



The RIFRA Method Quick Start Guide



Your 5-Step Framework for
Breaking People-Pleasing Patterns



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Reclaiming boundaries, safety, and your voice through the RIFRA Method



WHAT IS THE RIFRA METHOD?

RIFRA is a therapeutic framework designed to help you break people-pleasing patterns and reclaim your voice. It addresses the ROOT causes of self-abandonment, not just the symptoms.

RIFRA stands for:

- R - ROOT (Excavate Your Pattern)
- I - IMPACT (Map the True Cost)
- F - FEEL (Reclaim Your Emotional Range)
- R - REFLECT (Reclaim Your Power)
- A - ACTION (Make the Change)

STEP 1: ROOT - Excavate Your Pattern

Where did this start?

Quick Exercise: Think of your earliest memory of learning that your needs, voice, or desires didn't matter. Write it down.

Common Roots:

- Childhood experiences (divorce, abuse, neglect, parentification)
- Attachment wounds (inconsistent caregiving, emotional unavailability)
- Family messages ("Good girls don't...", "Don't be selfish", "Keep the peace")
- Cultural conditioning (gender roles, patriarchal messaging)
- Specific incidents (betrayal, abandonment, trauma)

The Question: What did this experience teach you about yourself, your needs, and your voice?



STEP 2: IMPACT - Map the True Cost

What is this pattern actually costing you?

Quick Exercise: Calculate the cost in these 4 domains:

1. Relationships: Hours per week spent people-pleasing × 52 weeks = _____ hours/year
2. Money: Lost income from not negotiating, under-earning, or burnout = \$_____
3. Health: Physical symptoms, medical bills, energy drain = \$_____
4. Dreams: What have you deferred? What's the gap between what you want and what you're doing?

The Question: Is this a price you're willing to keep paying?

STEP 3: FEEL - Reclaim Your Emotional Range

What emotions have you been suppressing?

Quick Exercise: Complete this sentence: "I'm not allowed to feel _____."

Common answers: Anger. Sadness. Desire. Need. Rage. Grief.

The Practice: Set a timer for 10 minutes and write without stopping, editing, or trying to make it sound good. Let yourself put down what you are actually feeling.

Bonus: Read back what you wrote and respond to yourself the way you would respond to a good friend - with curiosity, compassion, and no judgment.

Why This Matters: Unfelt feelings don't disappear - they leak out as anxiety, resentment, physical symptoms, or passive-aggressive behavior.

The Question: What emotion are you most afraid to feel? That's where you start.

STEP 4: REFLECT - Reclaim Your Power

How am I keeping myself stuck?

The Key Distinction:

- Being victimized: Something was done TO you (not your fault)
- Staying in the victim position: Continuing to give your power away to people who can't change

Both can be true at the same time.

Quick Exercise: Answer honestly:

- What am I doing that keeps this pattern alive?
- What would I have to change to break free?
- What am I avoiding by staying stuck?

Five Ways You Keep Yourself Stuck:

1. Enabling (doing for others what they should do for themselves)
2. Staying Silent (not saying what needs to be said)
3. Wallowing (replaying the story without taking action)
4. Blaming (waiting for others to change first)
5. Repeating (choosing the same type of person/situation over and over)

The Question: What is YOUR part in keeping this pattern going?

STEP 5: ACTION - Make the Change

What are you actually going to DO differently?

The Three Types of Action:

1. Boundaries

Protecting your time, energy, body, and peace

- Start small: "I need to think about that."
- Build up to: "No, that doesn't work for me."

2. Using Your Voice

Asking for what you need

- Practice: "I need ____." (Don't justify, don't explain, don't apologize)

3. Making Different Choices

Choosing yourself

- One brave action at a time
- Progress, not perfection

Quick Exercise: Choose ONE small action you'll take this week:

- Say no to one thing you don't want to do
- Ask for one thing you need
- Set one small boundary

The Question: What's the smallest action I can take TODAY to choose myself?



THE RIFRA CYCLE

RIFRA is a cycle, not a checklist. You can enter wherever the pattern is showing itself, and you may move backward, forward, or around the cycle as new information emerges.

Action often reveals the next layer. A boundary may bring up guilt, fear, grief, an old belief, or a protective "I can't." That isn't failure. It's information. Return to the step that needs attention, then try a smaller, more congruent Action.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. You didn't create these patterns - you learned or inherited them. But you can be the one who changes them.
2. Boundaries aren't walls - they're portals. They create space for your authentic life.
3. Feeling is part of change. What has been suppressed needs room to be experienced, not bypassed.
4. Self-compassion matters. Stay connected to yourself rather than forcing yourself through change.
5. You need support. Find your people. You don't have to do this alone.

WHERE TO ENTER THE CYCLE

- **ROOT:** when a pattern keeps repeating, a reaction feels bigger than the present situation, or Action is blocked and you need to understand what old learning or protection is being activated.
- **IMPACT:** when you need to see clearly what the pattern is costing you and why change matters.
- **FEEL:** when emotion is suppressed, numbed, overwhelming, or showing up indirectly and needs room to be felt.
- **REFLECT:** when you need to separate inherited beliefs and old "rules of the house" from what you actually believe, need, and choose now.
- **ACTION:** when you have enough clarity and capacity to try one small step that is congruent with your new rules.

If Action gets stuck, loop back rather than forcing it. Listen for what needs more Root, Impact, Feel, or Reflect, then choose a smaller Action.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Immediate:

1. Choose the step that feels most relevant now; you can enter the cycle anywhere.
2. Do that step's quick exercise.
3. Notice what comes up. Let that point you toward what needs attention next.

This Week:

1. Choose one small Action that reflects a new belief or "rule of the house" you want to live by.
2. Make it small enough to feel possible without overriding yourself.
3. Notice what follows: relief, guilt, fear, grief, pride, resistance, or something else.

This Month:

1. Follow the cycle where it leads; you do not have to move through the steps in order.
2. Journal what becomes clearer about roots, costs, feelings, beliefs, and choices.
3. If Action gets stuck, loop back rather than forcing it; find what needs attention, then choose a smaller Action.

REMEMBER

"No" is not a wall. It's a sacred portal to your authentic life.

Your voice matters. Your boundaries matter. You matter.

One brave action at a time, you're breaking what generations before you couldn't break.

Welcome home to yourself.

RESOURCES

This guide is a starting point. The full book goes deeper into the nervous-system roots of people-pleasing, relational patterns, somatic practices, and the five RIFRA steps so you can create change that lasts.

Go deeper with the book: *The Power of No: Reclaiming Boundaries, Safety, and Your Voice Through the RIFRA Method* by Tanya Dantus, LMFT, SEP. [Available on Amazon.](#)

Explore the RIFRA Method and work with Tanya: tanyadantus.com • [@tanyadantus](https://www.instagram.com/tanyadantus)

Get support: 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) • [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com) • [ACA](https://www.aca.org) • [CoDA](https://www.co-da.org) • [Al-Anon](https://www.al-anon.org)



ABOUT TANYA

Tanya Dantus, LMFT, SEP, is a psychotherapist, author, speaker, and creator of the RIFRA Method, an integrative framework for understanding and transforming patterns rooted in attachment and relational trauma.

She is the author of "The Power of No: Reclaiming Boundaries, Safety, and Your Voice Through the RIFRA Method."

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