

# Return To Routine



A Gentle System to Get Back to Life  
After Burnout, Chaos, or Collapse

*"You need a  
rhythm, not  
another planner."*

by Mel Tru





# Before You Begin

Let's be clear.

This isn't a guide for women who need another planner.

This is for the ones who forgot what day it was.

Who've been living off cereal and shutdowns.

Who walk through their homes and can't figure out where to start cleaning,  
so they just sit down in the middle of it.

**If that's you—**

you're not lazy.

You're not broken.

You're tired of surviving with no blueprint.

***This guide is what I wish someone had handed me  
after everything fell apart.***

I didn't write it from a mountaintop.

I wrote it from a kitchen floor,  
when I realized no one was coming to fix it for me

I learned how to feed myself and my child.  
I learned how to clean in rhythms, not marathons.

I learned how to stop spiraling and start steadying.

And here's what I discovered:

Small consistencies become stability.

***Peace isn't an accident — it's a rhythm.***

***And no one ever taught us that.***

So no, this isn't fluffy.

It's survival, disguised as softness.

It's a gentle way to return to yourself,  
when you don't even know where to begin.

Start wherever you are.

You don't need to hustle.

You just need to *return*.





# The *RETURN* Method

*A soft structure for rebuilding your rhythm*

Not to rise,  
but to **return**.  
Slowly. Honestly.  
In your own time.

## *R — Rest with Purpose*

Not all rest is passive.

Sometimes the bravest thing you can do is  
lay down with your eyes wide open and say,  
“Not yet.”

### **Practice:**

- Schedule rest before you schedule work.
- Pick a time today to do nothing on purpose.
- Light a candle. Breathe into stillness. Let it count.



### ***Journal Prompt:***

What would it look like to rest without guilt?



## *E — Ease Back In*

Re-entry is a slow burn.

You are not behind.

You are brave enough to go slow.

### **Practice:**

- Choose one thing to return to (meals, movement, a task).
- Set a 10-minute timer and just begin.



### ***Journal Prompt:***

What feels soft enough to start with?

## *T — Track One Thing*

Don't manage your life.

Just witness it.

One detail at a time.



### **Practice:**

- Track one anchor (e.g., hydration, sleep, movement).
- Let it be proof you're still here.



### ***Journal Prompt:***

What's one thing I can notice without judgment this week?



## *U — Unburden Your Day*

You don't need to do it all.

You need to do what matters.

And maybe that's less than you thought.

### **Practice:**

- Write down your full to-do list.
- Cross out half.
- Circle one thing you want to do.

### *Journal Prompt:*

What am I still carrying that I no longer have to?

## *R — Ritualize Your Mornings*

Let morning meet you slowly.

Warm hands.

Steam rising.

A rhythm of your own.

### **Practice:**

- Choose 2 morning rituals: make tea, stretch, journal, sit in light.
- Do them without urgency.



### *Journal Prompt:*

What morning rhythm feels like care?



## *N — Name Your Next Move*

When you're ready, whisper your next move.

Nothing loud.

Just honest.

### **Practice:**

- Write one small action you're ready for.
- Say it out loud. Give it shape.

### *Journal Prompt:*

What's quietly calling me forward?

You don't need to do all of this at once.

You just need one small rhythm a day.

A breath before the overwhelm.

A whisper of steadiness before the  
noise.

*This isn't a checklist — it's a compass.*

*Use what you need.*

Leave the rest until it calls you again.

And soon, almost quietly, you'll notice:  
the small consistencies start to stack.

*Peace doesn't arrive all at once —*

it's gathered gently, piece by piece.

You've returned to yourself.

That alone is worth celebrating.





# Rest with Purpose

*A sacred permission to stop spinning*

You are allowed to stop without starting again right away.

You are allowed to rest before you recover.

You are allowed to do nothing and still be worthy of everything.

Some days you're not tired because you're lazy.

You're tired because life has asked too much of you for too long.

This page is not about reclaiming productivity.



It's about reclaiming your breath.



You do not need to earn your pause.

You just need to honor it.

## What Rest Looks Like Now

- Turn off your phone. Even for 30 minutes.
- Sit down before you're exhausted.
- Light a candle or make tea with no goal other than presence.
- Lie on the floor and stare at the ceiling. Let it be enough.

*Rest isn't always a nap.*

It can be quiet. Stillness. A moment that belongs to no one but you.



 ***Journal Prompt:***

- Where in your day could I create a pocket of peace, even if it's only five minutes?





 ***Journal Prompt:***

- How would it feel to rest before I'm fully burned out?





# Mini Moments of Peace

*Pick 1-2 to try today- No pressure-  
just presence.*

☐ I sat without a screen, even for one minute.

☐ I drank something warm slowly.

☐ I laid down without guilt.

☐ I whispered, “I’m safe” to myself.

☐ I did nothing- and let that  
be everything.





# Ease Back In

*A slow re-entry, not a full return*

You don't have to leap back in.  
You can inch your way forward.  
You can move without pressure, without force, without apology.

After rest comes resistance.  
It's normal. It's part of healing.  
The goal here isn't to "catch up."  
It's to come home to yourself — softly, simply, gently.

## One Gentle Step at a Time

- Ease doesn't mean avoidance — it means intention.
- Today, you choose one thing to tend to: a dish, a corner of the room, a text, a breath.
  - Let that be enough.
  - Let you be enough.



*Momentum doesn't need a sprint — it just needs a start.*



 ***Journal Prompt:***

- What's one tiny task I've been avoiding that could help me feel slightly more grounded?





 ***Journal Prompt:***

- What would it feel like to do it slowly, with care?





# Mini *Return* Checklist

**Pick 1 to honor your return:**

- ☐ I made my bed — or just pulled the covers up.
- ☐ I opened a window.
- ☐ I did one load of laundry without finishing it.
- ☐ I washed one plate and didn't guilt myself over the rest.
- ☐ I took care of one thing only.





# Track One Thing

*The magic in paying attention.*

You don't need a planner.  
You don't need to organize your whole life.  
You just need to notice one thing.

The truth is, we spiral when we stop paying attention.  
Not because we're lazy — but because life blurred at the edges.  
This step is about sharpening your sight — just slightly.

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## *Choose Your Anchor*

Pick one thing — just one — to start tracking daily.  
This becomes your anchor, your quiet promise to yourself.  
Some gentle ideas:

- How many times you took a deep breath
- What time you woke up
- One meal you ate
- How your body felt
- A song that matched your mood
- What you wore and why



*You're not tracking to judge yourself.  
You're tracking to meet yourself again.*





***Journal Prompt:***

- If I had to track one thing just to stay connected to myself, what would it be?  
Why?







***Journal Prompt:***

- How can I make it feel like a ritual instead of a rule?







# A Week Of Gentle Returns

*Start with presence. Let consistency follow.*

## Small Acts of *Return*

Not a checklist-just a rhythm to come back to yourself

| Habit                                  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| Drank Water                            |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
| Stretched For 2 Minutes                |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
| Made My Bed                            |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
| Read or Wrote Something Just For Me    |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
| Went outside for a breath of fresh air |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |

*What softened me this week?*

*What pulled me back toward myself?*



*You're not behind- you're returning.*



# Understand What Matters

*Clarity is the softest form of power*

You've been so busy trying to survive, you forgot to ask:

What even matters to me anymore?

This isn't about setting big goals.

**This is about getting quiet enough to remember:**

- What makes you feel alive
- What drains you
- What you do out of habit
- What you long to do but don't allow

You don't need to fix it yet.

You just need to see it.

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✨ ***Gentle Reminder:***

There's a reason this step comes after the quiet rituals.

You can't hear what matters until you've slowed down enough to listen.

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🌀 ***Exercise:***

Draw a line down the middle of a page.

Label one side "I Keep This"

Label the other "I Release This"



🌿 ***Start writing.***

Tiny things. Big things.

Anything that feels like truth.

You are not being dramatic.

You are remembering your compass.





***Journal Prompt:***

What parts of my day feel sacred?





 ***Journal Prompt:***

- What parts feel like I'm betraying myself?





# Name Your Next Move

*You don't need a five-year plan—just one brave step.*

You've returned to yourself.  
Now, it's time to move—with gentleness, with clarity,  
with quiet confidence.

You don't need to overhaul your life.  
You don't need to be a different woman by Monday.  
You just need to choose one aligned, soul-rooted next step.

Not the loudest one.  
Not the one that earns applause.  
The one that feels like peace when you say it out loud.

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## **Try This:**

Look at what you've uncovered over the last few pages.  
What are you tired of pretending doesn't hurt?  
What do you wish you could begin?

Now whisper to yourself:  
“I'm ready to begin with...”  
Fill in the blank.  
Write it down. Don't overthink it.

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***Journal Prompt:***

If I could give myself one permission slip this week, what would it say?





# The Gentle Reset List

*When you can't do everything—  
do what brings peace back into the room.*

This is not a checklist for perfection.  
It's a reminder of what brings life back to your space when  
everything feels heavy.



## Daily Reset Helpers

*Choose 2–3 a day.  
That's more than enough.*

- Light a candle or incense in the morning
- Put on one load of laundry
- Wash the dishes or just clear the sink
- Wipe down the bathroom counter
- Open a window for five minutes
- Sweep one room (or just the entryway)
- Take out the trash
- Make your bed
- Clear one surface (nightstand, coffee table, kitchen counter)
- Play your favorite playlist or soundscape
- Change into cozy clothes
- Prep a soft drink (tea, lemon water, iced coffee—your ritual)



# The Soft Start Grocery List

*Stock your home like you're building a sanctuary—  
not a survival bunker.*

This isn't a rigid meal plan.  
This is a soft suggestion for nurturing foods and familiar  
comforts to ease you back into daily life.

## *The Soft Start Grocery List*

*Just a few basics to help you feel fed, soothed, and a little more human.*

### **Cozy & Easy:**

- Oatmeal or granola
- Soup (boxed or canned for low energy days)
  - Rotisserie chicken
  - Bagged salad kits
  - Frozen veggies
  - Eggs
- Bread (for toast, sandwiches, or soft mornings)
- Fruit you actually like (berries, bananas, citrus)
  - Pasta + jar sauce
  - Yogurt
  - Cheese + crackers
  - Nut butter
  - Herbal teas
- A sweet treat (yes, you're allowed)



*You don't need to prep a perfect meal plan.*

*This is a soft approach to returning to food and comfort without putting  
pressure on yourself.*



 You've made it back.

Back to stillness.

Back to yourself.

Back to a rhythm that feels like home.

You are allowed to move slowly.

You are allowed to build a soft life.

You are allowed to begin again—over and over,  
until the life you wake up to feels like love.

You didn't rush.

You didn't punish yourself.

You just... *returned*.

To the tiniest sense of rhythm.

To a few soft rituals.

To the life that's quietly waiting to be rebuilt.

This isn't the end.

It's the beginning of living like someone who deserves  
peace.





*Come back to this anytime.*

*You don't need to hustle to heal.*

*Just take care of the girl who's always done her best—even  
when no one saw it.*

*I'm so proud of you.*

*– Mel*

