

EMA M3 - Feel With Freedom

The Wise Break

*For moments when the emotion is too strong to run RAINN on the spot. Not avoidance
— you always come back.*

The Wise Break — how it works

A tool to leave the refractory period when an emotion is too strong to do so in the moment. You disengage, regulate, and regain choice. It is NOT avoidance — you always come back.

1. Recognize you **can't leave the refractory period** and respond well right now.
2. Recognize you **need more space and distance** from the emotion / situation.
3. **Decide** to take a Wise Break — **communicate** it if others are involved.
4. Take the space and time, applying tools that help you **regulate**.
5. **Come back** when you can give a constructive response.

A constructive Wise Break: DO / DON'T

DON'T

Distract in dysregulating ways

- drinking, mindless entertainment, indulging, self-numbing, drugs

Keep triggering it

- ruminating

Tasks that require regulation

- driving, working

DO

Release energy, ground, soothe, feel safe:

- Physical exercise: run, mindful movement
- A mindful walk, be in nature
- Breathwork
- Music, dance, sing, make art
- A warm shower, a cup of tea
- Meditate, resource
- Co-regulate

Wise Break – solo plan

- My early signs I need a wise break: _____
- My words to communicate it: _____
- Regulation activities that truly bring me back (from the DO list): _____
- Tendencies and patterns to look out for (from the DON'T list): _____
- My commitment: I will always come back. ☐

Wise Break – relationship roleplay

Partner A – practice the full sequence

Recognize → decide → communicate → step away to regulate → return.

Communicate it your way (or fill the blanks):

“I need some space to think better – I’m too ____ right now to think straight, and if I speak now it’ll do more harm than good. Give me ____ minutes, and we’ll come back to this then, okay?”

Keep in mind:

- Say it as care for the relationship, not punishment.
- Decide how long; negotiate if possible.
- Always come back – if still activated, make a new agreement.

Partner B – play the other person

- Respond in role.
- Share how it feels to receive a healthy Wise Break communication

Wise Break — pick a scenario

1

Partner conflict

A disagreement with your partner is escalating; you feel flooded and about to say something you'll regret.

2

Family pressure

A loaded conversation with a parent or sibling presses an old button; the heat rises fast.

3

Work friction

A colleague dismisses your idea in a meeting; anger or hurt surges and you're about to react.