

My Growth My Journey Individual Workbook

A gentle way to use this resource

Begin anywhere. Read one section at a time, choose only what fits, and skip, adapt, pause, or stop as needed. Try one practice before adding another. Reflection is an invitation, not a requirement.

Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | My Reflective Collective

Educational wellness material. Not therapy, diagnosis, medical advice, crisis care, or a substitute for individualized professional support.



Before you begin

Take a moment to notice where you are starting. There is no correct answer and no requirement to complete every prompt.

What is most present?	What would feel supportive?
[ ] Tension or restlessness [ ] Heavy emotion [ ] Numbness or shutdown [ ] Racing thoughts [ ] Low energy [ ] Something else: _____	[ ] More steadiness [ ] More clarity [ ] Comfort or rest [ ] A practical next step [ ] Connection or support [ ] Something else: _____

A simple rhythm

1. Notice	Name what is happening without judging it.
2. Choose	Select one prompt or practice that fits your energy and circumstances.
3. Try	Use it gently for a clear amount of time. Smaller still counts.
4. Check	Notice whether you feel even slightly steadier, clearer, safer, or less alone.

Low-energy option

Read only the headings. Circle or note one sentence that feels useful. Then choose one action that takes five minutes or less. You can return later; stopping is allowed.

A trauma-informed educational wellness worksheet for reflection, choice, self-care, and support.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

A printable reflection and practice resource

MY GROWTH, MY JOURNEY

A Trauma-Informed Workbook for Self-Understanding, Healing & Meaningful Change A compassionate Personal growth is not becoming more acceptable, productive, positive, or easy for aim other people. It is developing a more honest and caring relationship with yourself while choosing actions that reflect your values, needs, dignity, and hopes.

This workbook makes room for strengths, protective responses, identity, culture, nervous-system needs, grief, setbacks, disability, joy, support, and change at your own pace.

NOTICE - UNDERSTAND - CHOOSE - PRACTICE

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PART FOUNDATION

Growth Without Self-Rejection

You do not need to hate who you are in order to change. Acceptance means recognizing what is present; it does not require approving of every behavior or giving up on growth.

BOTH CAN BE TRUE A response may have helped you survive or belong, and it may create difficulties now.

You can honor why it developed and practice alternatives. Compassion and accountability can work together.

My permissions

-] I may go slowly. [ ] I may not know yet.
-] I may change my mind. [ ] I may need support.
-] I may protect privacy. [ ] I may rest.
-] I may celebrate small steps. [ ] I may define growth for myself.

Growth has sometimes felt like pressure to:

I want growth to feel more like:

What I hope to understand - not "fix" - about myself:

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

Choice first: You may write, draw, sit quietly, skip this prompt, or return later. You do not need to force insight or disclosure.

1. Orient: If comfortable, notice the room, the support beneath you, and one

neutral or pleasant detail. Let your breathing be natural.

2. Notice: What happens inside when I imagine accepting myself as I am today?

3. Respond with care: Try: "I can be worthy now and still want something

different."

4. Choose: Choose one way to make this workbook feel safer or more accessible.

Remember: Growth can include resting, grieving, asking for help, changing direction, and recognizing what you have already survived.

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PART 1

Who Am I Beyond Roles & Expectations?

_____
_____ Identity can include roles and achievements, but it is larger than what you provide, produce, survive, or perform.

Parts of my identity

-] Values [ ] Culture/heritage

-] Race/ethnicity [ ] Gender/sexuality

-] Faith/spirituality [ ] Disability/neurotype

-] Relationships [ ] Interests/creativity

-] Community [ ] Work/education

-] Survivor identity [ ] Roles I choose

When I feel most like myself, I am:

A role I value but do not want to define all of me:

A part of me that has not had enough room:

Something others assume about me that does not fit:

A strength rooted in my identity or lived experience:

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Which parts of me feel welcomed, hidden, performed, or protected?

3. Respond with care: Offer this sentence: "Every part of me deserves curiosity

and dignity, even when I am still learning."

4. Choose: Make room for one authentic preference, expression, or need this

week.

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PART 2

My Values Compass

Values are qualities of living you can move toward. Goals can be completed; values guide repeated choices.

Values that may matter

-] Connection [ ] Integrity

-] Compassion [ ] Courage

-] Creativity [ ] Learning

-] Justice [ ] Stability

-] Freedom [ ] Play

-] Health [ ] Spirituality

-] Community [ ] Rest

-] Adventure [ ] Authenticity

My five most important values:

A value I am already living:

A value that feels neglected:

One small action that would move toward it:

VALUES ARE NOT A value such as care does not require self-abandonment. Achievement does not

RULES require exhaustion. Family does not require tolerating harm. Values can be expressed flexibly and with boundaries.

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Is this value truly mine, or does it feel inherited, demanded, or tied to

approval?

3. Respond with care: Try: "I am allowed to choose what a meaningful life means

to me."

4. Choose: Choose one value-based action small enough to complete with

current capacity.

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PART 3

My Nervous System & Protective Responses

Fight, flight, freeze, shutdown, appease, attach, and submit responses are not conscious failures. They are patterns of protection shaped by biology and experience.

Signals I notice

-] Racing heart [ ] Muscle tension
-] Urgency [ ] Anger
-] Overthinking [ ] Restlessness
-] Blank mind [ ] Numbness
-] Heavy body [ ] People-pleasing
-] Hypervigilance [ ] Wanting to disappear

A situation that activates protection:

What my system seems to fear:

What the response tries to do for me:

The impact it sometimes has now:

Regulation options

-] Orient to the room [ ] Movement
-] Longer exhale if helpful [ ] Cold or warm sensation
-] Music/rhythm [ ] Weighted pressure
-] Reduce input [ ] Food/water
-] Safe connection [ ] Professional support

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Am I connected enough, activated, shut down, or unsure?

3. Respond with care: Say: "My response makes sense in context. I can offer my

body information about the present."

4. Choose: Choose an option that feels supportive; do not force eye closure,

stillness, breathwork, or body focus.

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PART 4

Patterns, Triggers & Choice Points

A trigger is a cue that activates protection. Awareness can create a choice point between the first reaction and the next action.

THE PATTERN MAP Trigger or cue fi body response fi emotion fi meaning/story fi protective urge fi action fi short-term relief fi longer-term impact.

A recurring trigger or cue:

What happens in my body:

Emotion and story:

Protective urge and action:

Short-term relief it provides:

Longer-term impact:

A different next action I could practice:

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: What younger need, current need, or boundary might this pattern point

toward?

3. Respond with care: Try: "I do not have to shame a protective response in order

to redirect it."

4. Choose: Identify the earliest moment in the pattern where a 5% change may be

possible.

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PART 5

The Inner Critic & Self-Compassion

Harsh self-talk may try to prevent rejection, failure, danger, or loss of control. Shame often reduces flexibility rather than creating sustainable change.

My critic tends to say:

-] You are not enough. [ ] You should be further ahead.

-] Do not make mistakes. [ ] Everyone is judging you.

-] Your needs are too much. [ ] Rest is lazy.

-] You must handle this alone. [ ] If you try, you will fail.

The critic may be trying to protect me from:

What it costs me:

What a wise and caring voice might say instead:

SELF-COMPASSION Mindfulness: "This is painful." Common humanity: "Struggle is part of being human; I

HAS THREE PARTS am not uniquely defective." Kindness: "What would support me now?"

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Whose voice or standard does this criticism resemble?

3. Respond with care: Place a hand where comfortable or simply soften your

tone: "I am having a hard moment, not becoming a bad person."

4. Choose: Rewrite one critical statement as accurate, accountable, and kind.

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PART 6

Needs, Emotions & Self-Trust

Emotions offer information about needs, meanings, boundaries, losses, and hopes. They are not commands and do not have to be justified to be acknowledged.

What may be present _____
_____

-] Safety [ ] Rest

-] Belonging [ ] Choice

-] Respect [ ] Clarity

-] Comfort [ ] Grief

-] Play [ ] Meaning

-] Privacy [ ] Support

-] Competence [ ] Fairness

-] Connection [ ] Autonomy

An emotion I find hard to allow:

What I learned that emotion meant:

What it may be communicating now:

A need I can acknowledge without immediately solving:

Self-trust evidence

A time I noticed something important:

A decision I made with the information I had:

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: What do I know, what am I guessing, and what do I need more

information about?

3. Respond with care: Try: "My feelings are real; I can listen to them and still

choose my response."

4. Choose: Name one low-risk decision you can make in alignment with your

present knowledge.

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PART 7

Boundaries, Consent & Relationships

A boundary describes what you will do to protect safety, dignity, time, energy, privacy, or values. It is not a method of controlling another person.

Areas to consider

-] Time [ ] Touch

-] Emotional disclosure [ ] Money

-] Digital privacy [ ] Work

-] Family [ ] Friendships

-] Home space [ ] Caregiving

-] Sexual consent [ ] Availability

I notice I may need a boundary when:

The boundary I want to communicate:

What I will do if it is not respected:

What makes this boundary difficult:

BOUNDARY SCRIPT "I am not available for ___. I am willing to ___. If ___ happens, I will ___." Keep the action within your control. Safety planning may be needed when retaliation is possible.

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Am I setting a boundary, making a request, avoiding vulnerability, or

trying to control an outcome?

3. Respond with care: Say: "My needs and limits are allowed to exist, even when

someone is disappointed."

4. Choose: Practice the boundary in writing or with a trusted, safe person.

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PART 8

Habits That Work With My Actual Life

Sustainable habits are supported by cues, environment, capacity, access, meaning, and recovery - not willpower alone.

Barriers that may matter

-] Unclear first step [ ] Low energy
-] Executive-function load [ ] Pain or disability
-] Perfectionism [ ] Fear of failure
-] Sensory barriers [ ] No supplies
-] Too many goals [ ] Unsupportive environment
-] Depression/anxiety [ ] Unrealistic timing

The behavior I want to support:

Why it matters to me:

The smallest useful version:

Cue or anchor:

Environment change:

Low-capacity version:

How I will acknowledge completion:

TRY "FLOOR, Floor: the smallest version that keeps contact with the habit. Target: the realistic TARGET, STRETCH" usual version. Stretch: an optional larger version when energy and time are available.

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Is this plan designed for my real capacity or an imagined ideal self?

3. Respond with care: Try: "Consistency can include flexible versions, rest, and

returning."

4. Choose: Reduce the first step until it feels approachable, then test it as an

experiment.

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PART 9

Perfectionism, Avoidance & Procrastination

Avoidance may reduce distress in the short term. Perfectionism can make starting, finishing, or being seen feel dangerous.

The task or situation I avoid:

What I fear may happen:

What perfectionism demands:

What "good enough" could mean:

A five-minute opening step:

Support options

-] Body doubling [ ] Timer
-] Permission for a rough draft [ ] Break into visible steps
-] Remove a decision [ ] Ask for clarification
-] External reminder [ ] Celebrate starting
-] Stop at a planned time [ ] Seek treatment/support AVOIDANCE IS Ask whether the task is unclear, unsafe, inaccessible, misaligned, overwhelming, INFORMATION boring, grief-linked, or associated with shame. The intervention should fit the barrier.

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: What feeling appears when I imagine beginning imperfectly?

3. Respond with care: Say: "My worth will survive an imperfect attempt."

4. Choose: Choose a beginning step, a stop time, and a compassionate response

if you do not complete it.

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PART 10

Grief, Change & Letting Go

Growth may involve grieving people, identities, hopes, time, health, certainty, or versions of yourself that once helped you survive.

Something I am grieving or releasing:

What it meant to me:

What I miss, regret, or wish had been different:

What I want to carry forward:

A ritual or act of acknowledgment:

GRIEF IS NOT Relief and sadness can coexist. Returning grief does not mean you are failing to heal.

LINEAR Some losses need witnessing more than solutions.

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: What would it mean to let this loss matter without making it my entire

identity?

3. Respond with care: Offer: "I do not have to rush grief to prove I am growing."

4. Choose: Choose one gentle way to honor the loss or seek companionship with

it.

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PART 11

Strengths, Joy & What Is Already Working

Growth is not only problem correction. It also includes noticing capacity, pleasure, resistance, creativity, connection, and survival wisdom.

Strengths I may recognize

-] Persistence [ ] Humor

-] Curiosity [ ] Empathy

-] Creativity [ ] Discernment

-] Courage [ ] Adaptability

-] Loyalty [ ] Advocacy

-] Resourcefulness [ ] Patience

-] Boundaries [ ] Spirituality

-] Playfulness [ ] Leadership

Something difficult I have moved through:

What helped me survive or adapt:

A quality I respect in myself:

A joy, interest, or pleasure I want more room for:

Someone or somewhere that helps me feel like myself:

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: What changes when I look for evidence of strength as carefully as I

look for flaws?

3. Respond with care: Say: "My pain is real, and it is not the only truth about me."

4. Choose: Schedule one small experience of pleasure, meaning, creativity, or

connection.

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PART 12

Support, Interdependence & Asking for Help

Healthy independence includes the ability to receive appropriate support. Interdependence allows both agency and connection.

Types of support

-] Listening [ ] Practical help

-] Information [ ] Professional care

-] Accountability [ ] Encouragement

-] Advocacy [ ] Companionship

-] Financial/resource support [ ] Rest/respite

-] Spiritual/community care [ ] Emergency support

A sign I need more support:

What makes asking difficult:

A safe-enough person or resource:

My specific request:

If that person cannot help, my next option:

ASKING SCRIPT "I am dealing with ___. Would you be willing to ___ by ___? It is okay to tell me what you can realistically offer."

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Do I fear being burdensome, indebted, rejected, controlled, or misunderstood?

3. Respond with care: Try: "Needing support is part of being human; I can choose whom, what, and how much."

4. Choose: Make one specific, bounded request or gather one support resource.

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PART 13

Setbacks, Relapse & Returning

Change is rarely linear. A setback can reveal triggers, unmet needs, missing supports, or an unrealistic plan.

What happened - in observable terms:

What was happening before it:

What need, trigger, or barrier may have mattered:

What helped even a little:

What I want to adjust:

Compassionate review

-] I can take responsibility without attacking myself. [ ] I can repair impact where appropriate.

-] I can update the plan. [ ] I can seek more support.

-] I can return today. [ ] I can reconsider whether this goal fits.

A RETURN IS The skill is not never drifting. It is noticing, learning, repairing, and returning with less PROGRESS shame and more useful support.

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: What would I say to someone I cared about in this same situation?

3. Respond with care: Offer those same words to yourself without requiring that

they feel believable immediately.

4. Choose: Choose the next kind action, not a punishment or an entire life

overhaul.

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PART 14

My 30-Day Growth Experiment

Choose one direction rather than attempting to transform every area at once.

_____

_____

The value or area I want to support:

My small repeatable action:

Floor / target / stretch versions:

When and where:

Likely barriers:

Supports and backup plan:

Weekly check-in

-] What helped? [ ] What felt difficult?

-] What did I learn? [ ] What needs adjusting?

-] What deserves acknowledgment? [ ] Do I keep, change, pause, or release this?

How I will notice progress beyond perfection:

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: Does this experiment feel chosen, meaningful, accessible, and kind

enough to sustain?

3. Respond with care: Say: "This is an experiment, not a verdict about my

character."

4. Choose: Commit only to the next small repetition and a weekly review.

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PART 15

My Personal Growth Plan

A flexible statement of values, supports, boundaries, and ways you want to return to yourself.

I want to live with more:

I want to release or reduce:

My needs and limits deserve:

When I am overwhelmed, I will try:

People or resources I can contact:

A truth I want to remember:

PERSONAL I will practice curiosity before judgment, compassion with accountability, and change COMMITMENT that honors my dignity, identity, capacity, and values. I may revise this plan as I learn.

THERAPEUTIC PAUSE FOR SELF-REFLECTION

2. Notice: What feels most alive, honest, or hopeful after completing this

workbook?

3. Respond with care: Thank the parts of you that participated, protected,

paused, or told the truth.

4. Choose: Choose one next step and one way to rest after this reflection.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Educational-wellness disclaimer

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Supportive practices and reminders

Trauma-informed choice

You are in charge of pace, privacy, and participation. Keep your eyes open if that feels safer. Change the words, position, movement, or environment. Skip any prompt that increases distress. You never have to describe a traumatic experience to benefit from grounding or reflection.

A one-minute mindfulness pause

Notice one point of support beneath you. Look around and name three neutral things you see. Notice one sound and one body sensation without trying to change either. Ask, 'What would support me in the next few minutes?' Choose the smallest workable response.

Believable affirmations

Choose language your mind can accept. Try: 'I can take one step at a time.' 'My needs and boundaries matter.' 'I am allowed to pause.' 'I can ask for support.' 'This moment is difficult, and it will not always feel exactly like this.' Edit any statement until it feels honest and respectful.

Practical tips

Pair reflection with water, food, movement, rest, medication as prescribed, or contact with a safe person when needed. Save the most helpful page where it is easy to find. Revisit the resource when you are relatively steady so the choices feel familiar during harder moments.

When more support is appropriate

A worksheet cannot provide emergency care, diagnosis, or individualized treatment. Consider a qualified health or mental-health professional when distress is intense, persistent, worsening, affecting daily functioning, or connected with safety concerns. In immediate danger, contact local emergency services or a crisis service available in your country.

Integrate and choose your next step

Pause after reading. More information is not always more helpful; the goal is to leave with one choice you can actually use.

What stood out?

_____

_____

What is one kind, realistic next step?

_____

_____

What support, boundary, or adaptation would help?

_____

_____

If this did not help

You did not fail. Try making the step smaller, changing from a thinking practice to a body or sensory practice, checking basic needs, or involving a safe person. Strong, persistent, or worsening distress may need professional or crisis support beyond a worksheet.