

# From Trigger to Choice

## A Mindfulness Tool for the Workplace

In today's workplace, pressure is constant. Tight deadlines, unexpected challenges, heavy workloads, and competing demands. These moments can trigger stress reactions in the brain: racing thoughts, irritability, and rushed decisions.

Mindfulness helps create a pause between the trigger and your response. In that pause lies the power to step out of autopilot and choose a calmer, more effective way forward.

The FLOW

**Trigger → Pause → Notice → Choose → Respond**

### 1. Trigger

- An email marked "urgent"
- A server crash
- A last-minute project demand
- A difficult conversation

Automatic reaction: stress spike, frustration, defensive tone.

### 2. Pause

- Take one conscious breath before acting.
- Inhale through the nose (count 4), exhale through the mouth (count 6).

### 3. Notice - Ask yourself:

- What's happening in my body? (tension, racing heart, shallow breath)
- What emotion is present? (frustration, anxiety, pressure)
- What thought is showing up? ("This always happens," "I can't handle this.")

### 4. Choose

Shift from autopilot to intention. Options might be:

- Respond calmly instead of reacting.
- Clarify the request instead of assuming.
- Take 2 minutes before replying.
- Ask for support.

### 5. Respond

Take the mindful action you've chosen. You'll likely:

- Reduce errors.
- Strengthen collaboration.
- Protect your wellbeing.

### Quick Practice: The 5-Breath Reset

1. Notice a trigger (stress email, tech glitch).
2. Sit upright, soften shoulders.
3. Breathe in for 4, out for 6, five times.
4. Re-engage with choice, not reaction.