

The Self-Calibration Guide

Measuring Your Own Living Winding

J. Konstapel & Claude (Anthropic), Leiden, 13 August 2026. Working paper, first edition.

CONTEXT HEADER — read before reacting to this text.

Programme. MAZE: the application of the Vacuum.Net theory to the human being.

This piece. The practical front door of the Living Winding model: procedures by which any person measures the model's four quantities on themselves, with a notebook or a spreadsheet, without instruments and without institutions. The companion protocol document ("The Living Winding Protocols") is the rigorous back door for anyone who wants to check the same claims on research data. This guide claims no validation; it hands over the instrument. Verification here is verification in practice — the model's own first property of knowing.

Settled. The theory: "The Living Winding" (8th ed., published) — eight definitions, one postulate; human = closure + spectral condition + window + one temporal selection criterion; quantities N , $\bar{\chi}$, τ , J ; five tests T1–T5.

Open. Everything empirical, including what your own measurements will show.

Conventions. Statuses base/derived/conditionally derived/chosen/testable; self-contained texts; thresholds fixed before measurement.

Corpus. constable.blog; Academia/ResearchGate.

1. What you are measuring

The model says: a person is a living winding — a pattern in the net that holds its own tension and maintains itself as long as current runs through it. Four quantities describe you completely at this level:

N — your pattern: how you hang in the net. Fixed. You do not measure N directly; you see it in the stability of the other three. $\bar{\chi}$ — your tension state: how you are doing, as a number. τ — your retention time: how long a hit stays with you. **J** — your throughflow: the load you carry, which is also what your self-maintenance costs.

Everything below measures $\bar{\chi}$, τ , J and their laws on yourself. No laboratory. The only instrument is a repeated number and honesty about thresholds.

2. The instrument

One scale, used throughout: **tension, 0–10**. 0 = fully slack, nothing pulling. 10 = maximum load you know. Score it twice a day at fixed times (morning, evening). One line in a notebook or one row in a spreadsheet: date, time, score, and one word of context.

Three rules make the numbers usable. First: fix the times and keep them. Second: score before you interpret — the number first, the story after. Third: never revise an old score. A wrong-feeling old number is data; a corrected one is fiction.

Baseline. Before any experiment, score two ordinary weeks. From these 28 numbers take your mean $\bar{\chi}_0$ and your typical spread s . These two numbers are your personal thresholds for everything that follows. Write them down and do not move them afterwards. Fixing thresholds before measuring is the entire difference between reading yourself and fooling yourself.

3. Procedure 1 — your retention time τ

τ is the model's sharpest personal number: how long a perturbation stays in you.

1. Wait for, or note in retrospect from your log, a dated hit: a conflict, bad news, a deadline shock. Day 0.
2. Keep scoring twice daily for 14 days. No other change in routine.
3. Plot score minus baseline ($\bar{\chi} - \bar{\chi}_0$) against days.
4. Find the day on which the deviation has halved. Call it t_{half} .
5. $\tau = 1.44 \times t_{\text{half}}$ (the exponential relation; the factor is $1/\ln 2$).

Interpretation. τ is yours: people differ in it because N differs, and the model says it is one number — the same τ for different kinds of hit. That is checkable: two or three episodes should give roughly the same τ . If your episodes give wildly different values, or the deviation clearly decays in two separate phases (fast first days, then a long slow tail), write that down: on you, the one-time claim fails — and that is a genuine finding, the personal version of test T1.

What to do with the number: stop arguing with it. A person with $\tau = 6$ days who expects to be over something in one day fights his own relaxation curve daily. Planning recovery *at* your τ instead of against it is the first practical yield of the whole model.

4. Procedure 2 — reading your weather

The four states are regions of the plane (level, change). With your baseline numbers they become a daily reading:

- **Loading** — today clearly above yesterday (rise larger than $s/2$).
- **Discharge** — today clearly below yesterday (fall larger than $s/2$).
- **Holding** — flat and high (change within $s/2$, level above $\bar{\chi}_0 + s$).
- **Rest** — flat and low (change within $s/2$, level below $\bar{\chi}_0$).

One label per day, assigned by the rule, not by mood about the mood. The practical law is: **act by state**. In loading, do not force closure — decisions made while tension is still arriving are made on a moving floor. In holding, endure and do not add load; holding is a state, not a failure. Discharge needs room, not interruption. Rest is when the pattern is repaired; it is the state in which more is possible, not the state to be minimised.

One reading a day, thirty seconds. After a month you know your own weather system better than any description of you could tell it.

5. Procedure 3 — your rest law

The model's rest law: required rest rises with carried load, linearly at first, then flattening toward a personal ceiling. Standing sleep science says rest need follows time awake; the model says it follows load. On yourself, this is decidable.

1. For 21–28 days, log daily: **load J** (one number 0–10 for the day's total demand — work, care, conflict, training, all of it) and **rest need** (hours slept when free to sleep out, plus a 0–10 felt-need score).
2. Plot rest need against load.
3. Look at the shape. The model predicts: rising at low load, flattening at high load — and days of equal waking time but unequal load should differ in rest need.

The flattening point matters most. Above it, more effort no longer buys more output — your effective throughflow has saturated at your own repair capacity. That ceiling (r/v in the model) is the most economically valuable number in this guide: it is the point beyond which extra load is pure pattern damage, paid for later. Most people locate their ceiling only by breaking; this measures it in a month, unbroken.

6. Procedure 4 — your window

Life exists between two edges, and both are personal.

The lower edge. Underload is also decay: too little current and the pattern thins. You know this edge from vacations that made you duller instead of fresher, from retirements that collapsed instead of liberated. Locate it observationally: in your log, mark stretches of very low load and score what happened to sharpness, mood, sleep. Below your J_{min}, all three sag.

The upper edge. The sustainable ceiling is not yours but your environment's: what your surroundings can keep supplying — money, attention, goodwill, help. You can exceed it temporarily; the reservoir depletes. Transient overshoot is possible; permanent overshoot is not. The practical reading: chronic exhaustion at loads you used to carry is often not your edge moving but your supply shrinking — a different problem with a different remedy.

Between the edges, and below the ceiling of Procedure 3, is your working range. Knowing its numbers replaces two standing moral vocabularies — laziness and weakness — with two measurable quantities.

7. Procedure 5 — the pair

A bonded pair is itself a winding: weaker than each member, but real. Two measurements, both requiring a willing partner:

1. **The shared mode.** Both partners score tension independently, twice daily, two weeks, no peeking. Then compare: correlate the series, and check the lag — whose deviations show up in the other's numbers, and after how long. A real pair shows a shared slow component that two strangers' series do not.
2. **Shared repair.** Rest phases taken together — boundary down for both at once — repair the pair pattern, not just each member. The whole ritual repertoire of every culture (meals, sabbaths, silence together) was this maintenance. One deliberate shared rest phase per week, logged like everything else, and its effect read from both series a month later.

The derived warning is loneliness: a knot whose mesh no longer shares tension loses conductance on every boundary. The model gives the health effect of isolation no separate mechanism — it is the

direct arithmetic of lost contacts. Maintaining the mesh is not social decoration; it is closure maintenance.

8. The rules of honest self-measurement

Six rules, all inherited from the protocol document, all enforceable by yourself:

1. Thresholds before data. Baseline first, then experiments.
2. One change at a time. A τ measured while also changing sleep, diet and job measures nothing.
3. Old numbers are never revised.
4. **Undecided is an allowed outcome.** A month that shows nothing clean is a month that shows nothing clean.
5. Class constancy: after a major life event (loss, move, new relationship, diagnosis), your parameters may genuinely change — that is not measurement failure, it is a new calibration. Start a new baseline.
6. Write down what would convince you the model is wrong for you, before you start. If nothing would, you are not measuring.

9. What this is, and what it is not

This guide is the model's clause-six move: the instrument handed to the population, not filed with the office. No credential is needed to run it, no committee can revoke it, and its verification standard is the oldest one — it is checked in practice by anyone willing to apply the same discipline. It is not therapy, not diagnosis, and not a substitute for help when help is needed; it produces numbers about load, recovery and state, nothing more. But those numbers replace a remarkable amount of borrowed vocabulary: laziness, weakness, oversensitivity, "should be over it by now" — each of them, on inspection, someone else's threshold applied to your winding.

Insight, in this model, is not a text. It is knowing your own numbers. This guide exists so that anyone can obtain them.

Annotated references

Konstapel, J. & Claude (2026). *The Living Winding: One Model, Seven Variables, and a Mapping onto the Sciences of the Human*. Academia/ResearchGate. The theory behind every procedure here: the definitions, the laws, the five tests, and the mapping showing that each quantity is already measured somewhere in science under another name.

Konstapel, J. & Claude (2026). *The Living Winding Protocols*. Working paper. The rigorous version of the same tests: preregistered criteria, decision rules, falsification conditions — the back door for anyone who wants the research-grade check of what this guide measures personally.

Konstapel, J. (2026). *The History of Knowing*. constable.blog. Why the instrument goes to the population and not to the office: the documented history of direct reading, its verification in practice, and the administrative pattern that this guide's distribution deliberately bypasses.

Kuppens, P., Allen, N. & Sheeber, L. (2010). *Psychological Science* 21, 984–991. The scientific twin of Procedure 1: mood autocorrelation ("emotional inertia") is τ , measured on research populations for two decades.

Borbély, A. (1982). *Human Neurobiology* **1**, 195–204. The scientific twin of Procedure 3: sleep pressure (Process S) — with the load-versus-time question that your own log can decide for you personally.