

Where to Start: A Guide for Survivors

By Ashantè Fray



Hi, Ashantè Fray.

Hello and welcome to "**Where to Start: A Guide for Survivors.**" My name is Ashantè Fray, and I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. When I was 19 years old, I made one of the most difficult decisions of my life—I chose to break the silence and begin my journey toward healing. That decision was both terrifying and liberating, and it marked the start of a path that has led me to where I am today.

As the founder of Synchronized Souls Inc., a community dedicated to supporting trauma survivors, I have had the privilege of walking alongside others on their healing journeys. I created this guide to offer you the support, encouragement, and guidance that I needed when I first began my own journey.

Healing from trauma is a deeply personal and often challenging process, but it is also one of the most empowering and transformative experiences you can undertake. Wherever you are on your journey, I want you to know that you are not alone. This guide is here to help you take those first steps, offering you tools and insights that have been meaningful to me and countless others.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your healing process. Remember, healing is a journey back to yourself—a journey back to your soul. And it is a journey worth taking.

With love and solidarity,

Ashantè Fray
Founder of Synchronized Souls





SYNCHRONIZED SOULS INC.

TRIGGER WARNING AND SAFE SPACE CREATION

This guide addresses sensitive topics related to trauma, including childhood sexual abuse, fear, and emotional pain. As you read, you may encounter content that triggers strong emotions or memories. It's important to be mindful of your body and mind—if you start to feel overwhelmed at any point, it's okay to pause, step away, or seek support. Your well-being is the top priority.

Before you begin, take a moment to create a safe space within yourself. This could be a mental or emotional sanctuary where you feel secure, grounded, and protected. It might involve visualizing a peaceful place, recalling a comforting memory, or simply focusing on your breath. This internal safe space can serve as a refuge as you work through the guide, providing you with stability and calm.

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INTRODUCTION

When I was 19 years old, I took one of the hardest steps of my life—I disclosed my truth as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. From the ages of 11 to 19, I was abused by several family members. The weight of this secret left me feeling isolated and trapped in my pain. Breaking the silence was terrifying. I was consumed by fear—fear of being judged, not being believed, and confronting the overwhelming emotions I had buried deep inside.

My healing story begins when I was 19 and attending Trent University. I noticed a poster asking, **"Are you being abused?"** As I read those words, I realized for the first time that they applied to me

This moment of realization was both terrifying and liberating.



I started therapy, where my therapist introduced me to the concept of boundaries—a foreign idea to me at the time. Establishing boundaries allowed me to create the space I needed to get to know myself. I began exploring parts of myself that I had been unable to before. In this new space, I began to explore who I was, outside of the trauma. I discovered parts of myself that had been suppressed—like my love for horror films, my ability to speak bluntly, and my love for writing and journaling.

From therapy, I moved towards spirituality, divination tools, energy healing, and somatic embodied practices, which have led me to where I am now. A certified trauma-informed yoga instructor, proud CSA survivor, tarot reader, storyteller, educator, and consultant.

If you're reading this guide, you might be feeling a lot of what I felt back then—fear, uncertainty, and perhaps a sense of isolation. Whether your trauma comes from childhood, more recent experiences, or another source, I want you to know that these feelings are normal, and you don't have to face them alone. This guide is here to help you take those first steps on your healing journey—a journey back to yourself and your soul. It's a challenging path, but also one that can lead to profound healing and self-discovery.

Reflection Question

What emotions surface as you consider beginning your healing journey?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Reflection Question

What fears or concerns do you have about confronting your past?

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***WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO
ACHIEVE OR DISCOVER? WHAT
AREAS OF YOUR LIFE DO YOU
WANT TO FOCUS ON?***

[illegible]

The First Steps: Embracing the Unknown

Starting your healing journey can feel like standing at the edge of a vast, dark forest. The path ahead may seem unclear, and you may not know what you'll encounter along the way. When I decided to break my silence, I was terrified. I didn't know how people would react or if I would be believed. I feared the emotional flood that might come once I started talking about what happened to me.

For trauma survivors, especially those who've experienced childhood sexual abuse, the fear of not being understood or accepted can be paralyzing. This fear can be compounded by the deeply ingrained shame and self-doubt that often accompany trauma. But taking that first step—whether it's telling someone your story, seeking therapy, or even just acknowledging your pain to yourself—is an act of incredible courage.

You might not feel ready. You might feel like the fear is too much. But remember, every journey begins with a single, often uncertain, step. It's okay to be scared. It's okay to not have everything figured out. What's important is that you're starting. Trust that you're moving in the right direction, even if the path isn't clear yet.

Creating Safe Spaces Within Yourself:

As you begin this journey, return to the safe space within yourself. This internal refuge can help you feel more grounded and secure as you navigate challenging emotions. Whether you visualize a peaceful scene, focus on your breath, or simply remind yourself that you are safe in this moment, use this space to anchor yourself as you take each step forward.

Reflection Question

What is the hardest part about taking the first step for you?

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Reflection Question

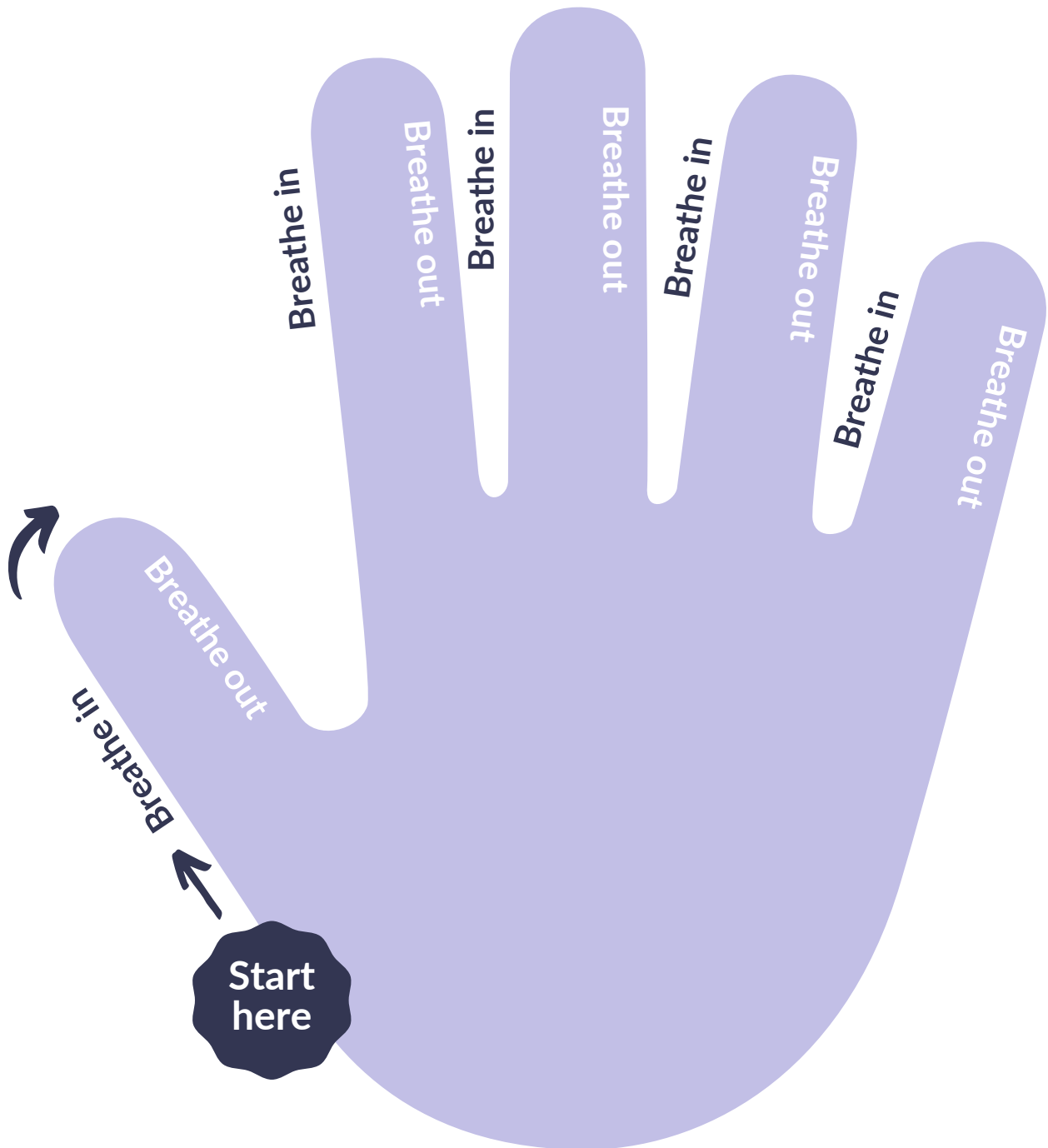
How can you show yourself kindness and patience as you begin this journey?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

CALM YOURSELF WITH A

5 FINGER BREATHING

BRAIN BREAK



Slowly trace the outside of the hand with the index finger, breathing in when you trace up a finger and breathing out when you trace down. You can also do this breathing exercise using your own hand.

A woman with dark skin and curly hair is standing in a body of water, wearing a long blue dress. Her arms are raised high above her head, and she is looking upwards with a joyful expression. The background shows a calm body of water and a line of green trees under a soft, overcast sky. The overall mood is one of liberation and empowerment.

TRAUMA-INFORMED
AFFIRMATION

**YOUR PAST
DOES *not*
DEFINE YOU.
YOU ARE
RECLAIMING
YOUR *power.***

TRAUMA-INFORMED
AFFIRMATION

Breaking the Silence: A Moment of Transformation

There is incredible power in breaking the silence, but it can also be incredibly difficult. For me, speaking out about my abuse was both terrifying and liberating. It was like releasing a storm that had been raging inside me for years. Finally voicing my truth—acknowledging the pain and the violation I had endured—was a moment of profound transformation. It was the first step toward reclaiming my life.

For many trauma survivors, the idea of breaking the silence can feel overwhelming. There might be a fear of not being believed, a fear of judgment, or a fear of reliving the trauma. These fears are valid, and the act of speaking out is not easy. But it is also the moment when healing truly begins. When you break the silence, you start to take back control. You begin to tell your story on your own terms, no longer letting the trauma define you in silence.

Creating Brave Spaces with Others:

When you're ready to share your story, consider doing so in a brave space—an environment where you feel safe, supported, and heard without judgment. This might be with a trusted friend, in a support group, or with a trauma-informed therapist. A brave space is where you can be vulnerable, where your story is honoured, and where you can begin to reclaim your voice and your power.

Reflection Question

If you've broken the silence, how did it feel afterward? If you haven't, what holds you back?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Reflection Question

What would it mean for you to reclaim
your voice and tell your story?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Activity: Preparing to Share Your Story

BEFORE SHARING YOUR STORY WITH OTHERS, TAKE SOME TIME TO PREPARE. WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE, HOW YOU WANT TO SHARE IT, AND WHY. CONSIDER WHAT SUPPORT YOU MIGHT NEED BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER SHARING. THIS COULD INCLUDE SETTING BOUNDARIES ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE WILLING TO DISCUSS, IDENTIFYING A SAFE PERSON TO TALK TO, OR PLANNING SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOU DECOMPRESS AFTERWARD.

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CHECK-IN

Feelings can be overwhelming for us and that is completely okay!
Check-in with your own feelings and see if you can figure them out.
Then, fill this container with feeling colours to show how much of each
you have right now.



Angry

Happy

Sad

Nervous

Excited

Calm

Facing Fear: The Heart of the Journey

Fear is a constant companion for trauma survivors. It's the fear of reliving painful memories, of feeling emotions that seem too big to handle, or of facing the truth about what happened. For those of us who have experienced trauma, especially in childhood, fear can become a deeply ingrained part of our lives. It's the fear of being vulnerable, of trusting others, and sometimes, even of trusting ourselves.

When I first started my journey, the fear felt overwhelming. It was like a wall standing between me and the life I wanted to live. But I learned that fear doesn't have to stop you. It's possible to move through it, one small step at a time. Each time you face your fear—whether it's by talking about your trauma, seeking therapy, or even just acknowledging your feelings—you take away some of its power.

Healing is not linear, it's a winding path with ups and downs. There will be days when the fear feels too heavy, and that's okay. What's important is that you keep moving forward, even if it's just a little bit at a time. Trust that with each step you take, you are building resilience, strength, and a deeper connection to yourself.

Remember, it's okay to take breaks, to feel overwhelmed, or to struggle. Healing is hard work, and it's essential to treat yourself with the same compassion you would offer a dear friend. When the journey feels too much, give yourself permission to rest. Trust that you are doing the best you can, and that is enough.

Reflection Question

What fears are most present for you right now? How have they affected your life?

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, typical of notebook or composition paper. The background is white, and there are no margins, text, or other markings present.

Reflection Question

How can you begin to face these fears in a way that feels safe and manageable?

[illegible]

A woman with dark skin and curly hair is standing in shallow water, possibly a lake or river. She is wearing a black one-piece swimsuit with colorful sequins and fringe. Her arms are raised, and she is smiling. The background shows a calm body of water and a line of green trees under a grey, overcast sky.

TRAUMA-INFORMED
AFFIRMATION

IT'S OKAY
TO FEEL WHAT
YOU FEEL. YOUR
EMOTIONS
ARE *valid.*

TRAUMA-INFORMED
AFFIRMATION

How Trauma Makes the Journey Harder

Trauma leaves deep scars that can make the journey to healing feel even more daunting. Whether your trauma stems from childhood abuse, sexual violence, or another form of violation, the impact is profound and long-lasting. Trauma can distort our sense of self, making us feel unworthy of love, happiness, or healing. It can create powerful triggers that bring back the pain as if it were happening all over again.

For survivors of childhood sexual abuse, the journey is often complicated by the fact that the trauma occurred during formative years. This can lead to deep-rooted issues with trust, self-esteem, and relationships. It can make it difficult to establish healthy boundaries, to believe in your own worth, and to feel safe in the world.

But despite these challenges, healing is possible. It's important to acknowledge that the journey may be harder because of the trauma, but that doesn't mean it's impossible. Each small victory—whether it's learning to trust someone, setting a boundary, or simply getting through the day—is a step toward reclaiming your life.

Reflection Question

How has your trauma affected your sense of self and your relationships?

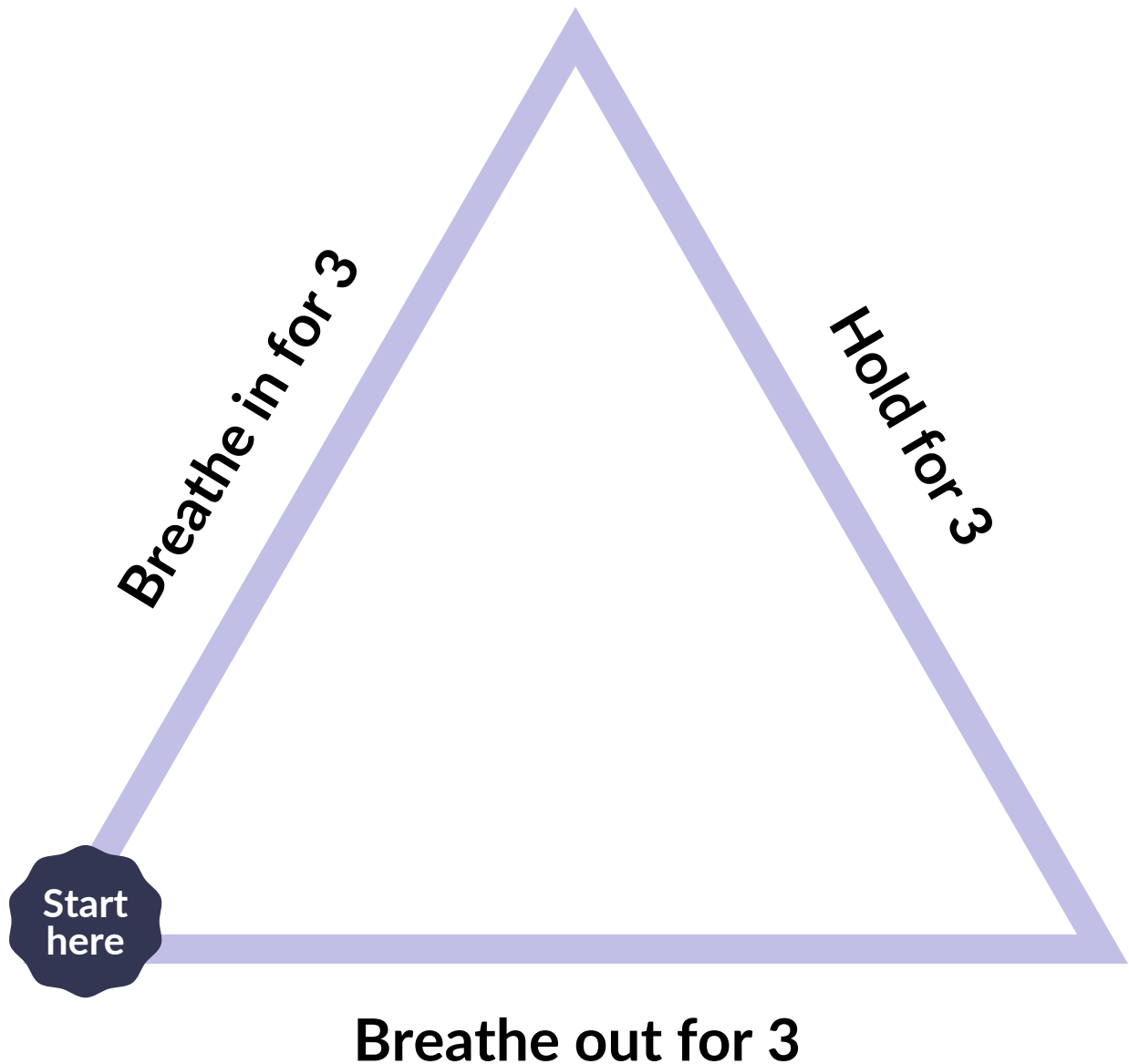
This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Reflection Question

What small victories have you experienced on your healing journey, even if they seem minor?

[illegible]

TRIANGLE BREATHING BRAIN BREAK



Starting at the left bottom of the triangle. Trace your finger up the side while you take a deep breath in. Hold your breath for three seconds as you slide down the other side. Breathe out along the bottom of the triangle. Repeat it until you are calm.

Returning to the Soul: Reconnecting with Your True Self

Healing is not just about overcoming pain—it's about returning to your soul. Trauma can make us feel disconnected from ourselves, as if we've lost the person we used to be. For me, this part of the journey was about rediscovering who I am beyond the trauma. It was about reconnecting with my passions, my values, and my inner strength—the parts of me that had been overshadowed by pain.

As you move forward, you'll find that healing opens up space for you to reconnect with yourself. You'll begin to see glimpses of the person you were before the trauma, and more importantly, the person you are becoming. This journey is about reclaiming your identity, your joy, and your life.

As you explore who you are beyond the trauma, continue to cultivate that safe space within yourself. This internal safe space will support you as you reconnect with parts of yourself that may have been hidden or overshadowed by pain. It's a place where you can explore, heal, and grow without fear of judgment.

Reflection Question

What parts of yourself have you felt disconnected from because of your trauma? How might you begin to reconnect with these parts?

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a template for handwriting practice or general note-taking. The background is a clean, solid white color.

Reflection Question

What brings you joy, peace, or a sense of purpose? How can you incorporate more of these things into your life as you heal?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

Self-care isn't an act but a loving commitment to oneself. How did you cherish yourself this week?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a long bath	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage in a hobby
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read for pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen to your favourite music
<input type="checkbox"/>	Go for a long walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time with a loved one
<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice mindful meditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watch a light-hearted movie
<input type="checkbox"/>	Journal your thoughts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pamper yourself
<input type="checkbox"/>	Try trauma-informed yoga	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a short nap
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cook a nourishing meal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go for a swim
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit a museum or gallery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice gratitude
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend a workshop or class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paint or draw	<input type="checkbox"/>	Explore a new place

TRAUMA-INFORMED
AFFIRMATION

I forgive
**MYSELF FOR
ANY
JUDGEMENTS
I'VE HELD
AGAINST
MYSELF.**

TRAUMA-INFORMED
AFFIRMATION

The Journey is Worth It: Finding Light in the Darkness

There were times on my journey when I wondered if it was worth it. The pain, the struggle, the uncertainty—it can feel like too much to bear. But I'm here to tell you that it is worth it. Every step forward, no matter how small, brings you closer to a life that is more peaceful, more joyful, and more connected to who you truly are.

Healing is not about forgetting or erasing the past. It's about finding light in the darkness. It's about learning to live with what has happened, but not letting it define you. It's about reclaiming your power, your voice, and your life.

You have already taken the first step by reading this guide. You have shown that you are ready to begin. Keep going. Trust that with each step, you are moving toward wholeness, toward freedom, and toward a life that is truly your own.



Reflection Question

What gives you hope as you think about your healing journey? What motivates you to keep going?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Reflection Question

How can you remind yourself of the progress you've made, even on days when it feels difficult?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Reflections

WINS CELEBRATED

Celebrate your achievements, however small they might be:

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Acknowledge any struggles or bottlenecks you faced:

LESSONS LEARNED

Identify learnings that can be carried forward:

FUTURE THOUGHTS

Write down any early ideas or upcoming focus points:

Reflections & Gratitude Journal

REFLECTIONS:

Reflection is a window to observing our growth and understanding our challenges. As we glance back, not with judgment, but with love and observation. Celebrate your victories, however small they might seem, and acknowledge the hurdles with compassion.

What worked? What felt challenging? Pen down without self-critique, and let these words be your gentle guide toward understanding and evolving on this journey.

GRATITUDE JOURNAL:

Gratitude is a gentle anchor in our moments of chaos and serenity alike. List down three things or moments from this journey that sparked a flutter of thankfulness in your heart. It could be a peaceful cup of tea, a warm hug, a moment of clarity, or simply being here, in this moment. Every spark is significant, every gratitude, is monumental.

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A MESSAGE FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

As you start this journey, I want you to know that you are not alone. I believe in your strength, in your resilience, and in your ability to heal. I have been where you are, and I know how hard it can be. But I also know that healing is possible, and that the journey is worth every challenge it presents.

Take your time. Be gentle with yourself. Allow yourself to feel what you need to feel, and know that each emotion, each step, is part of the process. This is your journey, and it is unique to you. Honour it, embrace it, and trust that you are exactly where you need to be.

You have begun a journey that will lead you back to yourself, back to your soul. And that is a journey worth taking.





LET'S WORK TOGETHER

If you're ready to take the next step in your healing journey, I invite you to connect with me and explore how we can work together. Whether you're looking for spiritual guidance, holistic healing, or a supportive community, Synchronized Souls Inc. is here to walk with you on your path to transformation.

WWW.SYNCHRONIZEDSOULS.COM

Join our TRAUMA-INFORMED RECOVERY SPACE

For **\$11 CAD / \$8 USD per month**, access a collection of 100+ trauma-specific resources designed to support your healing journey. This plan is perfect for those who want to focus exclusively on their trauma recovery in a self-paced, introspective environment.

You'll also have the ability to message me within our membership platform at any time for guidance, as well as connect with other souls who are navigating the self-paced space alongside you.

SECTIONS INCLUDE:

- Understanding Trauma
- Trauma and the Body
- Trauma and the Nervous System
- Attachment Styles
- Inner Children Healing
- Triggers
- Boundaries
- Healing through Relationships and Communication
- Embodied Healing
- Life After Trauma
- + More

SIGN UP NOW



JOIN OUR MEMBERSHIP JOIN OUR MEMBERSHIP JOIN OUR MEMBERSHIP JOIN OUR MEMBERSHIP

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1:1 TAROT READINGS

NURTURING THE HEALING SOUL



This session is designed for those seeking to nurture their soul and heal from trauma with compassion and care. Whether you're at the beginning of your healing journey or looking to deepen your practice, this tarot and oracle session offers supportive guidance to help you reconnect with your inner self, release emotional blocks, and foster self-compassion. Through this gentle yet insightful reading, you'll receive practical steps to create emotional safety, restore balance, and take empowered action in your healing journey.

BREAKING THE CYCLES OF TRAUMA



Breaking free from trauma is a powerful and transformative process, but it requires deep reflection and action. In this 1.5-hour session, we'll dive into the patterns and cycles that have been holding you back, helping you uncover insights to break free from the past and step into your true power. This reading offers a compassionate but thorough exploration of the deep wounds that still need healing, guiding you toward reclaiming your strength and creating a new path forward.

ATTRACTING & MANIFESTING ABUNDANCE



This session is designed to help you align with the abundance you're ready to attract and manifest in all areas of your life. Whether it's career opportunities, financial prosperity, love, or personal goals, this tarot and oracle reading will provide guidance on how to bring your desires into reality. Through this session, you'll uncover any blocks that might be standing in your way and learn how to harness your inner power to manifest with clarity and confidence.

INNER CHILD HEALING



Inner child healing is all about reconnecting with those tender parts of ourselves that carry deep wounds from childhood. In this session, we'll dive into not just immediate healing, but also the unmet needs and long-term nurturing that your inner child craves. You'll learn how to restore joy and safety while building a lasting bond with this part of yourself. This spread is perfect for those ready to go deep and truly nurture that inner kiddo with some love and care 🧡

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DIGITAL PRODUCTS



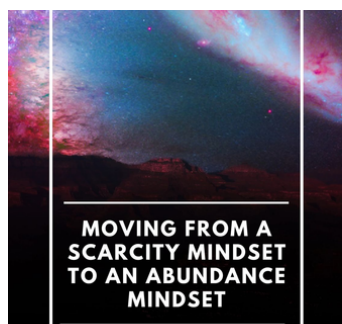
SOUL-CARE GUIDEBOOK



SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES



THE POWER OF SELF-REFLECTION & FORGIVENESS



MOVING FROM A SCARCITY MINDSET TO AN ABUNDANCE MINDSET

A person is lying in a field of tall green grass and small purple flowers. They are covered by a white sheet, with only their head and arms visible. The background is a soft-focus field of similar vegetation.

**I'M SO PROUD
OF YOU!**

Thank you for allowing
me to share this
journey with you.
Remember, you are
not alone, and your
journey toward
healing is just
beginning.