

# After Assertive Moments

*A grounding and nervous system recovery guide for navigating difficult conversations, emotional activation, boundaries, and post-conflict overwhelm.*

Feeling activated after speaking clearly, setting a boundary, or navigating conflict does not mean you did something wrong.

For many people, direct communication can trigger anxiety, guilt, fear, tension, or emotional overwhelm because the nervous system is learning a new pattern.

The goal is not to never feel anxious.

The goal is to speak clearly, stay grounded, and help your body come back down afterward.

## 1. Name What Just Happened

After a difficult interaction, pause and label the experience clearly instead of immediately spiraling into self-criticism or over-analysis.

Try: “That was activating. I stayed composed. I spoke clearly. Now my body needs care.”

Both of these things can be true at once:

- you can feel activated
- and still be proud of yourself for speaking clearly

## 2. Choose Active Decompression

When the nervous system is full of adrenaline, overthinking alone usually does not release the emotional charge. The body often needs help discharging the activation physically first.

Examples: • taking a walk

- stretching
- movement or light exercise
- slow breathing
- calming music
- grounding sensory input
- a simple repetitive game or task after the body begins calming down

### **3. Avoid Stacking Emotionally Heavy Tasks**

After an emotionally activating conversation, try not to immediately force yourself into another mentally or emotionally demanding situation if possible.

Instead, create a small buffer: • move your body

- drink water
- breathe slowly
- allow your nervous system time to settle before jumping into the next stressor

### **4. Warm And Firm Can Exist Together**

Healthy boundaries do not require emotional coldness, aggression, or emotional withdrawal.

You can remain: • emotionally warm

- grounded
- compassionate
- and connected

while still maintaining a clear boundary.

## 5. Keep Explanations Short

When boundaries become long explanations, they can unintentionally turn into emotional negotiations.

Instead of repeatedly defending yourself, practice: • calm repetition

- emotional steadiness
- and clear communication without over-explaining

## 6. Use Emotional Distancing Tools When Needed

When someone's reactions feel emotionally overwhelming, it can help to create a little psychological distance internally so your nervous system remembers you do not have to absorb all of the intensity.

Examples of emotional distancing tools: • imagining the interaction slightly zoomed out like a movie scene

- picturing the person as a harmless bobblehead character for a moment
- visualizing yourself behind protective glass
- imagining their emotional intensity floating past you like weather instead of entering your body

These tools are not about dismissing someone's feelings. They are simply small grounding techniques that can help reduce emotional flooding.

## 7. Grounding Reminder

You can be loving without over-functioning.

You can be firm without being cruel.

You can speak clearly and still stay connected to yourself.