



WHOLE AGAIN AT WORK A GENTLE RE-ENTRY TO CAREER CONFIDENCE AFTER BURNOUT & BETRAYAL



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WHOLE AGAIN AT WORK

A Gentle Re-Entry to Career Confidence After Burnout & Betrayal

"She remembered who she was and the game changed."
— Lalah Deliah

INTRO: "You're Not Broken, You're Brave"

If you're reading this, I want you to pause for a second and take a breath. The fact that you're here means you're already doing the bravest thing—trying again after being burned, bulldozed, or flat-out betrayed. This guide is your soft landing and strong launchpad. I created it for you, the woman who's navigating the fog after workplace trauma, who's tired but not done, who's rediscovering what it means to be seen, safe, and celebrated at work.

This isn't your typical "just hustle harder" job search guide. This is about healing first—then creating a career that fits the woman you've become.

The path after workplace trauma isn't linear. Research shows nearly 40% of women report experiencing some form of workplace harassment or bullying during their careers, yet these experiences remain largely unvalidated in professional development resources. What happened to you was real, and the impacts on your confidence, identity, and sense of safety at work were profound.

You likely found yourself questioning your abilities, your worth, and even your sanity as institutional betrayal unfolded around you. Perhaps you've been carrying shame about "letting it happen" or staying too long. I want you to know something crucial: The environment that betrayed you was designed to confuse, diminish, and eventually discard you—not because you lacked value, but because your light threatened a system built on power imbalance.

In these pages, we'll unpack not just LinkedIn strategies and job search tactics, but the deeper work of reclaiming your inherent worthiness, redefining success on your terms,



and creating safeguards that honor your experience. We'll use practical tools like LinkedIn in trauma-informed ways that put you back in control of your professional narrative.

Let's rebuild together, one grounded, gentle step at a time.



MODULE 1: "The Wreckage Isn't You"

Understanding & Validating What Happened

Focus:

- Understanding workplace trauma (burnout, gaslighting, betrayal, bullying)
- Naming it without shame
- Journaling to release the inner critic and reconnect with truth

Understanding Workplace Trauma

Workplace trauma manifests in many forms, each leaving its own unique imprint on our professional identity and sense of safety:

Burnout: More than just being tired, burnout is a state of chronic workplace stress characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. For women, burnout often comes from carrying both the visible workload and the invisible emotional labor of workplaces. The World Health Organization now recognizes burnout as an occupational phenomenon—it's a systemic issue, not a personal failing.

Gaslighting: This insidious form of psychological manipulation makes you question your own reality, memory, and perceptions. In workplaces, it sounds like: "You're being too sensitive," "That never happened," or "No one else has this problem." Over time, this erodes your confidence in your own experiences and judgment.

Betrayal: Institutional betrayal occurs when organizations you trusted to protect you instead cause harm or fail to prevent it. This might look like HR dismissing valid concerns, management protecting toxic leaders, or colleagues remaining silent witnesses to your mistreatment. The pain is deepened by the violation of trust.

Bullying: Workplace bullying includes persistent criticism, public humiliation, exclusion from important communications, withholding resources needed to succeed, or setting impossible standards. Research shows women often face different bullying patterns than men, with relational aggression and credibility attacks being more common.

Signs You've Been in a Toxic Work Culture

- You felt anxious Sunday nights and relief Friday afternoons



- Your physical health deteriorated (sleep problems, digestive issues, frequent illness)
- You found yourself constantly documenting interactions for "proof"
- You stopped sharing ideas or speaking up in meetings
- You began doubting skills you previously mastered
- Simple tasks required enormous energy
- You felt isolated or like you were "the problem"
- Your identity and values felt compromised
- You couldn't envision a future at the organization
- You developed hypervigilance to others' moods and reactions

What Institutional Betrayal Looks Like

- Minimizing or ignoring reported incidents
- Blaming you for "not handling" the situation
- Promising action but taking none
- Making the reporting process unnecessarily difficult
- Suggesting the problem is your perception, not reality
- Protecting those with power or tenure regardless of behavior
- Using confidentiality as a shield for inaction
- Retaliating directly or indirectly after you spoke up
- Failing to communicate investigation outcomes
- Painting you as "difficult" or "not a team player"

"It's Not Your Fault" Self-Reminders

- Toxic work environments are designed to make you blame yourself
- Your emotional responses were appropriate to abnormal circumstances
- Being loyal and trying to make things work are strengths, not weaknesses
- Your body's stress responses were trying to protect you
- Setting boundaries isn't selfish—it's necessary
- Leaving was an act of self-preservation, not failure
- Your worth isn't determined by how others treated you
- You did the best you could with the information and resources you had
- Healing isn't linear, and setbacks aren't failures
- You deserve workplaces that recognize your value



Boundary Basics for Moving Forward

1. **Informational Boundaries:** Control what you share about your past experiences and with whom. You get to decide how much context others receive.
2. **Physical Boundaries:** Honor your body's need for rest, movement, and care. Create physical workspace arrangements that support your sense of safety.
3. **Digital Boundaries:** Set limits on when you engage with professional platforms, job search activities, and work communications.
4. **Emotional Boundaries:** Recognize when you're taking on others' emotions or responsibilities. Practice phrases like: "I need to think about that," "That doesn't work for me," or "I'm not available for that."
5. **Time Boundaries:** Create buffers between activities, especially before and after potentially triggering professional interactions.
6. **Personal/Professional Boundaries:** Define what aspects of yourself you choose to bring into professional spaces, acknowledging that authenticity doesn't mean total transparency.

Reflective Exercise: Letter to Your Past Self

Write a letter to the version of yourself who stayed too long. Tell her what she didn't deserve, what she handled with grace, and what you're choosing differently now.

Dear one who stayed,

I see how hard you tried to make things work. I see how you showed up with your whole heart, giving second chances, believing in the possibility of change. You didn't deserve...

[Continue your personal letter]

What I honor about how you handled things...

What I'm choosing differently now...

With compassion and understanding, The woman you became



MODULE 2: "Reclaiming Your Voice"

Confidence, Clarity & Personal Branding

Focus:

- Rebuilding confidence post-trauma
- Identifying your transferable skills and value add
- Writing your new "about me" rooted in authenticity, not fear
- Creating your real elevator pitch — no performance, just truth

Rebuilding Confidence Post-Trauma

Confidence after workplace trauma isn't about "faking it till you make it"—it's about rebuilding trust in yourself through intentional reflection and evidence-based reminders of your capabilities.

1. **Validation Inventory:** Create a document where you collect evidence of your competence and contribution—past performance reviews, emails of appreciation, project successes, skills you've developed. This isn't ego-stroking; it's countering the distorted narrative trauma created.
2. **Identity Reclamation:** Workplace trauma often makes us shrink our professional identity to avoid further harm. Take inventory of aspects of your professional self you pulled back—creativity, leadership, outspokenness, boundary-setting—and gradually reintegrate them on your terms.
3. **Micro-Confidence Practices:** Rebuild confidence through small daily actions. Share an insight in a LinkedIn comment, reach out to a trusted former colleague, or apply for a job that excites you even if you don't meet every qualification (remember, men typically apply when they meet 60% of requirements, while women often wait until they meet nearly 100%).
4. **Reframe Perfectionism:** Recognize that perfectionism may have been a survival strategy in toxic environments. Practice "good enough" in safe areas first, gradually expanding to professional contexts.

Identifying Your Transferable Skills and Value

After workplace trauma, it's common to undervalue your capabilities or even forget aspects of your expertise. Let's reclaim this narrative:



Core Competencies Assessment: Beyond technical skills, identify the human capabilities you bring: perhaps adaptability, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, pattern recognition, or calm under pressure. Many of these may have been strengthened by navigating difficult work experiences.

Values Clarification: What matters most to you in work? Perhaps integrity, collaboration, creativity, impact, or growth? These values are part of your professional value proposition.

Transferable Skills Inventory: Women often discount their transferable skills. Consider capabilities like:

- Managing complex emotions (yours and others')
- Navigating challenging personalities
- Finding solutions with limited resources
- Creating clarity amid ambiguity
- Building bridges between viewpoints
- Recognizing early warning signs in systems
- Developing workarounds to structural challenges

Contribution Pattern Recognition: Look across your career for patterns in how you uniquely contribute. Do you excel at:

- Turning abstract concepts into actionable plans?
- Seeing problems others miss?
- Building trust in fragmented teams?
- Translating between technical and non-technical stakeholders?
- Maintaining quality despite pressure?

Writing Your New "About Me" Rooted in Authenticity

Your LinkedIn profile summary is an opportunity to reclaim your professional narrative with authenticity. This isn't about exposing vulnerability or trauma—it's about presenting yourself in alignment with your reclaimed identity.

The Authentic Summary Formula:

1. **Connect:** Open with a statement that connects you to the right audience
2. **Clarify:** Express your professional focus and strengths clearly
3. **Contribute:** Articulate the unique value you bring
4. **Context:** Provide relevant background that supports your narrative



5. **Call:** Include a clear invitation for connection

Example Framework: "I help [type of organizations/people] achieve [desired outcome] through [your unique approach]. With experience in [relevant background], I bring [unique perspective/skills] to [industry/function]. My work is guided by a commitment to [core values relevant to professional context]. I'm currently focused on [current professional direction], and welcome connections with [types of people you want to connect with]."

Authenticity Filters:

- Does this feel true to who I am now?
- Would I feel comfortable saying this in conversation?
- Does this represent what I want to be known for?
- Am I hiding behind jargon or buzzwords?
- Does this attract the right opportunities and repel the wrong ones?

Creating Your Real Elevator Pitch

Traditional elevator pitches often feel performative and inauthentic. Instead, craft a brief introduction that feels natural and aligned:

The Authentic Introduction Framework:

1. **Present reality:** What you're currently doing or focused on
2. **Past context:** Relevant background that shapes your perspective
3. **Passion point:** What energizes you professionally
4. **Purpose direction:** Where you're headed or what you're seeking

Examples: "I'm currently exploring roles in project management after five years in the education sector. My experience coordinating complex initiatives with limited resources gave me a unique approach to prioritization and stakeholder management. I'm particularly energized by bringing order to chaos and helping teams navigate change with minimal friction. I'm looking to bring these skills to mission-driven organizations in the healthcare or environmental space."

"After leading marketing teams in fast-paced environments, I'm now focusing on consultative roles where I can help organizations align their messaging with their values. My background in both corporate and nonprofit sectors has shown me the power of authentic communication to drive meaningful engagement. I'm especially interested in connecting with organizations navigating transitions or rebrand initiatives."

**Practice Contexts:**

- Networking events (virtual or in-person)
- Informational interviews
- LinkedIn messages to potential connections
- Coffee meetups with industry peers
- First-round interviews

Confidence Rebuilding Affirmations That Don't Feel Cheesy

Rather than generic positive statements, these evidence-based affirmations connect to your lived experience:

- "I've navigated challenging situations before and can do so again."
- "My worth isn't determined by my last workplace experience."
- "I bring valuable perspective because of everything I've learned."
- "I trust my ability to recognize healthy and unhealthy environments."
- "My boundaries protect my energy for what matters most."
- "I can choose environments that value my contributions."
- "My voice deserves to be heard."
- "I've recovered from setbacks before and have grown stronger."
- "I am reclaiming my professional path on my terms."
- "My intuition about workplace dynamics has been strengthened, not weakened."



Reflective Exercise: Beyond Your Job Title

List 10 things you bring to a team beyond your job title. Then write a paragraph introducing yourself as if you were describing your best friend.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Now, introduce yourself as if describing your best friend:

[Your name] is someone who brings such unique energy to her work. What makes her exceptional is...



MODULE 3: "No More Walking Into Fires"

How to Vet Employers & Interview Intentionally

Focus:

- Spotting red flags during the interview process
- Reading between the lines of job ads and Glassdoor reviews
- How to ask questions that reveal culture, not just perks
- Why "gut check" moments matter more than job titles

Spotting Red Flags During the Interview Process

After experiencing workplace trauma, your awareness of subtle warning signs is heightened—this isn't paranoia, it's wisdom. Pay attention to:

Interview Process Indicators:

- Disorganized scheduling or frequent rescheduling
- Interviewers who haven't reviewed your resume
- Inconsistent information from different team members
- Defensiveness when asked about culture or turnover
- Vague answers about advancement or decision-making
- Interrupting, dismissing, or talking over you
- Pressure to decide quickly without complete information
- Reluctance to introduce you to potential teammates
- Inability to articulate what success looks like in the role

Communication Patterns:

- Delayed or non-existent follow-up
- Changing expectations or job descriptions mid-process
- Overpromising without specifics
- Dismissing your questions or concerns
- Signs of poor communication between team members
- Inconsistent feedback throughout the process

**Power Dynamics:**

- How leadership speaks about team members
- Whether diverse voices seem valued or marginalized
- If dissenting opinions appear welcome
- How mistakes are discussed and addressed
- Whether boundaries around time and availability are respected

Reading Between the Lines

Job descriptions, company websites, and review platforms contain valuable intelligence when you know what to look for:

Job Description Analysis:

- Multiple mentions of "fast-paced," "wear many hats," or "high-pressure" may signal understaffing
- Excessive requirements for "thick skin," "handling criticism," or "stress tolerance" could indicate a harsh culture
- Emphasis on "culture fit" without defining that culture might mask exclusionary practices
- Vague language about "above and beyond" expectations may hide poor boundaries
- Mismatch between responsibilities and seniority/compensation often leads to burnout

Company Review Platforms:

- Look for patterns rather than outliers in reviews
- Check for response rates and tones in management replies
- Notice timeframes—has there been recent improvement or decline?
- Weigh mentions of specific departments or roles relevant to you
- Assess whether critical reviews share common themes
- Notice if positive reviews sound formulaic or genuine

LinkedIn Intelligence Gathering:

- Check employee tenure patterns—do people stay 1-2 years or longer?
- Look for internal mobility—do people get promoted or change roles?
- Examine leadership diversity across levels



- Notice engagement with employee content—does the company amplify employee voices?
- Review recent company posts for values and priorities
- Observe how the company responds to social issues relevant to their industry

How to Ask Questions That Reveal Culture

Strategic questioning during interviews helps assess organizational health without raising defensiveness:

Behavioral Questions:

- "Can you walk me through how the team handled a recent challenge?"
- "How was feedback delivered in the last project that needed improvement?"
- "What happened the last time someone on the team made a significant mistake?"
- "How does the organization typically respond when someone raises a concern?"
- "Can you share an example of how disagreements are navigated on this team?"

Culture-Revealing Questions:

- "What makes someone successful on this team beyond technical skills?"
- "How would you describe the communication style that works best here?"
- "What's something people might find surprising about working here?"
- "How has the culture evolved over the past year or two?"
- "What's the biggest challenge the team is currently navigating?"

Boundary-Testing Questions:

- "How do people on the team typically disconnect from work?"
- "What are expectations around response times to emails sent after hours?"
- "How are priorities adjusted when new urgent matters arise?"
- "What does flexibility mean in practice at this organization?"
- "How does the team ensure people can take their vacation time?"

Leadership Insight Questions:

- "How does leadership communicate changes that affect the team?"
- "What's an example of how the company has responded to employee feedback?"
- "How transparent is information about company performance and challenges?"
- "What's something challenging the leadership team is working to improve?"
- "How would you describe the leadership style that predominates here?"



Trusting Your Gut: The Body Knows

After workplace trauma, you may doubt your instincts, but your body often recognizes unsafe situations before your conscious mind does. Pay attention to:

Physical Responses:

- Tension in your shoulders, jaw, or stomach
- Shallow breathing or breath-holding
- Fidgeting or restlessness
- Energy drain after interactions
- Sleep disturbances following interviews
- Changes in appetite around interview processes

Emotional Indicators:

- Anxiety that exceeds normal interview nerves
- Relief when calls are canceled
- Reluctance to talk about the opportunity with friends
- Finding yourself downplaying concerns
- Feeling pressure to present a different version of yourself
- Sense of dread about starting the role

Cognitive Signs:

- Rationalizing red flags ("maybe it's not that bad")
- Focusing solely on escape from current situation
- Imagining how to navigate potential issues before even starting
- Difficulty visualizing yourself thriving in the environment
- Excessive rumination about interactions
- Sense of confusion or mental fog after discussions

Using LinkedIn as a Research Tool

LinkedIn offers powerful ways to vet potential employers before and during the interview process:

Company Research Strategies:

- Follow target companies to see their posting patterns
- Analyze their content for authenticity vs. corporate-speak



- Check the careers page link from their profile
- Review featured posts for values alignment
- Look for employee spotlights and voices

People Research Approaches:

- Review profiles of potential team members and leaders
- Look for patterns in background and tenure
- Check for shared connections who might provide insights
- Notice engagement patterns and professional interests
- Observe how they interact with others' content

Alumni Connections:

- Use the Alumni tool to find people who worked at target companies
- Connect with shared school backgrounds for insider perspectives
- Ask specific questions about culture and leadership
- Inquire about why they left the organization
- Seek advice on succeeding in that environment

Engagement Tactics:

- Comment thoughtfully on company posts before applying
- Share relevant industry content to demonstrate engagement
- Connect with recruiters with personalized messages
- Follow key leaders in target organizations
- Participate in industry groups where target company employees engage

Reflective Exercise: Your Non-Negotiables

Write out your "non-negotiables" — the things you will no longer tolerate in a workplace, and the things your next chapter must include to feel aligned.

What I Will No Longer Accept:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



5.

What My Next Workplace Must Include:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Early Warning Signs I Will Pay Attention To:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



MODULE 4: "Healing While You Rise"

Setting Up a Safe & Sane Routine in a New Role

Focus:

- Building routines that prioritize rest and nervous system safety
- Setting boundaries from day one
- Creating a "career care kit" for the hard days
- Why pace matters more than perfection

Building Routines That Prioritize Rest and Nervous System Safety

Starting a new role after workplace trauma requires intentional practices to support your nervous system's sense of safety:

Morning Regulation Practices:

- Create a non-negotiable morning routine that grounds you before work
- Implement a transition ritual between home and work (even for remote work)
- Set intentions for regulated engagement before opening emails
- Practice "resource priming" by visualizing supportive people or experiences
- Prepare body-based regulation tools (breath practices, movement sequences)

Workday Nervous System Support:

- Schedule short breaks for nervous system reset (2-5 minutes every hour)
- Create environmental cues for safety (photos, objects, comfort items)
- Develop awareness of early dysregulation signs unique to you
- Prepare regulation scripts for challenging situations
- Identify workplace allies who understand trauma responses

End-of-Day Transition:

- Create clear closure rituals for workdays
- Practice conscious transition from work to personal space
- Implement digital boundaries for work communications
- Develop physical practices to release workday tension
- Establish evening routines that support nervous system downregulation



Weekly Rhythm Design:

- Plan energy management across the week, not just time management
- Schedule recovery time after known triggering events
- Identify weekly touchpoints with supportive resources
- Create space for reflection and integration
- Balance structure (which creates safety) with flexibility (which honors needs)

Setting Boundaries From Day One

How you enter a new organization sets the tone for your experience. Setting healthy boundaries from the beginning is easier than trying to establish them later:

Communication Boundaries:

- Clearly articulate your communication preferences and working style
- Establish expected response times for different channels
- Define urgent vs. non-urgent matters and appropriate channels
- Create templates for saying no, deferring, or clarifying priorities
- Practice phrases that buy time without creating anxiety

Time and Availability Boundaries:

- Be intentional about arrival and departure times
- Clarify expectations about after-hours availability
- Establish precedents about weekend work and vacation responsiveness
- Create buffer time between meetings and commitments
- Practice visible boundaries (closing office door, status messages)

Workload Boundaries:

- Document scope discussions and agreements
- Clarify priorities when new tasks are added
- Develop comfort with appropriate pushback
- Create systems for tracking commitments to prevent overload
- Establish regular check-ins about capacity and priorities

Personal/Professional Boundaries:

- Decide what aspects of personal life you'll share in workplace
- Create language for declining social engagements when needed



- Establish comfort level with physical space and interactions
- Clarify your learning and feedback preferences
- Define how you'll handle discussions of prior work experiences

Creating a "Career Care Kit" for Hard Days

Even in healthy workplaces, challenging days happen. Prepare supportive resources in advance:

Physical Support Items:

- Comfort objects for your workspace
- Sensory tools for grounding (stress balls, textured items)
- Tea or beverages that support regulation
- Movement props (resistance bands, tennis ball for tension release)
- Comfort clothing or accessories that help you feel secure

Digital Resources:

- Saved folder of affirming emails or messages
- Playlist for different emotional needs
- Guided meditations or breathing exercises
- Photos that remind you of your worth beyond work
- Contact list of supportive people for different situations

Written Resources:

- Journal prompts for processing difficult moments
- List of your strengths and contributions
- Personalized pep talks for specific challenges
- Boundary scripts for common situations
- Reminder letters to yourself about your journey and growth

Professional Support Plan:

- Therapist or coach contact information
- Professional development resources that energize you
- Industry connections who understand your field's challenges
- Mentors who can provide perspective
- Career advisors for longer-term guidance



Why Pace Matters More Than Perfection

The pressure to prove yourself quickly in a new role can trigger trauma responses and old patterns. Creating a sustainable pace supports long-term success:

Expectation Management:

- Have explicit conversations about 30/60/90 day expectations
- Clarify priorities rather than trying to excel in all areas simultaneously
- Communicate your thoughtful approach to learning the role
- Frame your pace as strategic rather than limitational
- Emphasize quality and sustainability over speed

Permission to Learn:

- Document your learning process rather than just outcomes
- Schedule learning time rather than expecting instant mastery
- Develop comfort with asking questions and seeking clarification
- Create systems for organizing new information
- Recognize that learning curves are normal and valuable

Sustainable Performance Practices:

- Identify early warning signs of falling into overwork patterns
- Create recovery practices for high-intensity periods
- Balance achievement with connection and meaning
- Track energy expenditure alongside task completion
- Celebrate progress and small wins consistently

The Long View Approach:

- Frame your career as a marathon, not a sprint
- Make decisions based on 1-3 year impacts, not just immediate gains
- Consider how choices affect your whole life, not just work success
- Build professional relationships with depth, not just utility
- Create a career narrative that values sustainability and growth

How to Structure Your First 30 Days for Balance

The early days in a new role set important patterns. Here's how to create a foundation for sustainable success:



Week 1: Observation and Orientation

- Focus on relationship building and understanding systems
- Establish your workspace with comfort and regulation in mind
- Notice communication patterns and organizational rituals
- Begin implementing your boundary-setting language
- Practice your nervous system support routines consistently

Weeks 2-3: Engagement with Awareness

- Contribute while continuing to learn organizational context
- Notice where your trauma responses might be activated
- Implement regular check-ins with yourself about comfort levels
- Begin to clarify your unique value within the team
- Establish regular one-on-ones with key colleagues and supervisors

Week 4: Integration and Intention

- Reflect on initial patterns and adjust as needed
- Address any emerging concerns directly but diplomatically
- Reinforce boundaries that may have started to slip
- Celebrate initial contributions while honoring your learning curve
- Set intentions for your ongoing engagement based on early insights

Reflective Exercise: Your Energy-Honoring Workweek

Create a weekly rhythm that balances your energy, not just your schedule. What would a workweek look like if it honored your healing?

Monday:

- Morning:
- Midday:
- Afternoon:
- Evening:

Tuesday:

- Morning:
- Midday:
- Afternoon:



- Evening:

Wednesday:

- Morning:
- Midday:
- Afternoon:
- Evening:

Thursday:

- Morning:
- Midday:
- Afternoon:
- Evening:

Friday:

- Morning:
- Midday:
- Afternoon:
- Evening:

Weekend Restoration Practices:

-
-



BONUS SECTION: "Still Healing, Still Here"

1. *Burnout Recovery Journal Prompts*

Use these prompts when you need to process difficult emotions or experiences:

For Days When You Feel Overwhelmed:

- What sensations am I noticing in my body right now?
- What would feel like relief in this moment?
- What is one small action I can take to support myself?
- What am I carrying that isn't mine to carry?
- How would I support a friend feeling this way?

For Processing Workplace Interactions:

- What was activated for me during this interaction?
- What past experiences might be influencing my current reaction?
- What boundaries would support me in similar future situations?
- What's the story I'm telling myself about what happened?
- What alternative perspectives might be worth considering?

For Reconnecting With Your Value:

- What unique perspectives do I bring because of my experiences?
- When have I felt most aligned and energized in my work?
- What impact have I had that I feel proud of?
- What strengths have emerged or been reinforced through challenges?
- What would I say to my younger self about her worth and potential?

For Clarifying Direction:

- What energizes me rather than depletes me?
- When do I lose track of time in my work?
- What problems do I feel naturally drawn to solving?
- What environments help me thrive?
- What would success feel like, not just look like?

For Cultivating Resilience:

- What has helped me navigate difficult periods before?



- Who are the people who help me feel seen and supported?
- What practices bring me back to myself?
- What am I learning through this experience?
- How am I growing in ways that matter to me?



2. Toxic Job Vetting Checklist

Use this checklist during your job search process to evaluate potential employers:

Research Phase Red Flags:

- High turnover visible on LinkedIn (many employees with 1-2 year tenures)
- Leadership team lacks diversity
- Consistent themes in negative reviews
- Defensive or absent responses to critical feedback
- Vague or hyperbolic language about culture
- Excessive emphasis on "work hard, play hard" culture
- Limited or non-existent career advancement visible
- Minimal employee content or voice on social platforms

Interview Process Warning Signs:

- Disorganized or disrespectful scheduling
- Interviewers unprepared or unfamiliar with your background
- Inability to clearly articulate expectations or success metrics
- Defensive responses to questions about culture
- Glorification of overwork or "hustle" culture
- Dismissive language about work-life boundaries
- Inconsistent information from different interviewers
- Pressure tactics to accept offers quickly
- Reluctance to put promises in writing
- Limited access to potential teammates

Onboarding Red Flags:

- Absence of clear onboarding plan
- Limited introduction to team members and resources
- Immediate high pressure without adequate support
- Early boundary testing (after-hours emails, weekend requests)
- Lack of regular check-ins during early weeks
- Missing or inadequate tools and resources
- Sink-or-swim mentality toward learning curve
- Unclear or changing expectations
- Different reality from what was described in interviews

**Green Flags to Seek:**

- Transparent communication about challenges
- Clear, documented expectations
- Visible investment in employee growth
- Evidence of internal promotions and development
- Respect for boundaries in communication and scheduling
- Diversity at all levels of organization
- Humility and openness to feedback from leadership
- Work-life integration practices that feel sustainable
- Regular, structured feedback and development conversations
- Celebration of various types of contribution, not just visible achievements



3. The "Energy Inventory" Worksheet

Track what drains you, what fuels you, and how to build more of the latter into your day:

Energy Drains:

1. Specific tasks:
2. Types of interactions:
3. Physical environments:
4. Communication styles:
5. Time pressures:
6. Thought patterns:

Energy Sources:

1. Specific tasks:
2. Types of interactions:
3. Physical environments:
4. Communication styles:
5. Accomplishments:
6. Thought patterns:

Energy Neutral (Neither Draining nor Energizing):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Strategies to Reduce Energy Drains:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



4.

5.

Strategies to Increase Energy Sources:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Weekly Energy Management Plan:

- Monday:
- Tuesday:
- Wednesday:
- Thursday:
- Friday:



4. LinkedIn for Safety & Aligned Opportunity

Use LinkedIn strategically to find psychologically safe opportunities:

Profile Strategies for Safety:

- Highlight skills and experiences that position you for healthier environments
- Use subtle signals in your summary that indicate values alignment
- Feature recommendations that speak to collaborative and respectful working style
- Showcase projects or accomplishments that reflect healthy team dynamics
- Use the Open to Work feature selectively with targeted parameters

Research Tactics:

- Follow organizations known for employee wellbeing initiatives
- Connect with professionals who advocate for healthy workplace practices
- Join groups focused on positive organizational culture
- Save searches for companies with strong values alignment
- Track thought leaders in workplace wellbeing and psychological safety

Connection Approaches:

- Develop templates for reaching out to potential cultural informants
- Create specific questions that assess organizational health
- Prepare responses for discussing employment gaps or transitions
- Develop language for discussing your values and needs professionally
- Plan strategies for gracefully exiting conversations with red flag indicators

Engagement for Alignment:

- Comment meaningfully on content related to healthy work cultures
- Share articles and insights about effective leadership and teamwork
- Participate in discussions about workplace wellbeing
- Connect with HR professionals and recruiters focused on cultural health
- Develop relationships with professionals in target organizations before applying



CLOSING: "You Deserve More Than Survival Mode"

You were never too sensitive. You were surviving in an environment that didn't value your sensitivity as strength. But now, we're doing things differently. This time, we're building your next chapter with care.

The journey from workplace trauma to professional thriving isn't a straight line. There will be days when old fears resurface, when imposter feelings creep in, when you question your path forward. These moments don't erase your progress—they're part of the healing journey.

What makes this chapter different is that you're approaching it with awareness, intention, and self-compassion. You're no longer navigating your career on autopilot or from a place of scarcity. You're building a professional life that honors all of who you are—your gifts, your boundaries, your wisdom, and yes, even your wounds.

The right workplace for you doesn't just tolerate your needs—it values the depth of perspective you bring precisely because of what you've experienced. Your heightened awareness of power dynamics, your emotional intelligence, your commitment to integrity—these are extraordinary professional assets, not liabilities.

Remember that healing happens in community. Share this journey with trusted allies who understand. Celebrate small victories. Honor your instincts. Practice radical self-compassion on harder days.

You are not a burden—you are a badass with boundaries. And the workplace that deserves you? It's out there. Let's go find it—on your terms.

With unwavering belief in your journey,

Your Talent Transformation Whisperer

"The wound is the place where the Light enters you."
— Rumi
