

The Power of Connection

Even a small moment of connection can soften a



Gem Thomson

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CHAPTER 1

WHY CONNECTION MATTERS

Connection is the heartbeat of how we grow and heal.

Our brains are wired for it—every time we feel seen, understood, or gently cared for, our nervous system settles. It's one of the most powerful signals of safety our body knows.

This book is about understanding how we are shaped — not just by early experiences, but also by our temperament, culture, neurodivergence, and the relationships we have now.



CHAPTER 2 WE ARE BORN TO CONNECT

Human babies are unusual. Unlike most animals, we arrive in the world completely helpless. A foal can stand within hours; a kitten can crawl towards warmth. But human babies? We are born far earlier in our development than any other mammal – largely because our big heads would not make it through the birth canal otherwise.

Sue Gerhardt, in her book **Why Love Matters**, suggests this is a clever design feature. Our early helplessness draws us into an intense social relationship from the very beginning. Parents are compelled to gaze at their baby's face, to mirror emotions, to soothe. These tiny, repeated moments – eye contact, soft smiles, calm voices – literally shape the baby's brain.

Every time a baby is calmed, its stress system learns: 'I can settle. I am safe. Someone will come when I cry.' These early experiences build the foundations for self-soothing and emotional regulation.

Even if we did not have those experiences, the human brain remains changeable throughout life. Therapy, self-compassion, and warm relationships can act like those early moments – slowly teaching the brain a new story: you are safe here; you matter.

If your early care was uneven, that wasn't your fault—and may not reflect your caregivers' intentions or resources. There is capacity for change.



HOW EARLY CONNECTION SHAPES US

When Early Care Is Warm & Consistent

Brain learns to settle after stress

Curiosity and play feel safe

Relationships feel supportive

When Early Care Is Inconsistent or Absent

Brain stays alert, expecting danger

Exploring feels risky or overwhelming

Relationships can feel unpredictable or unsafe

Reflective Prompt:

How do you comfort yourself when you're upset? Was there anyone who soothed you like that when you were small? If not, what might it be like to offer yourself that same comfort now?

From the moment we are born, relationships shape us. When someone looks into our eyes with warmth, soothes us when we're upset, or laughs with us, our brain learns an important lesson: the world can be safe, and we are worth caring about.

When those moments are missing or inconsistent, the brain adapts as best it can. It becomes alert, watchful, always scanning for what might go wrong. That made sense then—it helped us cope. But it can leave us feeling tense or alone, even in safe relationships later on.

THE SCIENCE OF CONNECTION – QUICK VIEW

When We Feel Connected

When We Feel Alone

Stress system settles, body rests easier

Body stays on alert, stress chemicals stay high

Immune system works better

Immune system becomes weaker over time

Thinking is clearer, memory improves

Brain reacts as if danger is close, harder to calm down

We trust and reach out

We withdraw or become watchful

Reflective Prompt:

Think of one relationship—past or present—where you felt safe and understood. What did that person do that helped you feel that way? What would it be like to allow a little more of that feeling into your life now?

CHAPTER 3

LOVE AS A DRIVE – ROMANTIC LOVE AND ATTACHMENT

Romantic love is one of the most powerful drives humans experience. It is not just about passion or attraction – it can feel like the answer to something we have been missing for a very long time.

The Biology of Bonding Biological anthropologist Dr. Helen Fisher studied how love shows up in the brain. Her research shows that romantic love is a drive – like hunger or thirst. It activates the brain's dopamine reward system, creating energy, motivation, and longing. Alongside this, two other systems shape bonding: Romantic Love (Drive for Union): passionate focus, obsession, craving. Attachment (Drive for Safety): calm, comfort, and trust. Sexual Desire: physical attraction and vitality. Together, these systems create the biology of bonding – drawing us together, keeping us safe, and sustaining intimacy.

Love as a Repair for Missed Connection Romantic love often feels so powerful because it touches something deeper. If we missed consistent attunement in childhood, love can feel like a long-awaited answer. When a partner really sees us, delights in us, or offers soothing, the nervous system reacts as though it is finally receiving what it once longed for. This is why falling in love can feel like “coming home.”

Three Drives of Love Drive/System What It Feels Like Purpose Healing Potential

Romantic Love Passion, energy, focus Pulls us toward union Sparks joy, motivation

Attachment Calm, trust, comfort Keeps bonds secure Repairs missed safety from childhood

Sexual Desire Physical attraction, vitality Encourages reproduction & play Supports vitality & connection

Reflective Prompt

Think of a time you felt the “honeymoon effect” – when life seemed brighter, safer, or more joyful through love. What was happening in those moments? If you could bring even a small piece of that feeling into your life now – through connection, appreciation, or play – what might that look like? Closing Thought: Romantic love is both ancient biology and personal history. It awakens passion, calms us through attachment, and can heal old wounds. When we bring awareness and intention to it, love is not only a bond with another person – it becomes a pathway to repair, joy, and connection.



CHAPTER 4

THE CRITICAL VOICE – WHERE IT COMES FROM AND WHY IT'S NOT THE WHOLE TRUTH

Self-criticism shows up in almost every mental health struggle. It is so common in humans that you could call it part of being human – but for many of us, it is much louder than it needs to be.

If you were lucky enough to have a loving parent who sometimes gazed at you with warmth, really saw your individual ways, and appreciated them with acceptance – and who also set gentle boundaries and expectations – you were given something precious. That kind of parenting mirrors the society you will later step into: you are both cherished and guided. This is a big part of a healthy attachment system. It wires your brain to feel basically 'okay' with yourself and others.

But if you grew up with compromised parenting (and research suggests that is common – possibly 50 to 80% of us), you may have been left with a lifetime's worth of internal prejudice against yourself. You might not even be aware of it. It can show up as a harsh, automatic voice criticising everything you do, treating you as though mistakes are dangerous.

The hopeful truth is that this critical voice is not a fact; it's a habit. It developed as a survival strategy, trying to keep you safe or acceptable. With practice, it can soften. Therapy and self-compassion exercises help you build a kinder, wiser voice – one that guides rather than attacks.

THE CRITICAL VOICE – THEN AND NOW

When It Began

How It Shows Up Now

Trying to stay loved or safe as a child

Pushing yourself too hard, fearing mistakes

Learning to please others to avoid criticism

Finding it hard to relax or feel ‘good enough’

Staying alert to others’ moods

Second-guessing what people think of you

Reflective Prompt:

When your critical voice speaks up, whose voice does it remind you of from your past? If a kind, wise friend were here instead, what would they say to you?

CHAPTER 5 THE PULL OF US AND THEM

Humans are the most social animals on the planet, but our social brains have a quirk: we are wired to sort people into groups. Robert Sapolsky, in his book **Behave**, describes how fast this process is – our brains can decide who feels like 'us' and who feels like 'them' based on almost anything: skin colour, gender, accent, even ear size.

This tendency evolved to keep us safe. Belonging meant survival. But the moment we create an 'us,' we also create a 'them.' When we are calm, we can hold curiosity and compassion; under stress, we can quickly turn into, as Sapolsky puts it, 'monkeys flinging sh*t at each other.' (This is a dramatic paraphrase).

Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) reminds us we are united by shared vulnerabilities: we age, we lose, we love, we hope, we suffer. When we remember that, the lines between 'us' and 'them' soften. We see others as fellow humans, doing their best with difficult lives. We feel less alone.



TRIBAL BRAIN VS COMPASSIONATE BRAIN

Tribal Brain (Threat System)

Compassionate Brain (Soothing System)

Sorts into 'us' and 'them'

Sees shared humanity

Quick to judge and defend

Curious, slows down reactions

Stress shrinks empathy

Compassion expands empathy

Feels safer in groups, wary of outsiders

Feels safer through connection

Reflective Prompt:

Think of a time you felt strongly 'us vs them.' What helped you soften or feel more curious? What might it be like to picture that person as another human doing their best?

CHAPTER 6 WHAT KIND OF CHILD WERE YOU? – A BIG 5 REFLECTION

When we think about the roles we played in our families, it can also help to wonder about our temperament – what came naturally to us as children. Psychologists often describe personality in terms of five broad traits, known as the Big Five. These are not fixed labels, just tendencies shaped by both nature and nurture.

Reflecting on these can give clues about which parts of you felt supported or misunderstood when you were young.



THE BIG 5 – CHILDHOOD TENDENCIES

Big 5 Trait	If High in Childhood	If Low in Childhood
Openness (Imaginative, Curious)	Loved stories, new ideas; asked lots of questions	Preferred routine and familiar things; felt safest with what you knew
Conscientiousness (Organised, Responsible)	Liked to follow rules; enjoyed order and completing tasks	More carefree and playful; possibly called 'messy' or 'forgetful'
Extraversion (Sociable, Talkative)	Enjoyed being with others; liked group play	Quieter; enjoyed solo activities; needed time to warm up in groups
Agreeableness (Kind, Cooperative)	Helpful, gentle; avoided conflict	More independent-minded; stood up for yourself, sometimes seen as 'stubborn'
Neuroticism (Sensitive, Reactive)	Felt emotions strongly; easily upset by criticism	More even-tempered; slower to show distress

Reflective Prompt:

The hopeful part is that connection can be built at any age. Every warm exchange, every moment of shared laughter or kindness, slowly teaches the brain a new story: you are safe here; you matter.

Looking at these traits, which felt most 'like you' as a child? Were those parts encouraged, misunderstood, or shaped by your family environment? What do you notice about how they show up in you now?



CHAPTER 7

THE BRAIN UNDER STRESS – SURVIVAL MODES AND HEALING

The prefrontal cortex (PFC) is the part of the brain responsible for planning, self-awareness, and decision-making. It is use-dependent, meaning its development and functioning rely heavily on the quality and consistency of our early experiences.

When stress is chronic – whether from trauma or subtle emotional inconsistencies in childhood – our attention is pulled toward scanning for risk or danger. The brain prioritises survival over reflection. The PFC becomes under-engaged, while older systems, including the amygdala and limbic regions, dominate.

This can lead to present experiences being misinterpreted as past threats because they activate memory systems encoded during earlier distress – even when the current context is safe.

A central goal in therapy is to help bring the PFC back online, to support distinguishing past from present and possibility from inevitability. This is how curiosity, choice, and emotional regulation return.

The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis – the body's stress response system – also plays a role. When overactivated early in life, it becomes dysregulated, affecting hormone balance and the dopamine reward system. For some, especially those without affirming caregiving, this results in compulsive 'doing' – a relentless pursuit of productivity or distraction as a kind of attachment strategy.

In Paul Gilbert's 'three circles' model, the threat, drive, and soothing systems must balance. But the soothing system doesn't always come naturally. Rest and self-care often have to be learned and chosen intentionally – like exercise, their rewards tend to come after we start, not before.

STRESS AND THE BRAIN – QUICK VIEW

Reflective Prompt:

When you feel stressed, which of these systems feels most active for you – threat, drive, or soothing?
What is one small action you could take to activate the soothing system today?

System	Under Stress	When Healing
Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)	Goes offline; harder to think clearly	Re-engages with safety, reflection,
Amygdala & Limbic System	Dominates; scans for threat	Calms when danger is re-evaluated
HPA Axis (Stress System)	Over-fires; body stays tense	Regulates with soothing, connection
Drive System (Dopamine)	Compulsive 'doing' to feel safe	Balanced with chosen joy and self-care

CHAPTER 8

TWO WAYS OF PAYING ATTENTION – THE LEFT AND RIGHT BRAIN

Neuroscientist Ian McGilchrist describes how our two brain hemispheres pay attention in very different ways. Both are essential, but they give us distinct experiences of the world.

A simple way to picture this is to imagine a bird on a branch. The bird uses its left hemisphere to zoom in on a worm – sharp, focused, and detail-oriented. This is the brain’s ‘hunter mode,’ great for grasping specifics and solving problems.

At the same time, the bird’s right hemisphere is open to the wider scene. It is watching for predators, feeling the breeze, and staying aware of the forest around it. This is the brain’s ‘relational mode,’ sensitive to context, connection, and the bigger picture.

Humans need both. But under chronic stress or trauma, we can get stuck in left-brain attention – hyper-focused, analytical, and scanning for danger, losing our sense of the bigger picture. Therapy helps restore balance, inviting the right hemisphere’s broader, more compassionate awareness back online.



LEFT BRAIN AND RIGHT BRAIN– DIFFERENT KINDS OF ATTENTION

	Left Hemisphere – The Worm	Right Hemisphere – The Forest
Main Focus	Details, specifics, analysis	Context, relationships, the bigger picture
Purpose	Grasping, manipulating, problem-solving	Understanding, connecting, staying safe in the whole environment
Emotional Tone	Narrow, urgent, hunter-like	Open, curious, relational
Under Stress	Can get stuck here – overthinking, scanning, losing perspective	Quiets down under threat but essential for calming and reconnecting

Reflective Prompt:

When do you notice yourself in ‘worm-hunting’ mode – focused, scanning, perhaps overthinking? What helps you soften into the wider ‘forest view’ – noticing relationships, safety, and connection again?

CHAPTER 9 UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEEDS – THEN AND NOW

All children have basic emotional and psychological needs. These aren't luxuries – they're the building blocks of a healthy, secure brain. When these needs are met in childhood, we grow up expecting life and relationships to feel safe, interesting, and supportive. When they aren't met, our brains adapt as best they can, but we may carry those unmet needs into adulthood without even realising it.

Sometimes what feels 'wrong' in adulthood isn't because we're failing – it's because a part of us is still trying to meet those old needs with the only strategies we learned as children. The hopeful part? Once we understand the need, we can learn new ways to meet it now.



CORE CHILDHOOD NEEDS -THEN AND NOW

My Ebook

Childhood Need	If Met in Childhood...	If Not Met in Childhood...	How This Might Show Up in Adulthood
Attunement & Care for Your Inner World	A caregiver notices and cares about how you feel ('How are you feeling? Tell me about it.')	Adults ignore, dismiss, or criticise your feelings ('Stop making a fuss.')	You may ignore your own feelings, believe others don't care, or keep emotions hidden.
Stability & Safe Base	Consistent, reliable adults who stay connected, even through stress or conflict	Loss, divorce, death, or inconsistent caregivers	A deep need for stability may lead to clinging to unstable relationships or avoiding closeness.
Play, Joy & Curiosity	Adults encourage fun, laughter, and exploration	Play discouraged; home feels tense or overly serious	Joy and playfulness may feel unfamiliar or 'silly'; life may feel all work and no rest.
Comfort & Soothing When Distressed	Someone soothes you when upset, helping your body calm down	Left alone with big feelings or punished for showing distress	You may struggle to self-soothe; stress may feel overwhelming or lead to overwork, scrolling, or shutting down.

Reflective Prompt:

Looking at this list, which needs feel most familiar to you – either because they were well met, or because they weren't? What is one small way you could start meeting one of those needs now?

The challenge is that we often carry these roles into adulthood without realising it. We might find ourselves trying to hold a group of friends together, always fixing other people's problems, or endlessly pleasing others – even when it exhausts us. Sometimes we're not responding to the present moment at all; we're replaying a six-year-old's logic, trying to heal something that happened long ago.

We can all do this. it's just the brain doing what it learned best. But the good news is we can notice these patterns, and we can choose differently now. You are no longer that six-year-old trying to keep everyone safe. You have more options, more support, and more freedom than you did then.

Temperament/sensitivity Culture (e.g., “stiff upper lip”), Neurodivergence/sensory load, Current stress & relationships, Early experiences, Different routes, similar feelings; the work is the same: choose connection on purpose.

Childhood Role	Adult Pattern	New Choice
Peacemaker	Avoids conflict; often over-accommodates others	Express needs calmly, even if it feels uncomfortable
‘Good one’ or helper	Puts others first; feels guilty saying no	Practice small, kind acts of self-priority
Quiet or withdrawn	Pulls back when stressed; feels unseen	Share a little more with safe, trusted people

Reflective Prompt:

Think about the role you might have played in your family when you were small. Do you notice any echoes of that role in your adult life? If you didn't have to play that role anymore, what might you choose instead?

CHAPTER 10 SHAME, REPAIR, AND WHY “GOOD ENOUGH” MATTERS

Shame is a powerful, adaptive emotion. In a healthy system, it protects us. Imagine a toddler running towards the road. A loving parent yells sharply, “Stop! Don’t go near the road, Jenny!” The child feels a sudden physical jolt of shame – “I’m bad, I’ve done something wrong” – and it stops them in their tracks. This is how shame evolved: it’s meant to be a fast-acting ‘don’t do that’ signal to keep us safe.

But here’s the key: in a healthy system, shame doesn’t stay. A loving parent repairs it. After the danger passes, they kneel down, gather the child close, and say: “I know I shouted. You’re not bad, you’re wonderful. I love you. I just didn’t want you to get hurt.”

That repair changes everything. The child’s nervous system learns: I made a mistake, but I’m still loved. I’m still good. Psychologists call this reintegrative shame – the shame is released and doesn’t lodge deep in the child’s sense of self.

But when repair doesn’t happen – when parents are too busy, too stressed, or too disconnected – shame gets stuck. A child may grow up with a deep sense of “I’m always getting things wrong” or “There’s something wrong with me.” That stuck shame often becomes part of the critical inner voice many of us know so well.

The hopeful truth? Repair is still possible, even years later. We can offer it to our children, our loved ones, and even ourselves. Good relationships aren’t about being perfect – they’re about connection and repair

Healthy Shame vs Stuck Shame.

HEALTHY SHAME VS STUCK SHAME

Healthy (Reintegrative) Shame

Stuck (Maladaptive) Shame

Stops dangerous behaviour, then eases

Lingers, becomes part of identity

Followed by repair and reassurance

No repair; child feels unloved or 'bad'

Teaches: "I made a mistake, but I'm okay"

Teaches: "There's something wrong with me"

”

CHAPTER 11 OLD ROLES, NEW LIVES – HOW FAMILY PATTERNS FOLLOW US

Families are systems. When we're children, we unconsciously take on roles that help keep the family stable – or at least bearable. Some children become the peacemaker, keeping everyone calm. Others try to be the 'good one' or the 'helper.' Some retreat quietly to avoid making waves.

These roles make sense at the time. A child doesn't have much power, so they do what they can to stay safe, loved, or included.



CHAPTER 12

WHY THERAPY FEELS HARD – AND WHY IT'S THE MOST HOPEFUL THING YOU CAN DO

Sometimes therapy can feel like the last thing you want to do. Your mind might say: Don't go there. Don't look too closely. Keep moving, keep busy.

That makes perfect sense. The parts of us that were hurt in relationships – through loneliness, criticism, neglect, or loss – were often hurt because our attachment system, the part of us built for connection, wasn't fully met. When that system gets injured, it makes sense to avoid anything that might poke at it again.

But here's the hopeful truth: therapy is not more injury. It is, at its best, the opposite.

It is attention given to you – gently, steadily, and with care. It is a loving gaze on the parts of you that were unseen, misunderstood, or left alone. In this way, therapy can work a little like the parent we all needed: not perfect, but interested, warm, and curious about you.

And connection – even this safe, structured kind of connection – is the medicine our social brains are wired for. We know from decades of research that humans grow best in connection, not isolation. Therapy isn't about 'reducing' symptoms – it's about restoring something fundamental: the sense that you matter, that you are seen, and that you can feel safe enough to explore your own inner world again.

It's not always easy, but it is profoundly hopeful – because it's you choosing connection, on purpose, and that choice changes everything.

WHY THERAPY WORKS – QUICK VIEW

What Therapy Gives

Why It Helps

Gentle, steady attention

Your nervous system learns safety through

A curious, warm presence

The brain rewires through connection, not isolation

A safe place to explore feelings

Helps you see old patterns and try new ways of being.

Reflective Prompt:

When has someone's warm attention helped you feel calmer or more seen? What would it be like to let therapy – or even one safe person – offer that to you now?

CHAPTER 13

A BRITISH TWIST – JOY, STIFF UPPER LIPS, AND PERMISSION TO FEEL

Historically, in Britain, we are quietly taught not to make a fuss. We prize being stoic, hard-working, and 'not too much.' Joy can feel showy; sadness, self-indulgent. There is value in our grit and humour, but it can make us brush off moments of happiness or hesitate to ask for help.

It takes courage to do the opposite: to pause, notice the warmth in a conversation, or really savour a laugh. Joy is not frivolous – it is fuel. It is how our social brains recharge.

BRITISH GRIT VS ALLOWING JOY

British Grit	Allowing Joy
Keep calm and carry on	Pause, notice warmth
Brush off compliments or fun	Let yourself savour small happy moments
Value hard work above rest	See joy as fuel, not a luxury

Reflective Prompt:

How do you tend to respond to moments of joy or warmth – do you brush them off, or let yourself enjoy them? What would it be like to allow yourself just a little more space for those moments this week?

CHAPTER 14 WHAT MAKES US THRIVE

The strongest predictor of a long and satisfying life is not wealth or status – it is relationships. Not hundreds of friends, just a handful of people you can trust, laugh with, and feel at ease around.

Happiness researchers suggest about 40% of our wellbeing is shaped by intentional choices. Two evidence-based ways to boost that 40% are simple:

- Behavioural Activation: do small meaningful or enjoyable things regularly – take a walk, call a friend, cook something you love.
- Compassion-Focused Therapy: treat yourself like you would a friend when you are struggling; it calms the stress system and builds resilience.

Thriving is not about perfection. It is about small, repeated choices that nurture connection – with others and with yourself.

THE 40% RULE – INTENTIONAL CHOICES MATTER

Intentional Choice	Why It Helps
Reach out to someone you trust	Boosts oxytocin and social safety
Enjoy small pleasures (walks, hobbies)	Lifts mood through behavioural activation
Show kindness to yourself or others	Calms stress system, builds resilience

Reflective Prompt:

What is one small, pleasant or meaningful thing you could do today to gently lift your mood?

CHAPTER 15

THE LIGHTHOUSE – CHOOSING CONNECTION ON PURPOSE

I love connection. It is at the heart of what helps us heal and thrive, and it is why I chose a lighthouse as the symbol for my work. A lighthouse guides us back when we are a little lost – it shines a light on the parts of us that have been hidden or forgotten.

When we come from a compromised attachment system, we often soldier on through life with a part of ourselves disconnected or unknown. That part might have been tucked away for safety when we were young, and it can feel compelling – necessary even – to keep it hidden.

But the great thing about everything we have learned from neuropsychology and attachment science is this: we can change all of it for the better. If childhood was lonely, you can learn to really connect in adulthood. It takes intention and deliberate practice, but it can cure loneliness.

In today's world, it is easy to slip back into old habits of disconnection. The child who was left alone with big feelings can grow into an adult who works too hard, scrolls too much, or avoids closeness without meaning to. But connection is always available – you can choose it, again and again.



THE LIGHTHOUSE AS A GUIDE

What It Stands For

What It Means in Practice

Shining a light on hidden parts

Gently noticing parts of yourself you keep tucked away

Guiding you home

Choosing connection, even when it feels unfamiliar.

Standing steady through storms

Offering yourself kindness in difficult moments

Reflective Prompt:

What part of you feels most hidden or forgotten right now? What might it be like to gently turn your attention toward it, as if shining a lighthouse beam – curious, steady, and kind?

CHAPTER 16

ONENESS, EGO, AND THE QUIET MIRACLE OF Being

We all have a voice in our head – the one that judges, plans, criticises or reassures. It's not a problem in itself, but when we believe it's the whole of who we are, things get harder. That voice is part of the ego – the system we built to stay safe, accepted, or in control. It's not bad. It just learned to take charge when we needed it most.

Michael Singer reminds us that we're not the voice – we're the one who notices it. And that's the shift. When we begin to observe rather than obey, we open up a different kind of awareness.

But here's the important part: we can't just override the ego. Not if it's carrying pain, fear, or a sense of responsibility. Trying to leap straight to spiritual openness without first tending to what hurts usually backfires. We need to work with the parts of us that are still defending, still bracing, still doing their best to survive.

Letting go starts with safety. Awareness grows when the system feels less under threat.

Singer also points out something simple and profound: life is already happening. We didn't create this moment, this breath, or the beating of our heart. We don't control it. We're here to witness it.

You don't need to chase a spiritual high. Just come back to noticing what's already here. The inhale. The feeling in your chest. The pause between words.

The goal isn't to rise above being human. It's to be fully in it – awake, steady, and kind.

Reflective Prompt:

What might shift if you stopped trying to fix yourself for a moment? What would it be like to meet yourself with steadiness instead of striving?

BONUS CHAPTER ONENESS AND LETTING GO OF THE EGO

Each moment we're in is already enough. We don't have to make it more meaningful than it is. That's part of what Michael Singer is pointing to: this moment, just as it is, is life unfolding.

The ego often gets in the way of seeing that. But not because it's bad – because it's scared. It's the part of us that wants to get it right, be safe, stay loved. It runs constant commentary in our heads. And when it's been hurt or left alone, that commentary gets louder.

The first step in loosening the grip of the ego isn't to push it away – it's to understand it. That's what therapy helps with. You work with the old wounds, not around them. You notice the fears, the rules, the old beliefs, and start to hold them with some compassion.

When those patterns ease, something else becomes clearer: this moment doesn't need managing. You didn't invent your breath. You didn't create the sun or the fact that your heart is still beating. It's all already happening.

You don't have to do anything to belong. You already do.

This isn't about chasing bliss or some perfect inner peace. It's about noticing that you're here – already part of something bigger. And that's enough.

Reflective Practice:

Pause for a moment. Feel your breath. Notice what's around you. What would it be like to let this be enough, just as it is?

CLOSING NOTES – A GENTLE INVITATION

This workbook has been about understanding yourself with more kindness – seeing the patterns that once kept you safe, the needs that mattered then and still matter now, and the possibilities that open when you choose connection on purpose.

If you take one thing away from this, let it be this: change doesn't come from forcing yourself to be different. It comes from turning toward yourself with curiosity, patience, and compassion. The parts of you that feel stuck are not enemies to defeat – they are younger, protective parts that once worked very hard to keep you safe.

Every time you pause to notice a thought rather than fight it, every time you offer yourself even a small kindness, you are already changing your brain. You are teaching it something new: that you can be both safe and free.

Whether you are still healing old wounds, practicing stepping back from the mind's chatter, or beginning to glimpse moments of peace and connection – all of this counts. It is all part of the same journey.

Final Reflection:

Looking back over this workbook, what stood out to you most? What is one small practice – however simple – you want to carry forward into your daily life?

Thank you for giving yourself this time. Healing happens in moments like these – quietly, gently, and over time.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Sue Gerhardt – for her work on early attachment and emotional development (*Why Love Matters*).
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- Michael Singer – for his insights on inner freedom and oneness (*The Untethered Soul* & *Living Untethered*).
- Ian McGilchrist – for his exploration of brain lateralisation and the two modes of attention (*The Master and His Emissary*).
- And to the many clients and human stories that remind us daily of the courage it takes to heal.



My Ebook

Thank you for reading this e book which is a collection of knowledge and ideas from authors that I have hopefully referenced.

Please feel free to email me comments

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