

TORCH & SOUL

DID ANYTHING ACTUALLY CHANGE?

A guided repair check for after the apology, return, promise, or sudden improvement.

ONE ORIGINAL ISSUE. ONE OBSERVABLE RECORD. ONE PROPORTIONATE RESULT.

Separate relief and renewed warmth from the observable evidence of repair, without trying to read motive or predict the future.

20–30 MINUTES • DOWNLOADABLE + PRINTABLE

You are not deciding whether another person is sincere. You are deciding how much weight the observable change has earned.

Ignite Your Purpose. Fuel Your Soul.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What this tool can and cannot do

This is an observer-side repair check. You are evaluating the record available to you, not grading another person's intentions.

Use it when something positive has already appeared

- ☐ An apology
- ☐ A return after distance or separation
- ☐ A promise to get help or do better
- ☐ Renewed warmth, attention, or affection
- ☐ A different response after a request, boundary, consequence, or threatened loss
- ☐ A calmer period that makes you wonder whether the original problem improved

This tool will not

- ☐ Tell you whether the change is sincere
- ☐ Call consequence-triggered improvement manipulation
- ☐ Predict whether the change will last
- ☐ Diagnose another person
- ☐ Tell you to reconcile, stay, leave, trust, forgive, confront, or wait
- ☐ Replace safety, legal, custody, workplace, financial, or mental-health guidance

IMPORTANT

Positive emotion does not disqualify repair. Relief, warmth, and real repair can exist together. The question is whether the original issue also changed.

PART 1

Name the original issue

Repair cannot be evaluated until you identify what actually required repair.

Write one specific behavior, problem, or broken agreement. Avoid broad labels such as “everything,” “the relationship,” or “their narcissism.”

The original issue was:

What made this an issue?

- ☐ It happened repeatedly
- ☐ It broke a clear agreement
- ☐ It caused a concrete impact
- ☐ I raised it directly
- ☐ They acknowledged some or all of it
- ☐ It remained unresolved after prior discussions
- ☐ Other:

KEEP IT VISIBLE

The new warmth does not have to disappear for you to keep the original issue in view.

PART 2

Establish the baseline

Describe what was happening before the improvement appeared.

Before the change

Question	Your record
What was happening?	
How often did it happen?	
Over what period?	
What had already been requested or discussed?	
What happened after earlier requests?	

Add only what you directly observed, experienced, read, heard, or can document.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Without a baseline, a calmer atmosphere can feel like proof that the issue changed even when the issue-specific behavior has not yet been tested.

PART 3

Mark what preceded the improvement

Timing is evidence context. It is not proof of motive.

What happened immediately before the improvement began? Check the closest fit.

- ☐ An ordinary request
- ☐ A direct conversation or confrontation
- ☐ A boundary
- ☐ A consequence
- ☐ A threatened loss
- ☐ An actual separation
- ☐ Outside accountability
- ☐ They initiated the change without a recent request or crisis
- ☐ Something else:

What changed first?

- ☐ Words or promises
- ☐ Tone or warmth
- ☐ Access, attention, affection, or closeness
- ☐ Issue-specific behavior
- ☐ Accountability
- ☐ Follow-through
- ☐ Structure, routine, treatment, or outside support

DO NOT OVERCLAIM

Change that begins after consequences deserves context and observation. It does not automatically prove panic, manipulation, love bombing, sincerity, or lasting repair.

PART 4

Define what repair would look like

Make the standard issue-specific before evaluating the new atmosphere.

If the original issue were being repaired, what would become observable?

Repair variable	What would count here?
Issue-specific behavior	
Stable accountability	
Concrete follow-through	
Consistency	
Enough ordinary time	
Change after immediate pressure decreases	
Structural support, if relevant	

NOT PERFECTION

Repair does not require flawless behavior. It requires meaningful, relevant change plus a usable response when the issue recurs.

PART 5

Record what actually changed

Separate each kind of change so one strong category does not speak for all the others.

Area	What changed?	Observed or promised?
Words		
Tone / warmth		
Attention / affection / access		
Issue-specific behavior		
Accountability		
Follow-through		
Structure / environment		

Which change most directly addresses the original issue?

Which positive changes feel meaningful but do not directly repair the original issue?

PART 6

Test persistence

Different behaviors require different amounts of ordinary time. There is no universal 30-day rule.

- ☐ The relevant behavior has appeared more than once
- ☐ Accountability remains stable when the issue is discussed
- ☐ Concrete actions followed the promises
- ☐ The change continues without repeated crisis or prompting
- ☐ The change continues as immediate fear, conflict, or scrutiny decreases
- ☐ Ordinary stress has tested the new behavior
- ☐ If the issue recurred, ownership or correction happened faster
- ☐ Enough time has passed for this specific behavior to be meaningfully tested

How long and under what conditions has the change existed?

What happens when immediate pressure decreases?

PROPORTIONALITY

A promising beginning can deserve some weight without deserving the same weight as sustained repair.

PART 7

Compare reset and repair

A reset changes the emotional atmosphere. Repair addresses the original issue. Both can be present.

Reset signal	Repair signal
Conflict stopped.	The original issue is being addressed.
Warmth returned.	Behavior connected to the issue changed.
An apology occurred.	Responsibility remains stable and follow-through occurs.
Promises became stronger.	Actions became different and remain different.
Fear of loss increased effort.	Change persists as immediate pressure decreases.
You feel relief.	The record contains evidence that justifies revision.
The atmosphere improved.	The conditions supporting the original problem materially improved.

What improved most clearly?

- ☐ The emotional atmosphere
- ☐ The original issue
- ☐ Both
- ☐ Neither is clear yet

What evidence led you there?

PART 8

Choose the Proportionate Result

Do not choose the most final answer. Choose the strongest result the current record supports.

☐ **TOO EARLY TO CALL**

Something has changed. There has not been enough ordinary time or repeated behavior to know how much weight the change deserves.

☐ **RESET / ATMOSPHERE CHANGED MORE THAN THE ISSUE**

Warmth, calm, promises, attention, or closeness improved more clearly than the original issue-specific behavior or accountability.

☐ **EARLY REPAIR EVIDENCE**

Observable behavior or accountability changed in ways relevant to the issue. Persistence is still developing.

☐ **SUSTAINED REPAIR IS BECOMING OBSERVABLE**

Relevant behavior, accountability, and follow-through have persisted across enough ordinary time and reduced pressure to justify giving the repair real weight.

BOUNDARY

None of these results means “sincerity proven,” “permanent change,” “the relationship is safe,” or “you should stay or leave.”

YOUR RESULT

What has the change earned so far?

Check one current result. If two seem close, choose the more cautious result and name what evidence would justify moving it.

- ☐ TOO EARLY TO CALL
- ☐ RESET / ATMOSPHERE CHANGED MORE THAN THE ISSUE
- ☐ EARLY REPAIR EVIDENCE
- ☐ SUSTAINED REPAIR IS BECOMING OBSERVABLE

What this result does support

What this result does not establish

YOUR AUTHORITY

The tool organizes evidence. You decide what weight the result deserves in your life.

FINAL OUTPUT

What the Change Has Earned

Complete this one-page summary. Save it where you can return to it if the atmosphere, pressure, or promises shift.

Final record field	Your conclusion
Original issue that required repair	
Improvement that appeared	
What preceded the improvement	
Issue-specific behavior that changed	
Accountability and follow-through	
How long and under what conditions it persisted	
What happens as immediate pressure decreases	
My current result	

My working conclusion today:

REVISION STANDARD

What would honestly change your result?

Revision is not failure. It is what proportionate reasoning looks like when the record changes.

Evidence that would strengthen this result

Evidence that would weaken or reverse this result

The next reasonable review point

Choose a review point appropriate to the behavior. Do not use constant monitoring as a substitute for a defined test.

- ☐ After the relevant behavior has another ordinary opportunity to occur
- ☐ After a specific promised action is due
- ☐ After enough ordinary time has passed for this behavior
- ☐ After a relevant stressor or reduced-pressure period
- ☐ No scheduled review is needed unless genuinely new information appears

RETURN TO THE RECORD

New warmth does not erase the baseline. A setback does not erase real repair evidence. Revise only what the new information honestly changes.

COMPLETION

You do not have to decide forever today

You have completed the job when you can name the original issue, the observable change, the current result, and the evidence that would justify revision.

The apology may matter. The return may matter. The renewed effort may matter. Relief may matter.

But none of those has to carry more weight than the issue-specific record can support.

You are allowed to recognize meaningful repair evidence without promising permanence. You are allowed to name a reset without pretending nothing positive happened. You are allowed to say it is too early to call.

FINAL STATEMENT

I can give the change the weight it has earned without making it prove more than the record supports.

With truth and fire,

Melissa | Torch & Soul

Ignite Your Purpose. Fuel Your Soul.

Educational-use boundary

This product is an educational decision-support tool. It does not diagnose another person, determine motive or sincerity, predict permanence, assess relationship safety, or provide legal, custody, workplace, financial, medical, or mental-health guidance. If immediate danger, threats, stalking, coercion, court orders, or specialized obligations are involved, use qualified professional and emergency support appropriate to your situation.