

Mental Fitness for Technology Leaders

Four tools you can use at the console, in the war room, or in Monday staff meeting.

01 · REGULATE

The 90-second reset

1 Feet

Feel both feet on the floor. Unclench your jaw. Drop your shoulders.

2 Breath

In for 4. Out for 6. A longer exhale tells the body the emergency is not inside you.

3 Name

Name three facts: what is true, what is unknown, what is not on fire.

4 Next

Choose the next useful action — not the whole solution.

Use before you walk into the war room, pick up the phone, or hit send.

02 · DECIDE

Four-question decision filter

01 What is actually on fire?

Safety, legal exposure, citizen services, data integrity — or just noise?

02 What is reversible?

If you can undo it in 24 hours, decide faster. If you cannot, slow the room down.

03 Who else needs a voice?

Who will live with this at 2 a.m.? Get them in now, not in the after-action.

04 What will we know tomorrow?

If waiting 30 minutes changes the call, wait. If it does not, move.

03 · PRIORITIZE

NOW / NEXT / NOISE

NOW

Citizen or employee harm. Active compromise. Broken 911, payments, payroll, or instruction.

NEXT

Work that prevents the next NOW: patching, backups, staffing, vendor risk, documentation.

NOISE

Urgency without consequence. Status theater. Meetings that could be a note. Other people's panic.

04 · RECOVER

15-minute human after-action

Facts What happened, in order, without the soundtrack.

Friction Where did we get stuck — tools, authority, information, or people?

Cost Who ran hot? Who covered extra? What did we postpone?

Keep What worked that we should repeat on purpose?

Change One process change. One sentence we will use next time.

Close Thank people specifically. Then send them home if you can.

Recovery is readiness — not a reward. Heroics are a design flaw.