

PAIN & ILLNESS EMOTION MAPPING WORKBOOK

Explore the emotional roots behind your
chronic pain and illness

BY KIRSTEN MOCK



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



This guide is designed to help you gently explore the emotional roots of your chronic pain or illness. Many people living with long-term symptoms have experienced trauma, stress, or emotional overwhelm that the body stores when it doesn't feel safe to process them. By using this guide, you'll begin to understand the deeper messages your body may be trying to send.

You do not need to complete everything at once. Take your time, go at your own pace, and come back to it whenever you feel ready. This is your personal healing journey.

This guide is not about replacing medical care it's about working with your body in a more compassionate way. Your symptoms are not just something to get rid of they're signals from a deeper part of you. When we listen, healing becomes possible.

You are not broken you are healing.

WHAT IS EMOTION MAPPING?

Emotion mapping is a self-awareness tool that helps you explore the emotional roots behind physical pain, discomfort, or illness. It's based on the understanding that our bodies hold onto emotions especially those we suppress, avoid, or haven't had a safe space to process.

When emotional energy remains stuck in the body, it can show up as symptoms like chronic pain, fatigue, tension, inflammation, or even illness. Emotion mapping allows you to connect the dots between what you feel emotionally and what you experience physically.

Instead of only treating the body, emotion mapping invites you to listen to it.

How Does It Work?

By mapping out your symptoms and exploring when they began, what was happening in your life at the time, and what emotions might be buried underneath, you begin to uncover patterns and messages your body is holding onto.

You might discover that:

Your back pain flares up when you're feeling unsupported

Your fatigue worsens when you're overwhelmed or carrying emotional weight

Your digestive issues are tied to anxiety or fear of change

A chronic illness appeared during or after a traumatic life event

Why It Matters

Emotion mapping gives you a deeper level of insight into your body and healing journey. It doesn't replace medical care, but adds another layer of understanding and empowerment especially when you've felt stuck, unheard, or unsure why you're not healing.

It's about listening to your body with compassion, not judgment.

By becoming aware of these emotional patterns, you can begin to release what no longer serves you and create space for healing physically, emotionally, and energetically.



WHY EMOTIONS AND PHYSICAL PAIN/ILLNESS ARE CONNECTED

Our bodies and minds are deeply interconnected. What we feel emotionally can influence how we feel physically, and vice versa. This is known as the mind-body connection. Every emotion you experience whether it's joy, sadness, anger, fear, or grief creates a response in your nervous system. When emotions are expressed and processed in healthy ways, your body returns to balance. But when emotions are suppressed, denied, or overwhelming, they can get “stored” in the body and begin to show up as physical symptoms.

How It Works:

When you experience stress or trauma, your body goes into “survival mode” (fight, flight, freeze, or fawn). If the stressor is never resolved or processed emotionally, the nervous system may remain stuck in that state.

Over time, this can lead to chronic tension, inflammation, fatigue, or pain as the body tries to cope. Certain organs and areas of the body are known to be linked with specific emotions (e.g. grief with the lungs, anger with the liver, fear with the kidneys).

Real-Life Examples:

- A person who feels unsupported may experience chronic lower back pain.
- Someone who suppresses anger may struggle with digestive issues or tension headaches.
- Deep grief or loss may contribute to chest tightness, fatigue, or immune issues.
- Those with long-term emotional trauma often carry pain in areas like the neck, shoulders, jaw, or gut.

The Body Keeps the Score

Renowned trauma expert Dr. Bessel van der Kolk explains that “the body keeps the score.” Even if you’ve moved on mentally, your body may still be holding onto past experiences until it feels safe to release them. Pain and illness are not punishments or failures they’re often messages from your body asking for care, attention, or healing.

Why This Matters

By acknowledging this mind-body connection, you can begin to:

Understand your symptoms in a deeper way

Gently process emotions that may be stuck

Release physical pain or tension held in the body

Move toward real, lasting healing not just symptom management

You don’t need to figure it all out at once. Just by starting to listen to your body and its emotional signals, you’re already beginning to heal.



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

For centuries, healing traditions around the world have understood something modern medicine is only beginning to rediscover: our minds and bodies are not separate. Every thought, emotion, and experience we go through affects us physically and our physical state, in turn, affects how we think and feel.

This is known as the mind-body connection, and it plays a powerful role in chronic pain, illness, and healing.

Emotions Don't Just Live in the Mind

Emotions are not just “in your head” they're chemical and energetic experiences that move through your entire body. For example:

Anger can cause muscle tension, increased heart rate, and digestive issues.

Grief can create a heavy feeling in the chest or a constant fatigue.

Fear and anxiety can show up as stomach pain, shortness of breath, or headaches.

If these emotions are not safely felt or processed, they can get stored in the body, especially in places that are already vulnerable or under stress.

Trauma, Stress, and Chronic Illness

When we experience trauma whether it's a major event or a long-term buildup of stress the nervous system can become dysregulated. That means the body may stay in survival mode, even when we're no longer in danger.

This can cause:

Chronic inflammation

Weakened immune response

Tension, pain, and illness that won't go away

Persistent fatigue or burnout

Many people who live with chronic illness or pain find that their symptoms started or worsened during emotionally intense periods like the loss of a loved one, a breakup, financial stress, childhood neglect, or work burnout.

Science Supports the Mind-Body Link

Modern research shows that the brain and body are in constant communication through the nervous system, hormones, and immune system. Studies in psychoneuroimmunology and neuroscience confirm what healers and therapists have long observed:

Our emotions shape our biology.

And the good news is healing the emotional body can lead to physical relief.



The Body's Messages

Pain and illness are often messages, not malfunctions. Your body is not betraying you it's communicating something it hasn't had words for.

When you begin to tune in and listen with compassion, you can:

Discover what your body is holding

Understand how past experiences are still affecting you

Create space for both emotional and physical healing

This workbook will guide you through that process step by step.

SECTION 2: SYMPTOM TRACKER

This section is designed to help you become more aware of the connection between your physical symptoms and your emotional experiences.

Often, symptoms that seem random or “just physical” are closely linked to emotional stress, unresolved trauma, or patterns from the past. By tracking your symptoms over time and connecting them with emotional states you can begin to uncover valuable insights for healing.

You don’t need to overthink it. Just tune in and be honest with what you feel, both in your body and your emotions.

How to Use the Symptom Tracker

Use this chart regularly daily, weekly, or when symptoms change. Over time, patterns may begin to reveal themselves.

Fill in:

Symptom: What are you feeling? (e.g. headache, stomach pain, fatigue)

Location in body: Where is the sensation? (e.g. lower back, right shoulder)

Intensity: On a scale from 1–10 (1 = mild, 10 = extreme)

Frequency: How often does this occur? (e.g. daily, once a week, during stress)

Associated emotion: What emotion do you feel when this symptom appears? (e.g. sadness, fear, guilt)

Life event/stressor: What’s happening in your life right now or around the time this started?

Notes: Any thoughts, patterns, or memories that arise.





Symptom Tracker

This simple process of tracking can be incredibly empowering. When you start noticing how your body responds to life, stress, and emotion, you'll gain clarity and open a new path to healing.

1

Symptom: What are you feeling?

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.....

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2

Location in body: Where is the sensation?

.....

.....

.....

3

Intensity: On a scale from 1-10

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(Tip: Print multiple copies of this chart if needed or recreate it in your journal.)



Symptom Tracker

4

Frequency: How often does this occur?

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.....

.....

5

Associated emotion: What emotion do you feel when this symptom appears?

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6

Life event/stressor: What’s happening in your life right now or around the time this started?

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[illegible]

SECTION 3: BODY MAP (SOMATIC MAPPING)

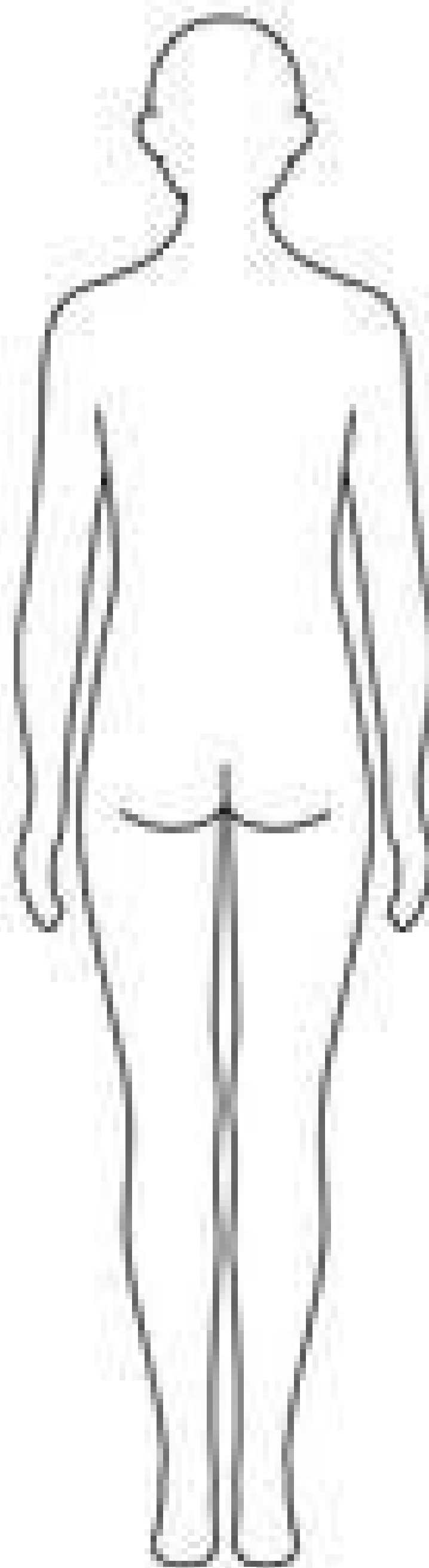
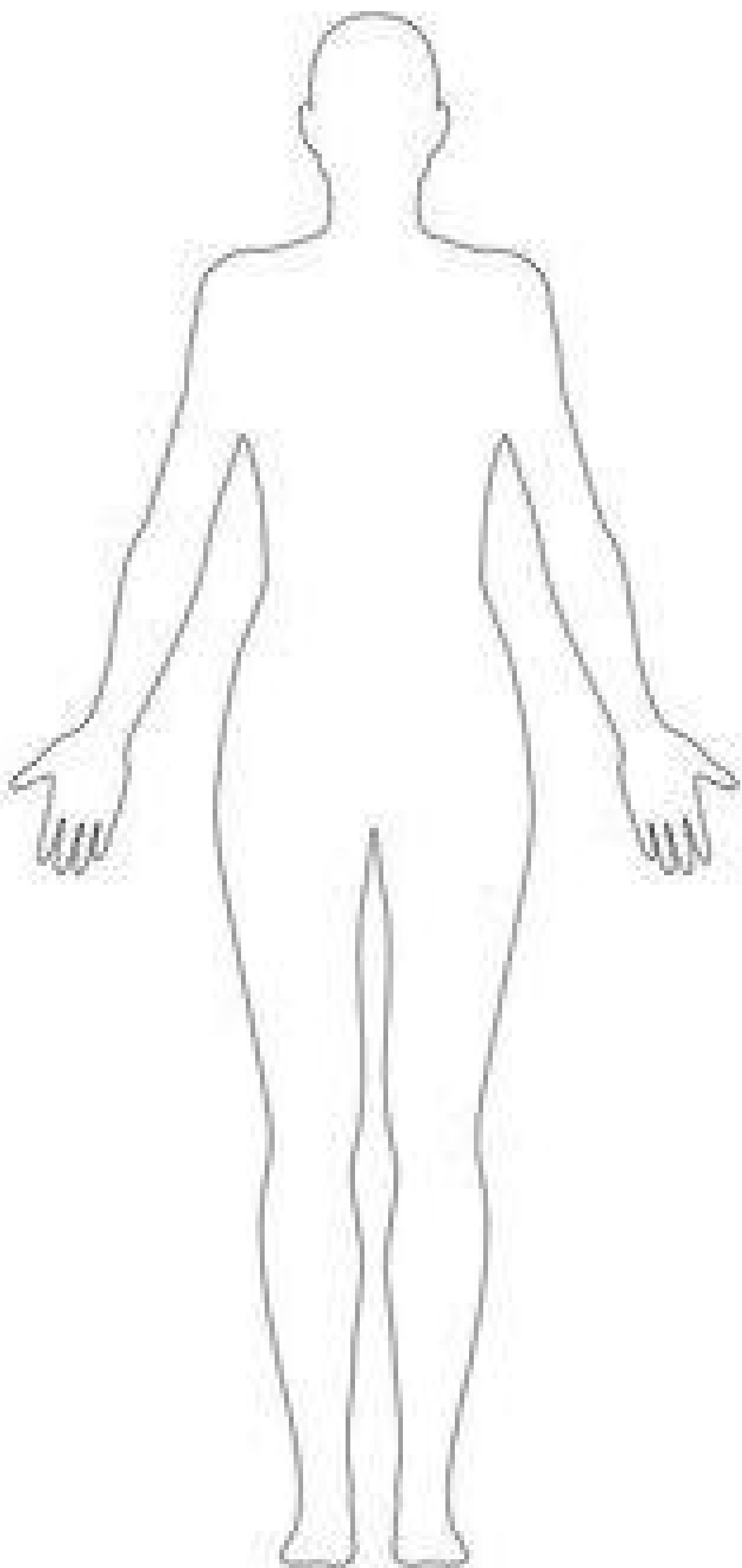
Instructions:

Use the outlines below to mark where you feel physical symptoms like pain, tension, discomfort, or numbness.

You can use:

- Colours to represent different emotions (e.g. red = anger, blue = sadness)
- Symbols (e.g. X for pain, O for tightness, ! for numbness)
- Write short notes on the body (e.g. “grief here,” “tension daily”)

You can also draw arrows or add words around the outline to describe what you’re feeling emotionally or energetically in that area.



SECTION 4: EMOTION REFLECTION PROMPTS

Exploring the Emotional Roots of Pain and Illness

Pain is not only physical. It can be a language the body uses when words fall short, when emotions are too overwhelming, repressed, or forgotten. This section invites you to gently reflect on what your body might be trying to tell you.

These prompts are designed to support emotional clarity, deepen self-awareness, and help you begin to understand how unprocessed emotions and life experiences may be linked to your symptoms. There are no right or wrong answers here only your truth.

Take your time. Find a quiet space. Breathe deeply. And begin.



Reflection Tip:

After you complete these prompts, sit quietly and notice how you feel. You may want to place your hand over your heart or the area where you feel pain and say:

"I am listening. I am open to healing. I am here with you."





Life Timeline

What was happening in your life when this pain or illness started?

1 Reflect on your life circumstances at the time. Were there any major stressors, losses, relationship changes, traumas, or transitions?

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.....

2 How did you feel emotionally during that period?

.....

.....

.....

3 Did you have support, or were you holding it all in?

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Emotional Suppression

What emotions do you avoid or suppress the most?

1

Which emotions make you uncomfortable to feel or express (e.g., anger, sadness, fear, shame)?

.....

.....

.....

2

Where did you learn it wasn't safe to feel these emotions?

.....

.....

.....

3

What happens in your body when you try to suppress them?

.....

.....

.....



The Impact on Your Life

What does this pain/illness prevent you from doing?

1

Are there activities, relationships, or goals this pain limits you from engaging in?

.....

.....

.....

2

How does that make you feel emotionally—frustrated, helpless, disconnected, resentful?

.....

.....

.....

3

Have you ever felt this way before in your life, even before the pain started?

.....

.....

.....



Protection Mechanism

What might this pain/illness be protecting you from?

1

Is there something painful you’ve avoided facing such as grief, failure, rejection, or change?

.....

.....

.....

2

Could this symptom be keeping you “safe” in a way (e.g., from being overwhelmed, from having to make a hard decision, from being seen)?

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.....

Body Wisdom Dialogue

Write a letter from your body to you. What might it say about how it feels, what it needs, or what it wants you to know?

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Body Wisdom Dialogue

Is there anger, sadness, wisdom, love, or fear in its voice?

[illegible]

Body Wisdom Dialogue

Then write back. Respond to your body with compassion and curiosity.

[illegible]

SECTION 5: EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS & PATTERNS

Identifying the Hidden Cycles Between Emotions and Symptoms

Understanding how your emotions and experiences relate to your symptoms can be a powerful step toward healing. Many people notice that pain or flare-ups tend to occur after certain emotional states, stressful situations, or even specific thoughts. The body remembers and it responds.

This section will help you begin to track your emotional patterns and recognize how your body might be reacting to your inner world. Once you can see the patterns clearly, you can start to gently shift them.

Reflection Prompts: Emotional Awareness

Use these questions to explore what emotional or situational triggers may be connected to your symptoms.

Take time to journal or reflect on these patterns. You may begin to uncover subtle links between your emotions and your physical pain that you hadn't seen before.

Daily Emotion & Symptom Tracking Chart

Use the chart below daily (or a few times a week) to observe patterns over time. You can print several copies or keep a digital version in a journal app or notebook.

Tips for Using the Chart:

Be honest, not perfect. It's okay if your notes are messy or incomplete.

Use emojis if it helps: 😊 😐 😞 🙄 😓 etc.

Over time, highlight repeating symptoms or triggers.

You might start noticing: "Every time I feel ignored, my back hurts." or "My pain increases before deadlines."

Gentle Reminder

This tracking is not about judgment. It's about awareness. The more you understand your emotional world, the more power you have to shift your body's response. Even small insights can lead to big breakthroughs.





Reflection Prompts: Emotional Awareness

When do your symptoms tend to get worse?

1

Is there a specific time of day, week, or month?

.....

.....

.....

2

Are they more intense after social interactions, arguments, work stress, or being alone?

.....

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.....



Reflection Prompts: Emotional Awareness

What emotions tend to come just before or during flare-ups?

1

Are you feeling overwhelmed, anxious, helpless, angry, or sad?

.....

.....

.....

2

Do you tend to push yourself too hard just before your symptoms spike?

.....

.....

.....

3

Do you notice a flare after ignoring your needs or boundaries?

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.....



Reflection Prompts: Emotional Awareness

What repeating patterns do you notice in your life?

1

Are there recurring situations that leave you feeling drained or hurt?

.....

.....

.....

2

Do certain relationships or environments trigger your symptoms?

.....

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DAILY EMOTION & SYMPTOM TRACKING CHART

DATE: / /

MOOD / EMOTIONS FELT

PAIN / SYMPTOMS (TYPE & INTENSITY)

TRIGGER / EVENT / SITUATION

NOTES / BODY MESSAGES

SECTION 6: RELEASING & HEALING EMOTIONS

Supporting the Body to Feel, Release, and Heal

Unfelt emotions often stay trapped in the body, contributing to chronic stress, tension, and pain. Releasing these emotions is not about reliving trauma it's about allowing your feelings to move through you in healthy, safe ways.

This section offers tools to help you begin gently releasing emotions and creating a sense of safety in your body again.

Healthy Emotional Release Techniques

Try experimenting with the following practices. Some will resonate more than others honor what feels safe and supportive for you:

Crying

Letting yourself cry can be deeply healing. Tears release stress hormones and can help calm the nervous system.

Movement & Gentle Exercise

Dancing, walking, stretching, shaking, or yoga can help emotions move through your body.

Creative Expression (Art / Music / Writing)

Paint, draw, play music, or write what you feel. Express without judgment. Let your body speak through color, sound, or words.

Journaling

Free-write or use guided prompts to express what you're feeling. It helps bring unconscious emotions to light.

Hypnotherapy or Guided Meditation

These help you access the subconscious mind and release stored emotional pain gently and effectively.

EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique / Tapping)

A powerful tool for calming emotional responses by tapping on meridian points while voicing feelings or affirmations.

Breathwork

Conscious breathing helps regulate your nervous system, release tension, and bring awareness to hidden emotions.

Screaming (into a pillow or in nature)

A primal but powerful way to release suppressed anger, frustration, or grief in a safe space.

Grounding & Nature Time

Reconnect with the earth, sit under a tree, or walk barefoot. Nature helps regulate and restore the emotional body.



REFLECTION: WHAT HELPS YOUR BODY FEEL SAFE?

DATE: / /

WHAT MAKES YOUR BODY FEEL GROUNDED, CALM, AND AT EASE?

ARE THERE CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTS, PEOPLE, SOUNDS, OR ROUTINES THAT HELP YOU RELAX?

WHEN DO YOU FEEL SAFEST EMOTIONALLY?

WHAT SMALL DAILY RITUALS COULD YOU INTRODUCE TO SUPPORT YOUR BODY IN FEELING SECURE?

AFFIRMATIONS FOR EMOTIONAL HEALING

Repeat these aloud, write them down, or post them somewhere visible:

“It is safe to feel my emotions.”

“My body is allowed to release what it no longer needs.”

“I am gentle with myself through this process.”

“Every emotion I feel brings me closer to healing.”

“I honor my story and my strength.”

“My body remembers, but I can help it feel safe again.”

“I am healing more every day.”

Mini Hypnosis Script for Emotional Release

Find a quiet, comfortable place. Close your eyes and begin.

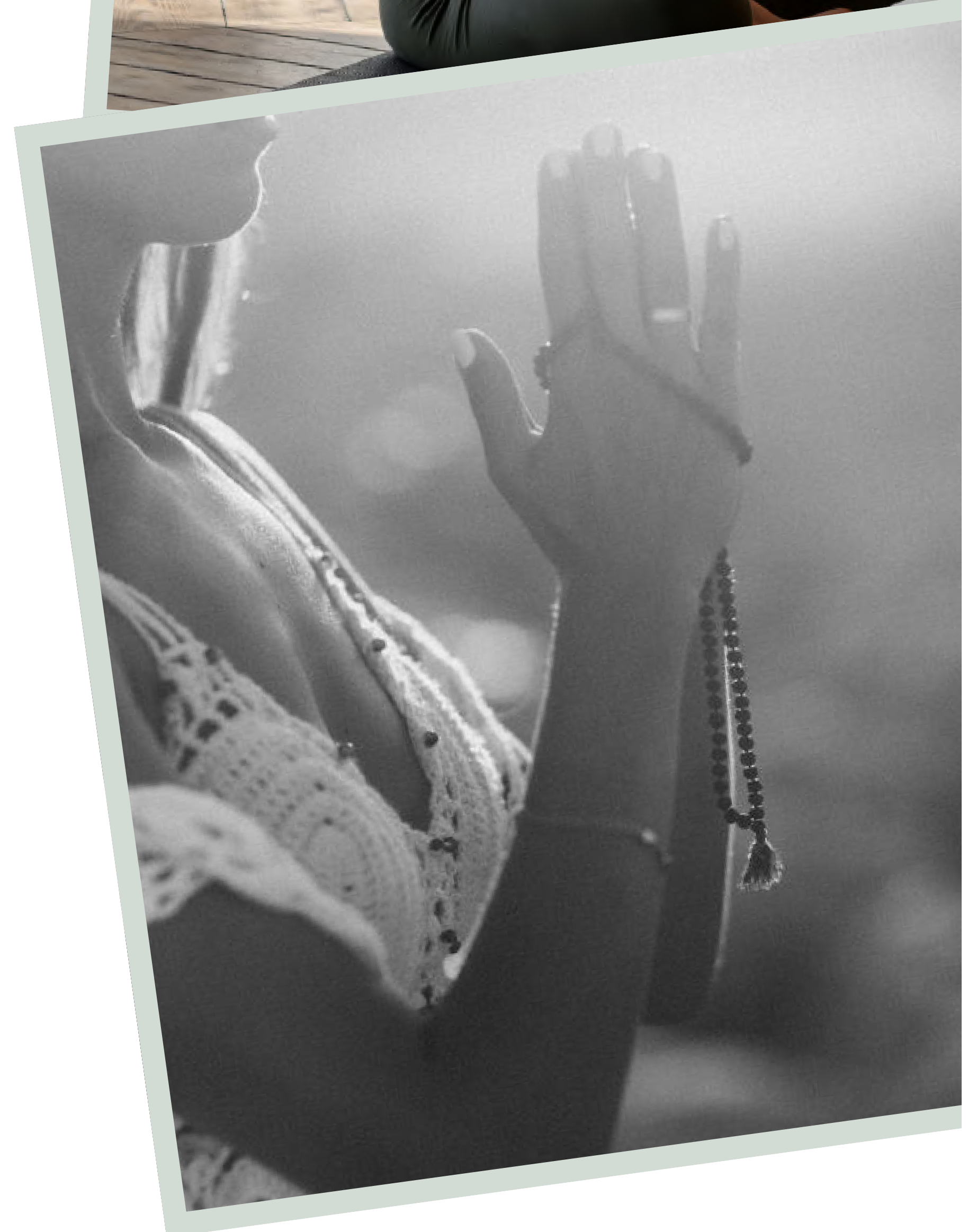
“Take a deep breath in... and out. Let your shoulders drop. Let your jaw soften. You are safe.

As you breathe, imagine a gentle light surrounding your body. It is warm, soothing, and soft. With each breath, it flows through you melting away old tension, softening stuck emotions.

You don’t need to force anything. Just allow. What you’re ready to release, your body will let go of gently, safely, naturally.

Now say to yourself: ‘I trust the wisdom of my body. I allow this release. I am safe to feel and heal.’

Stay here for as long as you’d like. When you’re ready, gently open your eyes.”



SECTION 7: YOUR INSIGHTS & ACTION PLAN

Turning Awareness into Empowered Healing

Over the last few sections, you've explored deep emotional connections, patterns in your pain, and ways your body might be asking for healing. Now it's time to pause, reflect, and gently begin shaping a personal healing path.

There is no pressure to have it all figured out. This section is simply a space to collect your insights, create a loving intention, and outline small steps toward change.

Your Key Insights

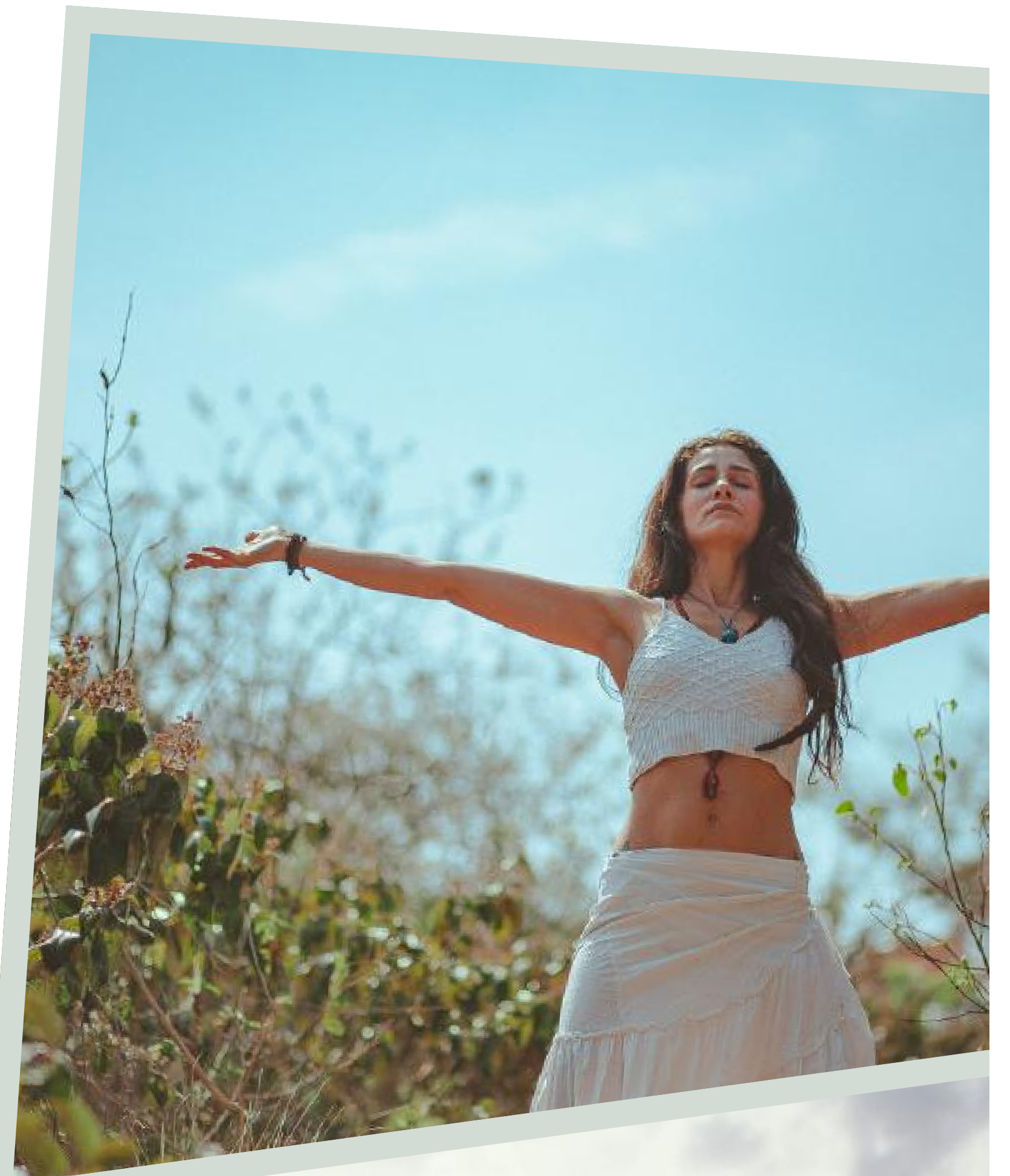
Reflect on what stood out the most for you throughout this process. Write down any realizations, shifts in awareness, or patterns you uncovered.

What did you learn about your emotional or physical pain?

Did anything surprise you?

What feels most important to address right now?

 Use the space below to write freely:

[illegible]

CREATE A HEALING INTENTION

A healing intention is like a gentle commitment to yourself, a compass that guides you, even when things feel difficult.

Examples:

- “I allow myself to heal at my own pace.”
- “I choose to listen to my body with compassion.”
- “I am creating space for emotional release and peace.”

Write your healing intention below:

"My healing intention is..."

[illegible]

CHANGES I WANT TO EXPLORE

Take a moment to think about what changes big or small you feel ready to explore. Focus on what feels supportive, not overwhelming.

Emotional Support Changes:

e.g., practicing EFT, journaling daily, starting therapy, setting boundaries

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-

Physical Support Changes:

e.g., gentle movement, nutrition, sleep hygiene, breathwork, bodywork

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-
-

Lifestyle Shifts:

e.g., slowing down, reducing toxic stressors, spending time in nature, more creative time

-
-
-

Final Reflection

What is one small thing you can do this week to begin honoring your healing intention?

📌 This week I will:

.....

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.....

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Remember: Healing isn't about perfection it's about awareness, intention, and small, loving actions repeated over time. You are already on the path.



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal dotted lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are 16 rows of dots, each row consisting of approximately 80 small grey dots. The entire sheet is framed by a thin black border.

About THE AUTHOR



Hi, I'm Kirsten Mock, the founder of The Artful Mind Counselling.

I'm a counsellor, hypnotherapist, and health coach who specializes in helping people living with chronic pain, illness, trauma, and grief. This work is deeply personal to me not just because of my training, but because I've walked this path myself.

From a young age, I faced ongoing health challenges, physical pain, and emotional trauma that shaped every part of my life. For years, I searched for answers in doctors' rooms and through medications, but nothing truly helped until I began healing emotionally and listening to what my body was trying to tell me.

That's when everything began to shift.

Through my own journey, I discovered how powerful the mind-body connection truly is and how trauma, grief, and unspoken emotions can live in the body, quietly fueling pain and illness. Today, I use a combination of therapy, hypnotherapy, and holistic coaching to help others reconnect with themselves, release what's been stuck, and create space for real healing physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

This workbook is one of the tools I created to support that healing process. My hope is that it helps you feel more understood, more in tune with your body, and more empowered on your journey.

DO YOU NEED
MORE HELP?

SCHEDULE A CALL

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