

Triggered Pause Strategies



to help press the pause button when you are triggered

1. Count

Why it helps:

Slows down your body's automatic "fight or flight" response so you can think before reacting.

How to:

- When you feel the heat rising, stop
- Slowly count backwards from 10 to 1 in your head or out loud
- With each number, take a breath
- Remind yourself: "My goal isn't to win this moment, it is to stay steady."

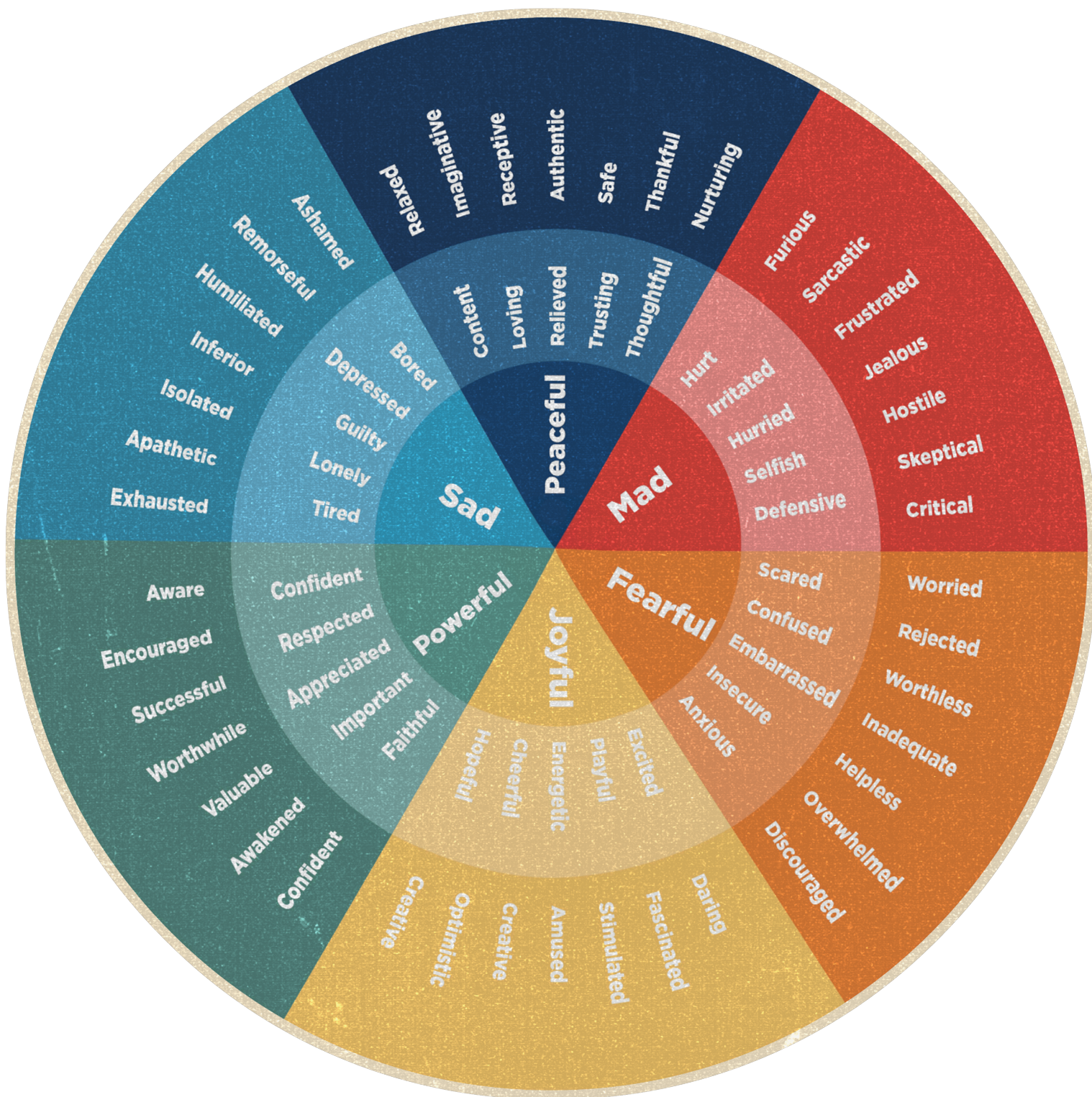
2. Name It to Tame It

Why it helps:

Labeling your feelings calms your nervous system and helps separate the emotion from your reaction.

How to:

- Pause
- Use the emotion wheel to name what you are feeling
- If you're able, say it aloud: "I'm sad.... I'm hurt... I'm embarrassed right now."
- Acknowledge how you are feeling without judgment
- Then decide your next step from a calmer place



3. Recognize Your Default

Why it helps:

Knowing your go-to reaction (fight, flight, freeze or fawn) helps you to catch yourself next time before your triggers overtake you.

How to:

- Discover what your typical reaction is
 - Think about the last time you were triggered. Did you:
 - **Fight:** Lash out with words or actions?
 - **Flight:** Walk away or shut down?
 - **Freeze:** Go blank, not sure what to do?
 - **Fawn:** Try to appease or over-please to avoid conflict?
- Once you identify your pattern, ask: "What would be a healthier response next time?"

4. Anchor Yourself with Breath + Scripture

Why it helps:

Breathing slows your heart rate. Pairing it with Scripture centres your attention on God's truth instead of your emotions.

How to:

- Inhale slowly and pray: "Be still..."
- Exhale slowly and pray: "...and know that YOU are GOD." (Psalm 46:10)
- Repeat 3 - 5 times until your body feels calmer

5. Delay Your Response

Why it helps:

Gives space for wisdom to show up before regret does.

How to:

- When triggered, make a rule: "Don't hit send. Don't hit post. Don't hit reply."
- Walk away (for at least 30 minutes or overnight if possible)
- Ask yourself: "Will I be glad I said this tomorrow?"
- If not, rewrite or don't send



6. Ground Yourself with Gratitude

Why it helps:

Gratitude shifts your focus from the offence to God's goodness

How to:

- *Pause and name 3 things you're grateful for in that moment*
- *Speak them out loud or write them down: "Thank you God for _____"*
- *Let gratitude soften your reaction before you re-engage*

7. Invite God into the Moment

Why it helps:

Rage tells you "you're on your own." Prayer reminds you that God is present and you don't carry the weight alone.

How to:

- *Whisper a prayer: "Lord, help me."*
- *Imagine handing the situation to God by placing it into His hands.*
- *Ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom, peace and perspective before you act.*

8. Change Your Environment

Why it helps:

Stepping away from the space where you were triggered helps your body reset and gives your brain fresh perspective.

How to:

- *Excuse yourself and step outside, or move to another room.*
- *Take a short walk, stretch, or splash water on your face.*
- *Tell yourself: "I'm creating space for clarity, not running from the issue."*



9. Do a HALT check

Why it helps:

Many triggers feel bigger when your basic needs aren't met. HALT helps you check if you're really reacting to the situation - or just to being hungry, angry, lonely, or tired.

How to:

- *Pause and ask: "Am I **H**ungry? **A**ngry? **L**onely? **T**ired?"*
- *If yes, meet that need first (eat, rest, call a friend, pray)*
- *Return to the situation with a clearer head and heart*

10. Visualize the Bigger Picture

Why it helps:

Rage shrinks perspective to the one offence in front of you. Visualizing the bigger picture reminds you of God's faithfulness and what actually matters.

How to:

- *Pause and imagine how this moment will feel tomorrow, next week, or next year*
- *Ask yourself: "Will this matter in five years? What's God doing in me through this?"*
- *Let the bigger picture shrink the power of the trigger*

