

The Exercise

Teach Your Nervous System Something New

You know by now that your nervous system loves familiarity. It would rather choose what's familiar than what's healthy, because familiar feels predictable. This week, you're going to teach it something different - not through a dramatic life change but through ordinary moments.

Choose **five things** this week that you would normally do on autopilot and deliberately do them differently.

You might:

- ♥ Sit in a different seat.
- ♥ Walk a different route.
- ♥ Visit a new café.
- ♥ Start a conversation instead of waiting for someone else to.
- ♥ Leave your phone at home while you go for a short walk.
- ♥ Eat somewhere different.
- ♥ Listen to a type of music you've never chosen before.
- ♥ Say no, thank you instead of maybe.
- ♥ Ask for what you want instead of settling.
- ♥ Spend an hour without filling every silence.

None of these things are difficult, expensive, or unusual but that's the point. As you do each one, pay attention to your nervous system. Does it resist? Does it tell you to go back to what's familiar? Does it make the unfamiliar feel bigger than it really is?

Don't argue with it. Simply notice. Then continue.

At the end of the week, look back over your five experiments.

What surprised you?

Which experiment felt easier than you expected?

Which one stretched you the most?

What did your nervous system learn?

Perhaps the biggest lesson won't be about the café, the walk or the conversation. Perhaps it will be this: you are far more adaptable than your nervous system first believed. Every time you safely experience something unfamiliar, you give your nervous system new evidence:

- ♥ Evidence that unfamiliar does not automatically mean unsafe.
- ♥ Evidence that you can cope.
- ♥ Evidence that change doesn't have to be feared.

Every piece of evidence makes the next step just a little easier. Breaking the cycle isn't only about changing your reactions. It's about gently expanding the life your nervous system believes isn't possible. One small experiment at a time.