

THE 2-MINUTE R4 VAGUS RESET

Regulate. Release. Rewire. Rise.

A Science & Soul Practice for Returning to Center

By Dr. Mike Van Thielen.

There are moments when the most important thing you can change is not the situation in front of you, but the **state from which you meet it**. You may not be able to control the meeting, the conversation, the competition, the person standing across from you, or the uncertainty of what happens next. But you can influence the physiology and awareness you bring into that moment.

This is where the vagus nerve and the autonomic nervous system become so important.

The vagus nerve is the longest cranial nerve and one of the body's major communication pathways between the brain and internal organs, including the heart, lungs, and digestive system. It is a major component of the parasympathetic nervous system, the branch of the autonomic nervous system associated with restoration, digestion, recovery, and conservation of energy.

Its counterpart, the sympathetic nervous system, helps mobilize us when action is required. When the brain perceives threat, uncertainty, pressure, or challenge, sympathetic activity can increase heart rate, alter breathing, redirect blood flow, heighten vigilance, and prepare the body to fight, flee, or perform. There is nothing inherently wrong with this response. We need it. The problem arises when this heightened state becomes our baseline and we begin thinking, communicating, making decisions, and moving through life from chronic tension rather than regulated awareness.

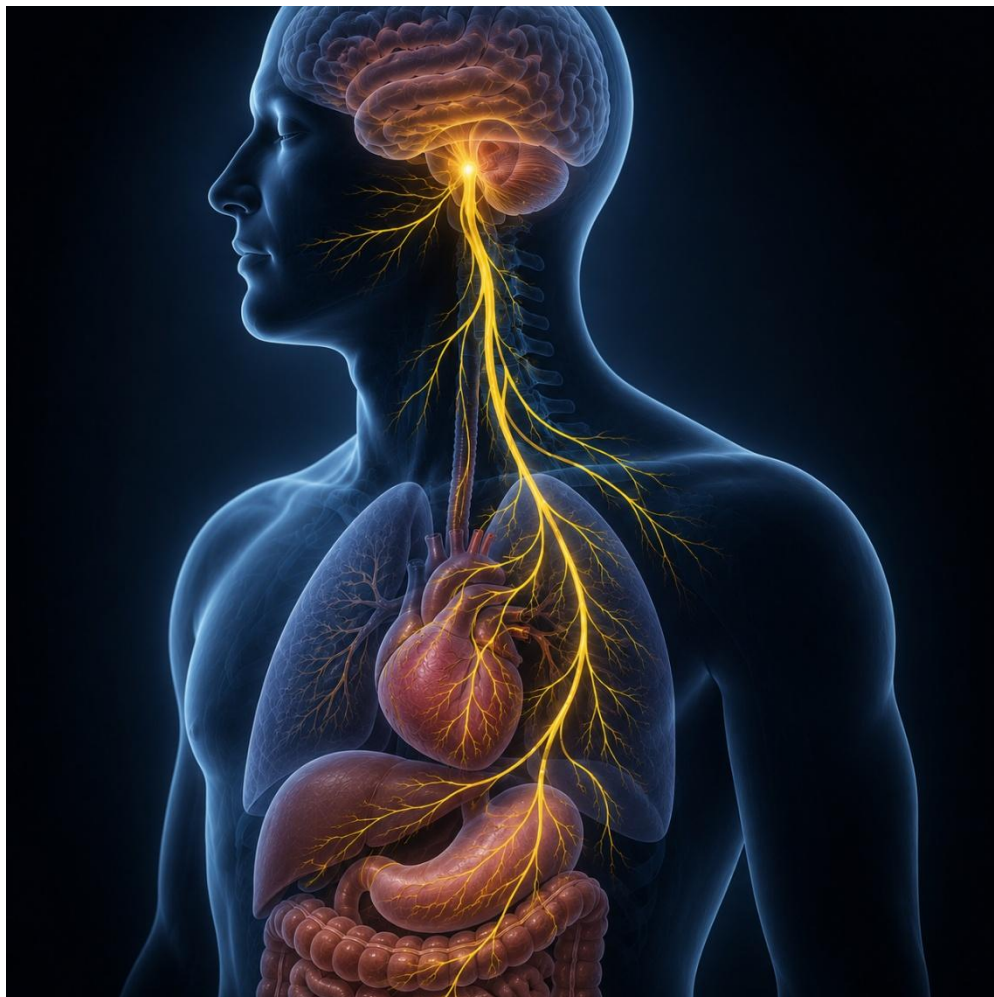
The goal, therefore, is not to remain parasympathetic all day. A healthy nervous system is flexible. It mobilizes when necessary

and settles when the challenge has passed. What we are seeking is a state of **regulated alertness**, enough to think clearly and feel centered, yet awake and energized enough to create, communicate, perform, and act.

This state matters because your physiology influences what becomes available to you psychologically. When you are overwhelmed, knowing what you *should* think or how you *should* respond is often not enough. You can know every mindset technique in the world and still lose access to it when your nervous system is highly activated.

That is why the R4 Vagus Reset is based on a simple principle:

State comes before strategy.



The Two-Minute Reset

The **2-Minute R4 Vagus Reset** compresses the four stages of the R4 Method—**Regulate, Release, Rewire, and Rise**—into four intentional breaths. Each stage uses one 4–7–8 breathing cycle, combined with specific sensory, muscular, attentional, and visualization cues.

The practice takes approximately two minutes and is designed to become familiar through repetition. Practice it once every day, preferably in the morning, for **33 consecutive days**. There is nothing biologically magical about the number 33; the intention is to create a meaningful period of uninterrupted repetition during which returning to center becomes increasingly familiar. After those first 33 days, the Reset can simply become part of your lifelong Science & Soul daily rhythm.

It can also be used whenever your state becomes especially important. Practice it before an important meeting, presentation, difficult conversation, competition, creative session, major decision, stressful situation, or any moment when you notice yourself becoming scattered, emotionally reactive, tense, or disconnected from your center.

The purpose is not to wait until you are overwhelmed and then desperately try to calm yourself. You are training your nervous system while you are already relatively safe so that the pathway back to center becomes increasingly familiar when you need it.

Begin With the Body

Sit toward the front of a chair with both feet flat and grounded on the floor. Lean your torso forward and gently rest your elbows or forearms on your thighs or knees. Allow your head and neck to hang comfortably, almost as if you were exhausted and had temporarily surrendered the weight of your body. Close your eyes.

This position is deliberate. Folding forward reduces visual stimulation, supports the upper body, creates mild compression

through the abdomen, and allows you to become acutely aware of diaphragmatic movement. Rather than thinking of the posture as a switch that automatically turns off fight-or-flight, consider it an embodied signal that tells you something important: for the next two minutes, there is nowhere to go, nothing to defend, and nothing to solve.

Before each of the four stages, slowly exhale until the lungs feel comfortably empty. Never strain to force out the final bit of air. Each stage then consists of one cycle in which you **inhale through the nose for four seconds, hold gently for seven seconds, and exhale slowly through the mouth for eight seconds.**

The extended exhalation is particularly important because slow breathing and prolonged exhalation can support parasympathetic influence and help shift autonomic balance toward a calmer state. Humming, swallowing, tongue positioning, pelvic-floor engagement, visualization, and muscular release then add layers of sensory input and intentional awareness to the breathing pattern.

Four breaths become one journey through the R4 Method: **Regulate, Release, Rewire, and Rise.**

1. REGULATE — Return to Center

Begin by slowly emptying your lungs. Then inhale, through your nose, for four seconds, allowing the breath to move downward toward the belly. Because you are leaning forward, you should feel your abdomen gently expanding against your thighs. There is no need to take the largest breath possible. Let it be deep, quiet, and controlled.

Hold comfortably for seven seconds and swallow once around the fourth count. Then begin your eight-second exhale through the mouth while producing a low, gentle hum, almost like the quiet vibration of an engine. Allow yourself to feel that vibration in the throat, chest, jaw, lips, and face.

The hum naturally helps lengthen the exhalation while creating a strong sensory experience throughout the structures of the throat and face. Instead of mentally commanding yourself to relax, bring your awareness into what is physically happening. Feel the abdomen soften, the shoulders drop, the vibration move through you, and the exhalation slowly carry activation out of the body.

This first breath establishes the foundation for everything that follows. The message is simple: **I am here. I am safe in this moment. I can return to center.**

2. RELEASE — Let the Body Let Go

Once again, slowly and comfortably empty your lungs. As you begin the four-second nasal inhale, press your tongue firmly but comfortably against the roof of your mouth. Become aware of your jaw, throat, abdomen, shoulders, and pelvic floor.

During the seven-second hold, maintain the tongue position and gently contract the pelvic floor, like the sensation you would use to temporarily stop the flow of urination. The contraction should be deliberate but never forceful. Around the fourth count, swallow once.

Then, as the eight-second exhalation begins, hum again, but this time make the exhale an experience of complete surrender. Release the tongue from the roof of the mouth. Let the pelvic floor soften. Drop the shoulders. Relax the forehead and muscles around the eyes. Unclench the jaw, soften the belly, and allow gravity to take the weight of your head.

The power of this stage comes partly from contrast. We often do not realize how much tension we are carrying until we deliberately contract and then consciously experience its release. Instead of merely telling yourself to “let go,” you give the body a physical experience of what letting go feels like.

Release is not weakness, nor does it mean ignoring what needs to be addressed. It simply means that you stop carrying tension that

is not helping you meet the present moment. **When unnecessary tension leaves, capacity returns.**

3. REWIRE — Give the Nervous System a New Destination

After emptying the lungs for the third time, begin your four-second inhale and bring one meaningful image into your awareness. See a future moment you want to create as though it has already happened.

Keep it simple. You do not need to visualize your entire future or create an elaborate mental movie. Choose one scene that represents what matters to you. Perhaps you are walking away from the meeting knowing it went exactly as intended. Maybe you have finished the project, delivered the speech, crossed the finish line, created the business, restored a relationship, achieved financial freedom, regained your health, or simply awakened one morning with a profound sense of peace.

During the seven-second hold, stop merely *seeing* the scene and begin to **feel it physically**. Ask yourself where the experience lands in your body. Perhaps you feel warmth in the chest, expansion around the heart, lightness in the abdomen, energy through the spine, or a spontaneous smile across your face. There is no correct sensation. What matters is that the imagined future becomes an embodied experience rather than an intellectual thought.

Around count four, swallow and consciously use that small physical action as an anchor for the state you are experiencing. During the eight-second exhalation, imagine the feeling spreading beyond the place where you first noticed it, moving through the rest of your body and radiating outward.

Mental rehearsal and imagery can engage neural networks involved in perception, emotion, planning, and future-oriented behavior. Visualization does not guarantee that an external event will magically occur. What it can do is make a desired state and

behavioral response more familiar, potentially influencing what you notice, how you respond, and which actions you take.

From the Science & Soul perspective, practice carries an additional meaning. Rather than waiting for the outside world to give you permission to experience peace, gratitude, confidence, freedom, or fulfillment, you practice generating the inner state first.

You become familiar with the feeling of the future before the future arrives.

4. RISE — Accept the New Baseline

Slowly empty your lungs one final time. Then inhale deeply and comfortably through the nose for four seconds, allowing the belly to expand once again.

During the seven-second hold, place the tongue against the roof of the mouth and gently engage the pelvic floor. Around count four, swallow. This time, however, do not search for another thought, goal, or visualization. Simply notice the state you have created through the previous three breaths.

You regulated your physiology. You experienced tension and consciously released it. You rehearsed the inner state associated with a future you wish to create. Now the final stage is about **acceptance and embodiment**.

Allow this state to feel normal.

During the final eight-second exhalation, release everything. Let the tongue soften, the pelvic floor relax, the jaw open slightly, the shoulders fall, the abdomen soften, and the hands become heavy. Allow the body to melt while your awareness remains clear.

When the exhale is complete, do not immediately jump up or reach for your phone. Remain in the position for several seconds and simply notice. Become aware of your breathing, heartbeat, thoughts, face, body, and overall sense of presence.

Then slowly lift your head, open your eyes, sit upright, and carry that state into whatever comes next.

The final message is not that you will never become stressed again. It is something much more useful:

I know what center feels like, and I know how to return.

Why Practice for 33 Days?

For the first 33 days, practice the R4 Vagus Reset every morning whether you feel stressed or not. This is an important distinction. If you use regulation practices only when you are already overwhelmed, the nervous system begins associating them exclusively with crisis. Practicing while you are relatively calm allows you to explore the state without urgency and repeatedly become familiar with the pathway that leads there.

Thirty-three days is not presented as a scientifically established threshold at which the nervous system suddenly changes. It is simply a commitment—a long enough period to move beyond novelty and begin establishing consistency. The deeper principle is repetition.

After 33 days, there is no reason to stop. If two minutes each morning improves your ability to begin the day centered and intentional, allow practice to become part of your lifelong rhythm.

Then use it again whenever your state matters.

Before the meeting, return to center. Before the difficult conversation, return to center. Before you walk onto the stage, return to center. Before competition, return to center. Before making an important decision, return to center. And perhaps most importantly, when someone triggers you and every part of your conditioned self wants to react immediately, give yourself two minutes before deciding who you want to be in that moment.

Eventually, the four words themselves become an internal roadmap: **Regulate. Release. Rewire. Rise.**

The objective is not to eliminate stress or suppress normal human emotions. Nor is the goal to remain permanently in a parasympathetic state. Health is flexibility, the ability to mobilize when life demands action and to return to regulation when the challenge has passed.

That is what makes this a **Reset**.

It is not about escaping life. It is about changing the state from which you meet life.

Because your state influences your perception. Your perception influences your choices. Your choices influence your actions. And repeated actions gradually shape the person you become.

WHY IT WORKS

The vagus nerve is the body's main communication highway between the brain and vital organs. It plays a key role in the parasympathetic nervous system—the state of rest, repair, digestion, clarity, creativity and connection.

When we regulate, release tension, and focus our mind intentionally, we shift from survival to possibility.

STATE COMES BEFORE STRATEGY.
CHANGE YOUR STATE,
CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

THE 2-MINUTE R4 VAGUS RESET

Regulate. Release. Rewire. Rise.

A daily practice to activate your parasympathetic nervous system, return to center, and create from a state of clarity, calm and connection.

STARTING POSITION
Sit forward in chair.
Feet flat on floor.
Elbows on knees.
Let head hang down.
Close your eyes.

This position (head below heart, core mildly compressed, diaphragm supported) pulls you out of fight or flight.

WHEN TO USE

- Every morning for 33 days (or longer)
- Before important meetings, presentations, conversations, competitions, or decisions
- When stressed, scattered, overwhelmed or reactive
- Anytime you want to return to center and your highest self

THE BREATH PATTERN

Before each stage: Exhale fully and slowly.

INHALE through nose 4 SECONDS	→	HOLD comfortably 7 SECONDS	→	EXHALE through mouth (with hum) 8 SECONDS
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1 REGULATE

Return to Safety

INHALE (4s)	HOLD (7s)	EXHALE + HUM (8s)
Inhale into belly. Feel abdomen press into thighs.	Swallow on count 4 of the hold.	Exhale with a soft hum (like an engine). Feel vibration in throat, chest and face.
I AM HERE. I AM SAFE. I RETURN TO CENTER.		

2 RELEASE

Let the Body Let Go

INHALE (4s)	HOLD (7s)	EXHALE + HUM (8s)
Inhale and press tongue firmly against the roof of mouth.	Keep tongue up. Tighten pelvic floor (like holding urination). Swallow on count 4.	Exhale with a hum and relax everything: tongue, pelvic floor, jaw, face, shoulders, belly. Let go.
I RELEASE WHAT I DON'T NEED TO CARRY.		

3 REWIRE

Create Your New Reality

INHALE (4s)	HOLD (7s)	EXHALE + HUM (8s)
Inhale and visualize a future moment as already happened.	Feel it physically. Notice where it lands. Swallow to anchor it.	Exhale with a hum and let that feeling radiate through your body and outward as a signal.
I EXPERIENCE MY FUTURE AND SEND THE SIGNAL NOW.		

4 RISE

Accept the New Baseline

INHALE (4s)	HOLD (7s)	EXHALE + HUM (8s)
Inhale deep into belly.	Tongue to roof. Engage pelvic floor. Swallow on count 4. Accept your new baseline.	Exhale with a hum and let your body melt. Be still.
I RISE INTO MY HIGHEST SELF AND CARRY THIS STATE FORWARD.		

33-DAY COMMITMENT

Practice every morning for 33 days straight (or longer) to rewire your nervous system and anchor this state.

4 BREATHS. 4 STATES. 2 MINUTES.
A LIFETIME OF TRANSFORMATION.

Calm Body
Clear Mind
Centered Heart
Limitless You

*"You don't rise to the level of your goals.
You fall to the level of your system."*

State comes before strategy. Change the state, and you change what becomes possible in the moment that follows.

R4 Vagus Reset — Quick Reference

Stage	4-Second Inhale	7-Second Hold	8-Second Exhale	Intention
1. REGULATE	Inhale through the nose into the belly; feel the abdomen gently press into the thighs.	Hold comfortably and swallow around count 4.	Exhale through the mouth while humming softly ; feel vibration through the throat, chest and face.	Return to center.
2. RELEASE	Inhale through the nose while pressing the tongue against the roof of the mouth.	Maintain tongue position, gently engage the pelvic floor , and swallow around count 4.	Hum while consciously releasing everything —tongue, pelvic floor, jaw, face, shoulders and belly.	Let unnecessary tension go.
3. REWIRE	Inhale while visualizing one desired future moment as already accomplished.	Feel that reality physically in the body; notice where it lands and swallow around count 4 to anchor it.	Exhale slowly while imagining the feeling expanding through the body and radiating outward.	Become familiar with your desired state now.
4. RISE	Inhale deeply through the nose into the belly.	Tongue to roof of mouth, gently engage pelvic floor, swallow around count 4 , and accept the state as your new baseline.	Exhale slowly and let the entire body melt.	Carry the state forward.

Starting position: Sit forward with feet flat on the floor, elbows or forearms resting on the thighs or knees, torso leaning forward, head comfortably hanging, and eyes closed. Before **each** stage of R4, first exhale slowly until the lungs feel comfortably empty.

Daily prescription: Approximately **2 minutes every morning for 33 consecutive days**, then continue as a lifelong practice if it serves you. Repeat the Reset before important meetings, conversations, performances, competitions, decisions, stressful situations, or anytime you want to return to clarity and center.