

UNLOCK YOUR BODY'S WISDOM

A Wellness Workbook

BY MORGAN SCHEURICH



A guide to help you transform your mind,
body and soul!

Hey there!

I'm Morgan! Welcome to your healing journey.

Thank you for choosing In Motion Body Based Healing and for purchasing this wellness workbook. I am truly excited to be a part of your transformative journey, and I want you to know that this workbook is more than just a tool - it is a sacred space designed to help you unlock the wisdom that resides within your body, mind, and soul

As a somatic psychotherapist, my passion lies in helping individuals like you tap into the deep, often untapped intelligence of the body. Your body holds powerful stories, emotions, and insights that, when embraced can bring healing, clarity, and profound growth. This workbook is created to guide you through that process - offering you a safe space to reflect, explore, and connect with yourself on a deeper level

The point of this workbook is simple: its here to support you in aligning your mind, body, and soul. It provides a space to express, explore, and release what no longer serves you, while also inviting you to nurture and honor the wisdom your body holds. Each pages is crafted to encourage self awareness, mindfulness, and healing with prompts that invite you to explore your inner world, your emotions, and your physical experience.

Whether you're just beginning or already on your healing path, know that this workbook is designed to meet you where you are. It's my hope that as you use these pages, you'll feel supported, inspired, and empowered to move through life with more freedom, ease, and connection to your authentic self

I am honored to be walking alongside you in this process. You are not alone on this journey, and together, we will unlock the body's wisdom that has always been there, waiting for you to listen!

With gratitude and support,

Morgan

In Motion Body Based Healing



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One

Grounding & Safety

Understanding the Nervous
System (Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn)
Grounding and Self Regulation
Exercises
Journal Prompts



GROUNDING *and Safety*

UNDERSTANDING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM: THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR INNER FLOW

Your nervous system is the command center of your body, constantly scanning your environment and adjusting how you respond to the world. It's what keeps you moving, feeling, reacting, and, most importantly, **adapting**. When you understand how your nervous system works, you gain the power to regulate your energy, process emotions, and cultivate a deeper sense of balance.

THE RHYTHM OF RESPONSE: FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE, FAWN

When you encounter stress—whether it's a big life event or just the daily grind—your nervous system responds instinctively. These responses aren't conscious choices; they're automatic patterns designed to protect and preserve you.

✦ FIGHT: THE SURGE

Your body gears up to defend itself. You feel the rush—heart pounding, muscles tensing, ready to take action. This response can show up as anger, frustration, or a need to take control.

✦ FLIGHT: THE ESCAPE

Your body senses danger and tells you to move—fast. Maybe you literally run, or maybe you bury yourself in work, scroll endlessly on your phone, or avoid tough conversations. It's all about getting away from the discomfort.

✦ FREEZE: THE PAUSE

Sometimes, the safest option is to stop completely. Your body might feel heavy, numb, or disconnected. You're present, but not fully there. Decisions feel impossible. You're in protective shutdown mode.

✦ FAWN: THE APPEASE

Instead of fighting or fleeing, you try to please, soothe, or blend in to stay safe. You ignore your own needs, overextend yourself, or say yes when you really mean no. It's survival through keeping the peace.



WHY IT MATTERS

Your nervous system is always working for you, not against you. But when stress becomes chronic, these survival patterns can take over, making it hard to feel at ease, connected, or in control. Learning to work with your nervous system—rather than fighting it—creates space for more fluidity, resilience, and inner strength.

REBALANCING YOUR SYSTEM

Breath With Intention

Deep belly breaths tell your nervous system, You're safe

Move Your Body

Shake it out, stretch, or walk to release stored tension

Tune in, Don't Tune Out

Notice where stress lives in your body. Get curious, NOT JUDGMENTAL

Find Your Anchors

Safe touch, nature, and supportive connections help your system reset

◆ NOTE ◆

Your nervous system isn't something to "fix"—it's something to understand, support, and trust. When you learn its language, you unlock the power to move through life with more ease, flow, and presence.



GROUNDING AND SELF REGULATION

Grounding is the practice of bringing yourself back into your body, back into the moment, back into your center. It's about finding steadiness when life feels chaotic, reconnecting when you feel disconnected, and creating a sense of safety inside yourself—no matter what's happening around you.

Your body is always here, in the present. Grounding is the bridge that helps your mind and emotions meet it there.

WHY IT MATTERS

When stress, anxiety, or overwhelm take over, your nervous system shifts into survival mode—fight, flight, freeze, or fawn. Grounding interrupts that loop, giving your body and brain the signal: You are here. You are safe. You have choice.



THREE EMBODIED EXERCISES FOR GROUNDING AND SAFETY

These exercises are designed to help clients cultivate a sense of stability, presence, and internal safety by connecting with their bodies in intentional ways.

THE ANCHOR BREATH (REGULATE & STABILIZE)

Purpose: This exercise helps slow the nervous system, bringing the body into a state of calm and safety.

How to Do It:

1. Find a comfortable seated or standing position.
2. Place one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
3. Inhale deeply through your nose for four counts, feeling your belly expand.
4. Exhale slowly through your mouth for six counts, softening your body with each breath.
5. Repeat for 2–3 minutes, noticing the rhythm of your breath anchoring you in the present moment.

Reflection: Where in your body do you feel the most grounded? What changes after a few minutes of breathing this way?



WEIGHTED HANDS (CREATING A FELT SENSE OF SAFETY)

Purpose: Using touch and gentle pressure to provide a sense of security and containment in the body.

How to Do It:

1. Sit or lie down in a quiet space.
2. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
3. Apply gentle, steady pressure—as if offering yourself support.
4. Breathe slowly and notice the warmth and weight of your hands.
5. If it feels safe, close your eyes and repeat to yourself: I am here. I am safe. I am held.

Reflection: How does it feel to receive this kind of support from yourself? Where in your body feels most at ease?

GROUNDING THROUGH THE FEET (ROOTING INTO STABILITY)

Purpose: This exercise helps clients feel more connected to their physical foundation, especially in moments of anxiety or overwhelm.

How to Do It:

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart, barefoot if possible.
2. Press your feet firmly into the ground, noticing the connection between your soles and the floor.
3. Shift your weight slightly forward and backward, side to side—feeling into your balance.
4. Imagine roots growing from the bottoms of your feet, deep into the earth.
5. Take five deep breaths, inhaling strength and exhaling tension.

Reflection: How does your body respond when you focus on your feet? What shifts when you imagine being deeply rooted?



SELF REFLECTING JOURNAL

Journaling is a powerful tool for grounding because it brings your attention into the present moment, helping you process emotions, track sensations, and reconnect with yourself. It also fosters a sense of safety by giving your thoughts and feelings a contained space to be acknowledged, rather than swirling inside you.

1. Where in my body do I feel the most grounded and stable? What sensations do I notice there?
2. What are three things—places, people, activities—that make me feel safe? How can I bring more of that safety into my daily life?
3. When I feel overwhelmed or disconnected, what is one small action I can take to return to myself?
4. Reflect on a time when you felt truly safe and at ease. What was present in that moment? How can you recreate that feeling today?
5. What messages has my body given me about safety and grounding lately? How can I honor those messages?



Two

Body Awareness & Sensory Experience

Tuning Into Body Sensations
Developing Introspection
(awareness of internal state
Exploring Movement as a way to
Process Emotions - Exercises



TUNING INTO BODY SENSATIONS

Your body is always speaking to you. It communicates through sensation—warmth, tension, tingling, expansion, constriction—giving you real-time information about your needs, emotions, and state of balance. The question is: Are you listening?

Tuning into your body's sensations is about building awareness from the inside out. It's the practice of noticing what's happening beneath the surface, allowing your body to guide you toward greater clarity, regulation, and connection.



WHY IT MATTERS



1. Your Body Holds Your Story

Every experience—every joy, stress, or moment of fear—leaves an imprint. When you tune into sensation, you tap into the body's memory, offering space for what needs to be acknowledged, processed, or released.

2. Sensation is Your First Language

Before thoughts, before words, your body speaks through feeling. That tightness in your chest? The warmth in your belly? The buzzing in your fingertips? These are signals. Noticing them helps you respond to life with more presence and choice rather than reacting on autopilot.

3. It's the Key to Regulation

When stress takes over, your body shifts into fight, flight, freeze, or fawn. Sensory awareness helps you recognize when this happens and take steps to ground yourself—whether through movement, breath, or self-touch—bringing your nervous system back to center.

4. Deepens Embodiment & Pleasure

Being fully in your body isn't just about managing stress—it's about experiencing more aliveness. When you slow down and tune in, you create space to savor simple moments: the warmth of the sun, the rhythm of your breath, the feeling of solid ground beneath you.

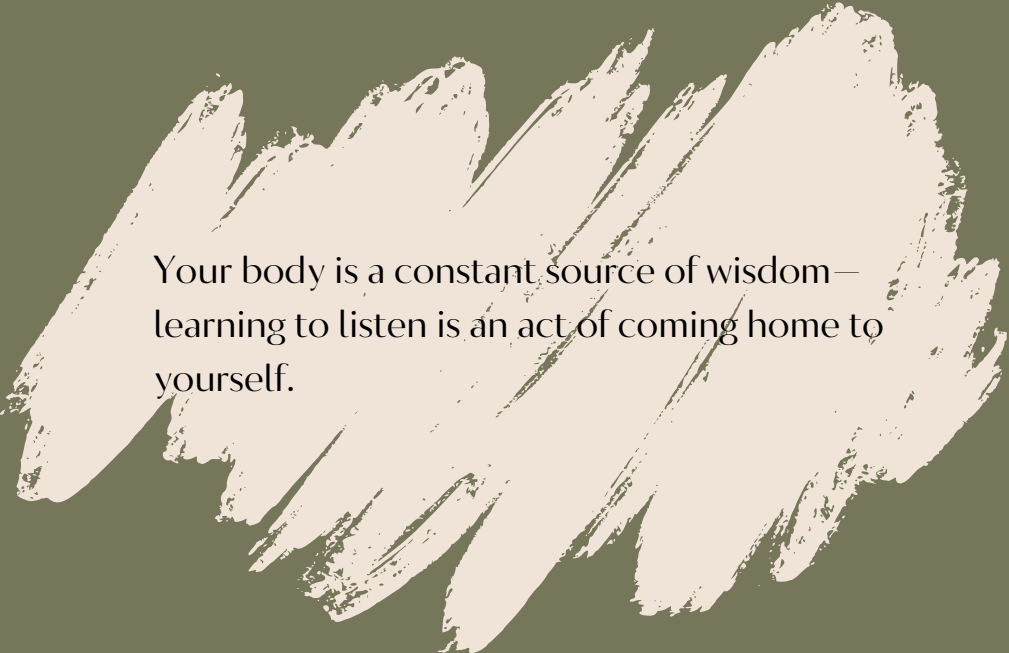
5. Rebuilds Trust with Yourself

The more you listen to your body's signals—whether it's the need for rest, movement, nourishment, or boundaries—the more you strengthen your sense of inner safety and self-trust.



HOW TO START NOTICING

- **Pause & Scan:** Take a moment to check in. Where do you feel tension? Softness? Energy?
- **Name It:** Instead of “I feel anxious,” try “I feel a fluttering in my stomach and tightness in my chest.”
- **Engage Your Senses:** Notice what you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch in this moment.
- **Stay Curious:** No judgment, no need to fix—just observe. Sensations shift, and so do you.



Your body is a constant source of wisdom—
learning to listen is an act of coming home to
yourself.

TRY THIS

EXERCISE: LISTENING TO YOUR BODY'S SENSATIONS

Purpose: This practice helps you connect with your body, recognize sensations, and respond with care.

Step 1: Settle In

- Find a comfortable position—sitting, standing, or lying down.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose, then exhale slowly.
- Gently bring your attention inward.

Step 2: Scan Your Body

- Start at your feet and move upward, noticing any sensations.
- Ask yourself:
 - Is there tension, warmth, tingling, or ease?
 - Does this area feel open or tight? Heavy or light?
 - What emotions, if any, come up?

Step 3: Name What You Feel

- Describe your sensations as clearly as possible.
- Instead of “I feel stressed,” try “My chest feels tight and my jaw is clenched.”
 - Instead of “I feel good,” try “There’s warmth in my chest and a lightness in my body.”

Step 4: Respond with Care

- Ask yourself: What does my body need right now?
- Breathe, stretch, move, or rest as needed.

Step 5: Reflect

- In your journal, write:
 - What sensations stood out to you?
 - How did this practice shift your awareness?

Keep checking in with your body throughout the day—small moments of awareness create deeper connection and trust.



DEVELOPING INTROSPECTION

“The Curious Observer”

Introspection is the practice of looking within—not to judge or fix, but to observe, explore, and understand. It’s the process of noticing your thoughts, emotions, and body sensations with curiosity rather than criticism.

Introspection isn’t about getting stuck in your head—it’s about tuning into your whole self. It’s an embodied experience, where self-awareness isn’t just mental but also felt in the body. Through introspection, you begin to recognize patterns, emotions, and physical cues that shape how you move through the world.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Deepens Self-Understanding – You start to see your reactions, needs, and desires more clearly.
 - Builds Inner Safety – By listening to yourself without judgment, you create a space where all parts of you are welcome.
 - Supports Regulation – Recognizing your thoughts and body sensations helps you shift from reacting to responding with intention.
 - Strengthens Embodiment – True introspection isn’t just thinking. –it’s feeling, sensing, and connecting with yourself from the inside out.




A SIMPLE PRACTICE *for Embodied Introspection*

Pause. Breathe. Notice:

- What is happening in my mind right now?
- What sensations are present in my body?
- What emotions are asking for my attention?

Introspection is an invitation, not a task—a way to meet yourself where you are, with presence and compassion.



Record what you've discovered
in your journal

Closing Reflection:

- Did anything surprise you during this check-in?
- How did it feel to listen to yourself without needing to change or fix anything?

Bonus Practice:

Set a reminder to pause for one minute a day and check in using these questions. Over time, you'll build a deeper sense of awareness and connection with yourself.



Exploring Movement as a way to Process Emotions

Emotions aren't just in the mind—they live in the body. When we move, we create space for emotions to shift, be expressed, and be released. In *In Motion*, movement isn't about performance; it's about listening to what your body needs and letting it lead.

Here are some somatic ways to explore movement as a tool for emotional processing:



Shake It Out – Releasing Tension & Overwhelm

When emotions feel stuck or overwhelming, shaking helps discharge built-up energy from the nervous system.

Try this:

- Stand with your feet hip-width apart.
- Start by gently shaking your hands, then your arms, shoulders, hips, and legs.
- Let the movement grow, loosening any tension or tightness.
- Continue for 1-2 minutes, then pause and notice—what's shifted?



Slow, Weighted Movement – Grounding & Soothing

If you're feeling anxious, unsteady, or overstimulated, slow and intentional movement can help create a sense of safety and presence.

Try this:

- Press your feet into the floor, feeling their connection to the ground.
- Move your arms or torso in slow, deliberate motions, as if moving through water.
- Imagine the weight of your movement grounding you, bringing you back into your body.
- Breathe deeply, noticing any shifts in sensation.



Impulse-Led Movement – Trusting the Body's Wisdom

Instead of directing your movement, let your body lead. This practice is about noticing and following impulses without overthinking.

Try this:

- Close your eyes, take a breath, and ask: What movement does my body want right now?
- It might be a stretch, a sway, a stomp, or something unexpected—let it happen.
- Follow the movement until it naturally slows or completes.
- Notice how your body feels after giving it what it asked for.

Movement is a language—your body is always speaking. The more you listen, the more freely emotions can move through you, rather than getting stuck inside you.



Three
Emotions & The Body

How Emotions Manifest Physically
The Five Major Emotions
Expressive Exercises
Journal Prompts



HOW EMOTIONS MANIFEST IN THE BODY

Emotions don't just exist in the mind—they live and move through the body. Every feeling has a physical expression, a shape, a rhythm. The tightening of your chest, the flutter in your stomach, the heat rising in your face—these are not random sensations. They are your body speaking.

At In Motion, we don't separate emotions from the body; we experience them through it. When we pay attention, we start to notice that emotions are not just abstract concepts but embodied experiences that show up in real, tangible ways.

THE BODY'S LANGUAGE OF EMOTIONS

Emotions take shape in the body through physical sensations, postures, and impulses—here are some common ways feelings manifest somatically:

Fear & Anxiety

Often felt as tightness in the chest, shallow breath, a racing heart, or restlessness in the limbs. The body prepares for fight or flight, even if there's no real danger.

Sadness & Grief

A heaviness in the chest, a lump in the throat, a deep fatigue. The body slows down, asking for space to feel, to process, to release.

Anger & Frustration

Heat rising, muscles tensing, a charge in the arms and jaw. The body is gathering energy, preparing to act, to set a boundary, to move something forward.

Joy & Excitement

A lightness, an openness in the chest, a buzzing or tingling sensation, an urge to expand outward. The body is in motion, expressing aliveness.

Shame & Embarrassment

A shrinking inward, shoulders rounding, a desire to hide. The body is protecting itself, pulling away from perceived judgment.

◆ How do these emotions show up in your body?



THE 5 MAJOR EMOTIONS

Fear - Sadness - Anger - Joy - Shame

FEAR

Why?

The nervous system perceives a threat (real or imagined) and prepares the body to react. If unprocessed, this state can lead to chronic tension, fatigue, and hypervigilance.

Somatic Response: Slow, deep breaths, grounding movements, and shaking can help discharge excess energy and bring the body back to balance.

ANGER

Why?

Anger is a mobilizing emotion—it's the body's way of preparing for action and boundary-setting. When anger is unexpressed, it can turn inward, leading to muscle tension, headaches, or digestive issues.

Somatic Response: Intentional movement (stomping, punching a pillow, vocalizing) helps release the charge rather than storing it.

Why?

Shame is a protective response, signaling a fear of judgment or rejection. The body contracts as a way to retreat and protect itself.

Somatic Response: Opening postures (expanding the chest, lifting the chin, taking deep breaths) can counteract the urge to collapse inward, helping to shift the emotional experience.

SADNESS

Why?

Sadness often signals a need for release and surrender. The body slows down to create space for processing. If suppressed, sadness can manifest as chronic fatigue or a sense of numbness.

Somatic Response: Gentle movement (rocking, stretching, or fluid motion) and deep exhalations can help emotions move through.


JOY

Why?

Joy creates a natural sense of expansion and connection. The body wants to move outward, express, and engage with the world.

Somatic Response: Fully embracing movement—whether through dance, laughter, or simply allowing yourself to take up space—enhances the embodied experience of joy.

SHAME

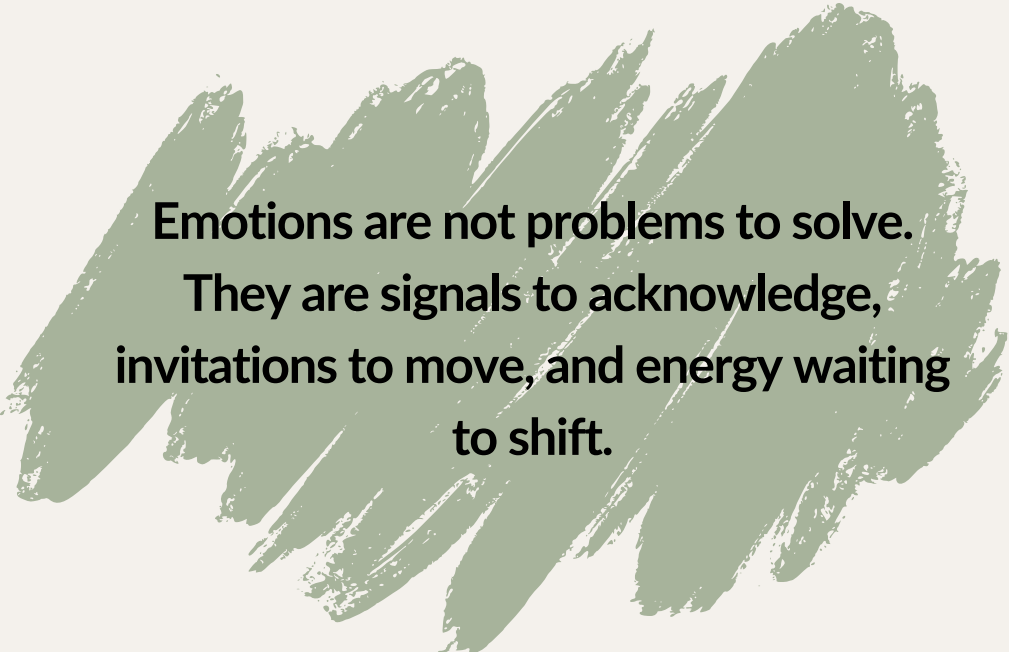


THE BODY HOLDS WHAT *The Mind Ignores*

When emotions aren't fully processed, they don't just disappear—they get **stored in the body**. Chronic tightness, digestive issues, fatigue, and even pain can be linked to unresolved emotional experiences. This is why movement, breathwork, and body awareness are essential—they **help emotions move rather than stagnate**.

A Simple Somatic Check-In:

1. **Pause and breathe** – Notice where tension or sensation is present.
2. **Name what you feel** – Without judgment, describe the sensation (tight, warm, heavy, fluttering, numb, etc.).
3. **Ask what your body needs** – Does it need to move, rest, shake, stretch, sigh?
4. **Follow the impulse** – Give your body permission to respond in a way that feels supportive.



**Emotions are not problems to solve.
They are signals to acknowledge,
invitations to move, and energy waiting
to shift.**



Four

Boundaries & Embodied Consent

Recognizing Personal Boundaries
through Body Awareness

A Felt Sense of “YES” and “NO”

Exercises: Somatic Boundary Setting,
Role-Playing Consent

Journal Prompts: Where do I Feel My
Boundaries?



RECOGNIZE PERSONAL BOUNDARIES THROUGH BODY AWARENESS

Boundaries are not just mental concepts—they are felt experiences. Your body is constantly communicating when something feels safe, comfortable, or too much. The key is learning to listen. In *In Motion*, we recognize that personal boundaries aren't rigid walls but living, breathing sensations that shift depending on the moment, the relationship, and your internal state.

HOW YOUR BODY SIGNALS

Your body will often tell you when a boundary is being **respected**, **stretched**, or **crossed** before your mind fully processes it. Here's how to recognize these cues:

A Sense of Ease → A Clear Yes

Your breath is steady, your muscles are relaxed, and your body feels open. This is a sign that you're in alignment with your boundary—what's happening feels safe and right for you.

Subtle Tension or Hesitation → A Soft No or Maybe

A slight tightening in your chest, a shallow breath, or a pause before responding. Your body is signaling uncertainty—this is a cue to slow down and check in before agreeing to something.

Tightness, Holding, or a Need to Step Back → A Strong No

Clenched fists, a pit in your stomach, or an urge to withdraw—these are clear body signals that your boundary is being pushed. This is your body asking for protection, space, or a shift in the situation.



PRACTICE BOUNDARY AWARENESS IN THE BODY

1. **Pause & Scan:** Before saying yes or no, take a deep breath and notice—what's happening in your body?
2. **Identify the Sensation:** Does your body feel open and relaxed or tight and constricted?
3. **Honor the Signal:** If there's tension or hesitation, explore it. Do you need more information, time, or space?
4. **Express It Somatically:** If a situation feels like too much, physically step back, press your hands outward, or take a grounding breath to reinforce your boundary.

Your body knows when something feels right or wrong—boundaries become clearer when you learn to trust those signals.



RECEIVING A FELT SENSE OF “YES”

A **felt sense of “yes”** is your body’s way of signaling alignment, safety, and authenticity. It’s an internal knowing that something is right for you. This experience can be subtle or strong, but it’s always **embodied** rather than just intellectual.

Here are some ways a “yes” might show up in the body:

A deep breath – Your breath naturally expands, feeling fuller and easier.

Warmth in the chest – A gentle heat or openness in your heart space.

Relaxed shoulders – A sense of softening, like tension releasing.

A grounded feeling – Your feet feel planted, steady, and connected to the earth.

A sense of expansion – Your body feels more open, lifted, or light.

Tingling or aliveness – A subtle energy moving through your arms, hands, or spine.

A natural leaning forward – Your body physically moves toward something with ease.

A gut feeling of ease – Your stomach feels settled, without knots or tightness.

A smile or brightening – Your face softens, and you might feel a natural uplift.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your felt sense of “yes” is an essential guide—it helps you recognize when something is aligned, safe, or nourishing. The more you attune to these cues, the easier it becomes to trust your body’s wisdom in decision-making, relationships, and personal boundaries.



RECEIVING A FELT SENSE OF “NO”

A **felt sense of “no”** is your body’s way of signaling discomfort, misalignment, or a need for protection. It often arises before the mind fully processes a situation, showing up as subtle (or strong) physical cues.

Here are some ways a “no” might show up in the body:

Tightness in the chest – A sense of constriction, like it’s harder to breathe deeply.

Shallow or held breath – Breathing becomes quick, restricted, or you unconsciously hold it.

A sinking feeling in the stomach – A knot, nausea, or unease in the gut.

Tension in the jaw, neck, or shoulders – A gripping or bracing response.

A sense of withdrawal – Your body leans back, crosses arms, or subtly pulls away.

Goosebumps or chills – A physical shiver, signaling discomfort or resistance.

A lump in the throat – A feeling of being unable to express or speak.

Restlessness or fidgeting – An urge to move away or shake off discomfort.

Heaviness or fatigue – A drained, sluggish feeling, as if your energy is being pulled down.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your felt sense of “no” is just as important as your “yes.” It protects your energy, guides you toward safety, and helps you set boundaries that honor your needs. Learning to trust and respond to these body signals allows you to move through life with more clarity, confidence, and self-respect.



SOMATIC BOUNDARY-SETTING EXERCISE: ROLE-PLAYING CONSENT

Purpose: This exercise helps you tune into your body's signals for yes, no, and uncertainty, strengthening your ability to recognize and honor your boundaries in daily life.

Materials: A quiet space, a journal (optional)

STEP 1: GROUND AND CONNECT

- Find a comfortable seated or standing position.
- Take three slow breaths, feeling your feet on the ground.
- Gently scan your body for any tension, warmth, or openness—just notice without judgment.

STEP 2: EXPLORE THE FELT SENSE OF “YES”

- Recall a clear, wholehearted “yes” from your past (a moment when something felt fully aligned).
- As you remember it, notice:
- Does your breath deepen?
- Do your shoulders relax?
- Does your chest feel open or warm?
- Do you feel grounded, light, or expansive?
- If it helps, say out loud: **“This is what yes feels like in my body.”**

STEP 3: EXPLORE THE FELT SENSE OF “NO”

- Recall a time when you felt a strong “no”—a moment when something wasn't right for you.
- As you remember it, notice:
- Does your body tighten?
- Does your breath become shallow or stuck?
- Do you feel a pit in your stomach or tension in your jaw?
- Do you instinctively want to step back or withdraw?
- If it helps, say out loud: **“This is what no feels like in my body.”**



STEP 4: PRACTICE BOUNDARY SETTING WITH MOVEMENT

- Standing or seated, imagine a situation where you might need to set a boundary (e.g., saying no to an overwhelming request).
- Notice how your body reacts—do you feel resistance, tightness, or hesitation?
- Experiment with using movement to reinforce your boundary:
- Press your hands forward as if saying “stop.”
- Step back to create space.
- Cross your arms or place a hand on your heart for self-protection.
- As you do this, breathe deeply and affirm:
 - **“It is safe to set boundaries.”**
 - **“My body’s signals are valid.”**

STEP 5: INTEGRATE AND REFLECT

- Sit quietly and notice how your body feels after practicing.
- Optional: Journal about your experience:
- What did “yes” feel like in my body?
- What did “no” feel like?
- How can I use these cues in my daily life?

This practice strengthens your ability to sense and trust your body’s boundaries, making it easier to recognize and communicate them in real-life situations. The more you practice, the clearer your internal signals become.



JOURNAL PROMPTS

1. Think of a time when I set a boundary that felt good. How did my body feel before, during, and after? What did I learn from that experience?
2. Think of a time when I ignored or overrode my boundary. What physical sensations did I notice but not act on? How can I honor those signals next time?
3. Where in my life do I struggle with boundaries the most? Do I notice patterns in my body's responses (e.g., exhaustion, tightness, nervous energy) What small shifts can I make to reinforce my boundaries somatically?
4. How do I express boundaries nonverbally? Do I use body language (stepping back, crossing arms, shifting posture) to communicate limits? What nonverbal cues help me feel more confident in boundary-setting?
5. How does my nervous system react when my boundaries are crossed? Do I go into fight, flight, freeze, or fawn? How can I bring regulation and grounding into those moments?
6. Write a short affirmation or mantra to remind yourself that your limits are valid and worth honoring.



Six

Reconnecting with Pleasure & Joy

Why Pleasure Matters

How Stress, Trauma, and Social
Conditioning Disconnect us from Joy

Overcoming Barriers to Pleasure

Cultivating Everyday Pleasure & Joy



WHY PLEASURE MATTERS

PLEASURES ROLE IN THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Pleasure is more than just an enjoyable experience—it plays a crucial role in nervous system regulation, healing, and resilience. When we experience pleasure, we are sending signals to our brain and body that we are safe, present, and open to connection.

1. Pleasure as a Signal of Safety

The nervous system is constantly assessing whether we are in danger or safety. This process, called neuroception, happens below conscious awareness. When we experience genuine pleasure—whether through sensory experiences, movement, laughter, or connection—the body shifts away from survival mode (fight, flight, freeze, or fawn) and into a state of regulation. Pleasure activates the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest), which helps counteract chronic stress and tension. It signals to the brain that it is safe to soften, receive, and be present. Over time, experiencing small moments of pleasure rewires the nervous system to be more resilient and adaptable.

2. The Neurochemistry of Pleasure

Pleasurable experiences trigger the release of key neurotransmitters and hormones that support healing and well-being:

- **Dopamine:** Associated with motivation, learning, and feeling rewarded. Helps shift us from stress-based functioning to curiosity and engagement.
- **Oxytocin:** Known as the “bonding hormone,” oxytocin promotes feelings of safety, connection, and trust.
- **Endorphins:** The body’s natural pain relievers, released through pleasure, laughter, and movement.
- **Serotonin:** Regulates mood and a sense of calm, often increased through pleasurable sensory experiences like warmth, touch, or time in nature.



3. Pleasure Expands the Window of Tolerance (Our Container)

The Window of Tolerance is the range within which we can comfortably experience emotions and sensations without becoming overwhelmed. Trauma, chronic stress, and burnout shrink this window, making us more reactive or numb. Pleasure helps expand this range by gradually introducing safe, positive experiences into the nervous system. For those who struggle with hyperarousal (fight/flight), pleasure grounds and soothes. For those who feel disconnected or numb, pleasure reawakens sensation and presence.

4. Pleasure as a Regenerative Practice

Pleasure is not just a reward; it's a resource. Building a practice of noticing and allowing pleasure strengthens nervous system resilience over time. The more we invite pleasure into our daily lives, the more we train the body to experience safety, ease, and connection as a natural state.

WAYS TO USE PLEASURE FOR NERVOUS SYSTEM REGULATION

- ✓ Sensory Grounding – Noticing pleasurable sensations (warmth, softness, deep breath)
- ✓ Movement-Based Joy – Engaging in playful or flowing movement
- ✓ Laughter & Connection – Social joy strengthens co-regulation
- ✓ Slow, Intentional Pleasure – Savoring food, music, textures, nature
- ✓ Creativity & Play – Engaging in non-goal-oriented activities

Pleasure is one of the most powerful tools for nervous system healing. It reminds us that we are alive, whole, and capable of experiencing joy—not just surviving, but thriving. When we embrace pleasure as part of our daily experience, we give our nervous system the nourishment it needs to restore balance, resilience, and well-being.



PLEASURE DISCONNECTION

Pleasure is a natural part of being human, yet many people feel disconnected from it due to **stress, trauma, and societal conditioning**. When the nervous system is wired for survival over ease, it can become difficult—or even feel unsafe—to access joy, play, and pleasure. This disconnection isn't a personal failure; it's an adaptation to protect the body and mind.

Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system (fight-or-flight), preparing the body to respond to perceived threats. When stress is ongoing, the body stays in survival mode, making it harder to relax and experience pleasure.

How stress blocks pleasure:

- **Hypervigilance:** The nervous system stays on high alert, making it difficult to soften into pleasurable experiences.
- **Tension & Holding Patterns:** Chronic stress creates tightness in the body, restricting flow, breath, and ease—key components of pleasure.
- **Reduced Dopamine & Serotonin:** Long-term stress can deplete neurotransmitters that support joy, motivation, and connection.

Over time, the body prioritizes protection over pleasure, making relaxation feel foreign or even uncomfortable.

Trauma—whether from a single event or ongoing experiences—deeply impacts how the body processes pleasure. The nervous system learns that safety requires vigilance, control, or numbness, making pleasure feel inaccessible or even threatening.



Common trauma responses that disconnect from pleasure:

- Freeze & Shutdown (Dorsal Vagal Response)

The body numbs sensations as a protective mechanism, making joy, excitement, or comfort feel out of reach.

- Hyperarousal (Fight-or-Flight)

The body is too wired to relax, making pleasure feel fleeting or unsafe.

- Guilt or Shame Around Feeling Good

If someone has experienced trauma, especially in childhood, they may associate feeling good with vulnerability or danger.

Trauma can teach the body that pleasure is not safe or allowed, leading to avoidance or discomfort when experiencing joy.

Beyond individual experiences, society shapes our relationship with pleasure—often devaluing it or tying it to productivity, morality, or external validation.

Common social messages that disconnect people from pleasure:

- **“Pleasure is indulgent or selfish.”**

Many people feel guilty for prioritizing enjoyment, rest, or play.

- **“You must earn pleasure through hard work.”**

Productivity culture makes pleasure feel like a “reward” rather than a basic need.

- **“Certain bodies don’t deserve pleasure.”**

Societal standards around body image, gender roles, and identity can make people feel unworthy of pleasure.

- **“Pleasure is dangerous or shameful.”**

Many cultures and religions moralize pleasure, especially in relation to the body and sexuality.

These messages create internalized barriers to feeling good, leading people to resist or shut down pleasure even when it is available.



OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO PLEASURE

Reclaiming pleasure isn't just about seeking more enjoyable experiences—it's about creating the internal safety and capacity to receive and fully feel them. If stress, trauma, or conditioning have made pleasure feel unfamiliar, fleeting, or even uncomfortable, the process of reconnecting requires patience and intentional practice.

Recognizing Resistance to Pleasure

Before deepening into pleasure, it's important to acknowledge and normalize any discomfort that arises around it. Common barriers include:

- **Hypervigilance & Overactivation** – The nervous system is stuck in survival mode, making it hard to slow down and receive pleasure.
 - **Emotional Numbness or Dissociation** – The body has learned to shut down sensation to avoid pain, making pleasure feel distant or inaccessible.
 - **Guilt & Shame** – Internalized beliefs (e.g., “I don't deserve this,” “Pleasure is selfish”) create unconscious blocks to enjoyment.
 - **Fear of Vulnerability** – Pleasure requires openness, which can feel unsafe if past experiences taught you that feeling good leads to harm, disappointment, or loss.
 - **Over-Reliance on Productivity** – A mindset that values achievement over well-being makes pleasure feel unproductive or unearned.



The Role of the Nervous System in Reclaiming Pleasure

Pleasure isn't just a mental concept—it's a felt experience in the body. If your nervous system isn't used to it, diving straight into intense pleasure can feel overwhelming. Instead, healing happens by:

- **Starting Small:** Introducing micro-moments of pleasure in manageable doses so the nervous system can build capacity.
- **Noticing Without Judgment:** Observing how pleasure feels in the body without pressure to increase or sustain it.
- **Creating Safety First:** Ensuring the body feels safe before introducing deeper sensory experiences.
- **Engaging the Senses:** Using touch, taste, sound, and movement to gently awaken pleasurable sensations.



CULTIVATING EVERYDAY JOY

Reclaiming pleasure isn't just about seeking more enjoyable experiences—it's about creating the internal safety and capacity to receive and fully feel them. If stress, trauma, or conditioning have made pleasure feel unfamiliar, fleeting, or even uncomfortable, the process of reconnecting requires patience and intentional practice.

Pleasure doesn't have to be big or extravagant—it can be woven into daily life.

Micro-Pleasures to Explore:

- Wrapping up in a cozy blanket
- Feeling the warmth of tea or coffee in your hands
- Taking a deep, satisfying breath
- Watching the way light moves through a window
- Moving your body in a way that feels fluid and free

Reflection: What small sources of pleasure do I already have in my life? How can I create more?

PERMISSION, PRESENCE, & PRACTICE

Healing through pleasure is a journey of permission, presence, and practice

A Pleasure Ritual:

1. Choose one simple pleasure to fully engage in today.
2. Slow down and immerse yourself in the experience.
3. Notice how it feels in your body.
4. Write down any insights or sensations that arise.

Final Thought:

Joy is not something we have to chase—it's something we can cultivate within. By welcoming even small moments of pleasure, we create a life that feels more nourishing, expansive, and alive.



Six

Integrating Somatic Awareness into Daily Life

Living in your Body, Not Just Visiting
Start Small
Releasing Barriers to Pleasure



CULTIVATING EVERYDAY JOY

Many people experience moments of body awareness—perhaps noticing tension in their shoulders, feeling their breath deepen during a stretch, or sensing the warmth of the sun on their skin. These moments are valuable, but they are often fleeting and unintentional.

Embodied living, on the other hand, is a more continuous and intentional way of relating to your body. It means not just occasionally tuning in, but moving through the world with a felt sense of presence, responsiveness, and attunement to your body's needs, sensations, and wisdom.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OCCASIONAL BODY AWARENESS & EMBODIED LIVING

Occasional Body Awareness	Embodied Living
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief moments of noticing the body• Often happens only in specific situation (meditation, yoga, discomfort)• May be reactive (only noticing the body when something is wrong)• Can be easily overridden by external demands or mental distraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A continuous relationship with body sensations and signals• Integrated into daily life - awareness is present in movement, rest, emotions, and decision making• Proactive, using body's cues to navigate choices, relationships, and self-care• Becomes an internal compass for well-being, guiding self trust and alignment



WHY INTEGRATION IS A PROCESS OF BUILDING SMALL, SUSTAINABLE HABITS

Shifting from occasional awareness to embodied living doesn't happen overnight. It's not about dramatic changes, but about consistent, small shifts that slowly reshape how you relate to your body.

Why small steps matter:

- ✓ The nervous system learns best through gentle, repeated experiences, rather than overwhelming changes.
- ✓ Small, daily moments of attunement rewire patterns of disconnection and overthinking.
- ✓ Sustainable habits prevent the pressure of perfection—it's about progress, not mastery.

HOW TO BEGIN

Start with short check-ins

– Pause for 10 seconds a few times a day to notice your posture, breath, or muscle tension.

Pair awareness with existing habits

Tune into your body while drinking water, washing your hands, or walking.

Use your senses as reminders

Let touch, sound, or temperature shifts bring you back into presence.

Make movement conscious

Whether stretching, shifting positions, or dancing, bring awareness to how your body feels as you move.

Practice non-judgmental noticing

Instead of trying to fix discomfort, simply witness what arises in your body with curiosity



FINAL THOUGHT: EMBODIMENT IS A PRACTICE, NOT A DESTINATION

Living in tune with your body is not about doing it perfectly—it's about returning to awareness again and again. Each time you pause, breathe, and check in with yourself, you strengthen your connection to your body's wisdom. Over time, these small moments accumulate into a way of being, allowing you to move through life with greater ease, authenticity, and presence.

Dear You,

I want to take a moment to honor you—for showing up, for choosing yourself, and for exploring this journey of embodiment and healing. This workbook was never about doing things perfectly—it was about deepening your connection to yourself, one breath, one sensation, one reflection at a time.

Thank you for trusting this process, for being willing to listen to your body, and for creating space to reconnect with your wisdom, your needs, and your joy. Growth isn't always linear, and healing happens in layers, but every moment you spend in awareness is a powerful act of self-care.

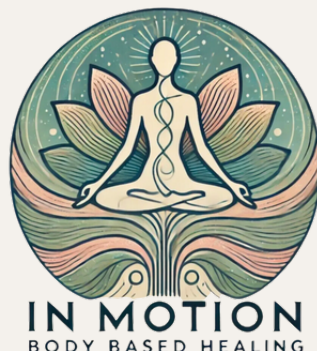
I hope that what you've explored here stays with you—not as a rigid set of rules, but as tools, reminders, and invitations that you can return to whenever you need them. Your body is always here, waiting for you with love.

Know that you are supported, exactly as you are, in every step of this journey.

With Warmth,

Morgan

In Motion Body Based Healing



LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Your wellness journey is uniquely yours, a beautiful unfolding of self-discovery. If you feel called to dive deeper, to explore further into your well-being and mindfulness, consider joining me in a personalized wellness coaching session. Together, we can navigate through your unique path, exploring with curiosity and unfolding each layer of your wellness journey with kindness and understanding. Your story is waiting to be unearthed, and I am here, ready to walk alongside you in every step of this transformative expedition.

Let's journey together.

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