

THE FIVE PRACTICES I RECOMMEND MOST

Fight Better Tonight

You keep having the same fight. Not the same argument. The same pattern: one of you gets louder, one goes quiet, nothing gets resolved. These five practices work with what is actually running that pattern: two nervous systems doing what they learned long ago. Small, concrete, doable tonight.

1 · The 10-second reset

IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT, WHEN YOU FEEL YOURSELF ABOUT TO LOSE IT

Both feet on the floor. One hand flat on your chest. Feel your heartbeat under your palm. Three slow breaths. Then, and only then, respond to whatever your partner just said.

Why it works: the combination of interoception (feeling inside your body) and gentle pressure activates the vagal brake, your nervous system's built-in "we are safe enough" signal. Ten seconds is the difference between reacting and responding.

2 · The body question

WHEN AN ARGUMENT IS GOING IN CIRCLES

Ask yourself first, then your partner: **"What are you feeling in your body right now?"** Not what are you *thinking*. Where do you feel this: chest, throat, stomach, jaw?

Why it works: answering requires going inward, which slows activation. And it shifts the conversation from blame ("you always...") to experience ("there's tightness in my chest"), which is a conversation two people can actually have.

3 · The bathroom break

WHEN YOU'RE FLOODED PAST THE POINT WHERE TEN SECONDS IS ENOUGH

Say one sentence first: **"I need two minutes. I'm coming back."** Then go, and pick one:

Cold water: run it over your wrists, then splash your face. Hold your breath for a moment as the water hits.

Legs up the wall: lie on the floor, legs vertical against the wall, one minute.

Twenty jumps: jumping jacks, on the spot, whatever works. Then three slow breaths.

Then go back. Going back is part of the practice.

Why it works: cold water on the face triggers the dive reflex: the vagus nerve slows your heart directly, no willpower required. Jumping discharges the fight-or-flight energy instead of suppressing it. Legs up the wall shifts blood flow and switches on the parasympathetic system. And the sentence matters most of all: a silent exit reads as abandonment to a pursuing partner. "I'm coming back" turns leaving the room from a rupture into a regulation.

4 · The repair recipe

AFTER A FIGHT, THE SAME EVENING OR THE NEXT DAY

Step 1: Acknowledge without defending: "Last night got intense."

Step 2: Name *your* move in the cycle: "I shut down when your voice rose. That probably felt like I was leaving."

Step 3: Share the vulnerable feeling, not the reactive one: "I wasn't angry. I was overwhelmed and scared I'd say something wrong."

Why it works: repair is not an apology. It's a moment of emotional honesty, and it's what tells both nervous systems the relationship survived the rupture. Couples who repair well fight the same amount. It just stops costing them the same.

5 · The 9pm rule

PREVENTION, FOR THE FIGHTS THAT ALWAYS SEEM TO HAPPEN AT NIGHT

Nothing important after 9pm. If a hard topic comes up late, say: **"I want to talk about this. Can we do it tomorrow before dinner?"** Then actually do it tomorrow.

Why it works: by late evening your nervous system's resources are depleted and your window of tolerance is narrow, and bedtime activates the attachment system ("are we okay?"). Delaying is not avoiding. Delaying is regulating.

One honest note: if turning toward your body brings up more than you expected, that is information, not failure. It's usually a sign that working with a licensed therapist would genuinely serve you. These practices are a doorway, not a substitute.

If these landed, the pattern underneath your fights can be mapped: yours specifically, not couples in general. That's what I do in sessions.

Free 25-minute intro call · sessions online, in English and Russian

calendly.com/regulateandrepair/session · Instagram & TikTok: [@regulateandrepair](https://www.instagram.com/regulateandrepair) / [@regulaterepair](https://www.tiktok.com/@regulaterepair)