

Your reactions under pressure are not fixed. They are habits — learned responses that can be understood, interrupted, and gradually replaced with more intentional choices. These exercises help you map your patterns, build your early warning system, and develop steadiness over time.

EXERCISE 1 — The Trigger Map

Skill: Identifying what escalates your reactions in conflict

Time: 20 minutes · Frequency: Once, then revisit quarterly

What to do

Think of three conflict situations in the past year where your reaction made things worse. For each one, write:

- What was said or done that triggered your reaction?
- What did your reaction look like — what did you say or do?
- What were you feeling in the moment? And underneath that feeling, what were you afraid of or needing?

Look across all three. What pattern do you see in what triggers you most consistently?

Reflection questions

- What is the common thread across your triggers?
- Is there a specific type of person, tone, or situation that consistently activates you?
- What need or fear is underneath your most common trigger?

EXERCISE 2 — The Body Check

Skill: Using physical sensation as an early warning system

Time: Before and during conflict situations · Frequency: Daily practice

What to do

Before entering a tense conversation, take 60 seconds to notice where you hold tension in your body. Shoulders, jaw, chest, stomach — wherever your stress lives.

During the conversation, use that physical location as your early warning system. When you feel it activate — tightening, rising, clenching — that is your signal to slow down before you respond.

Practice the pause: breathe, notice the sensation, and choose your response rather than reacting from it.

Reflection questions

- Where does your body signal stress before your mind does?
- How much time is there between the physical signal and your reaction? Can you extend that gap?
- What happens to the quality of your responses when you pause at the signal?

Managing Your Reactions Exercises

EXERCISE 3 — The Reaction Diary

Skill: Building self-awareness through systematic reflection on your reactions

Time: 10 minutes daily for two weeks · Frequency: Daily

What to do

For two weeks, keep a brief daily log. Each entry has three elements:

Situation: One conflict or tense situation from today — however small.

Reaction: What did I do? (Withdraw, escalate, smooth over, engage, freeze, redirect)

Choice: Was that the response I would have chosen if I had a moment to think? If not, what would I have chosen?

Reflection questions after two weeks

- What is your most common reaction pattern?
- How often did your actual reaction match what you would have chosen?
- What conditions make the gap between reaction and choice smallest — and largest?

EXERCISE 4 — The Steadiness Practice

Skill: Developing the capacity to stay present and functional under sustained pressure

Time: Ongoing · Frequency: Weekly deliberate practice

What to do

Each week, deliberately put yourself in a mildly uncomfortable conversation — one you might normally avoid or deflect. It does not need to be a major conflict. A conversation where you disagree, where the topic is sensitive, or where you are likely to feel some pressure.

Your only goal is to stay present and engaged for the full conversation — without withdrawing, without smoothing it over prematurely, and without escalating.

After the conversation, note: what was hardest? What helped you stay steady? What would you do the same way next time?

Reflection questions

- What kinds of discomfort are easiest for you to tolerate? What kinds are hardest?
- What internal resources help you stay steady — and can you access them more deliberately?
- How has your capacity to stay present changed over the weeks of practice?

For personalized coaching on managing reactions in conflict, contact diazprinz@conflictmanagementspace.com