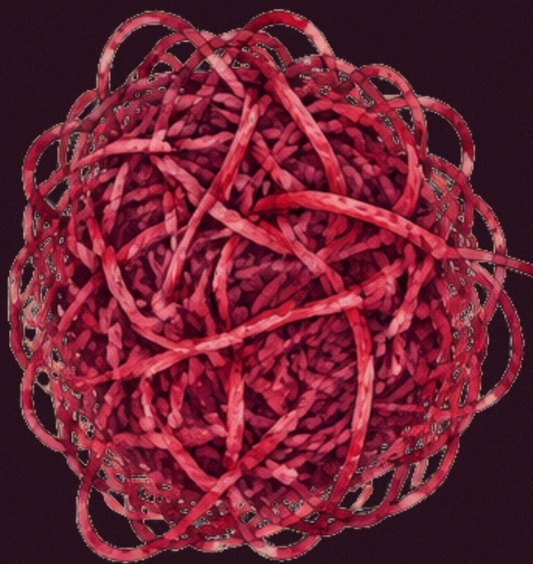
THE 30-DAY WORKBOOK

Why can't *I let go?*

You're not broken. You're tangled.



One thread a day, for thirty days.

WRITE TO ME *roxanne@whycantiletgo.com* ✦ INSTAGRAM *@whycant_i_letgo*

BEFORE YOU START

Hi. I'm glad *you opened this.*

If you're reading this, something ended, and it's still taking up more of your day than you want it to. Maybe you were together for years. Maybe it lasted four months and never had a name. Maybe it was your best friend. However it happened, you're probably tired of hearing "give it time."

I made this because I know how exhausting it is to keep going back to someone you thought you'd left behind. I could be busy, getting on with my life, and on a low evening still find myself checking on them: an ex, or a friend I'd lost. Had they found someone? Got the job? Were they happier than me? I didn't even want them back. I just couldn't stop looking.

Somewhere along the way I started calling what I needed to do *babysitting my brain*. Think of a child asking for a hundred chocolates. You can understand the wanting and still put the bag away, without calling the child bad for wanting them. Sometimes you have to say "not tonight" five times in an hour. That's LITERALLY the job!

I read a lot about habits, grief and how our brains change with practice. Picture a path across a field: walk it every day and it wears clear; stop, and the grass grows back. A new path forms the same way, one walk at a time. I tried a lot of things on myself, and the ones I kept are in this book. None of them is a miracle. What they gave me was something to actually do when the feeling arrived, and permission to try again when it didn't work.

Every day here has a story about someone in the middle of it, usually doing exactly what we all do. Then it has me, talking to you about what might be going on and what might help. Then something small to try, and a page that's yours.

You don't need to be ready. You don't need to do it well. Start with Day 1 tonight. I'll be on every page after that.

With care,

Roxanne Sage

HOW THIS WORKS

Four weeks. *One knot.*

Each week works on a different part of the knot. *Keep an eye on the bottom of the pages*: the knot down there loosens a little as you go.

WEEK 1

Stop pulling

This week has one job: getting through the moments when you want to reach for them.

WEEK 2

Find the ends

Now that the urges are a little more manageable, we start looking at the knot itself.

WEEK 3

Loosen

This is the week we pull gently on the hardest strands: the beliefs about yourself, the places you've been avoiding, the anger, the loneliness.

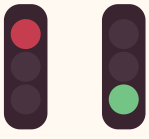
WEEK 4

Lay it down

The last week is about what you keep.

What every day looks like

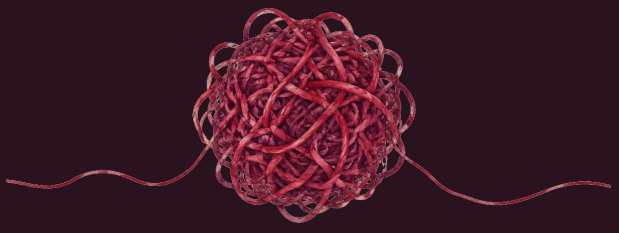
1. **The day opens**
   The day's number, a drawing, what today is about, and a line from a writer to set the tone.
2. **A story**
   Someone in the middle of something like yours, usually doing what most of us do in that moment.
3. **From me**
   What I learned about why this feels the way it does, said the way I'd tell a friend.
4. **Today's practice**
   One small thing to try, and a smaller version for the nights when even that feels like too much. Either one counts as the day.
5. **Your page**
   Space to write. Use a pen, or type into the fillable or phone version.
6. **Why it can help**
   A few lines on the research behind the practice, for when you want to know.



The only rules. Missed a day? Pick up where you are, not where you think you should be. A day doesn't fit your situation? Skip it and come back later; each day stands on its own. Bad night after a good week? Go back to any earlier day. That isn't starting over. That's using the book.

WEEK 1 OF 4

Stop *pulling*



This week has one job: getting through the moments when you want to reach for them. That's all. You don't have to understand it yet, feel better, or forgive anyone.

"The best way out is always through."

Robert Frost

THIS WEEK

1 The Ten Minutes

2 The Third Draft

3 The Loop Has a Name

4 Eleven Times

5 Twenty Minutes on the Couch

6 The Longer Column

7 A Page That Says What to Do

BY THE END OF THE WEEK

By the end of the week you'll have a way to pause before you send, a place for the words you don't send, and a plan for your hardest hour.

WEEK 1 · STOP PULLING · A HEAVIER DAY

1

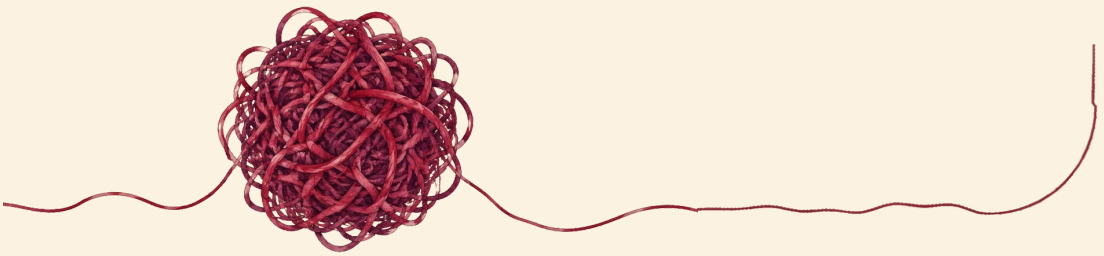


The Ten Minutes

Today is about the moment you want to text them, and what the next ten minutes can do.

"No feeling is final."

— Rainer Maria Rilke



DAY 1 · THE STORY

Maddie, 1:52 a.m.

Maddie wrote it in the Notes app first, which felt responsible. Four paragraphs. One about the trip to Big Sur, one about how she wasn't trying to start anything, and one that began "I know you said you needed space, but I think about you every single day." She'd spent the evening doing what she did most nights now: his Instagram, then his Spotify, then his Instagram again. By 1:52 the message was finished, and his profile said he'd been active four minutes ago, which felt like a sign.

She copied it into their thread, read it once, and pressed send before the part of her that was still awake could argue.

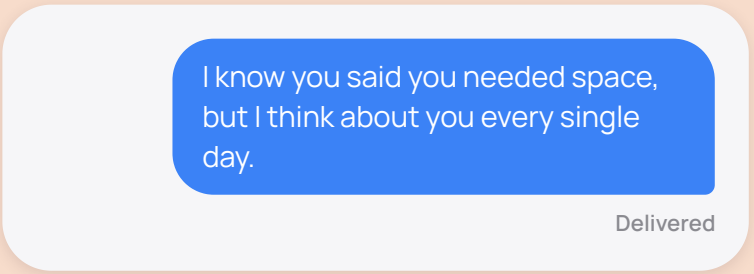
Delivered.

For the first twenty minutes she felt light, almost proud, like she'd finally been honest. Then she started checking. Delivered. Still delivered. She turned the phone face down, turned it back over, opened Instagram to see whether he was still active, closed it, opened it. At 3:40 she was rereading the message the way you reread an email to your boss after it's gone, and every sentence looked longer than it had at 1:52.

At 4:15 she typed "sorry, ignore that, it's late" and sent that too.

He replied at 9:07 the next morning, while she was in line for coffee: "hey. I think we both need space right now. hope you're ok."

She read it four times. She didn't know what she'd wanted him to say, exactly. She only knew it wasn't *that*, and that she'd now spend the day wondering whether the second message had made the first one worse.





DAY 1

From me

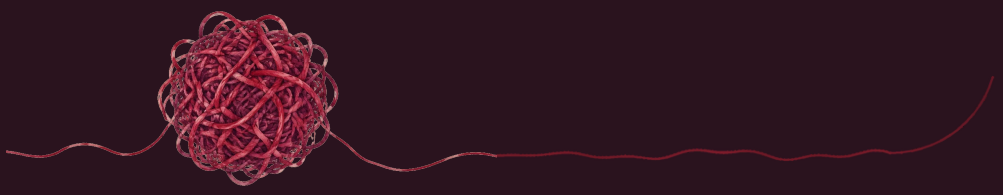
I want to start with Maddie because almost everyone I know has been Maddie. I have. (More than once.) Most of us don't need to be told that a 2 a.m. message is a bad idea. We *know*. We send it anyway, because at 2 a.m. the urge doesn't feel like an urge. It feels like the truth, finally arriving.

Here's what's going on underneath. When someone we're attached to goes away, the brain responds a lot like it does to withdrawal. In brain-scan studies, people who had just been left showed activity in the same reward and craving areas that light up when someone wants something they can't have. The pull to reach out is a sign of how much they mattered, and of a system doing what it was built to do.

This is the babysitting I mentioned in the letter, and Maddie at 2 a.m. is exactly where it happens. Part of her brain is asking, loudly, to send it right now. You don't have to fight that part or be ashamed of it. You just say, gently, "Not right now." Then you probably say it again in five minutes.

What if Maddie had said "not right now" and waited ten minutes? Maybe she'd still have wanted to send it at 2:05. We can't know that. But here's what's happening in your body at a moment like this: the urge arrives with a surge of adrenaline, and that surge builds, peaks and fades, usually within half an hour, even though from inside it never feels like it will end.

Ten minutes won't make the feeling disappear. What it does is get you past the sharpest part of the peak, when adrenaline is doing the talking and every reason to send it sounds like a good one. After ten minutes your body has started to settle, and whatever you decide next, you're deciding it with a little more of you in the room. And if you still want to send it, that's allowed. You'll just be *choosing* it, instead of being pulled into it.





DAY 1 · TODAY'S PRACTICE

The Pause

1. When the pull comes, put the phone somewhere you'd have to get up to reach. Another room is best.
2. Rate the pull from 0 to 10.
3. Set a timer for ten minutes. Sit, drink water, name three things you can see out loud. You don't have to stop wanting to text them. You only have to *not do it yet*.
4. When the timer goes, rate the pull again. Then decide. If you still want to send it, write it in your notes first, and *give your morning self a vote* leave it unsent tonight, and ask yourself again tomorrow, after sleep and breakfast, whether it should go.

If tonight is too much for all of that: phone in another room, and that's today done.



__ / 10

PULL BEFORE



__ / 10

PULL AFTER

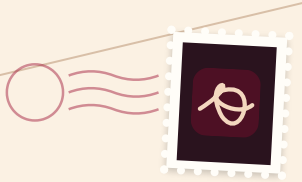
How strong is the urge, from 0 (none) to 10 (unbearable)? Rate it before you start, and again when you finish.

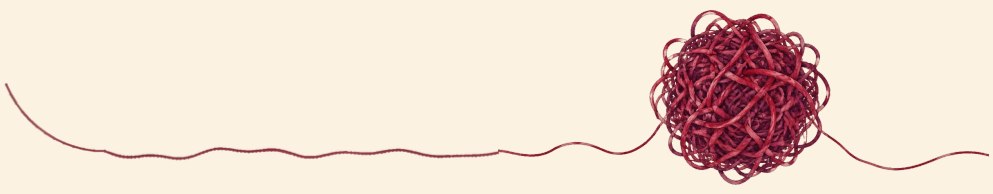
Hardest time today _____ when the pull felt strongest, e.g. "11 p.m., in bed"

What set it off _____ what happened just before, e.g. "saw his story"

Why it can help

Urges behave like waves: they build, peak and pass, especially when you don't act on them. Waiting doesn't make the feeling disappear, but it moves the decision out of the peak. Your before-and-after numbers also show you, in your own data, that the wave does come down.





DAY 1 · YOUR PAGE

Picture someone you love sitting exactly where you are tonight, in the same hurt, at the same hour. See her face. What would you say to her? Write it here, in the words you'd use for her. If it's easier, write it to a younger you.

Tomorrow · Day 2, The Third Draft



Why can't *I let go?*

YOU JUST FINISHED DAY 1

Want the rest? *There are 29 more days.*

Day 1 is the first ten minutes. The full kit walks you through the other 29 nights, one small thing to do each day, so the urge has somewhere to go besides their name.

The 30-Day Workbook. Every day has a story, a note from me, a practice and a page that's yours.

Pocket Book, Field Guide and Traps. What to do in the moment, when the pull is loud.

Your Tracker. One row per night, so you can see the wave coming down.

Guided audio for Days 1 to 7, included.

Get the full kit · $47

whycantiletgo.com/checkout

Questions? Write to me at roxanne@whycantiletgo.com
Or find me on Instagram @whycant_i_letgo

Roxanne Sage