

# Your 3-Minute Calm-Down Plan

has arrived...



## ☢ FOR THE OVERWHELMED REACTOR: "The Reset Routine"

**QUICK CHECK: ARE YOU THE OVERWHELMED REACTOR?**

- ✓ YOU FEEL YOUR EMOTIONS INTENSELY WHEN PARENTING GETS HARD
- ✓ YOU OFTEN FEEL GUILTY AFTER REACTING STRONGLY
- ✓ YOU WANT TO STAY CALM BUT STRUGGLE IN THE MOMENT

### Your 3-Minute Reset Plan:

#### MINUTE 1: Pause & Breathe

- Take 5 deep breaths (4 counts in, 6 counts out)
- Say to yourself: "This feeling will pass. I can handle this calmly."
- If needed, say to your child: "I need one minute to think about this."

#### MINUTE 2: Get Grounded

- Feel your feet on the floor
- Name 3 things you can see around you
- Remind yourself: "My child **isn't** giving me a hard time, they're **having** a hard time."

#### MINUTE 3: Reconnect & Respond

- Make eye contact with your child
- Use this script: "I can see you're [frustrated/upset/disappointed]. Let's figure this out together."
- Address the behaviour from a calm place

### Ready-to-Use Scripts:

- When you feel anger rising: "I'm feeling frustrated right now. Let me take a breath so I can help you better."
- After you've reacted: "I raised my voice and that wasn't okay. You deserve a calm parent. Can we try again?"
- Prevention script: "I'm starting to feel overwhelmed. Can you help me by [specific request]?"

**EMERGENCY BACKUP STRATEGY:**  
IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO EXPLODE, SAY: "I NEED A 2-MINUTE BREAK TO BE THE PARENT YOU DESERVE." GO TO THE BATHROOM, SPLASH COLD WATER ON YOUR FACE, THEN RETURN.

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## FOR THE EXHAUSTED PEACEKEEPER: "Boundary Script"

**QUICK CHECK: ARE YOU THE EXHAUSTED PEACEKEEPER?**

- ✓ YOU AVOID CONFLICT TO KEEP EVERYONE HAPPY
- ✓ YOU GIVE IN MORE THAN YOU'D LIKE TO ADMIT
- ✓ YOU FEEL DRAINED FROM ALWAYS ACCOMMODATING

### Your 3-Minute Boundary Plan:

MINUTE 1: Acknowledge & Validate

- Listen to what your child is saying/feeling
- Reflect back: "You're telling me that you [want/don't want/feel]..."
- Show you understand without immediately problem-solving

MINUTE 2: State the Boundary with Empathy

- Use this formula: "I hear that you [feeling] AND [boundary stays]"
- Example: "I hear that you're disappointed about bedtime AND it's still 8pm."
- Stay calm and kind but don't negotiate the non-negotiable

MINUTE 3: Offer Choice Within the Boundary

- Give them control over HOW, not WHETHER
- "You can choose: PJs first or teeth first?"
- "Would you like to walk to your room or hop like a bunny?"

### Ready-to-Use Scripts:

- For pushback: "I know this is disappointing AND this is what's happening."
- For big emotions: "You can be upset about the rule and you still need to follow it."
- For whining: "I'll be happy to listen when you use your regular voice."

**EMERGENCY BACKUP STRATEGY:**  
WHEN YOU FEEL YOURSELF ABOUT TO CAVE: "LET ME THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MINUTE." THIS BUYS YOU TIME TO DECIDE IF THIS IS A BATTLE WORTH PICKING OR A BOUNDARY WORTH HOLDING.

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## **FRUSTRATED CONTROLLER: "The Cooperation Invitation"**

**QUICK CHECK: ARE YOU THE FRUSTRATED CONTROLLER?**

- ✓ **YOU HAVE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS BUT KIDS DON'T FOLLOW THEM**
- ✓ **YOU FIND YOURSELF REPEATING THE SAME INSTRUCTIONS**
- ✓ **YOU BELIEVE KIDS SHOULD LISTEN THE FIRST TIME**

### **Your 3-Minute Cooperation Plan:**

MINUTE 1: Connect Before You Correct

- Get down to their eye level
- Use their name and wait for eye contact
- Say: "I want to understand what's happening for you right now."

MINUTE 2: Invite Collaboration

- Instead of commanding, try observing: "I notice [specific behavior]. What do you think about that?"
- Ask: "What's your plan for [situation]?"
- Wait 10 seconds - resist the urge to fill the silence

MINUTE 3: Problem-Solve Together

- "How can we make this work for both of us?"
- "Offer limited choices: "Would you like to [option A] or [option B]?"
- "Set a clear next step: "So our plan is [restate agreement]. Sound good?"

### **Ready-to-Use Scripts:**

- Instead of "Clean your room": "Your room needs attention. What's your plan?"
- Instead of "Stop fighting": "I see two upset kids. How can we solve this problem?"
- Instead of "Because I said so": "That's an important rule in our family because [brief reason]. What questions do you have?"

**EMERGENCY BACKUP STRATEGY:**  
WHEN YOU FEEL THE URGE TO LECTURE OR REPEAT YOURSELF: TAKE A BREATH AND ASK "WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL RIGHT NOW?" SOMETIMES IT'S CONNECTION, SOMETIMES IT'S CLEARER EXPECTATIONS, SOMETIMES IT'S JUST TIME.

# The Community

**Honest About Parenting** was created because something big was missing in parenting conversations: us. While advice abounds for managing kids, our own emotional needs get shelved—especially challenging for city-dwelling parents without family support networks.

Through my own parenting rollercoaster, research, and more therapy than I'd like to admit, my parenting journey taught me that great parenting isn't about perfect strategies but intention and self-awareness.

We all have strengths AND challenges!

Whether you're **The Overwhelmed Reactor, The Exhausted Peacekeeper, or The Frustrated Controller (or a mix of all three!)**, you have unique superpowers. In the coming weeks, I'll share insights to help you leverage these talents while building confidence in your challenging areas.

This isn't about becoming a "perfect parent" (which doesn't exist!). It's about becoming a more confident version of your authentic self—and taking care of YOU, so you can take care of them.

## Wassup?

I'M SWAY CLARKE,

Founder of **Honest About Parenting**. Musician, entrepreneur, content creator, and first and foremost, a Canadian dad raising two kids (Zero and Montego) with my partner in Berlin—without a single relative nearby. *Heavy!*

I've learned 2 things: the impact of shitty dads, and how impossible it is to implement ANY parenting strategies when built atop unaddressed personal trauma. I was "reactively parenting"—doing the opposite of my parents—until realising this wasn't that much better. Ha!

My mission is to create resources that acknowledge the **WHOLE** parent, not just techniques for children.

Because when we heal ourselves, we transform our parenting.



Sway Clarke  
HONEST ABOUT PARENTING

WATCH HERE:

