

How To Heal Self-Abandonment

QUESTION:

Why do I keep turning away from myself, ignoring my needs, or betraying my own truth? How can I stop?

ANSWER:

Self-abandonment happens when we consistently prioritise other people, distractions, or external approval over our own emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. Often it feels like just 'living life' or 'being a good person' but over time self-abandonment chips away at your sense of self leaving you exhausted, resentful, and numb.

Healing self-abandonment is about *awareness*. It's about noticing where you've been *turning away* from yourself and consciously creating pathways to consistently *choose yourself* instead.

Self-abandonment is a survival mechanism learned in childhood. It's shaped by repeated experiences where your needs weren't met or respected. The goal in healing self-abandonment is to recognise the pattern, honour the feelings beneath it, and take deliberate steps toward radical self-presence.

Here's how to start the healing process:

1. Notice the Small Ways You Turn Away From Yourself

Self-abandonment rarely appears as one dramatic act. It shows up in tiny moments: agreeing to things you don't want, numbing with work, food, or social media, or silencing your inner voice to keep the peace. Pay attention when your energy feels drained after an interaction, task, or obligation. Ask yourself: did I choose this because **I wanted to**, or did I choose it because **I thought I should?**

These small betrayals add up, creating the feeling that your life is being lived by everyone but you. Recognising subtle acts of self-abandonment is the first step to healing it. Awareness shines a bright light on the parts of yourself you've been ignoring.

2. Explore the Root of Your Abandonment Pattern

Self-abandonment often begins in early experiences where your needs were dismissed, ignored, or punished. Perhaps as a child you 'self-soothed' at your own expense, or your emotional needs were not safe to express. Your nervous system internalised that your survival depended on putting yourself and your needs last. This pattern can manifest in adulthood as chronic people-pleasing, ignoring your body's signals, or self-neglect. Healing begins when you understand that the pattern was a

protective strategy, not a personal flaw, and it can be changed with conscious thought and action.

3. Honour Your Needs Without Guilt

Choosing yourself doesn't make you selfish; choosing yourself restores balance. Begin by identifying simple needs you've been neglecting - rest, emotional expression, quiet time, and boundaries. Practice fulfilling them without justification. When guilt arises, acknowledge it but honour your commitment to yourself. Every time you meet your own needs, you train your nervous system to accept that your existence and feelings matter. This repetition rewrites the old message that putting yourself first is dangerous. Self-honouring becomes an act of love, resilience, and reclamation.

4. Learn to Say No – and Mean It!

Self-abandonment often hides behind 'yes'. Yes to requests, yes to compromise, yes to being badly treated. Start by practicing with a small but intentional 'no' - you don't need to justify or over-explain. Saying no is a declaration that your boundaries, needs, and energy have value. Each time you assert yourself, you strengthen your sense of self and interrupt the habitual pattern of abandoning yourself. Over time, you'll notice fewer

resentments, more clarity, and a sense of agency that was missing before.

5. Practice Presence With Yourself Daily

Being present with yourself is the antidote to self-abandonment. This doesn't mean being perfect or constantly self-reflective; it means checking in, noticing your body, your emotions, and thoughts, and responding to yourself with kindness. Simple practices like pausing to breathe, journaling your feelings, or asking 'what do I need right now' cultivate presence. The more you meet yourself consistently, the less your nervous system will default to ignoring or dismissing your needs. Presence builds trust with yourself and a foundation of self-respect.

6. Reconnect With Your Inner Voice

Self-abandonment silences your inner guidance. Healing requires you to listen to and trust your voice again. When decisions or conflicts arise, pause and ask, 'what feels true for me?' Practice speaking and acting from that inner wisdom. Even small choices about what to eat, when to rest, or what conversation to engage in are powerful opportunities to affirm yourself. The more you honour your inner voice, the less you abandon yourself, and the more aligned and empowered your life becomes.

Bonus Step: the opposite of self-abandonment is self-presence and self-honouring. It's staying present with yourself, meeting your own needs, and protecting your emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being instead of neglecting or betraying yourself.

Other phrases that capture it are:

1. Self-loyalty: standing by yourself no matter what.
2. Self-trust: believing your feelings and instincts.
3. Self-connection: keeping the line open between you and your inner truth.
4. Self-nurturing: actively caring for your needs without guilt.

If self-abandonment means leaving yourself behind to please or appease others, then its opposite means remaining with yourself even if it costs you someone else's love and approval. And if someone *is* holding love and approval at arm's length, you may question if you want to continue selling your soul for the pittance they pay you.

Affirmation:

I am worthy of my own presence, attention, and care. I choose myself with love and consistency.

Journal Prompts:

1. When in my life have I turned away from my own needs?

2. How did these moments shape the way I treat myself today?
3. What small acts of self-honouring can I begin today?
4. What boundaries am I ready to practice saying no to without guilt?

Visualisation:

Imagine meeting the version of yourself you've been abandoning – tired, unheard, and silenced. Sit with her. Take her hand. Whisper words of care, protection, and love. Invite her to lean on you now. Together, walk through a space filled with light and support where your needs are respected and your feelings are valid. Feel the sense of safety and belonging in your own presence.

Conclusion:

Self-abandonment is not a character flaw – it's a learned survival mechanism. Healing self-abandonment is an ongoing act of courage, presence, and love. Every time you choose yourself, you teach your mind and body that your life, your needs, and your feelings matter. This is the path to freedom from exhaustion, resentment, and self-betrayal.

Final Thought:

You are not lost; you have just been waiting to come home to yourself. Today is the day to start the journey.