

The Reflection

For many people, this conversation is where things start to click because they begin to recognise the pattern of self-abandonment. You may have spent years focusing on the symptoms:

- ♥ the inability to say no
- ♥ the fear of disappointing people
- ♥ the need for approval
- ♥ difficulty setting boundaries
- ♥ the tendency to put everyone else's needs before your own
- ♥ the struggle to know what you want
- ♥ exhaustion, resentment, the feeling of being lost

But what if these are not separate problems? What if they're all connected? What if the common thread running through them is that somewhere along the way, you learned that **maintaining connection with other people was more important than maintaining connection with yourself?**

That's not a comfortable realisation, in fact, it can be deeply emotional because many people begin to see just how often they've ignored their own feelings, dismissed their own needs, silenced their own voice, and overridden their own instincts. Not because they chose to, but because it felt safer to do so.

You may recognise yourself in some of these experiences:

- ♥ Saying yes when you wanted to say no
- ♥ Staying quiet when something mattered to you

- ♥ Feeling responsible for other people's emotions
- ♥ Ignoring your own exhaustion
- ♥ Minimising your own pain
- ♥ Accepting less than you deserve
- ♥ Telling yourself it doesn't matter
- ♥ Convincing yourself you'll be fine

The difficult truth about self-abandonment is that it often looks like love. It looks like being caring, supportive, dependable, selfless - which is why so many people fail to recognise it. They think they're being kind to others, but they're quietly being **unkind to themselves**. The question this conversation invites you to consider is simple: **what has the relationship with myself been like?**

- ♥ Do you listen to yourself?
- ♥ Do you trust yourself?
- ♥ Do you respect your own needs?
- ♥ Do you honour your own limits?
- ♥ Do your feelings matter to you?
- ♥ Do your boundaries matter to you?
- ♥ Do you show yourself the same compassion you offer everyone else?

For many people, these questions are surprisingly difficult to answer because self-abandonment often creates a strange kind of numbness.

- ♥ You become highly attuned to everyone else while becoming **disconnected from yourself**

- ♥ You know exactly what everyone around you needs yet you struggle to answer a simple question about **your own needs**
- ♥ You know what everyone else is feeling but find it difficult to **identify your own emotions**
- ♥ You know how to care for everyone else but rarely stop to **consider how to care for yourself**

If all that feels familiar to you, please remember something important: **you learned self-abandonment because it worked.**

- ♥ It helped you maintain connection
- ♥ It helped you gain acceptance
- ♥ It helped you avoid conflict
- ♥ It helped you survive

Adaptation became automatic and what was once a strategy gradually became a way of life.

The good news is that **awareness changes everything.**

- ♥ When you recognise where you disconnected from yourself you can reconnect
- ♥ You can begin listening to yourself when you realise how often you've ignored yourself
- ♥ You can begin trusting yourself again when you recognise how often you've overridden your feelings

This conversation is asking you to consider a different possibility.

- ♥ What if caring about yourself mattered too?
- ♥ What if your needs mattered?
- ♥ What if your feelings mattered?
- ♥ What if your voice mattered?
- ♥ What if you mattered as much as you think everyone else does?

The journey from self-abandonment to self-trust doesn't begin when you become a different person. It begins when you remember **that you're meant to be part of the conversation.** In fact, in your own life as you rebuild self-trust, when it comes to making choices and deciding what's good for you, **you** are the **only** conversation that matters.