

COMPANION WORKBOOK FOR 'WHERE DO I EVEN BEGIN?'

ONLINE EDITABLE VERSION

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT



CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT!

Throughout the book you'll find reflective exercises called 'Challenge It to Change It Journal Prompts'. These journal prompts provide a frame within which you can paint a clear picture of how you ended up fighting an emotional war. You don't need to respond to everything straight away - you can pass on anything that feels uncomfortable, revisit it later, or just let it rest in your mind as you doodle on the page and sit with the questions. Most of us remember very little about our earliest years so not all the experiences that brought you here will rise to the surface immediately - which is probably a good thing! You can come back to the exercises whenever you experience or remember something that may need 'challenging and changing.'

These exercises are like finding a map when you're lost; when we zoom out and look at the bigger picture - the map - we can work out how we got here, how we get out, and how, more importantly, we never go back. We start noticing alternate paths, ones that take us away from cliff edges and dangerous ground. As we become more aware of why and how our past still shapes our present, our emotional wounds will finally close and stay closed. Learning the truth about how we got 'here' finally feels cleansing and enlightening.

These 'Challenge It to Change It' questions are borne from over 15 years of research. They've been refined and enriched by the many brave souls I've worked with who have navigated their way through their own emotional storms and whose humbling transformations have all greatly contributed to the work in this book. Nothing in these pages is impossible to achieve - in fact it's all 'easy when you know how'.

People often tell me they don't know where or how to begin healing. Whatever they try doesn't 'stick' and their emotional wounds remain open, raw, and unresolved. If that's been your experience too, you're not alone.

The sooner we see the truth behind what we were taught to believe is 'wrong' with us, the sooner we can heal the confusion and pain of the past. When we ask ourselves the right questions, healing can happen faster than we expected with a lot less emotional overwhelm - and fear - about what we may uncover.

Healing doesn't have to be confusing, guilt-inducing, or feel like an impossible uphill struggle. When we untangle the root cause of our emotional wounds we become empowered to regulate our emotions, validate ourselves with positive meaning, and finally feel like we have a purpose on this planet.

Emotional Freedom is all about truth, so let's tell it!

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

HOW DO I RECOGNISE TRAUMA?

- Do you feel like you're fighting an emotional war?
- Are you struggling with your self-worth?
- Do you have addictions - food/shopping/emotional dependence?
- Are you socially anxious?
- Do you sabotage your opportunities?
- Do you procrastinate even when you want to move forward?
- Do you do what you **want** to do?
- Or what you **must** do?
- Does your current mindset reject success and wellbeing?
- Do you find yourself attracting emotional or financial poverty?
- Do you keep settling for less than you deserve?
- Have you ever been bullied, rejected or excluded?
- Did you hear or see your parents' fighting?
- Did you watch one of your parents leave?
- Do you compensate by 'being good' so no one else leaves you?
- Do you still fight for closure that never comes?
- Have you built an emotional wall around yourself?
- Were you ever humiliated or shamed by criticism or rejection?
- Were you scapegoated by a narcissistic parent or caregiver?

- Were your emotional needs met during your childhood?
- Did you have a close, safe, protective bond with a parent?
- Do you have a controlling personality to avoid feeling powerless?
- Do you close yourself off from other people emotionally?
- Do you struggle to trust other people even when you want to?
- Do you find it hard to forgive yourself?
- Do you dumb yourself down rather than dare to shine?
- Are you a pain-filled perfectionist?
- Are you a people-pleaser?
- Did your family's cultural or religious expectations harm your sense of self?
- Were you emotionally, physically, or sexually abused?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

HOW PAST TRAUMA AFFECTS YOUR LIFE TODAY

How is your past trauma affecting your thoughts, emotions, relationships, and choices today?

What has past trauma stopped you doing that you'd love to do?

What has past trauma made you do that you want to stop doing?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

HOW EVIDENCE OF BEING S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D SHOWS UP IN YOUR LIFE

- Do you chase love?
- Do you seek approval?
- Are you highly agreeable?
- Do you fear confrontation?
- Are you afraid to set boundaries?
- Do you keep quiet rather than speak up?
- Are you scared of being left?
- Are you a people pleaser or enabler?
- Do you run from connection and commitment?
- Do you struggle to trust others?
- Do you test people to see if they'll leave?
- Do you abandon your goals and never finish what you start?
- Do you struggle financially?
- Do you feel depressed and hopeless?
- Do you suffer with panic attacks?
- Are you socially anxious?
- Do you feel resentful?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

HOW WE SUFFER WHEN WE'RE S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D

We:

Don't feel good enough
Betray & blame ourselves
Detach/Zone out
Compare ourselves to others
Gloss over our pain
Fake who we are/how we feel
Procrastinate
Sabotage ourselves
Play small
Can't rest or sleep
Withdraw & isolate
Lie to ourselves
Feel resentful
Feel empty and hopeless
Think we're broken/
worthless
Are moody and snappy
Feel restricted and trapped

It's why we:

Are easily distracted
Repeat toxic patterns
Over-apologise
Over-compensate

It's why we become:

Perfectionists
People-Pleasers
Peacekeepers
Critical & Judgmental
Risk averse
Narcissistic
Co-dependent
Self-destructive
Intolerant
Bulimic/Anorexic
Hypervigilant
Lonely
Anti-social
Disempowered
Reckless
Needy
Obsessive

It's why we have:

Depression
Anxiety
BPD
Intrusive thoughts
Addictions

It's why we:

Seek attention
Don't trust or rely on
ourselves
Feel suicidal
Gossip
Overspend
Settle for less
Underestimate our abilities
Can't forgive ourselves
Punish ourselves
Can't cope with change
Struggle to relax
Neglect ourselves
Feel irritable
Can't focus
Deny our feelings
Keep busy
Feel emotionally numb
Avoid intimacy
Feel like a misfit
Feel misunderstood
'Choose' not to have friends
Ruminate
Feel overwhelmed

It's why we have:

Anger Issues
Imposter Syndrome
C/P.T.S.D
Problems with trust
No ambition
Fatigue
Rejection Sensitive
Dysphoria (RSD)
Dissociative Disorders
Separation issues
Flashbacks
Difficulty controlling
our emotions
Overwhelming guilt
Overwhelming shame
Difficulty with recall
Financial difficulties
No self-control

Physical symptoms:

Stomach aches
Headaches
Chest pain

These are not personal failings; they are symptoms of traumatic experiences.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

WHY WAS I S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D?

Think about who S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D you. Do you have a theory about why it happened?

Were they carrying unresolved pain or jealousy?

Were they repeating patterns of harm that were once done to them?

Were they overwhelmed by their own shame or fear?

When you read back over your answers, do you notice any traces of self-blame? Have you written 'because I wasn't good enough', 'because I made them angry'?

Are you able to place accountability where it belongs with the person who caused the harm, not with yourself?

Does it help to realise that you weren't S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D because of who you are, but because of who they are?

Do you still risk being S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D by any of these people today? If so, who and why?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

TRAUMA-SURVIVAL ZONE

This exercise invites you to notice what you've built around you that feels like safety... but isn't.

Who and what are you keeping close in your Trauma-Survival Zone?

Be honest. It may include people, habits, jobs, coping strategies, or beliefs.

What dreams, desires, or goals are you sacrificing by staying there?

What has your Trauma-Survival Zone helped protect you from?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

STEPPING OUT OF THE ZONE

Think about something you've been putting off - a project, a task, a dream - not because it's impossible, but because it's been buried in your Trauma-Survival Zone. Maybe fear, perfectionism, or self-doubt got there first and set up camp. Maybe you've told yourself you're not ready?

Let's change that.

What's the project, goal, or desire that's still stuck in your zone? Be as specific as you can - something you'd love to start, continue, or complete.

Why is it still in the zone? What fear, belief, or behaviour has kept it there?

What would it mean to you to complete or achieve it?

What's the next smallest step you can take to move it forward - even just a tiny bit - today?

How can you support yourself emotionally as you step out of the zone and into the life you want?

You don't need to feel fearless. You just need to feel ready enough to take the next step.

Growing up, did you get the message that you mattered? Or did you feel invisible, unimportant, unwanted, or uncared for? What happened that made you feel that way?

Did you have a safe place and a safe person to go to when you were hurt, afraid, or confused? Or was there no safe haven or safe person for your younger self to seek protection from?

Were your emotional needs met by your parents or caregivers? Think about both your father or primary caregiver and your mother or primary caregiver individually. How did each one respond to your emotions, needs, mistakes, and dreams? What messages - spoken or unspoken - did you receive about your worth?

What did you make their behaviour mean about you? What story about yourself have you been carrying because of their actions or inactions?

Now, what's the real truth? Who were they really? What were they carrying emotionally and mentally that had nothing to do with you?

What's one truth you now choose to tell *yourself* instead of their story?

Do you agree that the way you were treated was not your fault?

YES

NO

I'M BEGINNING TO AGREE

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

RECLAIMING MY TRUE PERSONALITY

You're allowed to change. You're allowed to grow. You're allowed to become the person you choose to be - not a version of you shaped by fear, shame, or rejection. In this exercise, you'll reflect on what parts of your personality you might like to change and explore the S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D fears that sometimes try to hold you back. This is about reclaiming your right to evolve into your true self.

If you could change something about your personality, what would it be? Example: I'd be more assertive. I'd allow myself to speak up without guilt.

If you make this change, what are you worried you might feel...

Example: rejected, criticised, abandoned.

Who might trigger this fear or discomfort? Example: your mother, your boss, your partner.

Does your current personality reflect who you truly are, or who you believed you needed to be to stay safe and fit in?

Do you adapt, shrink, or silence yourself to please other people?

When decisions are made, do you: go along with others, make your own choices, or compromise?

Are there character traits in you that remind you of someone who once S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D you? No shame, or blame, just awareness.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

INNER CHILD

Who or what is your inner child still afraid of?

In what ways are you dimming your inner child's light today?

What would you like to say to your inner child? Write with tenderness, honesty, and hope.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND

When we choose kinder thoughts about ourselves, we begin to express the little person we once were, the one who felt silenced and depressed. Below you'll find questions designed to help you express yourself more freely, and to connect with the empowered, authentic version of who you truly are.

Go ahead, dig deep - I'll wait.

KINDER THOUGHTS ABOUT ME

I am good at:

I can easily:

The best thing about me is:

If money were no object, I'd:

I could teach:

I enjoy listening to:

I'm most confident when:

I'd love to be a:

My favourite thing to do is:

My favourite thing about myself is:

Which S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D fear rises up first when you think about making a different choice today?

How has that fear shaped your past decisions?

If that fear no longer had control over you, what would you choose instead?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

OVERTHINKING

Do you ruminate or overthink?

Do you understand why you might do this?

Do your thoughts centre on a specific topic or person?

Do you know why you ruminate about this topic or person?

Are your thoughts rooted in any S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D experiences? If so, which ones?

Does your fear ease with rumination, or does it get worse?

What negative experiences do you most often ruminate about?

How would you feel if you stopped ruminating and accepted what is?

Next time you catch yourself ruminating, what will you do instead to redirect your mind?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

LEAVING THE TRAUMA SURVIVAL ZONE

Since you last explored who and what lives with you in your Trauma Survival Zone, what's changed?

Have you removed or added anyone or anything?

Have your boundaries strengthened?

Has your awareness grown? Write down any shifts you've noticed, no matter how small.

These **O**pposite **T**houghts (O.Ts) are your new truth. By repeating them often - especially when old programming tries to resurface - you begin building new neural pathways, and a new relationship with yourself.

Who taught you these negative thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about yourself.

What would you like to say to them.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

REWRITING HABITS, RECLAIMING POWER

What are the autopilot habits you want to change?

What will you do differently to shift these habits over time?

What S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D. experiences are you unconsciously trying to avoid by keeping old habits alive?

What are you afraid might happen if you let the habits go?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

WHO AND WHAT TRIGGERS YOU?

Awareness is your superpower. When you know why someone triggers you, their hold is loosened. You don't need to confront them, fix them, or even speak to them again. You just need to understand what they activated and why - and use that knowledge to set yourself free.

The names of the people who trigger you are:

If you stood up to this person/these people, what S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D feelings might you feel?

You believe they did what they did because:

You believe they said what they said because:

Were they intentionally cruel? Or simply unaware of the damage they caused?

What have you made it mean about you:

What is the truth?

How will you manage this person/these people going forward?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

POWER AND CONTROL

Where did you feel unsafe or out of control during your childhood? Think about times you felt powerless, overlooked, manipulated, or scared. Who was present? What was happening?

When we're 'out of control', we've literally run out of self-control. When and where has this happened to you? How did it hurt you?

What are your controlling behaviours? Be honest. Do you try to control situations, people, or outcomes to feel safe?

How has controlling others affected you emotionally, mentally, or physically? What has it cost you in terms of relationships, peace, or self-worth?

How has being controlled impacted your life? Think about your freedom, your sense of identity, your ability to trust, & your confidence.

Who or what still controls you? This might be a person, memory, belief system, or the voice in your head.

Have you ever used S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D behaviours to control others? If so, who was affected and how? Be honest but gentle with yourself.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

OVERWHELM

What empowering beliefs about yourself are you resisting - beliefs that could turn overwhelm into underwhelm in a matter of seconds?

Can you recall a time when you coped easily - even unexpectedly? What happened, and how did it make you feel?

What are you afraid might happen if you show people you can cope?

When you feel overwhelmed, what are you thinking?

I now choose to exchange that feeling of overwhelm for a feeling of:

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

SO, WHO WERE YOU BEFORE ALL THEIR SHIT BLOCKED OUT
YOUR SUNSHINE?

What did you love to do?

Who were you becoming before you were made to shrink, hide, or
shape yourself into someone else's version of acceptable?

What are the lost abilities, gifts, and talents that you're now reclaiming?

What's rising from the ashes? What sparks are returning?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

PROCRASTINATION

Look at the list of S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D experiences. Do you identify with any that are causing your procrastination?

When you procrastinate, what are you really trying to avoid feeling? Is it fear of failure? Of getting it wrong? Of being visible?

Are there any other hidden reasons for your procrastination? Is it linked to burnout? People-pleasing? Overwhelm? What are you really protecting yourself from?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

COMPARISON

Who compared you to someone they thought you should be?

How did that make you feel at the time?

How does it make you feel now?

Who do you compare yourself to now?

What does this person have or do that you think you're missing?

What do you admire in them - and what does that say about your own dreams and values?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

PERFECTIONISM

Are you a Joy-Fuelled Perfectionist or a Fear-Fuelled Perfectionist?

What does Fear-Fuelled perfectionism look like in your life?

What are the habits, patterns, or expectations you hold that come from fear rather than joy?

What does Fear-Fuelled perfectionism cost you? Think about time, energy, sleep, relationships, self-worth, creativity...

Who taught you to be a Fear-Fuelled Perfectionist? Was it a parent, teacher, sibling, boss, or even a societal message?

How did they do that? What were the words, actions, rules, or environments that shaped your Fear-Fuelled drive for perfection?

What's one thing you can change today to start moving from Fear-Fuelled to Joy-Fuelled perfectionism? Something small but meaningful like leaving something unfinished, not apologising for resting, or saying "this is good enough."

Would you accept yourself more if you didn't try so hard to be perfect? Why or why not?

There are already areas of your life where you've let go of perfectionism - what are they? How can you use those examples as proof that it's possible to live with more freedom and less fear?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

ACKNOWLEDGING AND EMBRACING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Take a moment to explore the connection between your early experiences of achievement and your current beliefs about success. The answers may surprise you - and they may also liberate you.

When you were growing up, how did the people around you react when you achieved something? Was there celebration? Jealousy? Dismissal? Indifference?

Were you ever S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D because you achieved something? Did someone shame, criticise, humiliate, exclude, or dismiss you when you succeeded?

Or did you witness someone else being S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D for their achievements? What impact did that have on your willingness to try or to succeed?

Were you ever told or made to feel that your ambitions, skills, or talents were silly, unrealistic, or laughable?

Did anyone call you a show-off, accuse you of trying too hard, or suggest that you “shouldn’t get ideas above your station”?

Did you feel pressured to achieve? Like you were the only one in the family who could go to college? That pressure, combined with low self-belief, can absolutely cultivate Imposter Syndrome because it teaches you that your worth is conditional, your success is fragile, and any *failure* would let everyone down. Instead of feeling proud of your achievements you feel like a fraud - not because you aren’t capable, but because the pressure to *prove* yourself stopped you feeling emotionally safe when you achieved something good.

Write down **three beliefs** and **three behaviours** that you know are driven by your Imposter Syndrome. These are not the truth of who you are - they're just echoes of old programming, ready to be rewritten.

Three beliefs:

Three behaviours:

Now take a breath and remind yourself: I am not a fraud. I am a work in progress & becoming more powerful by the day. I trust myself to show up as the real me.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

SELF-VALIDATION

Write down ten self-validating truths about yourself:

Read and repeat these ten self-validating truths every day.

Imagine a vulnerable child or someone you care about going through the same experience. What would you say to comfort and support them?

You've just told *yourself* what you needed to hear back then.

During your childhood, what words of praise or validation would have made a real difference to how you feel about yourself now?

Now say those words to yourself. Out loud. Every day. For 90 days.

Have you already walked away from people or situations that consistently invalidated you? If so, give examples of how you chose yourself instead.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

MY SELF-VALIDATING STATEMENT

I _____ am a human being with unmet needs for which I am now lovingly responsible. From this moment forward, I will care for and nurture myself with kind thoughts, gentle actions, and comforting routines. As I heal, I will make myself a priority and protect myself emotionally, financially, and physically.

Even though I have waited, hoped, and wished that my needs would be seen, understood, or met by:

_____ and it saddens me deeply that they never acknowledged what I was going through, I now commit to recognising my pain, honouring my healing, and meeting my own needs with compassion.

I will give myself time to consider any future connection with them from a place of emotional safety and strength. I will practice self-trust. I will forgive myself. I will create and maintain boundaries that honour my worth. I affirm that my feelings and opinions matter. I now commit to validating myself today, and for the rest of my life.

Signed: _____

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

NEEDS

Did you grow up with attentive caregivers who tried to meet your needs or inattentive caregivers who ignored or dismissed them?

Did you often feel forgotten, unwanted, or like your needs didn't matter?

Did you sense irritation, guilt, or resentment when you asked for something you needed?

Is your adult need for validation rooted in childhood experiences of rejection, criticism, or feeling invisible?

What are some of your unmet needs - then and now?

Who (if anyone) are you still blaming - consciously or unconsciously - for not meeting those needs?

How do you feel when those needs still go unmet today?

How have you been trying to meet those needs in ways that may not be healthy or helpful?

Now that you're aware of where these needs come from, what's one new, empowering thing you'll do differently going forward?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

GETTING OUR NEEDS MET

In the past what have you done to get your needs met:

If your needs weren't met, how would you react?

What's the most extreme thing you've done to try and get your needs met?

When you're seeking to meet a need, who are you most likely to emotionally lean on, manipulate, or unintentionally exploit?

Now choose someone significant from your childhood and reflect on how they operated emotionally and what it taught you.

How did they try to get their needs met?

What happened when their needs weren't met?

What's the most extreme thing they did to get their needs met?

Who were they most likely to lean on, manipulate, or exploit, to meet those needs?

Did they usually succeed?

Do you think you've ever behaved like them - consciously or unconsciously - to meet your own needs?

Which of these experiences are you ready to pull up by the roots so you can stop blaming yourself and place the shame where it truly belongs?

Who might you have become if your self-image hadn't been shattered by someone else's shame? Let yourself imagine a life where you were free from their opinions, punishments, and projections.

Do you still carry responsibility for their behaviour? Have you been blaming yourself for how they acted or what they said?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

MY SHAME STORY

When was the first time you remember feeling ashamed?

What words have you used to describe yourself because of that shame?

How do you feel now when you look back at the younger version of yourself who had to carry that unbearable burden?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

SELF-FORGIVENESS

Start simply. Say to yourself: "I forgive myself." Then write down everything:

You were ever blamed for.

You've carried guilt or shame for.

You've punished yourself over.

Do you need to forgive yourself for being in the way?

For being a mistake?

For being too clever, too good-looking, too different, or not enough of something they wanted me to be?

Were you too much or too little for someone else's comfort?

What went wrong for someone else that you were blamed and held responsible for?

Do you need to forgive yourself for simply being born?

Let this be the start of your release, the start of your healing, the beginning of freedom. Take a deep breath, let your shoulders drop, and keep writing. What were:

The mistakes you were told were yours.

The things you internalised even when they were never your fault.

With your hand on your heart say 'I forgive myself for':

I was just a child trying to survive.

I forgive myself for believing I was the problem.

I forgive myself for the way I coped when no one showed me how.

I didn't deserve what happened to me.

I *do* deserve peace.

And I forgive myself completely.

Self-forgiveness isn't a one-time event. It's a new habit. A new home. A new way of living.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

HOW DO YOU PUNISH YOURSELF?

Write down ten things that you're doing to punish yourself for the cruel, vindictive things other people said or did to you. No shame, no blame, only awareness.

Are you punishing yourself to punish someone else? For example, *"Look what you did to me. Look at the mess I'm in. How can I make you pay?"*

Have you ever hurt someone else because of your own S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D experiences? Do you punish yourself for how you treated them? Remember, this isn't about shaming you, we've all done things like this which is why we know to ask the questions. This is about self-awareness and healing and sometimes that means confronting painful truths.

What will you stop doing - or do differently - to end self-punishment, and how you punish others?

Are you willing to replace self-punishment with self-forgiveness?

- YES
- NO
- ALMOST

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

JARS OF JUSTICE

HOW CAN I TELL IF I WANT TO PUNISH OR FORGIVE?

This next exercise will help you recognise who you've forgiven, who you still need an apology from, or for whom you think a more formal punishment or consequence is still appropriate.

To help make this personal and visual, we're using Jars of Justice to gauge where you stand with the people who've caused you pain.

Full Jar – You still want to see this person face some kind of justice or consequence.

Half-Full Jar – You don't want punishment, but you do want an apology.

Empty Jar – You've forgiven them or you no longer carry an emotional charge around the situation.

Not Sure Jar – You're undecided, and that's completely OK.

There's no pressure here. You can return to this exercise anytime and move the jars around as your healing progresses. How you feel today may not be how you feel tomorrow.

As you reflect, ask yourself:

When I think about this person, do I feel peace, pain, or panic?

If I saw them now, would they greet me with kindness or contempt?

What did they emotionally take from me that I want to reclaim?

Am I angry that they've never apologised? Or do I understand why they behaved the way they did? Maybe both?

Do I want justice? Do I need closure? Do I still need to be heard?

You're not being asked to forgive what's unforgivable. You're being asked to honour how you feel.

Who would you give a full jar to (seek punishment):

Why?

What do you feel still needs to be said or acknowledged to enable you to move on and heal?

Who would you give a half-full jar to (an apology):

Why?

What words or gestures would bring you peace?

Who would you give an empty jar to (I've forgiven):

Why?

What helped you reach that place of freedom?

Who are you not sure which jar you would give to:

Why?

What questions, emotions, or boundaries still feel unresolved?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

INNER CRITIC/OUTER BULLY (ICOB)

What words does your ICOB use when it speaks to you?

What's the tone of its voice? Is it sharp, sarcastic, patronising, or cold?

Does your ICOB whisper insidiously or shout?

Do you have a name for your ICOB? If not, give it one now - make it cheeky or ridiculous if that helps.

Can you visualise your ICOB's face? What does it look like?

Why do you still pay attention to your ICOB's criticism?

What do you think your ICOB would say or do if you ignored it completely?

What names or labels does your ICOB use when talking to you?

Who in your life – past and present – has played the role of an ICOB?

How did they criticise you? What specifically did they say?

How has their criticism made you feel about yourself?

What do you imagine would happen if you disagreed with your ICOB and stood your ground?

Do you now believe you can challenge and override your ICOB's criticism and reclaim your power?

When you've finally shaken off the influence of other people's opinions and projections, how free do you think you'll feel?

As you hold your ICOB accountable for shaming you and projecting their own emotional debris onto you, what do you want to say back to them?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

ARE YOU TRADING YOUR STANDARDS?

Think of one situation in your life right now where you're doing this. What are you compromising on - or giving up - to remain 'safe' from judgement? What are you trading to avoid conflict, rejection, or criticism from your ICOB?

What has it cost you so far to keep your ICOB quiet. Think about your energy, confidence, joy, peace, creativity, purpose, connection, money or time?

When will you start choosing to do and say the things you want, and stop trading your standards to avoid discomfort or disapproval? Give yourself permission. What's your first step?

Who are you expecting to criticise you for doing this? Whose disapproval do you still fear - and why?

What do you believe the consequences might be? Are you afraid of conflict, exclusion, or being misunderstood? Are those fears rooted in the past - or are they true for you now?

Think about three ICOBs in your life. What is the comment, criticism, or behaviour from each that has impacted you the most? Name them, claim them, and start loosening their grip.

What boundaries will you now put in place with your ICOB(s)? What will you no longer tolerate, not even in your own mind? What will you say, do, or believe differently from now on?

What would your voice sound like if you'd never been criticised?

How would you speak to yourself if you'd only ever been loved, encouraged, and believed in?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

BOUNDARIES

Where in your life would it be **undeniably beneficial** for you to have boundaries?

Why do you think there's an absence of boundaries here?

When it comes to setting boundaries, which S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D experiences or consequences do you most want to avoid?

Who comes to mind when you think about setting boundaries?

What's your worst fear about setting boundaries?

What would be your greatest freedom if you set a specific boundary today?

Which boundary will you commit to setting this week - and keeping?

What will you say to someone next time they exploit your boundary?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

SAYING NO

Who would you love to say no to?

Why?

What's stopped you saying no in the past?

What have you made saying 'no' mean about you?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

AWARENESS

What have you learned about awareness?

What does awareness mean to you?

Where and when are you most aware of your emotions? With family, at work, in crowds, with strangers?

Where do you find it hardest to stay aware and calm?

What one trigger do you now feel more prepared to handle with awareness?

How will choosing awareness instead of reaction change your next difficult moment?

Think about yourself in the following scenarios. Choose your answer A B or C based on your current feelings

Scenario 1:

You're in the supermarket and it's busy. The lighting's too bright, the music's too loud, people are walking in front of you, bumping into you, reaching across you, and generally behaving like you're invisible. You finally get to the front of a slow-moving '5-items-or-less' queue for the checkout. Suddenly a person behind you, who's been complaining loudly about the wait, pushes in front of you and gets to the checkout with way more than 5 items in their basket. Do you:

A: Throw your basket at their head.

B: Say 'I was next if you don't mind.'

C: Think to yourself 'I used to be like that' and gratefully use the next free checkout.

Scenario 2:

You're walking along the high street. It's just after 1pm. There's lots of activity as people rush to get lunch and run errands. You see a guy on a scooter. He's weaving his way down the high street only just missing pushchairs and screaming toddlers. You're almost face to face with him. Do you:

A: Scream and theatrically leap out of the way.

B: Step aside calling him an asshole and tell him he's breaking the law.

C: Purposefully stand still in all your power and wait for him to pass.

Scenario 3:

You're sat uncomfortably in the reception area of a company with whom you're interviewing for a job. You're called 30-minutes late (no apology) into a freezing cold room. Nobody offers you a drink although they all have water, tea, or coffee. Not once during the interview do they use your name. Do you:

A: Thank them for their time but tell them they can stick their job where the sun doesn't shine.

B: Thank them for their time and tell **them** they wouldn't be a good fit for **you**.

C: Thank them for their time and tell **yourself** they wouldn't be a good fit for you. You deserve better.

Scenario 4:

It's Saturday and you've decided to say yes to an online date. You've turned up ten minutes early and waited 15 minutes for your date to arrive. You order a drink as do they and you both have a starter and main. You find the conversation dull and slow, and you call for the bill. Do you:

A: Go to the loo and climb out the window.

B: Pay your half and, for your date's benefit, summarise your negative experience there and then.

C: Pay the bill and wish them good luck and goodnight.

SCORES:

MAINLY A: Really?

MAINLY B: Good. Work in progress!

MAINLY C: Good job. My work is done. Almost.

Now, let's go deeper. Working with the scenarios above, describe yourself without awareness versus yourself with awareness. What's the biggest difference you notice between the two?

Scenario 1:

Me before awareness:

Me after awareness:

What's the biggest difference?

Scenario 2:

Me before awareness:

Me after awareness:

What's the biggest difference?

Scenario 3:

Me before awareness:

Me after awareness:

What's the biggest difference?

Scenario 4 :

Me before awareness:

Me after awareness:

What's the biggest difference?

Reflection: describe a 'real-life' situation that overwhelmed you - there's probably a few, just pick one.

How did you **react without awareness**?

Now imagine how you would **respond today with awareness**, self-control, and compassion for yourself?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION

Below are examples of how unconscious dialogue sounds — and how Conscious Conversation responds:

Unconscious Dialogue says:

I'm not safe!

I might suffer if I don't do what they want.

They say it's for my own good.

I can't cope.

I need someone to look after me.

I can't walk away. I'll look weak.

They'll judge me.

I will have the last word.

I must fight to be seen and heard and get my needs met.

What are some of your own examples?

Unconscious Dialogue says:

Conscious Conversation says:

There's no danger here.

This will pass.

I have my own opinion about what's best for me.

I'm an extraordinary copier.

I look after myself.

Walking away is the best option to maintain my peace, integrity and dignity.

I don't fear judgement from others.

I don't need to have the last word.

I'll meet my own needs, in my own way, in my own time.

Conscious Conversation says:

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

A IS FOR ACCEPTANCE

What are you or were you rejecting that is refusing to heal?

What have you learned about Acceptance?

How will Acceptance set you free from blame, shame, and guilt?

What truth about your emotional history are you now ready to accept?

Acceptance is our third step.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

LOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

What Logical Perspective will you practice from now on in circumstances that once overwhelmed you? Tip: In most situations there's always a peaceful exit to be had. Make your Logical Perspective simple, achievable, and easy to recall. Write your Logical Perspective as a simple statement you can remember and repeat when you feel triggered: My Logical Perspective is:

What have you learned about Logical Perspectives and why are they important to your emotional freedom?

Logical Perspective is our fourth step.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

EXITING

The Scenario:

You've worked hard to understand and unravel the confusion and pain of your past. Despite your newfound knowledge, you find yourself feeling anxious in a situation with a difficult person. Overwhelm starts to take hold, and you arrive at the amygdala's 'fork in the road.'

What do you do next?

What do you say next?

Next time you find yourself in a tough situation:

What conscious steps will you take to exit gracefully?

What empowering words will you say to yourself?

What physical actions will support your emotional safety?

Next time you're feeling overwhelmed by someone or something, will you implement your Exit Strategy? YES NO

How does giving yourself permission to leave change how you feel about your emotional power?

What does a graceful exit protect inside you?

*"A wise exit is never a defeat.
It's a declaration that you choose yourself first, every time."*

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

R IS FOR RESET AND REWARD

Growing up, what did you learn - directly or indirectly - about deserving rewards? Example: 'rewards had to be earned through perfection', or 'I was made to feel guilty for wanting nice things'.

How *were* you rewarded as a child?

Were rewards consistent, loving, chaotic, conditional or absent altogether?

How has your childhood understanding of rewards affected how you treat yourself today? Example: "I don't celebrate my achievements because I worry it looks selfish."

Who's in charge of your rewards now - your Wounded Inner Child or your Conscious Adult Self?

What do your patterns around reward and self-recognition reveal about your healing journey?

When you're faced with overwhelm, criticism, or confrontation, what will you now say or do to consciously reset yourself in the moment? Example: deep breath, mental image of Pinocchio, silent mantra: "I choose peace."

What is your new truth about deserving and rewarding yourself? Write a short, powerful affirmation or statement you can come back to whenever old guilt or doubt creeps in. Example: "I deserve to be celebrated just for being me."

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

MINUTE-BY-MINUTE

What needs to change in your life to allow you to slow down and live minute-by-minute? Think about your job, your studies, your relationships, your day-to-day habits.

What time commitments or expectations create a feeling of stress just thinking about them?

What time-pressured obligations are you still carrying that you don't want anymore?

Whose approval, whose expectations, whose deadlines are you still trying to meet - and why?

What have you learned about living minute-by-minute:

Minute-by-Minute is our eighth step.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

E IS FOR EMPOWERED

Right now, how would you rate your emotional power out of ten?

What would need to change for you to raise that number?

What does the empowered version of you believe about themselves?

What does the empowered version of you look like?

How do they move through the world?

What do they do differently compared to how you used to live?

How do they feel inside?

What changes will your empowered-self create in your life - starting today?

Think about what disempowerment has cost you over the years. What would you reclaim if you took your power back?

When you don't feel empowered, you feel like this:

When you feel empowered, you feel like this:

Who or what stole your emotional power in the past?

How did they do it? What weapons did they use — shame, criticism, fear, neglect?

Think about the empowering words you'll use to describe yourself going forward: Examples include:

Dignified, Brave, Kind, Expressive, Grounded, Alluring,
Independent, Clever, Patient, Sociable, Generous, Open-hearted,
Loving, Tolerant, Determined, Organised, Decisive.

Do any of these words spark a feeling or emotion in you?

Do any of them feel out of reach or triggering?

Or did they make you feel motivated, excited, and powerful?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

EMPATHY

How will you show empathy to yourself for the tough times you've been through?

Next time you find yourself in a tough situation, what will you do and say to soothe and ground yourself?

How will you speak to yourself from now on?

If you showed a difficult person empathy, what do you think would happen?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

YOUR NEW KNOWLEDGE...AND SETBACKS

Who or what triggered my fear-based memories?

What specific memories were triggered?

Did you experience any feelings of shame, criticism, rejection?

How quickly did you remember and implement A.C.A.L.M.E.R.M.E
and Three Little Words?

What could you do next time to support yourself even sooner?

How has your ability to reset, breathe, and self-reassure grown since you
first started this journey?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

PERMISSION TO BE YOURSELF

Challenge the Old Message:

What did you believe you needed permission for as a child? Examples: to rest, to speak up, to be different, to say no.

Write down three old beliefs you internalised about needing permission:

Name the Control:

Who withheld that permission from you?

How did it keep you small, silent, or scared?

Write a few sentences about the impact it had on your self-belief:

Grant Yourself New Permissions:

You are the authority in and of your life now. What three permissions do you want to grant yourself today? Example: "I have permission to trust my instincts," or "I have permission to rest without guilt."

Anchor It In:

Complete this sentence: starting today, I give myself full permission to...

The moment you stop waiting for permission from others is the moment you start living freely.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

RECLAIMING RESILIENCE

Reclaim the real you:

When you were a child what did you love to do?

What did you stop doing because of your S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D experiences?

What would you love to try doing again?

What would you love to try again but fear failing at?

Face The Fear:

What first step could you take just to see how it feels?

What's the worst that could happen if it doesn't turn out the way you hoped?

Is that so bad?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

EMBRACING FAILURE

Redefine Failure:

What are three things you know you would probably fail at if you tried them right now? (Be playful or bold even extreme!)

Does it bother you that you would fail at them? Why or why not?

Dig Deeper:

Who would you most hate to see you fail at something you care about?

What do they say? How do they react?

Rebuild Your Resilience:

If you knew you would recover quickly from any failure, what would you dare to try?

What thought are you having about this failure that is making you feel like giving up?

Then ask yourself: am I choosing, feeling, and thinking this because I was S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

CLOSURE

Closure is not something others can grant us. It's something we learn to create within ourselves. This exercise helps you understand how you've sought closure in the past and how you can now offer healing directly to your wounded inner child instead.

Reflect on the Pursuit:

When you seek closure, what does it usually look like?

Describe your emotions, your behaviour, and the ways you've tried to get your needs met.

Identify the Sources:

Who and what have you sought closure from? Think about people, relationships, groups, institutions - anywhere you sought validation, apologies, or understanding.

Acknowledge the Feelings:

How were you feeling at the time you sought closure? Examples: abandoned, rejected, unimportant, confused.

Consider the Alternatives:

If you hadn't sought closure from them, how might you have dealt with those feelings instead? Examples: Self-soothing, boundary-setting, grieving the truth.

Heal Forward:

If a similar situation arises in the future, what will you say to your wounded inner child instead of seeking closure from others? Examples: you are already enough, their behaviour does not reflect your worth, you are safe now, you don't need their permission to heal.

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

WHO ARE THE RED FLAG PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?

Who in your life fits the patterns we've explored? And don't forget to include yourself if you recognise an old version of you in any of the flags. This exercise is not about creating a list of enemies. It's about reclaiming your energy, your freedom, and your right to peace. Take your time. Breathe deeply. And answer from the strongest part of yourself. Awareness is power. It doesn't mean you have to confront, explain, or fix anyone. It simply means you get to see clearly and choose consciously who deserves a place in your life, and who doesn't.

The Shadow Victims in your life are:

The AWKWARDS in your life are:

The Narcissists in your life are:

The Drama Queens in your life are:

The Rescuers in your life are:

The Rescues in your life are:

The Co-Dependents in your life are:

The Emotional Disruptors in your life are:

The Guilt-Shovellers in your life are:

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

A TEST TO SEE IF A PERSON IS TOXIC

Think of the people in your life who you believe might be toxic. Pause. Breathe. Be honest. Then ask yourself:

Who are they? What roles do they play.

Why do you believe they're toxic? Trust your gut before you rationalise your doubt.

Have they S.E.A.R.C.H.E.D you? How?

When you express an opinion, ask for something, or express anxiety or concern, how do they react?

Do they listen, support, and help? Or do they dismiss, belittle, mock, or ignore you?

Do you walk on eggshells around them? Not sure? Think about whether you carefully edit yourself before speaking.

If you explained that you find them too critical or controlling would they be horrified and apologetic? Or would they deny it, blame you, and make you the problem?

Would they change their behaviour or escalate it? Would they shout, swear, sulk, withdraw affection, or use the silent treatment?

Would they slam doors, throw things, or threaten physical intimidation?

Do they seem to enjoy watching you wrestle with anxiety?

Do they gloat if something unfortunate happens to you?

Do you honestly believe they are capable of real change? And more importantly, even if they changed, would you ever truly feel emotionally safe with them? Would you trust them?

CHALLENGE IT TO CHANGE IT JOURNAL PROMPTS

WHERE DO WE EVEN BEGIN?

Pick one main project to start and finish and don't deviate! Have a think about the following questions and watch your project unfold. Write it clearly and proudly:

The main project you'd like to start, and finish is:

What's the first step you need to take to move this project forward?

And the next step after that?

And the next?

And the next?

Now, let's unpack what you're carrying. Think of your emotions like the clothes you'd pack if you were heading off on a beautiful sunshine holiday.

Ask yourself: what emotions would feel light to carry? List the feelings that lift, energise, and empower you.

What emotions feel heavy to carry? List the feelings that weigh you down, burden you, or keep you stuck.

Every thought carries energy. Some thoughts feel light and expansive, some feel sharp and stinging, some feel heavy and slow. Spend a few moments noticing your thoughts today - without judgement - and assign them one of these feelings:

- Light (expansive, uplifting)
- Sharp (critical, painful)
- Heavy (weighing you down)

Thought 1: _____

Light, Sharp, or Heavy?

Thought 2: _____

Light, Sharp, or Heavy?

Thought 3:

Light, Sharp, or Heavy?

Thought 4:

Light, Sharp, or Heavy?

Thought 5:

Light, Sharp, or Heavy?

Reflect on:

How many light thoughts did you have?

How many sharp thoughts did you have?

How many heavy thoughts did you have?

You did it!

You've just completed 154 pages of deep, honest emotional inquiry. That is no small thing.

You showed up for your pain. You faced your patterns. You challenged the unconscious beliefs that have quietly ruled your life. And more than anything, you chose truth, over and over again.

This workbook was never meant to be light reading. It was designed to stir what's been suppressed, to bring what's been buried into the light. You walked into that willingly and you stayed. You asked the hard questions; you answered them when no one was watching. That matters. It matters because you've interrupted something ancient, you've disrupted generational cycles, you've untangled emotional chaos and in doing that, you've opened the door to a life with more clarity, more peace, and more conscious choice than ever before.

This isn't the end of your healing but it is a milestone, one that deserves acknowledgment.

So, pause. Take a breath. Feel the enormity of what you've just completed.

You challenged it. You changed it.

And that's how emotional freedom begins.



For more information about sustainable and effective ways to mend your mental health please visit:

HOWTOMENDYOURMENTALHEALTH.COM

and join other **Good Enough Revolutionaries** who are changing how they see themselves and the world around them.

