

THE BATTLE WITHIN — TOOLKIT

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From The Battle Within by Eric Purvis with Joe Walsh (Book Four of The Battle Series). Print it. Use it.

Reading this book changes nothing. Using one of these this week changes everything. That's not a slogan, it's the whole difference between a bloke who feels a bit better for an afternoon and a bloke who actually gets his life back. So don't just read these. Print them. Stick the grounding drill on the fridge, the estate starter in the drawer with the important paperwork, the joy log where you'll trip over it. Pick one and use it before the week's out. That's the turn.

1. THE BROWN-ENVELOPE PROTOCOL

The system's mail — the CSA letter, the assessment, the solicitor's letterhead — has a way of detonating your whole day if you let it land on its terms. You can't stop it coming. You can absolutely control *when and how* it hits. Take the power back at the front door.

- **Pick a time and a place.** Open it at a set time in a set spot. Not first thing (it poisons the day), not last thing (it wrecks the night), not when the kids are in the room, and not when you're already flat.
- **Never open it alone if you know it's bad.** Have a mate on the phone or in the room.
- **Box-breathe first.** Three rounds before you break the seal (see Tool 2). Land your nervous system before the words do.
- **Read it twice before you react.** The first read is your fear reading it. The second read is *you* reading it. They often say different things.
- **The 24-hour rule.** Never fire back a reply in anger. Draft it if you must, then sit on it a full day. You have never once regretted waiting. You have often regretted sending.
- **Contain it.** One folder, one inbox label, one physical box. The letter lives there — it does not live in your head, your kitchen bench, or your chest.
- **Send it up the line before you spiral.** Forward it to your lawyer or support person and let them carry it for a bit. That's what they're for.

2. THE GROUNDING DRILL (FOR THE FLASHBACK, FOR THE SURGE)

When the trauma surge hits — the ping, the memory, the cold flood of it — your body thinks the danger is happening *now*. It isn't. This drill takes ninety seconds and tells your body the truth. Do it standing, sitting, in the car, anywhere. No one has to know.

1. **Feet on the floor.** Press them down. Feel the ground hold you. You are here.
2. **Box breathe.** In for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4. Repeat until the edge comes off. This is the whole engine — slow the breath, slow the alarm.
3. **5-4-3-2-1, out loud or in your head:**
 - 5 things you can *see*
 - 4 things you can *hear*
 - 3 things you can *touch* (name them as you touch them)
 - 2 things you can *smell*
 - 1 thing you can *taste*
4. **Cold water.** On your wrists, your face, the back of your neck. It resets the system fast.
5. **Say the line:** *"This is the memory of danger. It is not danger."* Say it until you believe it, because it's true.

You're not weak for needing this. You're smart for having it ready.

3. THE JOY INVENTORY (A ONE-WEEK GLIMMER LOG)

Here's the trick nobody tells you when you're numb: you don't wait to feel like it, then do the thing. You do the thing, and the feeling turns up later, if it turns up at all — and turning up is not the point. Doing it is. This is behavioural activation, stripped to something you can actually run for a week.

The rule: action before motivation. A low score is still a win, because a win is *showing up*, not *feeling great*.

DAY	ONE SMALL THING I'LL DO	ANY FLICKER? (0-10)
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		

DAY	ONE SMALL THING I'LL DO	ANY FLICKER? (0-10)
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

Starter list (steal any of these): a 10-minute walk in the sun · a coffee somewhere that isn't home · ring one mate · music you loved at 20 · make the good breakfast · sit outside for five minutes doing nothing · fix one small broken thing · pat a dog · get in the ocean · cook something from scratch · text your kid something daft.

Do it regardless of the score. Score it honestly afterward. A week of 2s and 3s is a nervous system coming back online. That *is* the recovery.

4. THE DATING-READINESS CHECK

Before you bring anyone near the kids, before you get serious, run these honestly. Not to talk yourself out of it — to make sure you're doing it from strength, not from drowning. A plug is not a partner.

- **Am I OK enough on my own that a “no” wouldn't sink me?** If a knock-back would flatten you, you're not dating yet — you're recruiting a life-support machine.
- **Am I chasing calm, or chasing chaos?** Be honest about which one actually feels like “home” to you right now.
- **What type is this person?** The rescue, the chaos, the too-fast, the love-bomb? If it's moving at a hundred miles an hour in week two, that's not passion, that's a warning.
- **Have I done the work, or am I filling a hole?** If they're a distraction from your own healing, you're not ready and it isn't fair to them.
- **Has “steady” been proven over months — before the kids meet anyone?** The boys have been through enough. Nobody comes near them until steady has been *demonstrated*, not promised.

If you're getting honest “no”s, that's not failure. That's just the next bit of building.

5. THE BLENDED-FAMILY ESTATE STARTER

This is the least romantic tool in the book and possibly the most loving. A will is a love letter you'll never be in the room to read — and in a blended family, it's a treaty that lets everyone you love keep loving each other after you're gone, instead of turning on each other over what's left. If a new partner with a family of her own is even on the horizon, this is not distrust. This is the most serious form of love there is: making sure that whatever happens to you, everyone lands safely.

The four documents that work as one:

1. **A Will** — current, and made *in contemplation of marriage* if a wedding is even a maybe.
2. **A Testamentary Trust** — the instrument that squares the circle.
3. **A Statement of Reasons** — kept with the will, explaining any uneven split.
4. **A Binding Financial Agreement** (the “prenup,” under the Family Law Act) — so you both go in clear-eyed.

The traps that blow the plan up — check every one:

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Marriage automatically REVOKES your will unless it's made “in contemplation of” that marriage. An overseas beach wedding counts. The happy ending can quietly tear up the very document protecting your kids.

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Don't leave a new partner NOTHING. A spouse left out is exactly who family-provision law lets challenge the estate — which drags your kids into court to defend it. Fairness to her is *how* you protect them.

☐

Let the testamentary trust do the work. She gets security — a right to live in a home and/or income for life. The capital passes to your kids afterward. Cared for and protected, no one has to choose.

☐

Never promise the same asset twice. The kids' protected home can't also be her residence right. Fund her security from a *different* asset.

☐

Get a reciprocal will so her plan and yours point the same way.

☐

Record your reasons calmly — no anger on the page. It's what lets the will survive a challenge, and it'll show you something about your own heart.



Guardianship can be conditional — e.g. the new partner as guardian *only if* the marriage happened, with a trusted fallback named otherwise.

The questions only you can answer:

- Who gets what?
- Is a new marriage actually coming?
- Where would everyone live?
- Who are the executors, the guardians, the trustees?

Heavy caveat: this is general information, **not legal advice**. A blended-family estate — especially with a business or a child under sole-responsibility orders — is genuinely specialist work. See a **WA estate solicitor AND a family lawyer, together**. It is the cheapest insurance you'll ever buy for the people you love.

6. GETTING REAL HELP

You cannot think your way out of this one alone, and you were never meant to. Here's how the Australian system actually works, in plain English. Going is not weakness. Going is the single strongest move in this whole book.

- **Start with your GP.** Book a longer appointment and ask specifically for a **Mental Health Care Plan**. That plan gives you Medicare-subsidised sessions with a psychologist each calendar year — real help, mostly paid for.
- **Find someone trauma-informed.** When you look for a psychologist, ask directly if they work with trauma and PTSD. If the first one isn't a fit, that's normal — try another. You're allowed to shop for the right person.
- **Use the men's services.** They exist because blokes ask for help later and less, and it costs us. Don't be a statistic. Make the call.

Support Resources - Lifeline — 13 11 14 - **MensLine** — 1300 78 99 78 - **Beyond Blue** — 1300 22 4636 - **National Alcohol & Other Drug Hotline** — 1800 250 015 - **1800RESPECT** — 1800 737 732 - **Kids Helpline** — 1800 55 1800 - **13YARN** (First Nations) — 13 92 76 - **Dads in Distress / Parents Beyond Breakup** — parentsbeyondbreakup.com - **Emergency** — 000

Suicide is preventable. Help works. If you're in the dark right now, you don't have to see the whole way out — you just have to make one call. The call is the turn.