

Learning to Speak

Workbook: Tools and worksheets to help you calm your body, challenge the belief, and choose a steady next step.

How to use this workbook

Print it, write in it, or copy prompts into your Notes app. You do not have to do it perfectly. Pick one chapter at a time and complete the pages that match what you are living through right now.

Website: maryroque.com/workbook

Author: Mary Roque-Vela

Start Here

This workbook is a companion to *Learning to Speak*. Each chapter gives you a small set of tools, in the same order every time: **calm the body first**, **challenge the belief second**, and **choose a clear next step**. When your nervous system feels safe enough, your words come back.

Quick definitions

REBT stands for *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy*. It is a practical method for finding the belief behind a feeling and replacing it with something truer and kinder.

Nervous system regulation means using simple body-based cues (breath, grounding, movement) to reduce fight/flight/freeze so you can think and speak clearly.

Permission: If a prompt brings up big emotions, pause. Do a body reset. Come back later. You are still making progress.

Table of Contents

1. Chapter 1: Learning to Speak	_____
2. Chapter 2: My Brain Does Not Do "Normal"	_____
3. Chapter 3: The Loss That Made Me Quiet	_____
4. Chapter 4: The Thing I Don't Describe	_____
5. Chapter 5: Love, Patterns, and Red Flags	_____
6. Chapter 6: The Healing That Isn't Cute	_____
7. Chapter 7: The Man Who Stays	_____
8. Chapter 8: The Year I Decide to Run	_____
9. Chapter 9: 5 AM Self-Respect	_____
10. Chapter 10: Notes App, Nervous System, and New Rules	_____
11. Chapter 11: Finding My Voice in Real Life	_____
12. Chapter 12: Still Messy. Still Becoming.	_____

Tip: If you are overwhelmed, start with Chapter 1 or Chapter 6.

Chapter 1: Learning to Speak

Focus

Calm the body first, challenge the belief second, then choose a clear next step so you can speak from steadiness instead of survival.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Nervous System Reset (4-6 breathing)

Inhale for 4, exhale for 6, five rounds. Let the exhale be longer than the inhale.

Notes from this practice:

REBT Mini-ABC

A: What happened? B: What am I telling myself it means? C: What do I feel and want to do when I believe that?

New belief:

A: What happened?

B: What am I telling myself it means?

C: What do I feel and want to do when I believe that?

New belief: What is truer, kinder, and still honest?

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

My voice matters, even while I'm still becoming.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 2: My Brain Does Not Do "Normal"

Focus

Slow the body down, soften the shame story, then speak without over-explaining.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Stop the Spiral in the Body (90 seconds)

Name 5 things you see. Press your feet into the floor. Exhale slowly twice. Drop your shoulders.

Dispute the Shame Belief (REBT)

Belief: "This means I'm ____." Evidence for/against: ____ More accurate belief: ____

Old belief:

New belief:

One-Sentence Anchor

"Let me say this in one sentence." What I mean is: ____ What I need is: ____

Write your words exactly as you want to say them:

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

I can be misunderstood and still stay with myself.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 3: The Loss That Made Me Quiet

Focus

Let grief move through your body safely, soften fear around emotion, and name what you need without shutting down.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Grief Grounding (60 seconds)

Hand on chest, slow exhale, five rounds. Say: "This is grief. I can feel it and still be here."

Notes from this practice:

REBT Permission Statement

Old belief: "If I feel this, I'll fall apart." New belief: "I can feel this and still function."

Two Lines in Notes

What I miss is: ____ What I need right now is: ____

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

I can miss someone and still keep my voice.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 4: The Thing I Don't Describe

Focus

Return your body to safety, define forgiveness in a healthy way, and keep boundaries without explaining your pain.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Safety Cue (30 seconds)

Look around and name where you are. Feel your feet. Exhale long once. Tell yourself: "I'm safe now."

Notes from this practice:

Forgiveness Clarifier

Forgiveness means: ____ Forgiveness does not mean: ____

Closed Door Script

"I'm not going into details, but I will say it affected me, and I'm healing."

Write your words exactly as you want to say them:

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

Forgiveness sets me free, and my story is not my shame.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 5: Love, Patterns, and Red Flags

Focus

Listen to your body, challenge the belief that keeps you stuck, and practice a boundary that protects your voice.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Body Signal Check

When I think about this person/situation, my body feels: ____ That sensation is telling me: ____

REBT Red-Flag Belief Check

Belief I use to justify this: ____ Is it true/helpful/protective? ____ Healthier belief: ____

Old belief:

New belief:

Boundary + Consequence

Boundary: "I'm not available for ____." If it continues, I will: ____

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

Love that costs me my voice is not love.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 6: The Healing That Isn't Cute

Focus

Regulate fast, challenge perfectionism, and build evidence that you're actually changing.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Two-Minute Reset

Water + one long exhale + one small action (under 2 minutes): _____

Notes from this practice:

Dispute the Perfection Belief (REBT)

Belief: "If I'm not consistent, I failed." New belief: "Progress includes setbacks. I can pick up where I left off."

Old belief:

New belief:

Progress Evidence

List three ways you're different today than you were a year ago.

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

Healing isn't cute, but it's real, and I'm doing it.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 7: The Man Who Stays

Focus

Regulate before difficult conversations, challenge fear of asking, and make a clear request.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Regulate Before You Speak (20 seconds)

One slow inhale. One long exhale. Then speak.

Notes from this practice:

REBT Fear of Asking

Belief: "If I ask for what I need, I'll be rejected." New belief: "I can ask directly and tolerate the answer."

Write your words exactly as you want to say them:

Clear Ask

Emotion: ____ Need: ____ Request: "Would you be willing to ____?"

Write your words exactly as you want to say them:

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

The right love helps me keep my voice.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 8: The Year I Decide to Run

Focus

Tolerate discomfort, shift identity beliefs, and keep your promise in a small way.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Discomfort Tolerance (10 breaths)

Count 10 slow breaths. Stay with the feeling without negotiating.

Notes from this practice:

Identity Belief (REBT)

Belief I'm practicing: "I'm the kind of woman who ____."

Old belief:

New belief:

Next Right Step

The smallest next right step today is: ____

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

Consistency is how I become her.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 9: 5 AM Self-Respect

Focus

Regulate on hard mornings, stop negotiating with self-respect, and start tiny.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Wake-Up Regulation

Light + water + one long exhale before you decide anything.

Notes from this practice:

Dispute the Negotiation (REBT)

Belief: "Skipping doesn't matter." New belief: "Self-respect is built by follow-through."

Two-Minute Rule

Commit to two minutes of the habit. After two minutes, reassess.

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

I keep promises to myself because I matter.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 10: Notes App, Nervous System, and New Rules

Focus

Reset overwhelm, replace shame with support, and keep scripts ready when words are hard.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Overwhelm Reset (Body First)

Name it: "I'm overwhelmed." Exhale long once. Do one task under 3 minutes: _____

Notes from this practice:

REBT "Tools = Care" Belief

Old belief: "Needing tools means I'm weak." New belief: "Needing tools means I'm human."

Old belief:

New belief:

Script Bank

Write your go-to scripts once so your voice is easier to access later.

Write your words exactly as you want to say them:

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

Tools aren't weakness. Tools are care.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 11: Finding My Voice in Real Life

Focus

Stay steady while you speak, stop chasing approval, and let your voice sound like it belongs.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Voice Steadier (Body Cue)

Before you speak, exhale longer than you inhale once.

Notes from this practice:

Dispute the Approval Belief (REBT)

Belief: "I need them to understand me to be okay." New belief: "I need to be clear. That's my job."

Old belief:

New belief:

No-Extra-Apologies

Replace "Sorry, but..." with "I need..." or "I'm not available..."

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

My voice is a home I'm allowed to live in.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Chapter 12: Still Messy. Still Becoming.

Focus

Anchor in progress, choose the belief you're living by next, and build self-trust through one small promise.

Before you begin

Circle one: **calm** / **anxious** / **shut down** / **angry** / **numb**

What is happening in my life right now (2-3 lines):

TRY THIS

Grounded Wins

Three slow breaths, then write three true wins from this week.

Notes from this practice:

Belief for the Next Season (REBT)

"I am becoming, and that means ____."

Old belief:

New belief:

Seven-Day Promise

One promise under 10 minutes, daily, for 7 days: ____

ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY WITH YOU

I am still becoming, and my voice is coming with me.

Next right step (one small action I will take today):

Appendix

Copy these pages into your Notes app, print them, or keep them as quick resets.

Script Bank

When you need to be brief

"Let me say this in one sentence."

When you feel misunderstood

"What I mean is _____. What I need is _____."

Closed door boundary

"I'm not going into details, but I will say it affected me, and I'm healing."

Seven-Day Promise Tracker

Promise (under 10 minutes):

Day	Done?	Notes (1 sentence)
1	■	
2	■	
3	■	
4	■	
5	■	
6	■	
7	■	

Grounded Wins

Three true wins from this week:

Use these when you need space to write.

[illegible]

