

Chapter 15

Returning to Yourself

Recognising self-abandonment is a significant realisation. You begin seeing clearly the moments in your life where you softened your voice, postponed your needs, or prioritised harmony at the expense of your own comfort. You may feel relief that you finally understand patterns that once seemed confusing, but you may also feel sadness when reflecting on how often you left emotional parts of yourself out of the conversation.

Both responses are natural.

Understanding the pattern is not about judging the past. It's about seeing clearly how your nervous system learned to compromise itself to maintain peaceful, safe connections.

Once you see the pattern clearly, something new becomes possible: **you can begin returning to yourself.**

Returning to yourself doesn't mean becoming aloof, confrontational or withdrawing from relationships. It doesn't require extreme changes or sudden declarations. Instead, it unfolds through small moments of awareness and honesty.

You noticing when you agree too quickly, pausing before you offer yet more reassurance, or recognising when your needs are quietly disappearing from the conversation. In these moments, you have a choice. You may decide to be flexible or accommodating in certain situations, but your own perspective begins to take its place alongside the needs of others.

Returning to yourself often begins with very small changes:

- expressing a preference
- taking a little more time before agreeing
- allowing yourself to say, I'm not sure that works for me

You may notice discomfort when you begin expressing your needs, others may notice the change as well and may not always be supportive or complimentary. But returning to yourself is about allowing connection and authenticity to exist at the same time. We know by now that healthy relationships are not built on one person disappearing to maintain harmony. They are built on mutual understanding, honesty, and respect.

Instead of organising your reactions, choices, and decisions primarily around maintaining harmony, you organise them

around a balance between connection, self-honouring and self-respect.

Reflection Exercise

Your Process of Returning

Take a moment to reflect on what returning to yourself might look like in your life.

One way I often leave myself out of conversations is...

A small change I could practise is...

Examples might include:

- pausing before agreeing
- expressing a preference
- asking for time to think
- setting a gentle boundary

What emotions do you notice when you imagine including your needs more openly?

What might become easier in your life if you remained more connected to yourself?

Final Reflection

Write a few sentences describing what “returning to yourself” means to you personally.

Returning to yourself is not about becoming someone new - it's about reconnecting with emotional parts of yourself that may have been quiet for a long time. Each moment of awareness strengthens your ability to remain present in your relationships while also remaining present in your own life.

Healthy connections no longer require your invisibility to remain harmonious.