

RETURN TO YOUR BODY

A gentle body-led cognitive-restructuring workbook for unlearning the beliefs that taught you to fight, shrink, and doubt yourself.

You were not born believing your body was the enemy.

A thought is not a fact. A learned belief is not your identity.

You do not need to become someone else to come home to yourself.

Before you begin

This workbook is an invitation to notice the beliefs that shape how you relate to your body—and to practise meeting them with honesty, curiosity, and care.

How to prepare

Choose a gentle moment. Set aside 10–20 uninterrupted minutes. Sit somewhere you feel physically supported.

Bring compassion, not perfection. You are not here to “fix” your thoughts or force yourself to feel positive. You are here to create space around them.

Listen to your capacity. Pause, take a breath, move your body, drink water, or return later if anything feels overwhelming.

Write what is true today. Your answers can be messy, incomplete, or changing. Let them be yours.

A gentle reminder

These prompts are reflective and educational, not a replacement for mental-health or medical care. If they bring up intense distress, trauma, disordered eating, or urges to harm yourself, pause and seek support from a qualified professional or a trusted person.

Belief 1: “My body is my enemy.”

A guided practice for moving from conflict toward curiosity.

Move slowly. You do not need to force a positive thought. The practice is to make room for a more honest, compassionate response.

1. THINKING

“Why is my body not listening to me?”

I feel like I am constantly trying to control it, change it, or make it behave differently.

2. NAMING

“I am having the thought that my body is against me.”

This is a thought I am experiencing—not an unquestionable fact.

3. NOTICING

“This thought gets louder when I compare myself to others.”

Especially when I feel I am fighting the same battle again: trying to lose weight, look different, or finally feel good enough.

4. VALIDATING

“Of course this belief feels real.”

I may have spent years receiving messages that my body needs to be controlled, corrected, hidden, or improved—rather than listened to.

5. QUESTIONING

“Is my body truly punishing me?”

Or could it be communicating, protecting, adapting, and doing the best it can with what it has been through?

6. UNIDENTIFYING

“This belief was learned; it is not my identity.”

Messages that female bodies are sinful, fat, flawed, too much, or never enough do not define the truth of my body.

7. DISTANCING

“I can hear this thought without obeying it.”

I can hear “my body is my enemy” without letting it decide how I speak to, feed, move, or treat myself.

8. RECONNECTING

“Maybe my body is not my enemy.”

Maybe it is waiting for me to listen. I can begin with curiosity, compassion, and one small act of care today.

Belief 2: “I am too much of a woman.”

A guided practice for releasing the pressure to make yourself smaller.

Move slowly. You do not need to force a positive thought. The practice is to make room for a more honest, compassionate response.

1. THINKING

“I am too emotional, too sensitive, too loud, too sensual, too intense. I need to make myself smaller.”

2. NAMING

“I am having the thought that being fully myself is too much for other people.”

3. NOTICING

“This thought gets louder when I express a need, set a boundary, take up space, show emotion, receive attention, or feel my femininity fully.”

4. VALIDATING

“Of course this belief feels familiar.”

I may have learned that women are safer when they are agreeable, quiet, accommodating, attractive but not too sexual, ambitious but not intimidating.

5. QUESTIONING

“Am I truly too much?”

Or have I been taught to measure myself by the comfort of people who benefit when I stay small?

6. UNIDENTIFYING

“This is a learned message, not my identity.”

My sensitivity, desire, voice, body, boundaries, and depth are not evidence that something is wrong with me.

7. DISTANCING

“I can hear the thought without letting it decide how much of myself I am allowed to be.”

8. RECONNECTING

“I am allowed to be fully here.”

I can be tender and powerful, sensual and wise, emotional and discerning. I do not need to shrink to be safe, loved, or worthy.

Belief 3: “I am not feminine enough.”

A guided practice for defining womanhood from within.

Move slowly. You do not need to force a positive thought. The practice is to make room for a more honest, compassionate response.

1. THINKING

“I am not feminine enough. I do not look, move, speak, dress, or exist the way a woman is supposed to.”

2. NAMING

“I am having the thought that my femininity has to be performed in a certain way to count.”

3. NOTICING

“This thought gets louder when I compare myself to other women, see idealised images online, do not feel beautiful, or feel unlike the version of femininity I was taught to admire.”

4. VALIDATING

“Of course this feels painful.”

I have absorbed messages that femininity must look soft, effortless, desirable, delicate, youthful, and pleasing to others.

5. QUESTIONING

“Who decided what a real woman should look like?”

Is femininity a fixed performance—or can it be expressed through the way I inhabit my own body and life?

6. UNIDENTIFYING

“This is a cultural standard I learned.”

It is not a measurement of my womanhood, beauty, or worth.

7. DISTANCING

“I can hear this thought without allowing it to define what I wear, how I move, how I speak, or who I become.”

8. RECONNECTING

“My femininity does not need to look like anyone else’s.”

It can be strong, soft, athletic, sensual, quiet, fierce, nurturing, ambitious, simple, or still unfolding. I am allowed to define it from within.

Belief 4: “A loving woman never feels rage.”

A guided practice for making room for anger without abandoning your values.

Move slowly. You do not need to force a positive thought. The practice is to make room for a more honest, compassionate response.

1. THINKING

“If I feel rage, I must be unloving, unsafe, difficult, or bad.”

2. NAMING

“I am having the thought that love and rage cannot exist in the same body.”

3. NOTICING

“This thought gets louder when I feel disrespected, overwhelmed, unheard, betrayed, controlled, or asked to carry more than is mine.”

4. VALIDATING

“Of course this belief feels familiar.”

Many women were taught to be kind, agreeable, forgiving, and emotionally available—while being discouraged from expressing anger.

5. QUESTIONING

“Is rage proof that I am unloving?”

Or could it be a signal that a boundary has been crossed, a need has been ignored, or something deeply important needs my attention?

6. UNIDENTIFYING

“I learned that a good woman stays pleasant and quiet.”

But that belief is not the truth of my character, my heart, or my capacity for love.

7. DISTANCING

“I can feel rage without acting from rage.”

I can listen to its message without letting it harm me or anyone else.

8. RECONNECTING

“My rage does not cancel my love.”

It can invite me to protect what matters, speak honestly, set a boundary, and choose clear, compassionate action.

Your own belief

Choose one body-related belief that feels present for you today. Write slowly. Use the steps as a conversation, not a test.

MAIN BELIEF

What is the belief I am carrying?

1. THINKING

What am I telling myself?

2. NAMING

"I am having the thought that..."

3. NOTICING

When does this thought become loud? What tends to trigger it?

4. VALIDATING

Why does it make sense that I learned or developed this belief?

5. QUESTIONING

Is it fully true? What else could be true?

6. UNIDENTIFYING

What messages, experiences, or standards may have shaped it?

7. DISTANCING

How can I hear this thought without letting it decide how I treat myself?

8. RECONNECTING

What is one compassionate, body-led response I can choose today?

A closing reflection

You do not have to believe every thought your mind offers you.

Each time you pause before criticism, comparison, control, or self-abandonment, you create another possibility: a relationship with your body built on attention, respect, and care.

What is one sentence I want to carry with me?

What is one small way I can show up for my body today?

You do not need to become someone else to come home to yourself.