



# The Healing Collective

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## SOMATIC AREAS





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### 1. Lower Back: Anger

If you sit in frustration, the lower back is a common place for storing repressed anger. For relief, learn to articulate frustration constructively and address conflicts with others. Sounds simple? It's not. Learning to harness the power of anger and turn it into a creative force is vital to living an active and rewarding life. Strive to convert anger into assertion; express it constructively, not destructively. You'll be rewarded with a surge in confidence, energy, and healthier relationships.

### 2. Stomach & Intestines: Fear

When you're afraid, you tend to tense your stomach and intestines. Sayings such as "I'm sick to my stomach" are usually bodily responses to conflict. The more you deny or repress fears, the more physical reactions will manifest. Begin by acknowledging your trepidation and talking it through with someone you trust. Consider all your choices and outcomes. The more you can express the fear in words, the less of a hold it will have on your body.

### 3. Heart & Chest: Hurt

I recently worked with a woman who was complaining of chest pains. A series of medical work-ups found no psychical cause for her symptoms. Was she supposed to live with chronic discomfort? Reluctantly, she turned to therapy. When I asked if someone she loved had hurt her, she guffawed and brushed my question off as psychobabble. A few sessions later, as she spoke about the demise of her last relationship, she began to cry uncontrollably. For too long, she ignored her broken heart. She needed to mourn the relationship and honor her sadness. After this release, the tension in her chest finally lifted.

### 4. Headache: Loss of Control

If you're a major or minor control freak, you're in for a real challenge. No matter how strong-willed you might be, an emphasis on control will eventually lead to burnout—and splitting headaches. Not all difficulties in life can be solved by intellect or trying to control everything. Controlling tendencies exacerbate many problems. Letting go, accepting what you can and can't control, and developing a mindfulness practice are the steps you need to take to cure your headache habit.

### 5. Neck /Shoulder Tension: Burdens and Responsibilities

Shouldering too many responsibilities is a pain in the neck. You're likely overly burdened if you suffer from neck and shoulder tension. Rather than ask for help from others, you'll probably do everything yourself. This most often leads to neck and shoulder tightness. Learn to delegate, ask for support, decide what is worth taking on, and for goodness' sake, share responsibilities with others.



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### 6. Fatigue: Resentments

Resentment stresses your entire body and does more damage to you than the people you resent. Blaming others, playing the victim, reliving the events—these are the empty calories of self-expression.

Resentments keep you from living in the moment and experiencing the benefits of being present. When you focus on those who wronged you, you are giving them free real estate in your head. Instead, try to focus on forgiveness or, at the very least, moving on. Strive for more fulfilling relationships, add a healthy dose of self-care, and you'll feel years younger.

### 7. Numbness: Trauma

When overwhelmed by an event, we tend to numb our feelings. This is our psyche's way of disassociating from overpowering pain or danger. Traumatic events are not always life-threatening—they can result from a brush with real or imagined threats or a history of childhood abuse or neglect. Over time, if you don't process the trauma, the memory of it gets lodged in your body. As a result, you deaden your feelings when vulnerable; trusting others is impossible, and true intimacy is lost. Any situation that makes you feel unsafe causes great confusion; you freeze up or go blank. The first step toward freeing yourself from trauma is recognizing its power over you and asking for help.

### 8. Breathing Difficulties: Anxiety

Breathing difficulties, a panic attack that leaves you gasping for air, and a suffocating feeling when anxious. These are the symptoms I've noticed in folks who are repressing great sadness. They don't want to cry and avoid tragic mourning events. Instead, they hide sadness, move on and focus on something else. But restricting tears is a lot like holding your breath. When you finally cry, it comes gushing out; equal parts pain and relief. Freeing bottled-up sadness is like sucking in a dose of fresh oxygen. It's refreshing and liberating!

### 9. Voice & Throat Problems: Oppression

Oppressed people are not allowed to have a voice. If you grew up in an oppressive atmosphere, speaking your mind or expressing your needs was dangerous. You also carry around a harsh inner critic. As a result, as an adult, you tend to withhold feelings. When you have the impulse to speak up, you resort to your childhood tendency to silence and repress your voice. This clash between the urge to speak and withhold causes tension and often manifests in throat and voice problems. In therapy, I've found that journal writing is a great way to expose your inner critic and start talking back to it. Also, reading poetry out loud (poetry has a profound connection to the unconscious) is a way of gaining confidence in your voice. Hopefully, you will soon realize you have the right to be heard.



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### 10. Insomnia: Loss of Self

People tend to lose sleep during life-changing events—good or bad. You experience anxiety when your life circumstances are in flux. This can happen during times of stress or times of significant personal growth.

For me, sleeplessness is most often associated with the fear of the unknown.

Please write down your worries or, better yet, talk them out with a close friend. However when you choose to talk to someone, insure that they are someone you can trust. To do this you must allow yourself to be vulnerable in the first place, and know that although someone may not be able to meet all of your needs, it doesn't mean the need will go unmet.

