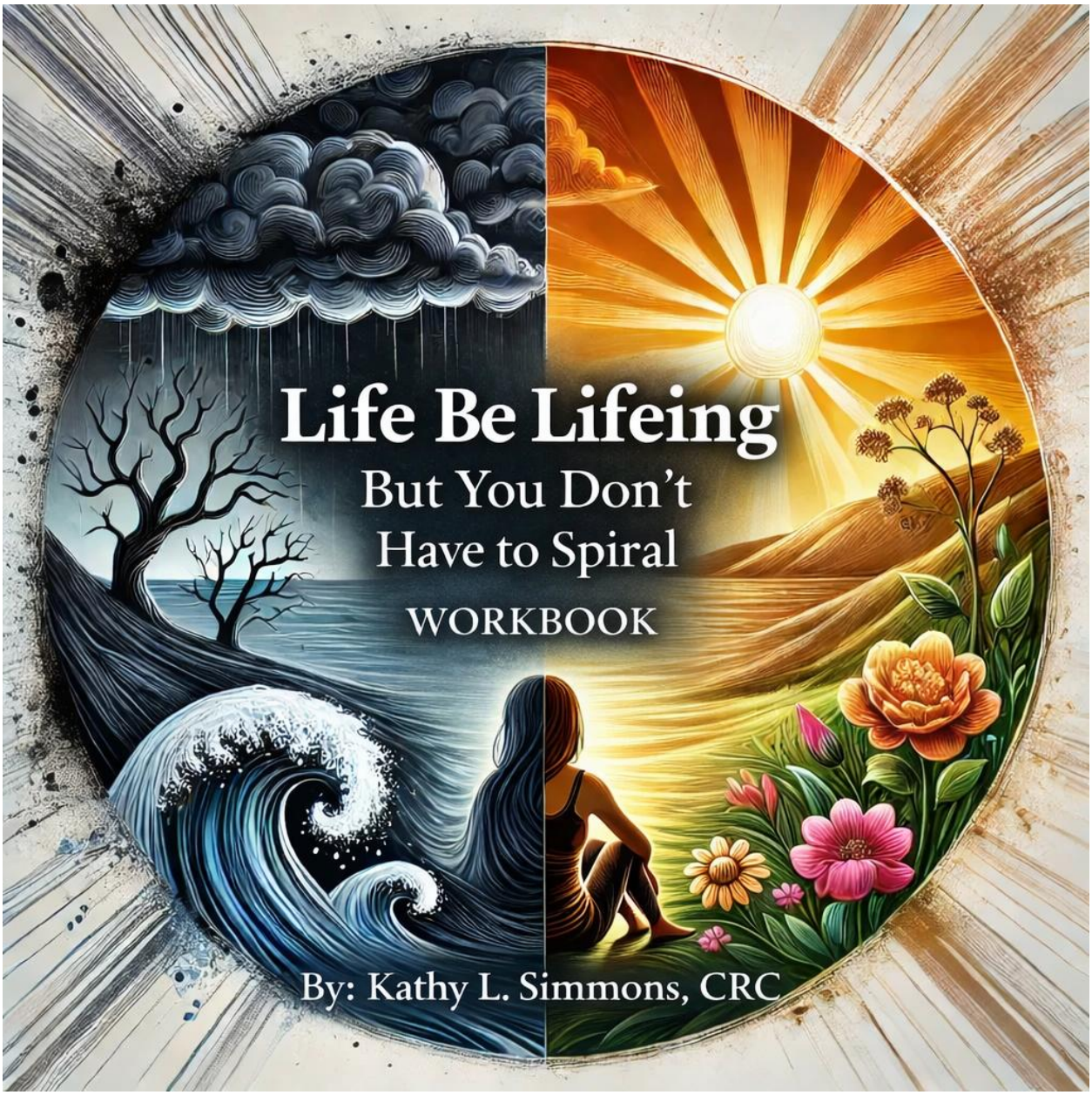

Life Be Lifeing
But You Don't
Have to Spiral
WORKBOOK
By: Kathy L. Simmons, CRC

Life Be Lifeing…

But You Don’t Have to Spiral

Grounding Tools for When Life Feels Heavy, Loud, or Unsteady

Written by
Kathy Simmons

Author | Certified Recovery Coach
Founder, *The Other Side of Rock Bottom*

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Scripture references, spiritual reflections, and faith-based language are included for encouragement and personal reflection. Readers are encouraged to engage with the material in a way that aligns with their own beliefs, values, and lived experiences.

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Author Letter

Life Be Lifeing… But You Don't Have to Spiral

If you're holding this book, chances are life has been *lifeing* a little harder than usual.

Maybe your mind won't slow down.
Maybe your body feels tense or exhausted.
Maybe you're grieving, hurting, overwhelmed, or just tired of holding it all together.
Or maybe nothing looks wrong from the outside—but inside, you feel like you're one thought, one comment, or one unexpected moment away from spiraling.

I want you to know this right away:

You are not failing at life.
You are not weak.
And you are not broken.

You are human.

Spiraling doesn't mean something is wrong with you.
It usually means something inside you needs attention, safety, rest, or truth.

This workbook wasn't written from a place of perfection or "having it all figured out." It was written from lived experience—through seasons of stress, grief, pain, uncertainty, faith, healing, and learning how to stay grounded when life feels unsteady.

This book won't tell you to "just think positive," "push through," or "fix yourself."

Instead, it invites you to pause.

To interrupt the spiral before it takes over.
To come back into the present moment—where your breath, your body, and your strength still exist.

Inside these pages, you'll find practical tools and gentle reframes to help you:

- Question the inner critic instead of automatically believing it
- Address physical needs before trying to solve emotional ones
- Change the language you use—and the power it has over you
- Separate pain from the stories your mind attaches to it
- Honor grief without letting it define your future
- Remember who you are when life tries to make you forget

You'll notice themes of grounding, breath, anchors, and intentional pauses woven throughout this workbook. That's intentional. Sometimes healing doesn't come from more thinking—it comes from slowing down, touching something real, breathing on purpose, and returning to *now*.

You don't need to read this book in order.
You don't need to finish it quickly.
You don't need to do it "right."

Come back to the chapters you need most.
Underline what resonates.
Skip what doesn't—at least for now.
Restring the day when it breaks.

If faith is part of your life, you'll find space for it here. If it's not, you'll still find grounding, wisdom, and tools that meet you where you are. This book is not about labels—it's about living.

And here's something I hope you carry with you as you turn these pages:

You are not behind.
You are not defective.
You are not defined by your hardest moments.

Life may be lifeing—but you don't have to spiral.

You can pause.
You can ground.
You can choose truth over fear.
You can begin again—right here, right now.

I'm honored you're here.

With compassion and hard-earned clarity,
Kathy Simmons
Author | Certified Recovery Coach
Founder, *The Other Side of Rock Bottom*

How to Use This Workbook

Life Be Lifeing… But You Don’t Have to Spiral

This is not a book you have to *get through*.
It’s a book you can *come back to*.

There is no right order, no finish line, and no requirement to do this perfectly. Life doesn’t happen in chapters—and neither does healing.

Start Where You Are

You don’t need to begin on page one.
Flip through the table of contents and notice what pulls at you. That’s usually where life is asking for attention right now.

If your thoughts feel loud, start with **The Critic**.
If your body feels off, start with **Triggers** or **Pain**.
If you feel stuck in “what if,” go to **The Spiral**.
If grief is heavy, open that chapter first.

Trust your instinct—it knows more than you think.

Use This Book in Real Time

This workbook was designed for *real moments*, not ideal ones.

Use it:

- When you feel overwhelmed or emotionally flooded
- When your body is tense and your thoughts won’t slow down
- When shame, grief, or self-doubt start creeping in
- When you notice yourself spiraling—or right after you catch it

You don’t have to finish a chapter in one sitting. Sometimes one sentence, one tool, or one breath is enough.

Read. Reflect. Practice.

Each chapter offers three simple things:

1. **Perspective** – a way to understand what's happening
2. **Tools** – something practical you can do right now
3. **Truth** – a reminder of who you are beneath the noise

Read slowly.
Write in the margins.
Underline what resonates.
Skip what doesn't—at least for now.

This is your book. Use it your way.

Come Back Often

You may notice that different chapters hit differently at different times. That's normal. Growth isn't linear—it's layered.

Some days you'll need grounding.
Some days you'll need reframing.
Some days you'll just need permission to rest.

Revisit chapters as life changes. What didn't speak to you once might matter deeply later.

Use the Tools, Not Just the Words

This workbook is meant to be *felt*, not just read.

Pause when prompted.
Practice the grounding exercises.
Use your breath.
Touch something real.
Anchor yourself in the present moment.

When life starts to unravel, don't wait until you're fully spiraling. Use the tools early. Small interruptions can prevent big overwhelm.

Restring the Day When It Breaks

Some days will go sideways. That doesn't mean you failed.

When that happens:

- Come back to one chapter
- Revisit one truth
- Practice one grounding tool
- Speak one honest sentence

That's enough.

One Last Thing

This workbook is not about fixing you.
It's about **supporting you**.

You don't need to become someone new.
You're learning how to return to yourself—again and again.

Life will keep lifeing.
But now, you have tools to help you stay grounded when it does.

Take what you need.
Leave the rest.
And come back whenever you're ready.

Chapter 1 — The Critic

"Stop and ask: Is this the voice of fear… or the voice of faith?"

Let's get one thing straight: your inner critic is not a prophet.
It's not all-knowing. It's not wise. It's not "just being realistic."

It's a *loudmouth with a megaphone* who shows up uninvited, talks over everyone, and somehow thinks it's helping by yelling things like:

- "You're always like this."
- "You never get it right."
- "This is who you are."
- "You ruined everything."

Sir/Ma'am… please return the microphone.

What the Inner Critic Actually Is

The critic is a protective part of you that learned, somewhere along the way, that the best way to prevent pain was to stay on high alert.

It tries to keep you safe by:

- predicting rejection before it happens
- shaming you into "doing better"
- controlling outcomes through overthinking
- preparing you for the worst so you're not surprised

It's like an emotional smoke detector that goes off when you toast a bagel.

The critic isn't proof you're broken.
It's proof you've been through enough that your nervous system started acting like everything is a five-alarm fire.

Fear Voice vs. Faith Voice

Here's the key question that changes everything:

Is this the voice of fear… or the voice of faith?

The Voice of Fear sounds like:

- urgent
- harsh
- absolute
- condemning
- panicky
- controlling
- shaming
- “If you don’t fix this right now, everything falls apart.”

Fear talks like it has deadlines. It talks like love is conditional. It talks like one mistake equals total destruction.

The Voice of Faith sounds like:

- steady
- honest but kind
- specific (not global)
- solution-focused
- grounded in truth
- compassionate
- “Let’s take the next right step.”

Faith doesn’t deny reality. It just refuses to turn reality into a life sentence.

The “Always / Never” Rule

This is one of your most powerful tools in the whole workbook:

If your inner voice uses words like “always” or “never,” it’s probably lying.

Because “always” and “never” are the critic’s favorite dramatic flair.

Examples:

- “I *always* mess things up.”
- “I’ll *never* be happy.”

- “Nobody *ever* shows up for me.”
- “I *never* do anything right.”

That’s not truth. That’s fear wearing a fake mustache pretending to be logic.

Here’s why it matters:
When your brain uses absolute language, it shuts down hope and problem-solving. It creates a story where change is impossible—so you either spiral… or freeze… or sabotage.

The Critic’s Greatest Trick: Confusing a Moment with an Identity

The critic loves to take something you did (or something you felt) and turn it into who you are.

- You made a mistake → “You’re a failure.”
- You snapped at someone → “You’re toxic.”
- You feel anxious → “You can’t handle life.”
- You’re tired → “You’re lazy.”

No.
You’re a human being who had a human moment.

A moment is not a label.
A feeling is not a verdict.
A setback is not a sentence.

The Critic’s “Top 5 Greatest Hits”

Let’s name them, because naming things takes away their power:

1. **Catastrophizing**: “This is going to ruin everything.”
2. **Mind-reading**: “They think I’m stupid.” (Did they tell you that, or did your critic write fan fiction?)
3. **All-or-nothing thinking**: “If it isn’t perfect, it’s pointless.”
4. **Shame stacking**: “You messed up… and now you should hate yourself for messing up.”
5. **Selective evidence**: The critic ignores 99 wins and zooms in on 1 flaw like it’s a Netflix documentary.

Educational Piece: What’s Happening in Your Brain

When the critic gets loud, your brain often slips into threat mode.

Threat mode can look like:

- racing thoughts
- irritability
- doom scrolling
- wanting to isolate
- body tension
- shutdown / numbness
- overexplaining
- people-pleasing
- needing control

In threat mode, the brain prioritizes survival over clarity.

So if you're trying to reason with yourself while you're flooded, it feels like:
Trying to do taxes during a tornado.

Step one is not "fix your whole life."
Step one is **regulate**.

The Interrupt: "Stop. Name it. Check it."

When you hear the critic show up, practice this three-step interruption:

1. **STOP**
   Pause. Literally stop what you're doing if you can—even for 10 seconds.
2. **NAME IT**
   Say: "That's my inner critic."
   Or: "That's fear talking."
   Naming it creates distance.
3. **CHECK IT**
   Ask:

- Is this statement *true*?
- Is it *kind*?

- Is it *helpful*?
- Is it *specific*?
- Does it contain "always/never"?
- Would I say this to someone I love?

If the answer is no… we don't let that voice run the meeting.

Replace the Critic with a Coach Voice

You don't need a new personality. You need a new *tone*.

Critic: "You're always messing up."
Coach: "You're under pressure. Let's slow down and take one step."

Critic: "You're never going to get better."
Coach: "You've improved before. Let's do what works."

Critic: "You should've known better."
Coach: "You know more now than you did then. That's growth."

Your coach voice can still be honest.
It just doesn't have to be cruel to be effective.

The Truth Test: Facts vs. Fear

Try separating what happened from what your critic is saying about what happened.

Facts: "I didn't respond to that message today."
Fear story: "I'm a terrible friend and everyone will leave."

Facts: "I'm behind on a few things."
Fear story: "I'm failing at life."

Facts: "I feel overwhelmed."
Fear story: "I can't handle anything."

Facts keep you in the present.
Fear time-travels straight into doom.

Mini Tool: The "Faith Question"

When the critic starts talking, ask:

If I believed I was supported, protected, and not alone… what would I do next?

Not the whole plan.
Not the next 10 years.
Just the next right step.

Faith is not pretending everything is fine.
Faith is refusing to let fear be the narrator.

Quick Practice: Catch the Lie Worksheet

Write it out—because thoughts lose power when they're exposed to daylight.

1. **What did my inner critic say?**

---

2. **Circle any absolute words:**
   Always / Never / Everyone / No one / Ruined / Hopeless / Stupid / Failure
3. **What emotion did it create in me?**

---

4. **What's the fact (only what's true, no story)?**

---

5. **What would a coach voice say instead?**

---

6. **Is this fear or faith? Why?**

---

7. **One next right step:**

A Little Humor + A Lot of Truth

Your inner critic might sound convincing, but it is not your CEO.
It's more like… that coworker who "just tells it like it is" and somehow is *always* telling it like it's the end of the world.

We're not firing it today.
We're just taking away its authority.

Because you don't need a harsher voice.
You need a truer one.

Chapter 1 Anchoring Statement

Say this out loud (yes, out loud—embarrassing and effective):

"I will not let fear narrate my life. I choose truth. I choose the next right step."

Chapter 1 Worksheet

Catch the Critic: Fear or Faith?

This worksheet helps you slow down and interrupt your inner critic before it turns into a spiral. There are no right or wrong answers—only awareness.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: What Did the Critic Say?

Write the exact words—no softening, no fixing.

Step 2: Spot the Red Flags

Circle any words that apply:

Always Never Everyone No one Ruined Hopeless Failure Too much Not enough

If you circled any of these, pause. Absolute language is a clue—not a verdict.

Step 3: Fear Voice or Faith Voice?

Read the statement again and answer honestly.

☐ This sounds like **fear**
☐ This sounds like **faith / truth**

What helped you decide?

Step 4: Separate Fact from Story

What actually happened? (Facts only—no meaning attached.)

What story did my mind add to it?

Step 5: Replace the Critic with a Coach Voice

If a kind, steady coach were speaking to you, what would they say instead?

(If this feels hard, imagine what you would say to someone you care about.)

Step 6: Check the Truth

Answer yes or no:

- Is this thought 100% true? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it kind? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Would I say this to someone I love? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no” to any of these, the critic does not get the final word.

Step 7: Choose One Next Right Step

Keep this small and doable.

Examples:

- Take three slow breaths
- Eat something

- Step outside
- Close this book and rest
- Reach out to someone safe

Reflection (Optional)

What did you notice as you slowed this down?

Anchoring Statement

Read this out loud:

“I will not let fear narrate my life. I choose truth and the next right step.”

Reminder

Your inner critic is loud—but it is not wise.
You don’t need to silence it.
You just need to stop letting it drive.

Chapter 2 — Triggers

"Before you solve the mental problem, check the physical one."

Let's start with a truth most of us learned the hard way:

Not every emotional spiral is emotional.

Sometimes you're not overreacting.
You're under-fueled, overtired, overstimulated, or painfully alone—and your nervous system is waving a tiny white flag while your brain is yelling, *"WHY AM I LIKE THIS?!"*

Welcome to **HALT**.

HALT: The Most Underrated Life Skill

HALT stands for:

- **H — Hungry**
- **A — Angry**
- **L — Lonely**
- **T — Tired**

These four states make even the calmest, kindest humans act like feral raccoons in a dumpster fire.

If you've ever:

- cried over a missing sock
- snapped at someone you love
- convinced yourself your life is falling apart at 9:47 p.m.
- replayed a conversation from three years ago while lying in bed

...there's a strong chance HALT was involved.

Why HALT Matters (The Educational Part)

Your brain and body are not separate departments—they're roommates sharing one nervous system.

When a physical need is unmet, your brain switches into **threat mode**.

Threat mode:

- lowers patience
- increases irritability
- shortens emotional tolerance
- amplifies fear
- weakens impulse control
- makes *everything* feel urgent

In threat mode, your brain is not interested in:

- logic
- long-term planning
- self-compassion
- perspective

It just wants relief. Fast.

So if you try to "think your way out" of a HALT state, it usually backfires.

That's like trying to reason with a toddler who missed nap time.
(You don't need a TED Talk. You need a snack and a blanket.)

H — Hungry

This one is not metaphorical.

Low blood sugar = low emotional tolerance.

When you're hungry:

- small problems feel huge
- patience disappears
- emotions spike
- decision-making suffers

And here's the tricky part: hunger doesn't always feel like hunger.

Sometimes it feels like:

- anxiety
- anger
- sadness
- restlessness
- "I hate everyone and everything"

Interrupt:
Eat something with protein. Not a lecture. Not a plan. Food.

Even a small snack can bring your nervous system back online.

A — Angry

Anger often shows up when:

- boundaries have been crossed
- needs have been ignored
- you've been "holding it together" too long
- something feels unfair or unsafe

Anger is not bad. It's information.

The problem is when anger goes underground—it leaks out as sarcasm, resentment, or self-criticism.

Interrupt:
Name what you're angry *about* without shaming yourself for feeling it.

Ask:

- What boundary was crossed?
- What need wasn't met?
- What am I actually protecting right now?

You don’t have to explode to honor anger.
You just have to listen.

L — Lonely

Loneliness is not just about being alone.

You can be surrounded by people and still feel unseen, unheard, or disconnected.

Loneliness tells your nervous system:
“I am not safe because I am not supported.”

And the brain takes that *very* seriously.

When lonely:

- the critic gets louder
- fear increases
- shame creeps in
- old memories resurface
- spirals deepen

Interrupt:
Reach for *safe* connection—not validation from chaos.

This can be:

- texting one person who gets you
- sitting with someone quietly
- listening to a familiar voice
- grounding yourself with something comforting

Connection doesn’t have to be deep.
It just has to be real.

T — Tired

Fatigue is one of the biggest spiral accelerators.

When tired:

- everything feels harder
- emotions hit faster
- patience evaporates
- resilience drops

Sleep deprivation literally shrinks your emotional bandwidth.

Your brain is running on fumes, and your inner critic takes over the microphone.

Interrupt:
Rest is not a reward.
It's maintenance.

Even:

- a nap
- going to bed earlier
- lying down without your phone
- lowering expectations for the day

...can prevent a spiral.

The HALT Check-In (Use This First)

Before you analyze, process, confront, decide, or spiral—pause and ask:

- Am I **Hungry**?
- Am I **Angry**?
- Am I **Lonely**?
- Am I **Tired**?

If the answer is yes to *any* of these, address that **first**.

This is not avoidance.
This is regulation.

The "Don't Solve It Yet" Rule

Here's a rule that saves relationships, sanity, and late-night regret:

If you're in a HALT state, don't solve life.

Don't:

- send the text
- make the decision
- have the conversation
- rewrite your life story

Regulate first.
Solve later.

Most problems feel very different after:

- food
- rest
- connection
- emotional release

Humor Break (Because It's True)

If it's after 8 p.m. and you're tired, lonely, and hungry…
Your brain will absolutely convince you that:

- everyone hates you
- you've ruined your life
- this feeling will last forever

This is why nothing good happens emotionally after 9 p.m.
That's not trauma—that's exhaustion with opinions.

Mini Practice: HALT Reset

Try this the next time you feel yourself slipping:

1. **Pause**
   Put both feet on the floor.
2. **Check HALT**
   Which one is loudest right now?
3. **Meet the need**
   Eat. Rest. Connect. Release anger safely.
4. **Re-check**
   Ask: “Does this still feel as intense?”

Most of the time, the volume drops.

The Big Truth

You are not “too sensitive.”
You are not weak.
You are not failing at life.

You are a human nervous system doing its best under pressure.

And sometimes the bravest thing you can do is say:

“I don’t need to figure this out right now.
I need to take care of myself first.”

Chapter 2 Anchoring Statement

Say this when your emotions feel bigger than your capacity:

“I will meet my needs before I judge my feelings.”

Chapter 2 Worksheet

HALT Check: Meet the Need Before You Solve the Problem

This worksheet helps you pause and check your physical and emotional needs before your thoughts run the show.
You don't need answers yet—you need awareness.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: What's Happening Right Now?

Describe what you're feeling or reacting to.

Step 2: HALT Check-In

Read each section slowly and answer honestly.

H — Hungry

☐ I have eaten recently
☐ I may be under-fueled

What have I eaten today?

What could my body need right now?

A — Angry

☐ I feel calm
☐ I feel irritated, frustrated, or resentful

If I'm angry, what might that anger be protecting?
(A boundary, a value, a need?)

L — Lonely

☐ I feel connected
☐ I feel isolated, unseen, or disconnected

Who feels emotionally safe to reach out to right now?
(One person counts.)

If no one is available, what helps me feel grounded?

T — Tired

☐ I feel rested enough
☐ I feel mentally, emotionally, or physically exhausted

How much rest have I actually had?

What kind of rest do I need most right now?
(Sleep, quiet, less stimulation, a break)

Step 3: Identify the Loudest Need

Which HALT category feels strongest right now?

☐ Hungry
☐ Angry
☐ Lonely
☐ Tired

Step 4: Meet the Need First

What is **one simple action** I can take to meet that need before trying to fix anything?

Examples:

- Eat something with protein
- Take a short rest
- Step outside
- Text someone safe
- Pause the conversation
- Breathe and ground

Step 5: Recheck the Intensity

After meeting the need, answer honestly:

Does this situation feel the same, lighter, or different?

What shifted, if anything?

Step 6: Decide What Can Wait

Answer this question:

Do I need to solve this right now?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If no, what can wait until I'm more regulated?

Reflection (Optional)

What do I notice about how unmet needs affect my thoughts or reactions?

Anchoring Statement

Read this out loud:

“I will meet my needs before I judge my feelings.”

Reminder

You are not overreacting.
You are responding from a nervous system that needs care.

Food before philosophy.
Rest before decisions.
Connection before conclusions.

Chapter 3 — The Tongue

"Flip the script. Speak to the mountain—don't just talk about it."

Words are not neutral.

They don't just describe your experience—they **shape** it.

Most of us underestimate how often our own language quietly fuels anxiety, resentment, exhaustion, and hopelessness. We say things on autopilot and then wonder why our nervous system is braced for impact all day.

This chapter isn't about "positive thinking" or pretending everything is fine.
It's about **intentional language**—because what you repeatedly say becomes what you repeatedly believe.

And your brain listens *very closely* to you.

Why Your Words Matter (The Educational Part)

Your brain processes self-talk the same way it processes information from the outside world.

Meaning:

- The tone you use with yourself matters
- Repetition strengthens belief
- Negative language increases stress hormones
- Hope-filled language increases regulation and resilience

Your nervous system responds to *meaning*, not just facts.

So when your words sound like pressure, obligation, or defeat, your body reacts as if you're under threat—even if nothing dangerous is happening in the moment.

"I Have To" vs. "I Get To"

Let's start with one of the sneakiest stress phrases in existence:

"I have to."

“I have to do this.”
“I have to deal with that.”
“I have to get through today.”

“I have to” turns life into a sentence you’re serving time for.

Now watch what happens when you flip it:

“I get to.”

“I get to show up.”
“I get to try again.”
“I get to take the next step.”

This doesn’t deny difficulty.
It reframes *agency*.

You’re not trapped—you’re choosing.

And choice changes how your nervous system responds.

Important note (because we’re being honest here):

You don’t have to use “I get to” for everything.
No one is required to say, “I get to pay taxes” with enthusiasm.

The goal is awareness, not perfection.

The Difference Between Venting and Verbal Spiraling

There is a big difference between:

- **Releasing emotion**
  and
- **Reinforcing hopelessness**

Venting sounds like:
“I’m overwhelmed right now.”
“This is hard.”
“I need to talk this out.”

Spiraling sounds like:
“This is never going to change.”

“I can’t do anything right.”
“My life is a mess.”

One moves emotion *through* the body.
The other digs it deeper.

Speak *To* the Mountain, Not *About* It

Talking about your problems isn’t wrong.
Living in them verbally keeps them powerful.

Here’s the shift:

Instead of:
“This anxiety is ruining everything.”

Try:
“This anxiety is loud, but it does not run my life.”

Instead of:
“I’ll never get through this.”

Try:
“I will take this one step at a time.”

This is not magic.
It’s alignment.

You’re reminding your brain who’s in charge.

Your Brain Believes What You Rehearse

Rehearsed language becomes default language.

Default language becomes identity language.

Identity language becomes self-fulfilling.

So if you constantly say:

- “I’m bad at this.”
- “I’m too much.”

- “I can’t handle life.”

Your brain starts operating as if that’s true—even when it isn’t.

The Power of Specific Language

Vague negativity creates helplessness.

Specific language creates movement.

Compare:
“I’m overwhelmed.”

vs.

“I’m overwhelmed because I have too many tasks and not enough rest.”

One is a fog.
The other is information.

Specificity creates options.

Humor Check (Because This Is Real Life)

If your self-talk sounds like:

- a disappointed coach
- a bored judge
- a sarcastic middle-school bully

…it may be time to update the script.

Your brain deserves better writing.

The Language Upgrade: From Pressure to Power

Here are some common phrases—and their grounded upgrades:

- “I can’t do this.” → “This is hard, and I can take the next step.”
- “I’m failing.” → “I’m learning.”
- “Everything is a mess.” → “Some things need attention.”

- “I’m behind.” → “I’m in process.”
- “I should be better by now.” → “I’m exactly where I am.”

Notice:
None of these deny reality.
They just remove unnecessary cruelty.

Educational Tool: Catch & Replace

When something stressful happens, try this three-step language reset:

1. **Catch the phrase**
   What did you just say out loud—or in your head?
2. **Check the tone**
   Is it condemning or constructive?
3. **Replace with truth**
   What’s a sentence that acknowledges reality *and* keeps you grounded?

Practice: Rewrite the Script

Write one phrase you’ve been saying a lot lately:

Old phrase:

Now rewrite it without shame, absolutes, or pressure:

New phrase:

Read the new phrase out loud.
Notice what happens in your body.

The Faith + Grounding Layer

Whether you frame this spiritually or practically, the principle is the same:

What you speak becomes what you stand on.

You don’t have to shout.
You don’t have to pretend.

You just have to choose words that align with truth instead of fear.

Chapter 3 Anchoring Statement

Say this slowly—especially when stress is loud:

“My words create direction. I choose language that supports my strength.”

Chapter 3 Worksheet

Flip the Script: Using Language That Supports You

This worksheet helps you notice how your words affect your thoughts, emotions, and nervous system—and gives you a way to shift your language without denying reality.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: Catch the Phrase

Write a sentence you've been saying out loud or in your head lately—especially when you're stressed.

Step 2: Notice the Tone

Read the sentence again and check all that apply:

☐ Harsh
☐ Absolute
☐ Pressure-filled
☐ Hopeless
☐ Shaming
☐ Neutral
☐ Supportive

What does this sentence make your body feel?
(Tight, heavy, tense, calm, rushed, etc.)

Step 3: "I Have To" or "I Get To"

Does this sentence sound like obligation or choice?

☐ "I have to..."
☐ "I get to..."

If it sounds like “I have to,” rewrite it using choice or agency—without pretending it’s easy.

Original sentence:

Rewritten sentence:

Step 4: Talk About It or Talk *To* It?

Read the original sentence again and answer:

☐ I’m talking *about* the problem
☐ I’m talking *to* the problem

If you’re talking *about* it, rewrite the sentence as if you’re speaking directly to it with strength and clarity.

Example:
“This anxiety is ruining everything” →
“This anxiety is loud, but it does not control me.”

Step 5: Replace the Critic With a Coach Voice

Imagine a calm, steady coach speaking to you. What would they say instead?

Step 6: Speak It Out Loud

Read your new sentence out loud.

What changes when you hear it in your own voice?

Reflection (Optional)

What did you notice about how language shifts your perspective or emotions?

Anchoring Statement

Read this out loud:

“My words create direction. I choose language that supports my strength.”

Reminder

You don’t need perfect words.
You need *truer* ones.

Speak to the mountain.
Don’t build a home at its base.

Chapter 4 — The Victor

"You're not surviving anymore. You're overcoming."

Let's gently—but firmly—retire a mindset that keeps a lot of people stuck:

The idea that you are forever defined by what you went through.

Yes, your experiences shaped you.
Yes, some seasons nearly broke you.
Yes, you had to fight battles you never signed up for.

But you are not still *in* those battles.

You are here.

And that matters.

From Survival Mode to Victor Mode

Survival mode is a season.
Victor mode is a perspective.

Survival mode sounds like:

- "I'm just trying to get through the day."
- "I can't mess this up."
- "If I let my guard down, everything falls apart."

Survival mode kept you alive.
It sharpened your instincts.
It taught you endurance.

But it was never meant to be permanent.

Victor mode says:

- "I've been through hard things—and I'm still standing."
- "I know how to adapt."
- "I've already proven my strength."

This isn't arrogance.
It's acknowledgment.

You Have a PhD in Resilience

Let's talk credentials.

You've:

- adapted when you didn't want to
- endured what you didn't choose
- learned lessons you didn't sign up for
- kept going when quitting would've been easier

That's not luck.
That's earned resilience.

No one hands out diplomas for this kind of education—but if they did, yours would read:

Doctor of Philosophy in Getting Back Up.

With a minor in "Figuring It Out As I Go."

The Problem With Staying in "Recovery" Language (Educational Moment)

Words shape identity.

If you only see yourself as:

- "in recovery"
- "still healing"
- "a work in progress"

...you may unintentionally anchor yourself to the *process* instead of the progress.

Healing is real. Growth is ongoing.
But identity matters.

You are not a project under construction.
You are a person with a lived history and reclaimed power.

Victor language doesn't erase pain—it **reframes it**.

Victors Are Not Perfect (Thank God)

Being a victor does not mean:

- you never struggle
- you don't have bad days
- you don't get triggered
- you don't need rest or support

It means:

- you respond instead of collapse
- you pause instead of spiral
- you choose growth over self-attack
- you recognize your capacity

A victor still feels.
They just don't hand the steering wheel to fear.

Reclaiming Your Story

Here's the shift:

You are not the worst thing that happened to you.
You are not the mistakes you made while surviving.
You are not the version of you that existed in crisis mode.

You are the one who:

- adapted
- learned
- grew
- showed up anyway

Your story doesn't end at the wound.
It continues at the wisdom.

Humor Check (Because We Need It)

If resilience had a personality, it would say:

"I didn't ask for this character development...
...but since we're here, I might as well be good at it."

That's victor energy.

The Victor Mindset in Practice

When life throws something unexpected your way, a victor asks:

- "What do I know now that I didn't know before?"
- "What tools do I already have?"
- "How can I respond instead of react?"

This isn't about powering through.
It's about **remembering who you are**.

Exercise: Name Your Resilience

Take a moment and write this out.

Three things I've survived or overcome:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now write this sentence—slowly:

"If I lived through that, I can handle this."

Notice how your body responds.

Identity Upgrade: From Wounded to Wise

Wounds teach.
Wisdom remains.

Your scars are not proof of damage.
They're proof of healing.

You don't have to relive your hardest moments to honor them.
You honor them by living well now.

Chapter 4 Anchoring Statement

Say this like you mean it—even if you don't fully believe it yet:

"I am not defined by what hurt me. I am defined by what I overcame."

Chapter 4 Worksheet

The Victor Inventory: Reclaiming Who You Are

This worksheet is about recognizing your strength—not minimizing your pain.
You don't have to hype yourself up. You just have to tell the truth.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: Name What You've Overcome

List experiences you've lived through that required resilience. These don't have to be dramatic—only real.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(If your first instinct is to downplay them, notice that. That's not humility—it's habit.)

Step 2: Identify the Strengths You Gained

Hard seasons leave skills behind. Write what you learned or developed because you had to.

Examples: adaptability, empathy, courage, discernment, endurance, self-awareness.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 3: Evidence of Resilience

Answer honestly.

- A time I didn't quit when it would have been understandable:

- A moment I handled something better than I used to:

- Proof that I am not the same person I once was:

Step 4: Retire the Survival Identity

Survival mode once protected you—but it doesn't need to lead anymore.

Old identity or belief I've been carrying:

Where did it come from?

How did it once help me survive?

Step 5: Choose the Victor Identity

Now, rewrite the story—not as a wish, but as a statement of truth.

I am someone who...

I have learned how to...

I trust myself to...

Step 6: Apply It to Real Life

Finish this sentence:

Because I am a victor, I can respond to challenges by:

Reflection (Optional)

What felt uncomfortable, surprising, or grounding as you wrote this?

Anchoring Statement

Read this out loud—slowly:

“I am not defined by what hurt me. I am defined by what I overcame.”

Reminder

You are not “still just surviving.”
You are standing because you adapted, learned, and endured.

That’s not luck.
That’s resilience.

Chapter 5 — Shame

"Tarnish is not the metal."

Let's clear something up right away:

Shame is not humility.
It's not accountability.
It's not growth.
And it is definitely not truth.

Shame is a liar that sounds convincing because it uses your own voice.

It whispers things like:

- "What kind of person does that?"
- "If they really knew you…"
- "You should be past this by now."
- "This proves something is wrong with you."

Shame doesn't correct behavior.
It attacks identity.

Shame vs. Guilt (The Educational Part)

These two often get lumped together, but they are very different.

Guilt says:
"I did something that doesn't align with my values."

Shame says:
"I *am* something bad, broken, or unworthy."

Guilt can be useful—it points toward repair.
Shame paralyzes—it convinces you you *are* the problem.

One invites growth.
The other invites hiding.

"Tarnish Is Not the Metal"

Here's a metaphor that changes everything:

If a piece of silver tarnishes, we don't throw it away.
We don't decide it's fake silver.
We don't call it worthless.

We clean it.

Because **tarnish sits *on* the metal—it is not the metal.**

Shame works the same way.

What you've been through…
What you've done while surviving…
What happened *to* you…

That's tarnish.
It's not your core.

You are still made of the same valuable material you always were.

Shame Loves Silence

Shame grows in secrecy the way mold grows in the dark.

It thrives when:

- you don't talk about it
- you isolate
- you replay it privately
- you assume you're alone

The moment shame is named, it loses oxygen.

This is why safe connection is so powerful—not because people "fix" you, but because shame cannot survive honesty paired with compassion.

Humor Break (Because Shame Hates Being Mocked)

Shame wants you to believe:

- everyone else has it together

- you're the only one struggling
- you missed some secret life handbook

Shame also wants to act like it's a moral authority.

Spoiler alert:
Shame has no credentials.
It's just loud.

The Difference Between Responsibility and Self-Punishment

Here's where a lot of people get stuck.

Taking responsibility sounds like:

- "That wasn't okay, and I want to do better."
- "I see the impact of my actions."
- "I can repair this."

Self-punishment sounds like:

- "I deserve to feel terrible forever."
- "I shouldn't forgive myself."
- "I don't get to move on."

Self-punishment does not prevent future mistakes.
It just keeps you stuck in the past.

Growth happens through **repair**, not self-destruction.

Shame Is on You — Not You

Shame is something you *carry*, not something you *are*.

It sticks when:

- boundaries were crossed
- power was uneven
- survival required choices you didn't want to make

- you were doing the best you could with what you had

You can acknowledge impact **without** erasing your humanity.

Both can be true.

The "Release Papers" Truth

Here's a reframe that matters deeply:

You don't have to earn forgiveness by suffering long enough.

Grace—whether you understand it spiritually, relationally, or psychologically—does not wait for perfection.

Your sentence has already been served.

You are not on probation for your past.

Shame says: "You still owe."
Truth says: "You are free to move forward."

The Nervous System + Shame Connection (Educational)

Shame activates the same threat response as physical danger.

That's why it:

- makes your chest tighten
- makes you want to disappear
- shuts down clear thinking
- fuels anxiety and depression

Your body reacts to shame as if you're unsafe.

Which means the solution is not more judgment—it's **safety**.

Safety looks like:

- self-compassion
- grounding
- regulated breathing

- supportive connection
- gentle truth

Practice: Separate Who You Are from What Happened

Try this on paper. It's simple—and powerful.

What happened:

What shame says this means about me:

Now cross that out.

Write instead:

What this actually says about my humanity:

Read that last line slowly.

Reclaiming Identity After Shame

You don't erase shame by arguing with it.
You erase it by **refusing to merge with it**.

You can say:

- "That was painful—but it is not who I am."
- "I am allowed to learn and still be worthy."
- "I don't need to punish myself to prove I care."

Shame wants permanence.
Healing introduces choice.

Chapter 5 Anchoring Statement

Say this with intention—even if it feels uncomfortable at first:

"Shame is not my identity. I am still worthy, still valuable, and still becoming."

Chapter 5 Worksheet

Tarnish Is Not the Metal: Releasing Shame

This worksheet helps you separate **who you are** from **what you've been through**.
Move slowly. There is no rush and no judgment here.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: Name the Shame

Write what shame has been whispering to you lately.

(If it feels harsh or absolute, that's shame—not truth.)

Step 2: Identify the Trigger

What situation, memory, or feeling tends to bring this shame up?

Step 3: Separate Tarnish from Core

Shame sits *on* you—it is not *you*.

What happened or what I did (facts only):

What shame says this means about me:

Now pause. Draw a line through that sentence.

Step 4: Speak the Truth Instead

Rewrite the meaning with compassion and honesty.

A truer statement about what this actually says:

Examples:

- "I was doing the best I could with what I had."
- "This reflects a season, not my worth."
- "I am still valuable, even here."

Step 5: Responsibility Without Self-Punishment

If there is something to take responsibility for, name it *without attacking yourself*.

What I can acknowledge or repair (if applicable):

One healthy step forward (not punishment):

Step 6: Release the Sentence

Finish this sentence honestly:

I no longer need to punish myself by:

I give myself permission to:

Reflection (Optional)

What did it feel like to separate the action from your identity?

Anchoring Statement

Read this out loud:

“Shame is not my identity. I am still worthy, still valuable, and still becoming.”

Reminder

Tarnish can be cleaned.
Metal remains.

You are not required to suffer forever to prove you’ve grown.
Your release papers are already signed.

Chapter 6 — The Spiral

"Get out of the 'what if' and back into the right now."

A spiral rarely starts with a dramatic event.

It usually starts small.

A thought.
A sensation.
A memory.
A tone in someone's voice.
A feeling that something is *off*.

And before you know it, your mind is ten steps ahead, replaying the past, predicting the future, and building a worst-case scenario PowerPoint presentation you never asked for.

Welcome to the spiral.

What a Spiral Actually Is (The Educational Part)

A spiral is what happens when your brain mistakes **uncertainty** for **danger**.

Your nervous system doesn't like unknowns. When it can't predict what's coming next, it tries to protect you by scanning for threats and filling in the blanks—usually with fear.

That's when you get:

- racing thoughts
- tight chest or shallow breathing
- restlessness or shutdown
- looping worries
- mental time travel

The spiral isn't weakness.
It's your brain trying (and failing) to keep you safe.

The Past + Future Trap

Spirals live in two places:

- **The past:** “Why did that happen?” “What if I had done something different?”
- **The future:** “What if this goes wrong?” “What if I can’t handle it?”

Notice what’s missing?

The present moment.

And the present moment is the only place where your body is actually safe.

Why Logic Doesn’t Work in a Spiral

Once you’re spiraling, your brain is in **threat mode**, not thinking mode.

Threat mode:

- reduces rational thinking
- increases emotional reactivity
- shuts down long-term planning
- prioritizes escape or control

So telling yourself:

- “Just calm down”
- “This doesn’t make sense”
- “I shouldn’t feel this way”

…doesn’t help.

You don’t need better logic.
You need **grounding**.

Grounding: Coming Back Into Your Body

Grounding pulls you out of mental time travel and back into *now*—where your breath, senses, and agency still exist.

One of the most effective grounding tools is the **5-4-3-2-1 Method**.

Simple. Powerful. Portable.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Tool

Use this anytime you feel yourself slipping into a spiral.

Step 1 — Name 5 things you can see

Look around. Name real, tangible objects.
Example:

- A chair
- A window
- A plant
- Your hands
- The floor

This anchors your brain in the present environment.

Step 2 — Name 4 things you can feel

Focus on physical sensation.
Example:

- Feet on the floor
- Fabric on your skin
- The temperature of the room
- Your breath moving

Sensation interrupts racing thoughts.

Step 3 — Name 3 things you can hear

Even subtle sounds count.
Example:

- A fan
- Traffic
- Birds

- Your own breathing

Sound brings awareness outward instead of inward.

Step 4 — Name 2 things you can smell

If you don't smell anything, name two scents you like.
Example:

- Coffee
- Soap
- Fresh air

Smell is deeply tied to regulation.

Step 5 — Name 1 thing you can taste

This can be:

- A sip of water
- Gum
- The taste in your mouth

Taste brings the nervous system fully back into the body.

Why This Works (Educational Insight)

The 5-4-3-2-1 tool works because it:

- engages multiple senses
- signals safety to the brain
- interrupts rumination
- slows the stress response

You are essentially telling your nervous system:
"I am here. I am safe. This moment is manageable."

Humor Check (Because Spirals Are Dramatic)

Spirals love to convince you that:

- everything is connected
- this feeling means something terrible
- you must solve it *right now*

In reality, your brain is just tired, scared, or overstimulated—and acting like a conspiracy theorist at 2 a.m.

We don't argue with it.
We ground it.

The "Right Now" Rule

When spiraling, narrow your focus to **right now**.

Ask:

- Am I safe *right now*?
- Is there an immediate danger *right now*?
- What is one small thing I can do *right now*?

Most of the time, the answer is:
"I am uncomfortable—but I am not in danger."

That distinction matters.

After the Spiral Slows

Once the volume drops, *then* you can reflect.

Not to punish yourself—but to learn.

Ask:

- What triggered this?
- What need wasn't met?
- What helped me ground?

This builds awareness—not shame.

Practice: Spiral Interruption Plan

Write this out now, so it's there when you need it.

My early spiral signs:

My go-to grounding tool:

One sentence I can say to myself:

Example:
"This feels intense, but it will pass."

The Big Truth

You don't stop spirals by controlling your thoughts.
You stop them by anchoring your body.

You don't need to eliminate fear.
You just need to stop letting it drive.

Chapter 6 Anchoring Statement

Say this when your thoughts start racing:

"I am here. I am safe. This moment is enough."

Chapter 6 Worksheet

Interrupt the Spiral: Back to Right Now

This worksheet is not about fixing the future or rewriting the past.
It's about **coming back into the present moment**, where you actually have power.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: Notice the Spiral Starting

What's happening right now? (Thoughts, feelings, sensations)

Step 2: Name Where Your Mind Is

Check one:

☐ I'm stuck in the **past**
☐ I'm stuck in the **future**
☐ I'm bouncing between both
☐ I'm overwhelmed and unsure

What thoughts keep looping?

Step 3: Reality Check — Right Now

Answer honestly:

- Am I safe **right now**? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is there an immediate danger in this moment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no immediate danger, write this sentence:

"I am uncomfortable, but I am not in danger."

Step 4: Grounding — 5-4-3-2-1

Slow down and complete each line.

5 things I can see:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

4 things I can feel:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

3 things I can hear:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2 things I can smell:

1. _____
2. _____

1 thing I can taste:

1. _____

Pause here. Notice what shifted.

Step 5: What Helped?

Did the intensity change after grounding?

☐ Yes
☐ A little
☐ Not yet (and that's okay)

What feels different, if anything?

Step 6: One Next Right Step

Not the whole solution. Just the next step.

Examples:

- Drink water
- Step outside
- Sit quietly
- Delay decisions
- Reach out for support

Step 7: Build Your Spiral Plan (Fill Once, Reuse Often)

My early warning signs:

My go-to grounding tool:

A sentence I can say to myself:

Example:
"This will pass. I don't have to solve everything right now."

Reflection (Optional)

What did you learn about your spiral this time?

Anchoring Statement

Read this slowly:

“I am here. I am safe. This moment is enough.”

Reminder

Spirals are not failures.
They are signals.

You don’t stop them by thinking harder.
You stop them by grounding deeper.

And you just practiced that.

Chapter 7 — Pain

"Separate the sensation from the story."

Pain has two parts.

The part that exists in the body.
And the part the mind builds around it.

One is real and unavoidable.
The other is optional—but powerful.

Most suffering comes not from the sensation itself, but from the **story we tell about the sensation**.

And once we learn to separate the two, pain loses some of its grip.

Pain vs. Suffering (The Educational Part)

Pain is a physical or emotional signal.
Suffering is the meaning we attach to it.

Pain says:

- "Something hurts."
- "Something is wrong."
- "Something needs attention."

Suffering says:

- "This will never end."
- "I can't handle this."
- "This means my life is over."
- "This proves I'm broken."

Pain is information.
Suffering is interpretation.

One asks for care.
The other demands despair.

Why the Brain Adds a Story

Your brain's job is to make meaning.

When pain appears, your mind asks:

- Why is this happening?
- How long will this last?
- What does this mean about me?
- What if it gets worse?

These questions are normal—but when left unchecked, they turn sensation into catastrophe.

Your nervous system hears the story and reacts as if the danger is bigger than it is.

Example: Same Pain, Different Stories

Sensation: Burning feet.
Story A: "This is unbearable. I'll never feel normal again."
Story B: "This sensation is uncomfortable, but I've survived discomfort before."

Same pain.
Very different experience.

One tightens the body.
The other creates just enough space to breathe.

Educational Insight: Pain and the Nervous System

When pain is paired with fear:

- muscles tense
- breath shortens
- pain intensifies
- fatigue increases

When pain is met with calm acknowledgment:

- the nervous system settles
- tension releases slightly
- pain becomes more manageable

You don’t erase pain by fighting it.
You soften it by **removing unnecessary fear**.

The Phrase That Changes Everything

When pain shows up, try this sentence:

“This is a sensation—not a prophecy.”

Pain does not predict your future.
It describes your present.

And the present is survivable.

Humor Check (Because Pain Is Rude)

Pain has a flair for the dramatic.

It loves to show up uninvited.
It exaggerates.
It acts like it’s permanent—even when it isn’t.

Pain is that guest who says,
“I might stay forever,”
but rarely does.

We acknowledge it.
We don’t hand it the house keys.

Separate Sensation from Story (Step-by-Step)

When pain appears, walk through this slowly:

Step 1 — Name the Sensation

Be specific.

- Burning
- Throbbing
- Tight
- Achy
- Sharp
- Heavy

Specific language grounds the experience.

Step 2 — Locate It

Where is it?

- Feet
- Back
- Chest
- Head

Pain feels bigger when it's vague.

Step 3 — Name the Story

What is your mind saying about this sensation?
Write it down if you can.

Step 4 — Gently Challenge the Story

Ask:

- Is this a fact or a fear?
- Have I survived discomfort before?
- Does this sensation define me?

Step 5 — Anchor in Truth

Replace the story with a grounded statement:

- "This hurts, and I am still safe."
- "My body is communicating, not condemning me."
- "This moment will pass."

Your Spirit Is Not On Fire

Here's a truth worth remembering:

Your body can hurt without your spirit being damaged.

Your feet may burn.
Your head may ache.
Your chest may feel tight.

But your **core self**—your will, your values, your identity—is untouched.

Pain is loud.
It is not all-powerful.

Practice: Pain Reframe

Write this out.

The sensation I'm feeling:

The story my mind tells about it:

Now rewrite the story—without fear or finality:

A grounded truth I can say instead:

Read it out loud.

When Pain Becomes a Teacher

Pain can teach:

- pacing
- boundaries
- compassion
- patience
- humility

Not because pain is good—but because awareness grows through experience.

You don't need to "push through" to be strong.
Sometimes strength looks like listening.

Chapter 7 Anchoring Statement

Say this gently—especially when pain flares:

"My body may hurt, but my spirit remains unbroken."

Chapter 7 Worksheet

Separate the Sensation from the Story

This worksheet helps you work with pain—physical or emotional—without letting it define you or spiral your thoughts.
Go slowly. You are not trying to make the pain disappear. You are creating space around it.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: Name the Sensation

Be specific. Avoid interpretation—just describe what you feel.

Examples: burning, aching, tight, heavy, sharp, dull, throbbing.

The sensation I'm feeling:

Step 2: Locate It

Where do you feel this sensation in your body?

If it had a size or shape, what would it be?

Step 3: Name the Story

What is your mind saying *about* this sensation?

Examples:

- "This will never end."
- "I can't handle this."
- "This means something is wrong with me."

The story my mind is telling:

Step 4: Fact or Fear?

Read the story again and answer honestly.

☐ This is a **fact**
☐ This is **fear**
☐ This is a mix of both

What part feels exaggerated or absolute?

Step 5: Rewrite the Story With Truth

Without denying the pain, rewrite the story in a grounded, compassionate way.

Examples:

- "This hurts right now, but it is not permanent."
- "My body is communicating, not betraying me."
- "I can be uncomfortable and still be okay."

A truer, gentler story:

Step 6: Re-anchor in the Body

Choose one grounding action and do it before moving on:

☐ Slow breathing (inhale 4, exhale 6)
☐ Press feet into the floor
☐ Place a hand where you feel the pain
☐ Touch an anchor object
☐ Stretch gently

What did you choose?

Step 7: Check In Again

After grounding, answer honestly:

Did the intensity change?

☐ Yes
☐ A little
☐ No—and that's okay

What feels different, if anything?

Reflection (Optional)

What did you notice when you separated sensation from story?

Anchoring Statement

Read this slowly:

"My body may hurt, but my spirit remains unbroken."

Reminder

Pain is real.
But it is not a verdict on your life, your future, or your strength.

You are more than what you feel in this moment.

Chapter 8 — Grief

"You are a legacy bearer."

Grief is not a problem to solve.
It's a reality to live with.

And one of the hardest parts of grief is this:
Life keeps moving even when your heart feels like it shouldn't.

You wake up.
The world goes on.
People laugh, grocery stores stay open, the sun rises.

And inside, you're carrying someone—or something—that is no longer here.

That disconnect can feel unbearable.

What Grief Actually Is (The Educational Part)

Grief is not just sadness.

Grief is love with nowhere to go.

It shows up as:

- waves of emotion that feel unpredictable
- exhaustion that doesn't match your activity level
- guilt for surviving
- anger you don't recognize
- moments of joy followed immediately by sorrow
- feeling "fine" one minute and wrecked the next

All of this is normal.

Grief is not linear.
It does not follow stages in order.
It does not move on a schedule.

Anyone who tells you otherwise is selling something.

The Myth of "Doing Grief Right"

There is a quiet pressure in grief to:

- heal faster
- be strong
- be grateful
- stop talking about it
- "move on"

Let's be clear:

You don't move on *from* grief.
You move **forward with it**.

Grief changes shape, not significance.

Survivor Guilt: "Why Am I Still Here?"

One of the most painful parts of grief is the question no one likes to say out loud:

"Why them… and not me?"

Survivor guilt can sound like:

- "I should have done more."
- "I don't deserve to be okay."
- "If I'm happy, it means I didn't love them enough."

This is not truth.
This is grief trying to make sense of loss.

You did not cause their death.
You did not earn their absence.
And you are not betraying them by continuing to live.

You Are a Legacy Bearer

Here's a reframe that matters:

You are not “leaving them behind.”

You are **carrying them forward**.

Their influence didn’t end when their life did.
It lives on through:

- the way you love
- the values you hold
- the stories you tell
- the lessons you pass on
- the life you continue to build

You are a living extension of what mattered to them.

That makes you a legacy bearer.

Humor Check (Because Even Grief Has Awkward Moments)

Grief will have you:

- crying in the car
- laughing at a memory and then immediately crying again
- feeling guilty for laughing
- forgetting something important and then blaming yourself

Grief is messy.
It has no decorum.
It doesn’t care about timing.

You’re not doing it wrong.
You’re doing it honestly.

Missing Them Without Punishing Yourself

You are allowed to miss them deeply *and* live fully.

Those two things are not opposites.

You don’t honor loss by shrinking your life.
You honor it by living well with what you were given.

Loving someone does not require lifelong suffering as proof.

Educational Insight: The Body and Grief

Grief lives in the body.

It can cause:

- tightness in the chest
- heaviness in the limbs
- changes in appetite
- disrupted sleep
- weakened concentration

This doesn’t mean you’re “not coping.”
It means your nervous system is adjusting to a new reality.

Gentleness is not optional here—it’s essential.

Practice: Release the Blame

Write this out slowly.

What I blame myself for:

Now ask:

- Was this within my control?
- Did I act with the information and capacity I had at the time?
- Would I hold someone else to this standard?

Rewrite with compassion:

A truer, kinder statement:

Grief and Permission to Live

Here's a truth many people need to hear:

You don't owe your grief your future.

You can:

- miss them
- honor them
- speak their name
- carry their memory

...without freezing your own life in time.

Living well is not abandonment.
It's continuation.

When Grief Hits Out of Nowhere

Grief has no respect for calendars.

It will show up:

- on random Tuesdays
- in grocery store aisles
- during songs
- in familiar scents
- when you least expect it

When it does:
Pause.
Breathe.
Name it.

"This is grief. It makes sense."

You don't have to spiral to honor it.

Chapter 8 Anchoring Statement

Say this gently—especially on hard days:

“I carry them with me. I honor them by living well today.”

Chapter 8 Worksheet

Grief Without Guilt: Carrying Love Forward

This worksheet is not about "moving on."
It's about honoring what was lost **without blaming yourself for surviving**.

Go slowly. Pause when needed.

Step 1: Name What You're Grieving

Grief can be about a person, a relationship, a season, a dream, or a version of yourself.

What I am grieving:

Step 2: What I Miss

Write freely. There is no right amount.

Step 3: Notice the Guilt (If Any)

Grief often carries guilt—even when it doesn't belong there.

☐ I feel guilt
☐ I feel responsibility
☐ I feel "what ifs"
☐ I don't feel guilt right now

If guilt is present, write what it sounds like:

Step 4: Separate Guilt from Reality

Answer honestly:

Was this within my control?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

Did I act with the information, capacity, and resources I had at the time?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Would I judge someone else this harshly?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Step 5: Release What Was Never Yours to Carry

Finish these sentences:

What was never in my control:

What I did with love and intention:

Step 6: Reframe Survival

Surviving does not mean you loved less.

Finish this sentence gently:

Living well honors them because:

Step 7: Legacy Bearing

You carry forward what mattered.

One value, lesson, or love I carry with me:

One way I honor that today:

Reflection (Optional)

What shifted as you released guilt or blame?

Anchoring Statement

Read this slowly—especially on heavy days:

“I carry love forward. I honor them by living well today.”

Reminder

Grief is not a debt you must keep paying.
You are not required to suffer forever to prove you loved deeply.

You are a **legacy bearer**—and that is sacred.

Chapter 9 — The Small Stuff

"If it won't matter in five years, don't give it five minutes of your peace."

Life doesn't usually steal our peace in one dramatic moment.

It leaks it out slowly.

Through:

- minor inconveniences
- misunderstood texts
- tone of voice
- traffic
- emails
- comments that land sideways
- things that are annoying but not actually important

By the end of the day, you're exhausted—and you can't even point to *why*.

Welcome to **death by a thousand paper cuts**.

Why the Small Stuff Feels So Big (The Educational Part)

Your brain doesn't automatically sort stress by importance.

It treats:

- a real threat
- an imagined threat
- an emotional inconvenience

…with the **same stress response**.

So when small things stack up, your nervous system goes,
"We are under attack,"
even when what's actually happening is:
someone chewed too loud and the Wi-Fi blinked.

The problem isn't the small stuff itself.
The problem is **how long it lives rent-free in your body and mind**.

The 5-Year Rule

Here's one of the simplest, most powerful tools in this entire workbook:

If it won't matter in five years, don't give it more than five minutes of your peace.

This doesn't mean:

- your feelings aren't real
- you're not allowed to be annoyed
- you should suppress emotion

It means you get to choose **proportion**.

Let's Test It

Ask yourself:

- Will this matter in five years?
- Will I remember this next year?
- Will this affect my life trajectory?
- Is this worth the stress response my body is having?

If the answer is no…

We let it go faster.

Humor Check (Because Perspective Helps)

Some things we've all spiraled over:

- a text that ended with a period
- someone not replying fast enough
- a look that *might* have meant something

- an awkward interaction from 2014
- someone else's bad mood

If you've ever replayed a conversation in the shower like it's a courtroom drama—you are not alone.

Your brain just hates unresolved loops.

The Cost of Holding On

Every time you ruminate on something small, it costs you:

- energy
- focus
- emotional bandwidth
- presence

And here's the kicker:

Most of the small stuff is **outside your control**.

You don't need to carry what you can't change.

Control vs. Peace

Here's a question that shifts everything:

Do I want to be right... or do I want to be at peace?

Sometimes you can't have both.

Letting go isn't losing.
It's **opting out of unnecessary suffering**.

The Boundary of "This Doesn't Deserve Me"

Not everything needs:

- a response
- an explanation

- a reaction
- your emotional energy

You are allowed to say—internally or out loud:

“This doesn’t deserve my peace.”

That’s not avoidance.
That’s discernment.

Educational Insight: Rumination Is a Habit

The brain replays what feels unresolved.

But replaying does not equal resolving.

In fact, rumination:

- increases anxiety
- increases irritability
- lowers problem-solving ability
- reinforces stress loops

Interrupting rumination is a skill—not a personality trait.

Practice: Small Stuff Sorter

Use this quick filter the next time something irritates you.

What happened:

Will this matter in five years?
Yes / No

If no:

- What can I release right now?
- What deserves my attention instead?

If yes:

- What's one calm, proportional response?

Reclaiming Your Peace Is an Act of Self-Respect

You don't have to earn peace by being unbothered.
You protect peace by being selective.

Your energy is finite.
Spend it on what builds your life—not what drains it.

When the Small Stuff Is Actually a Signal

Sometimes "small stuff" feels big because:

- you're already overwhelmed
- you're tired
- you're grieving
- you've been holding too much

In that case, the irritation isn't the issue—it's the indicator.

That's your cue to pause, not push.

Chapter 9 Anchoring Statement

Say this when something minor starts to hijack your mood:

"I choose peace over pettiness. This does not get more of me."

Chapter 9 Worksheet

The 5-Year Rule: Protecting Your Peace

This worksheet helps you decide what deserves your energy—and what doesn't.
It's not about ignoring feelings. It's about choosing proportion.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: Name What's Bothering You

Be specific. What's taking up space in your head right now?

Step 2: Check the Impact

Answer honestly:

Will this matter in **5 years**?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure

Will it matter in **1 year**?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Will it matter in **1 month**?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Step 3: Apply the 5-Minute Rule

If it won't matter in 5 years, ask:

How much of my peace does this actually deserve *right now*?

☐ Less than 5 minutes
☐ A brief response

☐ Some attention—but not rumination
☐ More care (this may not be “small stuff”)

Step 4: Control or Release

What part of this situation is **within my control**?

What part is **outside my control**?

(You are not required to carry what you can’t change.)

Step 5: Choose Peace on Purpose

Finish this sentence:

I choose to release:

I choose to focus on instead:

Examples:

- My breath
- The present moment
- Something that brings calm
- What actually matters to me

Step 6: Decide the Response (If Any)

Not everything needs a response.

☐ No response needed
☐ Calm, brief response

☐ Set a boundary
☐ Address later when regulated

What's the healthiest response for *me*?

Reflection (Optional)

What do I notice about how often small things steal my peace?

Anchoring Statement

Read this out loud:

"If it won't matter in five years, it doesn't get five minutes of my peace."

Reminder

Peace is not passivity.
Letting go is not losing.

You are allowed to protect your energy without explaining yourself.

Chapter 10 — Identity

"Wear your new identity like a Hallmark stamp."

At some point in life, many of us keep living from an identity that is **outdated**.

Not because it's accurate anymore—but because it's familiar.

We keep introducing ourselves to the world (and to ourselves) as:

- who we used to be
- what we survived
- what went wrong
- what others labeled us
- what we once believed about ourselves

And then we wonder why growth feels heavy.

You can't fully step into a new life while wearing an old name tag.

Identity Is Not Just Who You Are — It's How You Move

Identity quietly answers questions before you ever ask them.

Questions like:

- "Can I handle this?"
- "Do I belong here?"
- "Am I capable?"
- "Am I allowed to want more?"

If your identity says *no*, you'll hesitate—even when the opportunity is right in front of you.

Identity doesn't shout.
It *guides*.

The Problem With Letting the Past Lead

Your past may explain you—but it does not define you.

When identity stays rooted in old seasons, it sounds like:

- “That’s just how I am.”
- “I’ve always struggled with this.”
- “I’m not the kind of person who…”
- “People like me don’t get to…”

That language feels honest—but it quietly locks doors.

Growth requires updating the narrative.

The Hallmark Stamp Metaphor

A stamp does three important things:

1. It marks something as authentic
2. It shows where it belongs
3. It sends it forward

Your identity works the same way.

When you wear it intentionally, it says:
“This is who I am now.”
“This is where I’m going.”
“This message is valid.”

You don’t need permission to stamp your life with truth.

Educational Insight: Identity Shapes Behavior

Research consistently shows that behavior follows identity—not willpower.

If you believe:

- “I’m resilient,” you try again.
- “I’m capable,” you take responsibility.
- “I’m worthy,” you set boundaries.

But if your identity says:

- “I’m broken,”
- “I’m behind,”
- “I’m not enough,”

…your actions will quietly align with that story—even if you want something different.

Identity Is Chosen Repeatedly

Here’s the truth no one tells you:

You don’t choose your identity once.
You choose it **daily**.

In the way you:

- talk to yourself
- respond to stress
- allow or disallow behavior
- stay silent or speak up
- shrink or stand tall

Every choice votes for the identity you’re becoming.

Humor Check (Because Old Identities Are Sticky)

Old identities are like expired coupons.

They once served a purpose—but now they just slow you down while you stand in the checkout line of life insisting,
“But this *used* to work!”

It’s okay to update.

Reclaiming Your Name

Try finishing these sentences honestly:

- “I am someone who _____.”

- “I am learning to _____.”
- “I no longer identify as _____.”

Notice what feels true—not what feels impressive.

Truth sticks better than hype.

Practice: Identity Upgrade

Write this out.

Old identity I’ve been wearing:

Where it came from:

Now rewrite it—not as a wish, but as a declaration:

New identity I choose to wear:

Read it out loud.

Your nervous system needs to hear it from *you*.

You Are Allowed to Outgrow Labels

You are allowed to:

- change your mind
- become softer or stronger
- want different things
- live differently than expected

Growth doesn’t mean you were wrong before.
It means you’re paying attention now.

Identity Is Not Ego — It's Alignment

Claiming who you are is not arrogance.

It's responsibility.

When you know who you are:

- decisions get clearer
- boundaries get firmer
- guilt loses its grip
- confidence becomes quieter but stronger

You stop auditioning for belonging.
You start *occupying your life*.

Chapter 10 Anchoring Statement

Say this with intention—even if your voice shakes a little:

"I choose to live from who I am now, not who I used to be."

Chapter 10 Worksheet

Identity Stamp: Living From Who You Are Now

This worksheet helps you intentionally claim your identity—rather than letting old labels, past seasons, or other people decide it for you.

Go slowly. Truth sticks better than pressure.

Step 1: Notice the Identity You've Been Wearing

We all carry labels—some given to us, some we gave ourselves.

An old identity, label, or belief I've been living from:

Examples:

- "I'm the strong one."
- "I'm always behind."
- "I'm bad at relationships."
- "I have to prove myself."

Step 2: Where Did It Come From?

Understanding origin brings compassion.

This identity came from:
☐ A past season
☐ Survival mode
☐ Other people's expectations
☐ Trauma or loss
☐ Something I once needed to believe

Explain if helpful:

Step 3: How It Once Helped

Even outdated identities once served a purpose.

This identity helped me survive by:

(Recognizing this does not mean you keep it.)

Step 4: How It Limits Me Now

Answer honestly—without judgment.

This identity now limits me by:

Examples:

- Keeping me small
- Making me doubt myself
- Keeping me stuck in old patterns

Step 5: Choose the Identity You Want to Wear

Not who you wish you were—who you are *becoming*.

Finish these statements:

I am someone who…

I value…

I trust myself to…

Step 6: Stamp It With Intention

Imagine placing a stamp on your life that says, “This is authentic.”

My chosen identity stamp:

(One word or phrase—simple and true.)

Examples:
Resilient • Grounded • Capable • Becoming • Steady • Whole

Step 7: Live From It Today

Identity shows up in action.

One way I will live from this identity today:

Examples:

- Set a boundary
- Speak up
- Rest without guilt
- Take a step forward

Reflection (Optional)

What felt grounding, emotional, or freeing as you did this?

Anchoring Statement

Read this out loud:

“I choose to live from who I am now, not who I used to be.”

Reminder

You don’t need permission to update your identity.
Growth doesn’t erase your past—it integrates it.

Wear your truth like a stamp:
clear, intentional, and unapologetic.

Chapter 11 — The Rosary

“Use your anchor beads.”

When life gets loud, words often stop working.

Thinking doesn’t help.
Reasoning doesn’t help.
Talking it out feels exhausting.

In those moments, what helps most is **something you can touch**.

This chapter is about anchors—physical, rhythmic, grounding practices that bring you back into your body when your mind won’t slow down.

Whether you use a rosary, beads, stones, a bracelet, or your own breath, the purpose is the same:

To interrupt the spiral and return to the present.

Why Anchors Work (The Educational Part)

Your nervous system responds to rhythm and repetition.

That’s why:

- babies calm when rocked
- breathing exercises regulate anxiety
- repetitive motion soothes distress
- familiar objects feel comforting

An anchor gives your body a signal of safety **without requiring thought**.

It says:
“You’re here. You’re grounded. You’re okay in this moment.”

The Rosary as a Grounding Tool

For some, a rosary is deeply spiritual.
For others, beads are simply a tactile anchor.

Both are valid.

The power is not in perfection or performance—it's in **presence**.

When your fingers move bead to bead, your breath slows.
When your breath slows, your nervous system follows.

Breath + Beads Practice

Here is a simple anchor practice you can use anytime—no special setup required.

Step 1 — Hold the beads (or any anchor)

Let your fingers rest on them.
Notice the texture.
Notice the weight.

Step 2 — Breathe with intention

As you move to the next bead:

- **Breathe in:**
  "I am at peace."
- **Breathe out:**
  "I am a victor."

Move slowly.
No rush.
No goal.

Step 3 — Stay present

If your mind wanders, that's okay.
Gently bring your attention back to the next breath, the next bead.

This is not about clearing your mind.
It's about **coming back**.

Educational Insight: Why Touch Matters

Touch activates the parasympathetic nervous system—the part responsible for rest and regulation.

That's why:

- holding something steady reduces anxiety
- pressure and texture ground attention
- repetitive motion calms emotional flooding

You are giving your body what it needs to feel safe again.

Humor Check (Because Even Sacred Tools Get Misused)

If you find yourself:

- speed-breathing through beads
- mentally grocery shopping mid-prayer
- judging yourself for "doing it wrong"

Congratulations—you're human.

Anchors don't require perfection.
They require **participation**.

Anchors Beyond Beads

If beads aren't your thing, anchors can also be:

- a ring you twist
- a stone in your pocket
- a bracelet you touch
- your breath counted slowly
- feet pressed into the floor

The object matters less than the intention.

When to Use an Anchor

Anchors are especially helpful:

- during anxiety
- when spiraling
- while grieving
- during pain flare-ups
- when words fail
- before sleep
- during difficult conversations

They help you stay *with yourself*.

Practice: Create Your Anchor Routine

Write this out.

My anchor object:

When I will use it:

The phrase or breath I'll pair with it:

The Deeper Meaning

Anchors remind you:

- you are not alone
- you are supported
- you are allowed to pause
- you can return to yourself anytime

They are not escapes.
They are **returns**.

Chapter 11 Anchoring Statement

Say this softly as you breathe:

“I am grounded. I am present. I am held.”

Chapter 11 Worksheet

Anchor Practice: Returning to Yourself

This worksheet helps you create a **personal grounding practice** using breath, touch, and repetition.
It is not about doing it "right."
It is about **coming back into your body and the present moment**.

Take a slow breath before you begin.

Step 1: Choose Your Anchor

An anchor is something physical that helps steady you.

☐ Rosary or prayer beads
☐ Bracelet or ring
☐ Stone or small object
☐ Breath only
☐ Other: _____

My anchor object:

Step 2: Notice the Sensation

Hold or touch your anchor.

What do you notice?
(Texture, temperature, weight, pressure)

(This brings your nervous system out of your head and into your body.)

Step 3: Pair It With Breath

Choose or create a simple breath phrase.

You will repeat this slowly—one phrase per breath.

Examples:

- Inhale: *I am at peace* / Exhale: *I am a victor*
- Inhale: *Here* / Exhale: *Now*
- Inhale: *I am safe* / Exhale: *I am grounded*

My inhale phrase:

My exhale phrase:

Step 4: Practice the Rhythm

As you move bead to bead, breath to breath, or touch to touch:

- Slow your breathing
- Let your shoulders drop
- Bring your attention back when your mind wanders

How many breaths or beads feel supportive right now?

Step 5: When to Use Your Anchor

Anchors work best when used early and often.

☐ When anxiety starts
☐ When I feel overwhelmed
☐ During pain or discomfort
☐ While grieving
☐ Before sleep
☐ During difficult conversations
☐ Other: _____

Step 6: Check In After

After using your anchor, answer honestly:

Does my body feel:
☐ More calm
☐ Slightly settled
☐ The same (and that's okay)

What changed, if anything?

Step 7: Make It a Habit (Not a Chore)

Finish this sentence:

Using my anchor reminds me that:

Reflection (Optional)

What did it feel like to ground through touch and breath instead of thought?

Anchoring Statement

Read this slowly as you breathe:

"I am grounded. I am present. I am held."

Reminder

Anchors are not escapes.
They are **returns**.

You are not leaving your life—you are coming back into it.

And you can do that anytime.

Chapter 12 — The Long Game

"Victory is daily maintenance."

If there's one truth that makes life feel both easier *and* more honest, it's this:

There is no finish line where life suddenly becomes effortless.

No day where you wake up healed, unbothered, untriggered, and permanently calm.

And honestly?
Thank goodness.

Because growth isn't about arriving somewhere perfect.
It's about **learning how to maintain yourself through real life**.

That's the long game.

Why Maintenance Matters (The Educational Part)

Most people don't spiral because of one big event.

They spiral because of:

- unprocessed stress
- ignored needs
- unchallenged thoughts
- unchecked shame
- accumulated exhaustion

Maintenance prevents accumulation.

It's the difference between:

- brushing your teeth daily
  vs.
- needing a root canal

Not glamorous.
Very effective.

Victory Is Not a Feeling

Here's a reframe that changes expectations:

Victory is not how you feel.
Victory is how you **respond**.

You can:

- feel anxious and still ground
- feel sad and still show up
- feel overwhelmed and still choose truth
- feel tired and still rest on purpose

Victory looks like consistency—not intensity.

Review the Truth

When life gets loud, return to what you *know*.

Truth sounds like:

- "This moment will pass."
- "I have handled hard things before."
- "I don't need to decide everything today."
- "I am safe right now."

Truth is steady.
Fear is dramatic.

Part of maintenance is choosing which voice gets airtime.

Reject the Lies

Lies often sound urgent, familiar, and convincing.

Common ones:

- "You're backsliding."
- "You should be better by now."

- “This means nothing worked.”
- “You can’t handle this.”

Lies create pressure.
Truth creates choice.

Maintenance means noticing lies quickly—and not letting them run the day.

Restring the Day When It Breaks

Some days snap.

Your routine falls apart.
Your mood tanks.
Your energy disappears.
Your emotions feel raw.

That doesn’t mean the day is ruined.

It means it needs **restringing**.

Restringing can be:

- taking a break instead of pushing
- grounding instead of spiraling
- asking for help instead of isolating
- letting “good enough” be enough

You don’t throw the whole instrument away because one string breaks.

Humor Check (Because Maintenance Isn’t Sexy)

Maintenance doesn’t look impressive.

It looks like:

- drinking water
- eating real food
- going to bed earlier

- pausing before reacting
- using tools you already know work

It's not exciting—but it's what keeps the system running.

Educational Insight: Habits Build Capacity

Small, repeated actions strengthen:

- emotional regulation
- self-trust
- resilience
- confidence

You don't rise to the occasion.
You fall back on your habits.

Maintenance makes sure you land safely.

The Long Game Mindset

The long game asks:

- "What supports me over time?"
- "What helps me stay grounded?"
- "What do I need *today*—not forever?"

It replaces urgency with sustainability.

You stop sprinting through life.
You start pacing.

Practice: Your Maintenance Map

Write this out.

Three truths I return to when things get hard:

1. _____

2. _____
3. _____

Three tools that help me stay grounded:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

One thing I can do today to support myself:

_____

_____

When You Miss a Day

Here's permission you may not realize you need:

Missing a day does not erase progress.

You don't start over.
You start **where you are**.

The long game is forgiving, not fragile.

Bringing It All Together

Life will keep lifeing.

Thoughts will get loud.
Triggers will show up.
Pain and grief will visit.
Old patterns will try to reintroduce themselves.

But now, you have:

- awareness
- tools
- language
- anchors

- choice

And that changes everything.

Final Anchoring Statement

Say this with quiet confidence:

“I tend my life daily. I choose truth. I return to myself.”

Closing Note

You don’t need to do this perfectly.
You just need to keep coming back.

And you can.

Every day.

Chapter 12 Worksheet

The Long Game: Daily Maintenance, Real Victory

This worksheet is not about fixing your whole life.
It's about **tending to yourself today**—because that's how lasting change happens.

Take a breath before you begin.

Step 1: Name Today Honestly

No editing. No judgment.

Today feels like:
☐ Steady
☐ Heavy
☐ Overwhelming
☐ Hopeful
☐ Exhausting
☐ Mixed

What's contributing to that feeling?

Step 2: Review the Truth

When life gets loud, truth steadies you.

One truth I need to remember today:

Examples:

- "This moment will pass."
- "I've handled hard things before."
- "I don't need to solve everything today."

Step 3: Reject the Lie

Lies create pressure and panic.

A lie or fear trying to take over today:

Why I'm choosing not to believe it:

Step 4: Choose Your Maintenance Tools

You don't need all of them—just one or two.

☐ Grounding or breath
☐ Meeting a physical need (food, rest, water)
☐ Anchor practice
☐ Language shift
☐ Boundary or pause
☐ Connection
☐ Rest without guilt

The tool(s) I'll use today:

Step 5: Restring the Day (If Needed)

If today feels off the rails, that doesn't mean it's ruined.

What part of today needs restringing?

One small reset I can do:

Examples:

- Take a break
- Lower expectations

- Delay a decision
- Ground and start again

Step 6: One Kind Action Toward Myself

Kindness is part of maintenance—not a reward.

One way I will be kind to myself today:

Reflection (Optional)

What helps me stay steady over time?

Anchoring Statement

Read this slowly:

“I tend my life daily. I choose truth. I return to myself.”

Reminder

Missing a day does not erase progress.
Feeling off does not mean you’re failing.

The long game is built with:

- awareness
- compassion
- consistency
- returning again and again

That’s how real victory lasts.

A Note From Me to You

If you're reading this, I want you to pause for a moment.

Because you made it here.

Not just to the end of a book—but through moments of reflection, honesty, discomfort, and courage. And I want you to hear this clearly:

I am proud of you.

Not because you did everything perfectly.
Not because you had breakthroughs every chapter.
But because you stayed.
Because you tried.
Because you were willing to look at your thoughts instead of running from them.
Because you chose awareness over autopilot—again and again.

That takes courage.

This workbook asked you to slow down in a world that rewards rushing.
It asked you to be honest in a culture that prefers pretending.
It asked you to care for yourself without shame, punishment, or pressure.

And you showed up.

Some pages may have felt easy.
Some may have hit tender places.
Some you might have skimmed, skipped, or promised to come back to later.

All of that counts.

Growth doesn't happen in straight lines.
It happens in pauses, returns, and quiet decisions to try again.

If there's one thing I hope you carry with you, it's this:

You are not weak for needing tools.
You are not behind because life has been heavy.
And you are not failing when you have hard days.

You are learning how to stay steady when life starts lifeing—and that is a skill that will serve you for the rest of your life.

You don't have to remember everything in this book.
You just have to remember that you have options now.

You can pause.
You can ground.
You can meet your needs.
You can choose truth over fear.
You can return to yourself.

And when you forget—because you will—that's okay too.

Come back.
Start again.
That's how this works.

I'm genuinely honored you trusted me enough to walk through this with you.
And I hope you feel just a little more steady, a little more compassionate toward yourself, and a little more confident in your ability to handle what comes next.

You did something meaningful here.

And I'm proud of you.

Always.

With encouragement and belief in you,
Kathy Simmons

Resources

Support Beyond This Book

This book offers grounding tools you can use anytime. Still, there may be moments when additional support is helpful—or necessary. Reaching out is not a failure. It's an act of care.

Below are trusted resources for crisis support, emotional health, grief, grounding, and continued growth.

Immediate Support & Crisis Lines (U.S.)

If you feel unsafe, overwhelmed, or at risk right now:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
📞 Call or Text **988**
🌐 https://988lifeline.org
Available 24/7 for emotional support, crisis intervention, and connection to local resources.

Emergency Services
📞 Call **911** if you are in immediate danger.

(If you are outside the United States, please contact your local emergency number or a national crisis line in your country.)

Mental & Emotional Health Support

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Helpline
📞 **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**
🌐 https://www.samhsa.gov
Free, confidential referrals for mental health and substance use treatment.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
📞 **1-800-950-NAMI (6264)**
🌐 https://www.nami.org
Education, support groups, and resources for individuals and families.

Psychology Today – Therapist Directory
🌐 https://www.psychologytoday.com
Search for licensed therapists by location, specialty, and insurance.

Grief & Loss Support

GriefShare
🌐 https://www.griefshare.org
Support groups and resources for people grieving the loss of a loved one.

What's Your Grief
🌐 https://whatsyourgrief.com
Educational articles, tools, and compassionate guidance around grief and loss.

Hospice Bereavement Services
Many hospice organizations offer **free grief support**, even if your loved one was not in hospice care. Contact local hospice providers for details.

Grounding, Mindfulness & Nervous System Support

Insight Timer
🌐 https://insighttimer.com
Free guided meditations, breathing exercises, and grounding practices.

Calm
🌐 https://www.calm.com
Mindfulness, sleep support, and stress-reduction tools.

Headspace
🌐 https://www.headspace.com
Guided meditation and breathwork for anxiety, focus, and emotional regulation.

Recommended Reading

These books complement the themes of grounding, resilience, grief, and self-compassion explored in this workbook:

- **The Body Keeps the Score** — Bessel van der Kolk
- **Option B** — Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant
- **Rising Strong** — Brené Brown
- **Man's Search for Meaning** — Viktor E. Frankl
- **Self-Compassion** — Kristin Neff

Faith & Spiritual Support (If This Aligns for You)

For some, spiritual connection offers grounding and comfort:

- Faith leaders or pastoral counseling
- Spiritual direction
- Prayer, meditation, or contemplative practices

Engage only in ways that feel safe, supportive, and aligned with your beliefs.

A Gentle Reminder

You are not meant to carry everything alone.
You are not weak for needing help.
And you don't have to wait until you're at a breaking point to reach for support.

This book is one tool.
Outside support is another.

You are allowed to use both.

About The Other Side of Rock Bottom (OSRB)

The Other Side of Rock Bottom was born out of lived experience — not theory, not perfection, and not a highlight reel.

OSRB was created for people who were tired of being told to "just get over it," tired of pretending they were fine, and tired of feeling like they didn't belong anywhere unless they had it all together.

It was built for real people with real lives, real trauma, real addiction, real grief, and real hope.

How OSRB Was Formed

OSRB started as a simple idea:
What if there was a place where honesty was welcomed, not judged?

A place where:

- You didn't have to be "fixed" to show up
- You didn't have to explain or justify your pain
- You didn't have to choose between accountability and compassion
- You didn't have to hide relapse, struggle, doubt, or questions

What began as small recovery meetings grew into a community — because people were hungry for something real.

OSRB wasn't built around shame.
It was built around **truth, connection, and staying**.

Our Mission

The mission of The Other Side of Rock Bottom is simple and powerful:

To create a safe, inclusive, trauma-informed space where people can heal, grow, and recover — without judgment, pressure, or perfection.

We believe:

- Recovery is not one-size-fits-all
- Mental health and addiction recovery are deeply connected
- Faith can be a source of healing, not harm
- Awareness without shame creates real change
- You don't have to hit "rock bottom" to deserve support
- Community saves lives

At OSRB, we focus on:

- Honesty over performance
- Progress over perfection
- Responsibility without self-destruction
- Grace paired with action

Our Meetings

OSRB hosts **multiple daily Zoom meetings** designed to meet people where they are — emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

All meetings are:

- Free
- Open to anyone seeking recovery, healing, or growth
- Trauma-informed
- Judgment-free
- Come-as-you-are

You do not need to speak.
You do not need to share.
You do not need to have anything figured out.

You just need to show up.

OSRB Zoom Meeting Information

Zoom Meeting ID:
831 1998 2784

Passcode:
recovery

Zoom Link:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83119982784?pwd=vmbuLfhdiLo46yTo40HKZELnOF5lhX.1

(This same link, ID, and passcode are used for all OSRB meetings.)

Daily Meeting Schedule (U.S. Time Zones and GMT)

Morning Meditation

- 🕗 **8:00 AM Eastern (ET)**
- 🕖 **7:00 AM Central (CT)**
- 🕕 **6:00 AM Mountain (MT)**
- 🕔 **5:00 AM Pacific (PT)**
- 🌍 1:00 PM GMT (EST) / 12:00 PM GMT (EDT)

A calm, grounding start to the day focused on intention, reflection, and connection.

Midday Motivation

- 🕑 **2:00 PM Eastern (ET)**
- 🕐 **1:00 PM Central (CT)**
- 🕛 **12:00 PM Mountain (MT)**
- 🕚 **11:00 AM Pacific (PT)**
- 🌍 7:00 PM GMT (EST) / 6:00 PM GMT (EDT)

A teaching-based meeting with practical tools, real talk, and encouragement for navigating life and recovery.

GMT conversions follow U.S. Eastern standard time (EST) or daylight time (EDT).
U.S. zone times assume locations that observe daylight saving time.

Evening Recovery

- 🕗 8:00 PM Eastern (ET)
- 🕖 7:00 PM Central (CT)
- 🕕 6:00 PM Mountain (MT)
- 🕔 5:00 PM Pacific (PT)
- 🌍 1:00 AM GMT (EST) / 12:00 AM GMT (EDT), next day

A supportive, connection-focused meeting where honesty, sharing, and community are central.

Beyond Meetings

OSRB is more than meetings.

It's a growing recovery community that includes:

- A private Facebook group
- One-on-one recovery coaching
- Guest speakers and story-sharing nights
- Trauma-informed education
- Faith-filled encouragement without pressure
- Ongoing connection outside of meetings

OSRB exists to remind people of one core truth:

There is life on the other side of rock bottom.

You don't have to do this alone.
You don't have to have it all together.
And you don't have to wait until things get worse to reach out.

If you're reading this and wondering whether you belong here —
you already do. 💛

Connect with OSRB

Website: www.theothersideofrockbottom.org

Email: kathy@theothersideofrockbottom.org

Phone: (475) 307-9586