

Important Safety Information

This workbook is intended as a supportive educational resource.

It is not a substitute for psychotherapy, medical care, crisis intervention, or emergency services.

If you are experiencing thoughts of harming yourself or others, are unable to maintain your safety, or are experiencing a mental health emergency, please seek immediate assistance.

Emergency resources include:

- Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)
- Call 911 or your local emergency services
- Go to the nearest emergency room
- Contact your therapist, psychiatrist, physician, or crisis support provider

Please use this workbook within your personal limits.

If an exercise feels overwhelming, stop and return to a Lighthouse Practice focused on orientation, grounding, or support.

Healing does not require pushing beyond your capacity.

Going slowly is often the fastest way forward.

Please remember:

You do not have to do this alone.

Support is available.

PART V: FINDING VITALITY

Introduction: More Than Survival

Much of healing begins with learning how to feel safe.

We learn how to regulate.

We learn how to work with triggers.

We learn how to understand our nervous system.

These are important skills.

But healing is not only about reducing suffering.

Healing is also about increasing connection.

Connection to ourselves.

Connection to others.

Connection to meaning.

Connection to joy.

Connection to possibility.

Connection to life itself.

There often comes a point in healing when the question begins to change.

Instead of asking:

"How do I stop hurting?"

We begin asking:

"What helps me feel alive?"

This section explores that question.

Vitality does not mean happiness all the time.

It does not mean endless energy.

It does not mean the absence of struggle.

Vitality is the felt sense of being connected to life.

You may experience vitality through:

- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Purpose
- Nature
- Movement
- Relationships
- Learning
- Play
- Wonder
- Meaning
- Beauty

Vitality often appears quietly.

A moment of laughter.

A deep breath.

A meaningful conversation.

A sunset.

A song.

A walk.

A feeling of possibility.

This section is an invitation to notice and cultivate those experiences.

Not because they erase pain.

But because they help remind us that life contains more than pain.

Before Continuing

Take a moment and reflect.

When was the last time I felt truly alive?

What was I doing?

Who was I with?

What did I notice in my body?

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Remembering Vitality

Take a moment to remember a time when you felt:

- Engaged
- Connected
- Curious

- Peaceful
- Inspired
- Present

You do not need to recreate the experience.

Simply remember it.

What memory came to mind?

As you remember it, what happens in your body?

A Gentle Reminder

You do not need to earn vitality.

You do not need to become fully healed before experiencing moments of joy, wonder, meaning, or connection.

Vitality is not a reward at the end of healing.

It is part of healing itself.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 15: Remembering What Supports Life.

Chapter 15: Remembering What Supports Life

The Seeds of Vitality

Vitality is often easier to recognize in hindsight.

We look back and realize:

"I felt more like myself then."

"I felt engaged."

"I felt connected."

"I felt alive."

Many people who have experienced trauma become highly skilled at noticing danger, problems, and what is not working.

This is understandable.

The nervous system is designed to detect threat.

Yet healing also involves strengthening our ability to notice what supports life.

The goal of this chapter is not to force positivity.

The goal is to identify the experiences, people, places, activities, and qualities that nourish you.

These are the seeds of vitality.

Looking Back

Take a moment to reflect on your life.

Think about times when you felt:

- Engaged
- Connected
- Curious
- Energized
- Peaceful
- Inspired

- Meaningful
- Fully yourself

What memories come to mind?

What stands out about those experiences?

What Helps Me Feel Alive?

Check any that resonate.

Relationships

- ☐ Meaningful conversations
- ☐ Time with friends
- ☐ Time with family
- ☐ Time with a partner
- ☐ Time with children
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Being understood
- ☐ Helping others

Nature

☐ Mountains

☐ Ocean

☐ Lakes

☐ Rivers

☐ Forests

☐ Animals

☐ Gardening

☐ Fresh air

Movement

☐ Walking

☐ Hiking

☐ Running

☐ Yoga

☐ Dancing

☐ Stretching

☐ Sports

☐ Strength training

Creativity

☐ Writing

☐ Music

☐ Photography

☐ Art

☐ Cooking

☐ Building

☐ Crafting

☐ Creating something new

Learning

☐ Reading

☐ Classes

☐ Travel

☐ Exploration

☐ New experiences

☐ Curiosity

Spirituality

☐ Meditation

☐ Prayer

☐ Ritual

☐ Time in nature

☐ Reflection

☐ Connection to something larger

Play

☐ Humor

☐ Games

☐ Adventure

☐ Fun

☐ Exploration

☐ Spontaneity

My Vitality Inventory

List anything that contributes to a sense of aliveness.

No item is too small.

People

Places

Activities

Experiences

Qualities

Examples:

Curiosity

Freedom

Adventure

Creativity

Connection

Learning

Beauty

Playfulness

Meaning

My qualities:

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Tracking Aliveness

Take a moment to think about one person, place, activity, or memory that brings a sense of vitality.

Choose one.

As you focus on it:

What do you notice in your body?

Do you notice:

- ☐ Warmth
- ☐ Expansion
- ☐ Relaxation
- ☐ Energy
- ☐ Curiosity
- ☐ Softening
- ☐ Interest
- ☐ Hope

☐ Something else

Stay with that experience for a few moments.

Allow your nervous system to register it.

What Diminishes Vitality?

Just as it is important to know what supports life, it is helpful to understand what depletes it.

What consistently drains my energy?

What leaves me feeling disconnected from myself?

Reconnecting With What Matters

Sometimes vitality fades because we have become disconnected from what is important to us.

Reflect:

What matters most to me right now?

What values feel important?

What do I want more of in my life?

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The One Percent Exercise

You do not need a complete life overhaul.

You do not need to transform everything.

Ask yourself:

What is one small thing I could do this week that would increase my sense of vitality by 1%?

Examples:

- Spend time outside
- Call a friend
- Listen to music
- Read for pleasure
- Visit a favorite place
- Watch a sunset
- Take a walk
- Create something

My answer:

Vitality and Permission

Many people unknowingly believe they must earn joy.

Earn rest.

Earn pleasure.

Earn connection.

Earn fun.

Take a moment and complete the following:

I give myself permission to:

What happens in your body when you read those words?

Reflection

What did I discover about vitality?

What surprised me?

What feels most important to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What contributes most to my sense of aliveness?

Is there anything that feels even 1% more alive than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Vitality is not something you find once and keep forever.

It is a relationship.

It grows through attention.

It grows through practice.

It grows through connection.

The more we notice what supports life, the more available those experiences become.

Not because life becomes perfect.

But because our awareness expands.

You already carry the seeds of vitality within you.

This chapter simply helped you remember where some of them are planted.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 16: Small Steps Toward Vitality.

Chapter 16: Small Steps Toward Vitality

Vitality Grows Through Action

After experiencing trauma, loss, burnout, depression, anxiety, or prolonged stress, many people find themselves waiting to feel better before they begin living again.

They may think:

"When I feel more motivated, I'll start."

"When my anxiety goes away, I'll do that."

"When I have more energy, I'll reconnect."

"When I'm healed, I'll live my life."

While this is understandable, vitality often works differently.

Many times, vitality grows through action.

Not huge action.

Not dramatic transformation.

Small action.

One choice.

One moment.

One step.

The goal of this chapter is not to create a perfect life.

The goal is to help you identify small, realistic ways to move toward what matters.

The Myth of the Big Change

Many people believe change requires a major breakthrough.

In reality, meaningful change often happens through small, repeated experiences.

A five-minute walk.

A conversation.

A moment of laughter.

A creative project.

A healthy boundary.

A new experience.

Small moments accumulate.

Vitality often grows in the spaces between them.

Looking for What Is Already Working

Before adding anything new, take a moment to notice what already supports you.

What is currently going well?

What helps me feel connected?

What am I already doing that supports my well-being?

Building a Vitality Practice

Think about the activities, experiences, and values identified in the previous chapter.

Choose a few that feel realistic and available.

Something That Supports My Body

Something That Supports My Mind

Something That Supports Connection

Something That Supports Joy

Something That Supports Meaning

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The Five-Minute Rule

When motivation is low, try reducing the size of the task.

Ask:

Can I do this for five minutes?

Examples:

- Walk for five minutes
- Read for five minutes
- Journal for five minutes
- Stretch for five minutes
- Sit outside for five minutes

The goal is not completion.

The goal is engagement.

What could I do for five minutes today?

Reclaiming Curiosity

Trauma often narrows attention toward survival.

Vitality often expands through curiosity.

Ask yourself:

What am I curious about right now?

What would I like to learn?

What have I been wanting to explore?

Reclaiming Play

Many adults stop making space for play.

Yet play is often an important pathway to vitality.

Play is not productivity.

Play is not achievement.

Play is engagement for its own sake.

What felt playful when I was younger?

What feels playful now?

How might I make more room for play?

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The Vitality Experiment

Choose one activity from your Vitality Inventory.

Try it this week.

Not because you have to.

Not because it will solve everything.

Simply as an experiment.

What will I try?

When will I do it?

What am I hoping to notice?

Permission to Begin Again

There may be activities, dreams, interests, or relationships that once brought you alive.

Perhaps they feel distant now.

That is okay.

You do not have to pick up where you left off.

You only need to begin where you are.

Ask yourself:

What am I ready to return to?

Vitality and Choice

Trauma often leaves people feeling as though life happens to them.

Healing often includes reconnecting with choice.

Not control.

Choice.

Reflect:

Where do I currently have choice in my life?

What choice would support me right now?

The One Small Step

Before moving on, identify one action you can take in the next 24 hours that supports vitality.

Keep it simple.

Keep it realistic.

Keep it achievable.

My next step:

How confident am I that I can do it?

____ /10

If the number is below 7, make the step smaller.

Reflection

What did I learn about moving toward vitality?

What surprised me?

What feels most important to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What step feels most available to me?

Is there anything that feels even 1% more possible than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Vitality rarely arrives all at once.

It often returns in small moments.

A conversation.

A walk.

A laugh.

A creative idea.

A meaningful connection.

A choice that reflects who you are becoming.

You do not need to wait until you feel completely ready.

You do not need to wait until healing is finished.

Sometimes vitality grows because we take a small step toward it.

And then another.

And then another.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 17: Reconnecting With Choice.

Chapter 17: Reconnecting With Choice

More Choice Than You Think

One of the most painful consequences of trauma, loss, chronic stress, or difficult life experiences is the feeling that choice has disappeared.

Life begins to feel reactive.

Automatic.

Constrained.

We may find ourselves living from habit, survival, fear, obligation, or expectation.

Over time, it can become difficult to remember that we still have agency.

Not complete control.

Not certainty.

Not the ability to determine every outcome.

But choice.

Healing is often the gradual process of reconnecting with the places where choice still exists.

The goal of this chapter is not to make perfect decisions.

The goal is to help you notice the choices that are available to you right now.

Choice Versus Control

Many of us spend energy trying to control things that are beyond our influence.

Other times, we overlook the choices that are available to us.

Take a moment to reflect.

What is outside of my control?

What remains within my influence?

What choices are available to me today?

Looking at My Life Through the Lens of Choice

Consider the following areas of your life.

You do not need to change anything right now.

Simply notice where choice exists.

My Relationships

What choices do I have?

My Health and Well-Being

What choices do I have?

My Work

What choices do I have?

My Environment

What choices do I have?

My Daily Life

What choices do I have?

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The Choice Pause

When you feel stuck, overwhelmed, or trapped, pause and ask:

What are my options?

List at least three.

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

What do I notice as I expand my view?

The Difference Between Obligation and Alignment

Sometimes we continue doing things because we believe we should.

Because others expect it.

Because it is familiar.

Because it feels safe.

Take a moment and reflect.

What am I doing out of obligation?

What feels aligned with who I am becoming?

Listening to Your Inner Compass

Imagine that your life is guided not by fear, but by values. Ask yourself:

What matters most to me?

What kind of person do I want to be?

What qualities do I want to cultivate?



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Future Self Reflection

Imagine yourself one year from now.

Not a perfect version.

Not a healed version.

Simply a version of yourself who has continued taking small steps toward vitality.

What do you notice?

How does this version of you move through the world?

What advice might this future self offer you today?

Permission to Change

Many people feel guilty when they grow.

When they set boundaries.

When they choose differently.

When they leave old roles behind.

When they become someone new.

Take a moment and complete the following:

I give myself permission to:

What happens in your body as you read those words?

Creating a Life-Giving Direction

You do not need a detailed plan.

You only need a direction. Reflect:

What do I want more of?

What do I want less of?

What direction feels life-giving?

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My Next Choice

Before moving on, identify one choice available to you within the next week.

It does not need to be dramatic.

It only needs to be intentional.

My next choice is:

Why does this choice matter?

How might this choice support vitality?

Reflection

What did I learn about choice?

What surprised me?

What feels most important to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What choices feel available to me right now?

Is there anything that feels even 1% more possible than when I began this chapter?

Closing Part V: Finding Vitality

Throughout this section, you have explored:

What supports life.

What brings you alive.

The small steps that create momentum.

The choices that shape your future.

Vitality is not a destination.

It is a relationship.

A relationship with yourself.

A relationship with others.

A relationship with meaning, curiosity, creativity, connection, and possibility.

There will be seasons when vitality feels close.

There will be seasons when it feels distant.

Neither experience defines you.

What matters is your willingness to keep returning.

Again and again.

To what supports life.

To what matters.

To what brings you home to yourself.