



# OWN YOUR STORY



# Introduction

Have you ever had the feeling that you're living a life that looks fine on the outside but doesn't quite feel like yours on the inside?

You're coping, functioning, holding everything together. You make sense of things, you keep going. But underneath, there's a quiet feeling that rarely gets said out loud, a feeling of being slightly out of sync with your own life, of repeating patterns you didn't consciously choose, of always adjusting, always managing, always scanning for ways to feel safe and included.

You ask yourself: ***Am I actually the authority in my life... or just the one trying to manage it all?***

This course is an invitation to explore that question, to notice where your story was first shaped **without** your input or permission, and to recognise how old patterns and habits continue to influence you.

This course helps you recognise how a gradual detachment has formed between your true self and the person you became to keep the peace. It shows you how your thoughts

and behaviours - that started as self-protection - have slowly become your identity.

Most of us don't lose track of ourselves suddenly; *something* in you is now:

- Ready to pause.
- Ready to look again.
- Ready to recognise what once helped you navigate emotional chaos no longer fits the life you want to live.

As you notice and change your habits and patterns with compassion instead of judgement, **you gradually return to your authentic reality.** You're no longer living on autopilot or unconsciously allowing habits to run - and ruin - your life.

You begin to realise; ***I'm not just part of the story... I'm the one who gets to write it.***

From that place of self-authority, your relationship with yourself begins to change. You're no longer on the outside of your own decisions; you're present for them.

This course is not about shaming or judging you. It's about raising awareness, so you recognise who you were **trained to become.** There's no rush here, no right or wrong way to do this.

Start where you are with what's real and true for you right now.

## **MODULE 1: WHERE YOUR STORY ACTUALLY BEGAN**

### **Lesson 1: You didn't choose your starting point**

You were born into a set of circumstances you didn't design. Parents and caregivers who already had stress, strong beliefs, limitations, tenderness, compassion, or a lack of both.

You adapted to those conditions to survive because that's what babies and young children do, but a lot of what you now call "personality" started as adjustment.

At just weeks or months old, you began to learn:

- how to be safe in a room
- how to be accepted
- how to try and get your needs met
- how to reduce conflict
- how to be "enough" for the environment you were in

Those lessons were not conscious choices. They were survival intelligence.

This first lesson is not about blaming your parents; it's about recognising something simple and important: **today, you are a product of your earliest experiences.** You have become what you adapted to. This course will show you that

the ways you adapted in childhood can be revisited and changed.

## **Exercise**

Don't overthink it. Let it be honest, even if it's messy. Take a quiet moment and reflect on these prompts:

In my early environment, I learned that I needed to be:

To stay safe or accepted, I became:

What I needed then, but didn't consistently receive, was:

## **Journal prompts**

What parts of my personality feel like they were shaped by pressure rather than choice?

What did I learn I had to be to avoid rejection or tension?

What did I need that I didn't have language for at the time?

What still feels like it belongs to that earlier environment, not my current life?

## **Lesson 2: The roles you learned to play to belong**

When you were a child, who did your environment shape you to become? Were you:

- the strong one
- the organised one
- the funny one
- the sick one
- the helper
- the quiet one
- the achiever
- the peacemaker
- the reliable one

These weren't random roles you picked. They were ways of finding stability in your relationships with others.

A role is what you become when being yourself doesn't feel consistently safe. But the role you chose wasn't fake; it was functional. It helped you feel a sense of belonging.

But roles are also limited - they only show a small, safe part of who you are. Over time, if a role becomes fixed, it can start to feel like a cage you didn't consciously enter.

Recognise and thank your adopted role for the safety and protection it gave you but now, you're allowed to let it go.

## **Exercise**

Write down 3 roles you recognise in yourself.

Role 1:

Role 2:

Role 3:

Then think about...the role helped me by:

Role 1:

Role 2:

Role 3:

Then think about...the role cost me:

Role 1:

Role 2:

Role 3:

And finally, think about...I first learned this role when:

Role 1:

Role 2:

Role 3:

## **Journal Prompts**

Which role receives the most approval from others?

Which role feels most exhausting to maintain?

Where do I feel like I am performing instead of being?

What would it feel like to step out of one role, even briefly?

### **Lesson 3: What you needed that you didn't always get**

Growing up, most of us don't get everything we need in the exact way we need it, which often means we adapt around the gaps.

These gaps may have been:

- emotional attunement
- consistency
- safety to express needs
- permission to be messy, loud, uncertain
- someone noticing us without the attention needing to be earned

When these needs aren't consistently met, the mind does something very intelligent: it learns to self-manage the need instead of expressing it. We reinforce the role we've adopted to maintain harmonious connections with the people who *should* but can't meet our needs. We become hyper-independent, develop humour to cover up hurt, or squash our need for softness and comfort.

But when we **suppress** a need we **depress** our emotions. We feel lonely, isolated, sad, and withdrawn. If we don't learn to recognise and change these feelings, more often than not, we carry them for the rest of our lives.

## **Exercise**

Finish these sentences:

What I needed most was:

What I often received instead was:

What I learned to do in response was:

## **Journal Prompts**

What needs did I learn to minimise or dismiss?

What has being “low maintenance” cost me?

What emotions did I stop expressing to keep the peace?

What would it feel like to acknowledge my needs without judgement?

## **MODULE 2: THE VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD IS NOT YOURS**

### **Lesson 4: The inner critic is learned, not intuitive**

There's an inner voice many people grow up believing is "just them." It comments, it evaluates, it predicts failure, it points out flaws before anyone else can and it often sounds certain, even when it's harsh.

This inner voice is not your intuitive truth but a learned external language that belongs to someone else. It trained you with its feedback, tone, expectations, silence, and comparison to become someone you're not. It may belong to one person or many people, but you internalised the message it gave you: that you aren't enough as you are. The voice left you no choice but to adopt another role to fit in, stay safe, alleviate shame, and minimise your risk of punishment and exclusion.

What began as adaptation became internal narration.

The important shift is this: **you're not listening to reality; you're listening to a conditioned message that has trained you to abandon yourself.**

How do you retrain the voice? By noticing it, questioning and challenging it, **not** believing it, and allowing your intuitive

truth to take over. Your inner critic has had its day. Time to move on.

## **Exercise**

Write 5 statements your inner voice often says about you.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now write your intuitive truth and shut that voice down:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## **Journal Prompts**

When does my inner voice become most critical?

Who or what does it sound like in those moments?

What happens within me when I believe it fully?

What changes when I treat it as a voice, not a truth?

## **Lesson 5: Fear learned to sound like truth**

Fear rarely announces itself clearly. It doesn't say: I'm afraid, it says:

- This won't work.
- Don't even try.
- Why bother.
- You already know how this ends.
- It's safer not to.

And over time, because fear is repetitive and emotionally charged, it begins to feel true.

### **But fear is not truth.**

Fear is prediction shaped by past experiences - sometimes accurate, often outdated.

This matters because when fear is mistaken for truth, it quietly limits your life while convincing you it's protecting you.

The goal is not to remove fear but to recognise its tone.

## **Exercise**

Think of one situation you are currently avoiding or delaying.

What is fear saying:

What facts are known:

What is imagined or assumed:

## **Journal Prompts**

Where do I mistake anxiety for intuition?

What decisions feel like avoidance rather than alignment?

What would I try if fear was not leading?

Think back to the childhood roles you played. What was fear trying to protect you from:

## **Lesson 6: Observation is not judgement**

One of the most important distinctions in this work is the difference between **noticing** and **judging**.

Most people aren't aware when they move into self-criticism. They think they're simply reflecting but internally, they're collapsing **observation** into **evaluation**.

### **Observation is:**

- I notice I felt tense.
- I notice I withdrew.

### **Judgement is:**

- I'm always like this.
- Something's wrong with me.

One creates space, the other closes it.

Learning this difference changes the internal environment you live in. You stop judging yourself for being human and observe yourself doing your best.

When you intentionally observe yourself, you soften what can at times be a harsh perspective. You allow yourself to make mistakes, to 'course correct', and be kind to yourself in the process.

## **Exercise**

Think about one recent situation that felt uncomfortable. Now write two different takes on the same situation:

1. Pure observation:

2. Judgemental interpretation:

Write down what you notice about the emotional difference between them:

Which version do you prefer? 1 or 2:

## **Journal Prompts**

When do I turn observation into self-criticism?

What language do I use when I am hard on myself?

What changes when I stay in simple noticing?

What becomes softer when judgement is removed?

## **MODULE 3: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES THAT OUTLIVED THEIR MOMENT**

### **Lesson 7: The patterns that once protected you**

Some of your **strongest patterns** began as **self-protection**. You learned them in environments where something needed to be managed such as conflict, unpredictability, emotional intensity, absence, and pressure. So, you adapted.

You might have learned to:

- stay quiet to stay safe
- over-function to prevent disharmony
- anticipate other people's moods
- minimise your needs
- become easy-going to avoid rejection

These were not mistakes. They were intelligent responses to your environment at the time.

But what protects you in one season restricts you in the next.

The question is no longer, **why am I like this?** It's become, **is it still necessary to be like this?**

## **Exercise**

Identify one or two long-standing coping patterns.

These patterns originally helped me by:

They now show up in my life as:

## **Journal Prompts**

What did my adapted behaviour protect me from?

Where did it first become necessary?

What situations still trigger it today?

What would life look like without it running automatically?

## **Lesson 8: When coping becomes limitation**

Coping strategies *look* like strength. They're often praised by other people because if *we're* coping *they're* released from any emotional accountability for the circumstances.

Coping strategies look like:

- reliability
- independence
- not needing much
- holding everything together

But when you're *coping*, you're not thriving.

Coping is what you do to minimise and manage pressure. If you stay in coping mode for too long, life can start to feel like something you're enduring rather than living.

**The shift here is subtle but important:** you're allowed to move from coping alone into receiving support; from holding everything together to letting yourself be helped.

## **Exercise**

Complete this sentence honestly:

One way I cope that no one sees is:

It costs me:

## **Journal Prompts**

Where in my life am I still in survival mode?

If I gave myself a break from achieving, what would my life look like?

What am I afraid would happen if I stopped trying so hard to cope?

Who would I be without constant effort?

## **Lesson 9: The cost of staying in survival mode**

Survival mode is not just stress. It narrows:

- emotional range
- social openness
- creativity
- rest
- self-trust

Survival mode means we're functioning but not living with joy, peace, or contentment. We're hypervigilant, restless, sometimes paranoid and short-tempered.

The cost of survival mode is gradual disconnection. We don't realise we're in survival mode until we begin to feel numb, tired, or detached from ourselves and the world around us.

But when we choose to start noticing, observing ourselves, silencing the critical voice, stepping out of the roles we played to stay safe, we find our way back to the reality of who we were born to be. Gently. Repeatedly. Without judgement. This is me.

We finally acknowledge that the life we've been living belongs to someone else. We're ready to embrace the life that belongs to us.

## **Exercise**

When I think about slowing down and stepping out of survival mode, I feel:

What I fear would happen if I stepped away from the way I've been living is:

## **Journal Prompts**

Where am I pushing through when I could ask for help?

What does my body feel like when I'm in survival mode?

What would a small relief look like today?

What helps me feel even slightly more present?

## **MODULE 4: COMING BACK INTO RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF**

### **Lesson 10: Learning to notice yourself without criticism**

A lot of people are in a judgemental and critical relationship with themselves. They notice everything but through a **lens of evaluation and criticism**. This lens means that even gentle observation and awareness become uncomfortable.

This lesson is about shifting the **quality of attention** - not more self-focus, just kinder noticing.

You're learning to be with your experience without immediately turning it into a problem to solve. This is subtle, but it changes everything because what you can stay with, you can understand and what you understand, you stop fighting.

## **Exercise**

During the day, pause three times just to observe yourself. No interpretation or fixing:

Right now, I notice:

1.

2.

3.

## **Journal prompts**

What happens within me when I observe myself without judgement?

Where do I still automatically correct or criticise myself?

What feels unfamiliar about being neutral with myself?

What softens when I stop analysing everything?

## **Lesson 11: Rebuilding self-trust with your own experiences**

Self-trust is built through consistency of response, so every time you acknowledge your experiences and your needs, you strengthen self-trust. This includes comparatively small things like:

- noticing tiredness
- noticing discomfort
- noticing when to say “no” before it becomes resentment

Experiences and feelings are data; they’re information that your brain and mind need to steer you towards or away from people and situations that may be good for you or harmful.

If you’re ignoring or undervaluing your experiences and needs, then you’re weakening self-trust as well as placing yourself in vulnerable, uncomfortable situations.

Your experiences are not an inconvenience; your feelings are not insignificant. They are both essential to building your mind and body in resilient ways.

Self-trust, simply defined, is whether you have your back - or not. Are you there for yourself, in your corner, championing your needs? You may have been trained to put yourself last

but today is where your story changes. You matter. Tell yourself.

## **Exercise**

Notice when you become aware of your internal responses to discomfort, saying “yes” when you want to say “no,” feeling tired, or overwhelmed. Then respond with a small action that acknowledges your feelings and shows you’ve listened. This could be something minimal, like pausing, adjusting your posture, giving yourself a moment before continuing, sipping water, mentally counting down, or walking away.

Write down your 3 examples and how you responded:

1.

2.

3.

## **Journal Prompts**

Where do I ignore my own inner signals?

What would it mean to treat my experiences as legitimate?

When have I ignored myself and later regretted it?

What can I do differently that will build self-trust?

## **Lesson 12: Small ways to stop abandoning yourself in real time**

Self-abandonment is not always dramatic; in fact we often abandon ourselves in small ways:

- saying yes too quickly
- staying quiet when something feels off
- ignoring tiredness
- explaining yourself when you don't want to
- pushing past internal signals

This lesson is not about never doing these things again; it's about noticing when you do them sooner - because the earlier you notice, the more choices you have about choosing something different.

There's a section on self-abandonment at  
[thehealinglibrary.com](http://thehealinglibrary.com).

## **Exercise**

Reflect on the past 24 hours and write down the ways you feel you abandoned yourself:

Next time, what will you choose instead:

## **Journal Prompts**

Where do I abandon myself in small everyday ways?

What signals do I tend to ignore?

What would it look like to pause before ignoring myself?

What helps me stay present with myself in real time?

## **MODULE 5: LIVING AS THE AUTHOR OF YOUR NEXT CHAPTER**

### **Lesson 13: Choice doesn't require certainty**

Many people wait for certainty before they allow themselves to act differently. But certainty is rarely the starting point - it's the byproduct. It tends to arrive after action, not before it. If you wait until you feel completely sure, you may wait indefinitely.

You don't need full confidence to make a different choice. You don't need clarity about the entire path ahead. What you need is far simpler, and far more available: just enough awareness to recognise, that *\*this\** - however familiar - is no longer working for me in its current form.

That moment of recognition is where self-authority begins.

Choice, in real life, is often quiet. It rarely announces itself as a dramatic turning point. More often, it looks like something small, almost easy to overlook:

- a pause where you would normally react
- a delay where you would usually rush in
- a different sentence than the one on autopilot
- a response that interrupts an old pattern

These are not insignificant shifts - but the foundations of change.

Choice doesn't require a complete reinvention of who you are. It doesn't demand that you become a different person overnight. It simply asks that, in the moment, you do something slightly different from what you've always done before.

And from that small difference, a new direction quietly begins to form.

## **Exercise**

Identify 3 areas in your life where you feel stuck. Write down the different choices you will make - without certainty - that will change your experience:

1.

2.

3.

## **Journal Prompts**

Where am I waiting for certainty before changing anything?

What small shift feels possible right now?

What would "good enough" look like, as opposed to "perfect"?

Do you have examples of how different choices have changed things over time?

## **Lesson 14: You are allowed to change without explanation or justification**

One of the quietest, heaviest burdens people carry is the belief that change must be defended – that it needs to be explained, softened, justified, and made palatable for others before it can be real. We rehearse reasons. We gather evidence. We try to make our evolution make sense to everyone watching.

But change doesn't require consensus. It doesn't need permission, approval, or a neatly packaged explanation that others can understand. Change only asks for one thing: a decision.

A decision to do something different. A decision to stop betraying what you know, deep down, isn't working anymore.

You are allowed to outgrow people, patterns, identities, and environments – even the ones you once fought hard to hold onto. You are allowed to wake up one day and realise that what used to fit no longer does, without needing to present a closing argument to justify why.

Not everything that shifts within you will have a clean, logical explanation. Sometimes the only clarity you'll have is a quiet, persistent knowing that, 'I can't continue like this'.

And that is enough.

You don't owe anyone a version of your life that stays the same just because it keeps *them* comfortable. You don't owe a detailed explanation for choosing peace over familiarity, growth over stagnation, or truth over expectation.

People may not understand your change. They may question it, resist it, or try to pull you back into who you used to be – because that version made more sense to them.

But your life is not a group project.

Your responsibility is not to be understood. It is to be honest.

And sometimes honesty looks like change without explanation, justification, or permission.

## **Exercise**

Complete this sentence, bearing in mind all the judgement, criticism, and consequences you're worried about receiving. Complete it honestly. Nobody else will see it.

I am allowed to change, to do things differently, even if:

## **Journal Prompts**

Where do I feel pressure to justify myself?

What changes have I delayed because I couldn't justify them?

What would it feel like to trust my intuition without having certainty?

Who benefits when I stay the same?

Well done, and wow! You did it.

There is no final version of you that this course is trying to deliver. There is no point at which your story becomes finished, resolved, or perfectly understood. What changes is that your **past stops being the only lens through which you meet yourself.**

This can feel subtle at first, almost too subtle:

- you notice a thought, instead of becoming it.
- you notice a reaction, instead of obeying it.
- you notice a familiar pattern or habit, and just for a moment there is space around you as you change your mind and do something different.

That space becomes the beginning of self-authorship. Not control. Not perfection. Not reinvention. Just the return of choice inside something that used to feel involuntary, programmed, pre-conditioned.

This work is not about becoming someone else; it's about no longer disappearing inside the version of yourself who was formed under conditions **you did not choose.**

It's unlikely your life will be rewritten immediately. When you start making different choices and doing things differently, the changes accumulate gradually.

Soon though, you'll wonder how and why you chose to do things the way you did them before. *Some* of your old patterns and habits will feel harder to change, *most* of them will soften over time, but *all* of them will stop defining everything they touch as you learn to observe yourself and do something different.

There is no 'right pace' or finish line you're meant to reach. There is simply a moment where you either meet yourself with awareness and choice... or you don't. That moment is not a pass or fail; it's just the practice of coming back, again and again, and observing the story versus the facts, of choosing the external training or the internal intuition.

From there, you begin to live as someone who is present inside their own life. Not outside analysing it, not surviving it, but here in it, as yourself.

*With love.*