

STOP THE SPIRAL: A 5-Minute Secure Reset

When you feel the urge to over-explain, seek reassurance, or shut down.

STEP 1: BODY FIRST (60 Seconds) - *You cannot think your way out of a feeling.*

- **Breathing:** Inhale for 4 counts, Exhale for 6 counts (Repeat 6x).
- **The Check:** Drop your shoulders. Unclench your jaw. Press feet into the floor.
- **Grounding:** Name 3 neutral things you see around you.
- **The Cue:** Say out loud: *"My body is sounding an alarm. I can lower the volume first."*

STEP 2: NAME THE PATTERN (30 Seconds) - *Identify what is happening right now.*

- Relationship Spiral (Fear of abandonment/conflict)
- Performance Spiral (Fear of failure/imposter syndrome)
- Urgency to Fix/Explain (Reassurance seeking)
- Urgency to Hide/Avoid (Shutdown)

Reminder: *This is a pattern, not a personality.*

STEP 3: THE SPIRAL SENTENCE (15 Seconds) - *Validating the fear stops the fight.*

Say this to yourself: *"A part of me is scared right now. I don't need certainty — I need safety."*

STEP 4: THE REASSURANCE PAUSE (2 Minutes) - *Before you send that text or ask for validation:*

1. What am I afraid will happen if I don't fix this *right now*?
2. What do I actually need? (Comfort? Clarity? A break?)

Choose Your Path:

- Soothe: I am too activated. I will regulate for 20 minutes first.
- Wait: I will set a timer for 20 minutes before asking for reassurance.
- Act: I will take one secure action (see below).

STEP 5: ONE SECURE NEXT STEP (60 Seconds) - *Choose ONE small action that aligns with your values, not your fear.*

Relationship Anxiety	Perfectionism / Work Anxiety
Send one clear, short message (no over-explaining).	Write a "good enough" draft for 10 minutes.
Ask for a specific time to talk later.	Do the tiniest next task (e.g., open the document).
Take a 20-minute pause before responding.	Set a timer for 10 minutes of work, then stop.
Write the "anxious draft" in your notes app, then wait.	Ask: "What would I tell a friend to do first?"

Need more support?

Join the Overthinker Reset — a 6-week skills group to help you build lasting security.

www.therapywithjohnpelikan.com/reset