

# When You Feel Like You're Failing: A Reminder Sheet for the Hardest Moments

You will have moments when your voice gets too loud.

You'll slam a drawer, say something you regret, or wish you could disappear.

This sheet is for *those* moments. Print it. Post it. Whisper it.

Let it remind you: **you are still in the fight**. That means you're winning.

## You Are Not Failing If...

- You yelled, but then apologized.
- You needed a break and took one.
- You gave them cereal for dinner because it's all you had energy for.
- You cried in the bathroom while they watched a cartoon.
- You gave them a screen just to breathe for 10 minutes.
- You couldn't stop the meltdown, but you stayed in the room.
- You're learning to pause instead of punishing.
- You're doing today differently than you did last year.

**That's not failure. That's growth.**

## Five Things to Say to Yourself Right Now

1. "This is hard — and I'm doing it anyway."
2. "My child needs connection, not perfection."
3. "It's not too late to reset this moment."
4. "I am allowed to have limits."
5. "I can breathe. I can come back."

**If You're Dysregulated Right Now: Try This**

- **Step out of the room for 30 seconds.** Even 10 seconds counts.
- **Press your hands against the wall.** Feel your body. Come into the present.
- **Put one hand on your heart and one on your belly.** Take three slow breaths.
- **Say aloud (or whisper):** “This moment will pass.”
- **Look at your child like they’re scared, not bad.** That reactivates compassion.

**Start again, not over.**

You're not too late. You're not too much. You're not alone.

You're a cycle-breaker. And even if you're shaking — you're still standing.

### **Self-Regulation Checklist for Parents (Especially in Recovery)**

*Before You React, Reconnect*

Use this checklist before, during, or after a hard moment to regulate your own nervous system.

Because you can't pour from an empty cup — and parenting is a full-contact sport.

#### **BODY CHECK**

- Have I eaten today?
- Have I had water in the last 90 minutes?
- Am I overheated, overstimulated, or touched-out?
- Do I need to step outside or splash water on my face?
- Can I sit down for just one minute and feel my feet on the floor?

#### **BREATH CHECK**

- Am I breathing slowly — or holding my breath?
- Can I take three slow exhales to signal “safety” to my body?
- Would it help to do a quick Finger Tracing Breath?
- Could my child breathe with me — instead of me talking at them?

## **EMOTION CHECK**

- What am I actually feeling right now? (Not just anger — is it fear, exhaustion, shame?)
- Does this situation remind me of something from my past?
- Am I expecting my child to handle their feelings better than I handle mine?
- Am I in a “now” reaction or a “then” reaction?

## **REPAIR PLAN (IF YOU LOST IT)**

- Did I own my part out loud? (“That was too loud. I’m sorry.”)
- Did I reconnect without blame? (“That was a hard moment. Let’s try again.”)
- Did I remind my child they are still loved?
- Did I remind *myself* that I’m still growing?

## **LONG-TERM PLAN**

- Have I used any of my own recovery tools today?
- Do I need a meeting, phone call, or safe adult support?
- Have I gotten any adult connection today — even five minutes of kindness?
- Can I forgive myself for not parenting perfectly — and parent from this moment forward?

**You are not responsible for your child’s every emotion.**

You are responsible for how *you respond* to it.

Regulation is leadership.

Repair is healing.

And your daily presence — not perfection — is what makes the difference.