

## **The Journal**

Consider the following journal questions with curiosity rather than judgment. The goal is not to **criticise yourself** but to **understand yourself**.

Which coping mechanism has had the greatest influence on my life?

How has it shaped my relationships, decisions, behaviour, and my sense of self?

How did this coping mechanism help me when it first developed?

What need did it meet?

What did it protect me from?

If I am completely honest, how is this pattern affecting my life today?

What is it stopping me from doing, saying, feeling, or becoming?

What opportunities, relationships, experiences, or parts of myself might I have lost because of this pattern?

When does this coping mechanism show up most strongly?

What situations, people, emotions, or fears tend to activate it?

What does this pattern promise me? Safety? Approval? Control?  
Certainty? Protection?

Does it deliver what it promises?

What is the emotional, physical, or psychological cost of continuing this pattern exactly as it is for the next five years?

What would become possible if this coping mechanism no longer ran my life?

Without my coping mechanisms how might I think differently?

Without my coping mechanisms how might I feel differently?

Without my coping mechanisms how might I behave differently?

Which part of me is afraid of letting go of this pattern?

What does that part of me believe might happen if I changed?

Complete the following sentence: I can appreciate how this pattern helped me survive, but I'm beginning to see that it's costing me:

Take a few moments when you've finished writing and read through your answers slowly. Notice what stands out, what surprises you, what feels true. This work is asking you to see your **patterns of coping clearly** so you can change what you've so far **not seen or acknowledged**. We can't let go of something until we understand both what it's given us and what it's cost us.