORKBOOK

A setback is not the end of the story. It is the place where the next honest chapter begins.

A simple, printable workbook for finding your way back after stress, relapse, disappointment, emotional overwhelm, or a difficult life event.

Part One: Learn the method

Part Two: Write your plan

Bodhi Life Balance Mental Health Workbooks

How to Use This Workbook

The Comeback Plan Workbook is designed for people who are trying to recover after a hard moment. The hard moment may be a relapse, a panic spiral, a conflict, a loss, a mental health setback, a mistake, or a season where life feels heavier than usual.

This workbook is not about pretending everything is fine. It is about slowing down, telling the truth, taking care of the body, choosing one next step, and returning to support instead of isolation.

Important safety note

This workbook is for education, reflection, and skill building. It is not a replacement for therapy, medical care, crisis care, or emergency services. If you may harm yourself, harm someone else, or cannot keep yourself safe, call 988, call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or reach out to a trusted crisis support immediately.

What you will need

- ☐ A pen or pencil
- ☐ A quiet place if possible
- ☐ A few honest minutes
- ☐ Permission to start imperfectly

You do not need to finish everything at once. You can do one page, one question, or one small action and still be making a comeback.

A Simple Explanation of The Comeback Plan

A comeback is not a dramatic speech or a perfect transformation. A comeback is the decision to return to yourself after something has pulled you away from who you want to be.

Many people get stuck after a setback because the mind starts building a shame story. The shame story may say, “I ruined everything,” “I always mess up,” or “There is no point in trying.” The Comeback Plan helps you slow that story down and replace it with a practical recovery process.

The basic idea

When life knocks you down, do not begin with self-punishment. Begin with stabilization. Once your body and emotions are calmer, you can think more clearly, make safer choices, and take the next right action.

The comeback begins when you stop arguing with the past and start caring for the next five minutes.

The Comeback Plan

The six-step method

Step	What it means	A simple sentence to use
1. Pause	Slow the moment down before you react.	I can stop for one minute before I decide.
2. Stabilize	Bring the body down first.	My nervous system needs care, not punishment.
3. Tell the truth	Name what happened without shame.	This is what happened, and this is how it affected me.
4. Choose one move	Pick one realistic next step.	I only need the next right action.
5. Connect	Let support be part of the plan.	I do not have to do the comeback alone.
6. Repeat	Practice small actions until momentum returns.	Progress counts even when it is imperfect.

Why Comebacks Are Hard

Setbacks often feel personal. They can make people feel weak, embarrassed, angry, scared, or hopeless. The nervous system can react as if the setback is a threat. That is why people sometimes shut down, lash out, isolate, use substances, binge, avoid responsibilities, or give up for a while.

The goal is not to shame those reactions. The goal is to notice them early and interrupt the pattern with care, structure, and support.

Common setback reactions

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I isolate or stop answering people. | ☐ I criticize myself harshly. |
| ☐ I want to quit because I feel behind. | ☐ I make one mistake bigger than it is. |
| ☐ I reach for old coping habits. | ☐ I avoid the people who can help me. |
| ☐ I feel numb, restless, or overwhelmed. | ☐ I tell myself the future is ruined. |

A reaction is information. It is not a final identity. You can notice the reaction, pause, and choose a different next move.

The comeback mindset

- I can be honest without attacking myself.
- I can be responsible without being cruel to myself.
- I can begin again before I feel ready.
- I can use support instead of disappearing.

The Comeback Plan in Real Life

The method works best when it stays simple. You are not trying to solve your whole life in one sitting. You are trying to lower the emotional temperature and make one healthy move.

Use this sentence when you feel stuck

This is a hard moment, not my whole life.

A quick example

A person has a painful argument and feels ashamed. Their first impulse is to drink, use, disappear, or send a damaging text. A Comeback Plan would ask them to pause, stabilize their body, write down what happened, name what they need, choose one safe action, and contact one support person before making the situation worse.

The goal of a comeback

The goal is not to become perfect. The goal is to return to safety, honesty, connection, and direction. A small good choice repeated many times becomes a new pattern.

When to use this workbook

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ After a relapse or near relapse | ☐ After conflict |
| ☐ After panic or emotional overwhelm | ☐ After a hard therapy session |
| ☐ After grief, rejection, or disappointment | ☐ When motivation disappears |
| ☐ When shame is getting loud | ☐ When I need a reset plan |

My Comeback Plan Worksheet

Use this section with a pen or pencil. Write slowly. You do not need perfect answers. You need honest answers that help you take the next healthy step.

Name:

Date:

What made me open this workbook today?

How intense does this feel right now: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 = calm or low 5 = difficult but manageable 10 = crisis level

The main emotion I am noticing is:

The first healthy thing I can do in the next five minutes is:

STEP 1

Pause Before I React

The first move is to create space between the feeling and the reaction. A pause is not weakness. A pause is how you stop one painful moment from becoming a bigger problem.

My pause plan

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ I will take five slow breaths. | ☐ I will put my phone down for ten minutes. |
| ☐ I will drink water. | ☐ I will step outside or change rooms. |
| ☐ I will sit with both feet on the floor. | ☐ I will wait before sending a message. |
| ☐ I will ask for help. | ☐ I will use another safe pause: |

The reaction I am trying not to act on is:

What could happen if I react too quickly?

What could improve if I pause first?

STEP 2

Stabilize My Body

Strong emotions live in the body. Before you try to solve everything, help your body come down. A calmer body gives your mind a better chance to make a wise choice.

Check what your body needs

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Food | ☐ Water |
| ☐ Sleep | ☐ A shower |
| ☐ Movement | ☐ Breathing |
| ☐ Quiet | ☐ Medication as prescribed |
| ☐ A safer place | ☐ A support person |

What do I notice in my body right now?

What is one safe grounding skill I can use?

After I use the skill, what changed in my body?

Intensity after stabilizing: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 = calm or low 5 = difficult but manageable 10 = crisis level

STEP 3

Tell the Truth Without Shame

Honesty is not the same as self-attack. This page helps you describe what happened in plain language. The goal is to understand the pattern so you can respond with clarity.

What happened?

What was happening before it happened?

What did I feel?

What did I need but did not know how to ask for?

Responsibility Without Self-Punishment

This page separates accountability from shame. Accountability helps you make repairs. Shame tells you that you are the mistake. The Comeback Plan uses accountability, not self-punishment.

What part of this is my responsibility?

What part of this is not mine to carry?

What repair, boundary, or lesson can I take from this?

What would I say to someone I cared about if they were in this same situation?

STEP 4

Choose One Next Right Action

A comeback becomes real when it becomes behavior. Pick one action that is small enough to do and strong enough to move you in the right direction.

Possible next right actions

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Apologize or repair one thing. | ☐ Make an appointment. |
| ☐ Attend a meeting or group. | ☐ Clean one small area. |
| ☐ Take a walk. | ☐ Ask someone to sit with me. |
| ☐ Eat a real meal. | ☐ Go to sleep instead of spiraling. |
| ☐ Return to a plan I already made. | ☐ Remove myself from a risky situation. |

My next right action is:

I will do it by this time:

The smallest version of this action is:

One obstacle that may get in the way is:

My plan for that obstacle is:

STEP 5

Connect Instead of Disappear

Setbacks grow in isolation. Support does not mean someone fixes everything for you. Support means you do not have to carry the whole weight alone.

My support map

Support person or service	How they help me	How I contact them	When I will reach out

The words I can use to ask for help are:

If I am not safe, my emergency plan is:

STEP 6

Repeat Until Momentum Returns

Momentum usually returns after repeated small actions. Use this page to practice the comeback instead of waiting to feel motivated.

My three non-negotiable recovery actions

1.

2.

3.

My seven-day comeback promise

For the next seven days, I will practice returning to myself with small actions, honest reflection, and support when needed.

My promise to myself is:

When I want to quit, I will remind myself:

Seven-Day Comeback Tracker

Use this tracker for one week. The goal is not perfection. The goal is to notice, reset, and return.

Day 1	Date: _____
One thing I did today to return to myself	
Stress level today	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
One support I used or could use	
One thing I will not punish myself for	
Tomorrow I will	

Day 2	Date: _____
One thing I did today to return to myself	
Stress level today	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
One support I used or could use	
One thing I will not punish myself for	
Tomorrow I will	

Seven-Day Comeback Tracker Continued

Day 3	Date: _____
One thing I did today to return to myself	
Stress level today	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
One support I used or could use	
One thing I will not punish myself for	
Tomorrow I will	

Day 4	Date: _____
One thing I did today to return to myself	
Stress level today	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
One support I used or could use	
One thing I will not punish myself for	
Tomorrow I will	

Seven-Day Comeback Tracker Continued

Day 5	Date: _____
One thing I did today to return to myself	
Stress level today	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
One support I used or could use	
One thing I will not punish myself for	
Tomorrow I will	

Day 6	Date: _____
One thing I did today to return to myself	
Stress level today	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
One support I used or could use	
One thing I will not punish myself for	
Tomorrow I will	

Seven-Day Comeback Tracker Continued

Day 7	Date: _____
One thing I did today to return to myself	
Stress level today	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
One support I used or could use	
One thing I will not punish myself for	
Tomorrow I will	

At the end of this week, one thing I want to remember is:

After the Setback: What I Learned

This page is for learning, not punishment. You are looking for information that can help you protect your future self.

What helped me calm down or stay safe?

What made things harder?

What pattern do I notice?

What do I want to practice next time?

What support do I need to keep using?

My Comeback Statement

Write a short statement you can return to when shame, fear, anger, or hopelessness gets loud. Keep it honest. Keep it human. Keep it usable.

My comeback statement:

Three reminders I want to keep

1.

2.

3.

I am allowed to begin again without denying what happened.

End of workbook.