

SOMATIC STUDIO COLLECTIVE

Finding Your Way Back to Yourself

A Self-Guided Resource for Times When You Need Support

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How to Use This Guide

Throughout this workbook you will see a lighthouse symbol.

Lighthouse Practice

These exercises are intended to be your first stop when you are feeling activated, overwhelmed, disconnected, anxious, frozen, or unsure what to do next.

Think of these practices as places to pause and regain your bearings.

Just as a lighthouse helps guide ships through rough waters, these exercises are designed to help you reconnect with the present moment and find support within yourself.

You do not need to complete the workbook in order.

If you are struggling, simply turn to the nearest Lighthouse Practice and begin there.

Even a few moments of orientation, grounding, or resource tracking can help create more space in your nervous system.

Small shifts matter.

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.

Chapter 1: What's Happening Right Now?

A Gentle Beginning

If you are opening this guide, chances are something feels difficult, overwhelming, confusing, activating, or simply hard to make sense of.

Before we try to solve anything, fix anything, or figure anything out, let's begin by noticing where you are right now.

You do not need to have the right answers.

You do not need to understand why you feel the way you do.

You only need to be willing to become curious about your present experience.

Healing often begins not by changing what is happening, but by becoming aware of what is already here.

Take a slow breath.

Look around the room.

Notice where your body is supported.

There is nowhere else you need to be right now.

What Brought Me Here Today?

Take a moment to write a few words, phrases, or sentences.

What happened that led you to open this guide?

What Am I Aware Of Right Now?

Without trying to change anything, notice what is present.

Thoughts

What thoughts keep pulling for your attention?

Emotions

What emotions do you notice?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Frustration
- ☐ Sadness
- ☐ Grief
- ☐ Shame
- ☐ Guilt
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Relief
- ☐ Hope
- ☐ Other _____

Body Sensations

What sensations do you notice in your body?

Check any that fit.

- ☐ Tightness
- ☐ Pressure
- ☐ Heaviness
- ☐ Warmth
- ☐ Coldness
- ☐ Tingling
- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Shaking
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Tension
- ☐ Spaciousness
- ☐ Other _____

Where do you notice these sensations?

How Activated Do I Feel?

Using a scale from 0–10:

0 = completely calm and settled

10 = the most activated I can imagine feeling

My current activation level is:

_____/10

What Do I Need Most Right Now?

Without overthinking, complete the sentence:

Right now I need more:

- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Rest
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Space
- ☐ Connection
- ☐ Movement
- ☐ Comfort
- ☐ Clarity
- ☐ Nourishment
- ☐ Grounding
- ☐ Other _____

A Moment of Reflection

Take a moment to notice what you discovered.

What stood out?

What surprised you?

Is there anything your body may be trying to communicate to you?

Before Moving On

You have already done something important.

You paused.

You noticed.

You became curious.

Nothing may have changed yet, and that is okay.

Awareness is often the first step toward regulation.

As you continue through this guide, remember that you do not need to force yourself into feeling better. The goal is not perfection. The goal is to develop a deeper relationship with your experience, one moment at a time.

Resource Check

Before moving on, take a moment to notice whether there is anything in your experience that feels supportive, neutral, or even slightly easier.

You do not need to feel good. You are simply looking for what is here.

What feels supportive right now?

Examples might include:

- A pet nearby
- A comfortable chair
- A favorite blanket
- A friend
- A memory
- A favorite place

- The sound of rain
- A cup of tea
- A part of your body that feels settled

What feels neutral?

Neutral experiences are often overlooked, but they can help the nervous system settle.

Examples:

- A wall
- The floor
- A lamp
- The sound of a fan
- Your breath
- The feeling of your clothing

What feels difficult right now?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier than when you first opened this guide?

What do I want to remember before moving on?

A Final Pause

Take a slow look around the room.

Notice three things you can see.

Notice where your body is supported.

Notice one thing that feels safe, neutral, or pleasant.

You do not have to hold on to that experience.

Simply notice that it exists.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 2: Finding My Location.

Chapter 2: Finding My Location

Coming Back to Here and Now

When we become activated, overwhelmed, frightened, or disconnected, it is common for our attention to narrow.

We may become lost in thoughts, memories, fears, future worries, or old experiences.

Sometimes our nervous system begins responding to something from the past as if it is happening right now.

Orientation helps us reconnect with the present moment.

Orientation is not about convincing yourself that everything is okay.

It is about helping your nervous system gather information about where you are right now.

The goal is simple:

To help your body recognize that this moment is different from other moments.

Before We Begin

Take a moment and look around the room.

There is no right way to do this.

Allow your eyes to move naturally.

You are not searching for anything.

You are simply noticing.

Take your time.

Orienting to Your Environment

Slowly look around the room.

Allow your eyes to land on objects that feel interesting, neutral, pleasant, or familiar.

Notice:

- Colors
- Shapes

- Light
- Texture
- Movement
- Distance

As you look around, ask yourself:

What do I notice?

What catches my attention?

Is there anything that feels pleasant, comforting, or familiar?

Locating Yourself in Time

When we are activated, our nervous system can lose track of time.

Let's gently reconnect with the present.

Answer the following:

Today's date: _____

My age: _____

The year is: _____

The city I am in: _____

The place I am sitting right now: _____

One thing I know to be true right now:

Locating Yourself in Space

Notice your body.

Without changing anything:

My feet are touching:

My back is supported by:

My hands are resting on:

The closest object to me is:

The farthest thing I can see is:

The 5-4-3-2-1 Exercise

This exercise helps widen awareness and reconnect with the present environment.

Five Things I Can See

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Four Things I Can Feel

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

Three Things I Can Hear

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Two Things I Can Smell

1. _____
2. _____

One Thing I Can Taste

Finding a Glimmer

A glimmer is a small moment that brings a sense of ease, safety, connection, curiosity, or aliveness.

Glimmers are often subtle.

You are not looking for happiness.

You are looking for something that feels even slightly supportive.

As you look around:

What feels pleasant?

What feels beautiful?

What feels comforting?

What feels familiar?

If I Am Highly Activated

If your activation level feels above a 7 out of 10, try this sequence:

1. Stop reading.
2. Put both feet on the floor.
3. Slowly look around the room.
4. Name five things you see.
5. Find one object that feels neutral or pleasant.
6. Notice your breathing without changing it.
7. Feel the support beneath your body.
8. Stay with that support for one minute.

You do not need to do anything else.

Orientation Practice Log

After completing this chapter:

Before Orientation

My activation level: ____ /10

After Orientation

My activation level: ____ /10

What changed?

What stayed the same?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier?

A Final Reflection

Take a slow look around one more time.

Notice the room.

Notice your body.

Notice the support beneath you.

Notice that you have arrived here, in this moment.

You do not need to solve anything right now.

For this moment, simply notice where you are.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 3: Checking My Nervous System.

Chapter 3: Checking My Nervous System

Understanding What Is Happening Inside

Many of us have been taught to ask:

"What's wrong with me?"

A more helpful question is:

"What state is my nervous system in right now?"

Your nervous system is constantly gathering information from both your internal and external worlds.

It is asking:

- Am I safe?
- Am I connected?
- Do I need protection?
- Do I need to take action?
- Can I rest?

When stress, trauma, grief, conflict, uncertainty, or overwhelm occur, your nervous system responds automatically.

These responses are not signs of weakness.

They are survival responses.

The goal of this chapter is not to judge your response.

The goal is to understand it.

When we understand our nervous system state, we can begin to offer ourselves what we actually need.

A Different Way of Looking at Yourself

Before continuing, take a moment to consider:

The reactions I have today were often adaptations that helped me survive difficult experiences in the past.

My nervous system is not trying to hurt me.

My nervous system is trying to protect me.

Take a breath and notice what happens when you read those words.

The Nervous System States

You may recognize yourself in more than one state.

That is completely normal.

Many people move between states throughout the day.

Fight

Fight energy often appears when the nervous system believes it must push back, protect, defend, or regain control.

Fight May Feel Like:

- ☐ Irritable
- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Frustrated
- ☐ Impatient
- ☐ Critical
- ☐ Defensive
- ☐ Restless
- ☐ Ready for conflict
- ☐ Easily triggered

In My Body I May Notice:

- ☐ Tight jaw
- ☐ Clenched fists
- ☐ Heat
- ☐ Increased heart rate
- ☐ Muscle tension
- ☐ Pressure in chest
- ☐ Feeling "charged"

What Fight Often Needs:

- ☐ Movement
- ☐ Boundaries
- ☐ Expression
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Space

Reflection

How does fight show up in my life?

Flight

Flight energy often appears when the nervous system believes it must escape, avoid, solve, fix, or stay busy.

Flight May Feel Like:

- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Worry

- ☐ Overthinking
- ☐ Racing thoughts
- ☐ Difficulty slowing down
- ☐ Urgency
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Constant planning
- ☐ Difficulty resting

In My Body I May Notice:

- ☐ Shallow breathing
- ☐ Tight chest
- ☐ Butterflies
- ☐ Jitteriness
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Difficulty sitting still

What Flight Often Needs:

- ☐ Slowing down
- ☐ Orientation
- ☐ Grounding
- ☐ Containment
- ☐ Support

Reflection

How does flight show up in my life?

Freeze

Freeze often occurs when the nervous system feels overwhelmed and does not know what action will bring safety.

Freeze May Feel Like:

- ☐ Stuck
- ☐ Numb
- ☐ Blank
- ☐ Unable to decide
- ☐ Disconnected
- ☐ Immobilized
- ☐ Foggy
- ☐ Confused
- ☐ Unable to start

In My Body I May Notice:

- ☐ Heaviness
- ☐ Reduced energy
- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Slowed movement
- ☐ Feeling distant
- ☐ Difficulty accessing emotions

What Freeze Often Needs:

- ☐ Small steps
- ☐ Gentle movement
- ☐ Orientation
- ☐ Patience
- ☐ Compassion

Reflection

How does freeze show up in my life?

Fawn

Fawn often develops when maintaining connection feels necessary for safety.

Fawn May Feel Like:

- ☐ Pleasing others
- ☐ Difficulty saying no
- ☐ Worrying about disappointing people
- ☐ Ignoring personal needs
- ☐ Excessive caretaking
- ☐ Avoiding conflict
- ☐ Taking responsibility for others' feelings

In My Body I May Notice:

- ☐ Tension
- ☐ Exhaustion
- ☐ Tight chest
- ☐ Difficulty identifying my own needs

What Fawn Often Needs:

- ☐ Boundaries
- ☐ Self-trust
- ☐ Permission to have needs
- ☐ Support

☐ Self-compassion

Reflection

How does fawn show up in my life?

Collapse

Collapse often occurs when the nervous system feels depleted, defeated, hopeless, or without sufficient resources.

Collapse May Feel Like:

- ☐ Exhaustion
- ☐ Hopelessness
- ☐ Giving up
- ☐ Isolation
- ☐ Emptiness
- ☐ Disconnection
- ☐ Lack of motivation
- ☐ Feeling shut down

In My Body I May Notice:

- ☐ Heavy limbs
- ☐ Low energy
- ☐ Slumped posture
- ☐ Reduced engagement
- ☐ Desire to withdraw

What Collapse Often Needs:

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Rest
- ☐ Connection
- ☐ Nourishment
- ☐ Small achievable steps

Reflection

How does collapse show up in my life?

Connection

Connection is not the absence of stress.

Connection is the ability to remain connected to yourself, others, and the present moment even when challenges arise.

Connection May Feel Like:

- ☐ Calm
- ☐ Curious
- ☐ Grounded
- ☐ Present
- ☐ Engaged
- ☐ Flexible
- ☐ Compassionate
- ☐ Open

In My Body I May Notice:

- ☐ Steady breathing
- ☐ Relaxed muscles
- ☐ Warmth
- ☐ Spaciousness
- ☐ Ease
- ☐ Energy

Reflection

What helps me feel connected?

What State Am I In Right Now?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Fight
- ☐ Flight
- ☐ Freeze
- ☐ Fawn
- ☐ Collapse
- ☐ Connection

Which state feels strongest today?

What does this state seem to be trying to accomplish for me?

What might this state need from me right now?

 Lighthouse Practice

Naming Is Regulating

Take a moment and complete the sentence:

Right now, my nervous system seems to be in:

When I recognize this state, I feel:

The kindest thing I can offer myself right now is:

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

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

Before Moving On

You do not need to force yourself into a different state.

You do not need to become calm.

You do not need to fix yourself.

Simply recognizing your nervous system state is a meaningful step.

Awareness creates choice.

Choice creates possibility.

And possibility creates room for change.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 4: Listening to Sensation.