

Walking Back Through

A four-step practice for any return after a gap, from a few days to a few months. Used to defuse the staircase grammar (start over, fall behind, recommit) and replace it with the Loop grammar (walk back in).

The practice:

1. Stop the apology. The sentence forming in your head that begins with "I'm sorry I haven't," "I should have," or "I keep meaning to". Let it stop forming. The apology is to a track that doesn't exist.
2. Name what you're doing. Out loud or silently: "I'm walking back in." Or: "I'm here today." Or just: "I came back."
3. Do one small thing. Read one paragraph. Take one breath you noticed. Send one text. The act needs to be the act of being inside the room, however briefly.
4. Leave when you need to leave. The door is still going to be there. It doesn't time you.

Exit condition: This practice is finished the moment you've done step three.

Gentle fallback: If even step three feels like too much, step two is enough. Naming the return is the practice.