

Compassionate Connection Therapy

Welcome to Your Reflection Space

This worksheet was created with care—for anyone moving through something tender, uncertain, or important. Whether you're processing pain, seeking clarity, rebuilding trust, or simply needing space to breathe, you're welcome here.

These worksheets offer gentle tools for reflection—resources that meet you where you are, without pressure or expectation. They're designed to support emotional exploration at your own pace, in your own way.

The mission is simple: To make emotional support more available in a time when many are struggling. To offer free, compassionate resources with no hidden agenda. To help you reconnect with your own voice, in ways that feel safe and steady.

If this mission resonates, feel free to share it. Post it, print it, pass it along. Your share might be someone's first moment of feeling understood.

These worksheets are offered with care, for personal use only. They're here to support your healing—not to rush it. You don't need to finish every section. You don't need to have all the answers. Take what supports you. Leave what doesn't. Your pace, your process, your wellbeing—these come first.

You're not alone. Even if we've never met, this resource is offered with quiet solidarity—holding space, cheering you on, and believing in your capacity to heal.

A Gentle Note on Safety

These worksheets are designed for personal reflection. They are not a substitute for therapy or professional treatment.

If you're in therapy, consider sharing this resource with your therapist before exploring. If you're not in therapy, please reflect in a space that feels emotionally and physically safe.

You might choose to explore alongside someone you trust—a friend, partner, or support person. If that isn't available right now, this worksheet can still be a quiet companion. Go gently. In your own time. In your own way.

Where to Find the Worksheets

If this resource feels meaningful, please share it. Healing is communal—and your share might be someone's first step toward feeling less alone.

These worksheets are shared freely across platforms:

Website: <https://CompassionateConnectionTherapy.co.uk>

Facebook: Compassionate Connection Therapy

TikTok: @rosa.tomassi.bella

Instagram: @connectiontherapyrhl

Let's make emotional support tools free, gentle, and accessible—together.

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A Note on Contact

These worksheets are shared freely, but individual support cannot be offered through messages or comments. If you need support, please speak with a therapist or someone you trust. These tools are here to guide gentle exploration—not to replace professional care. Thank you for understanding, and for sharing with kindness.

If You're in Crisis

These worksheets are not for emergencies. If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, please reach out:

- Samaritans — 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- NHS 111 — urgent mental health advice
- 999 — if you or someone else is at immediate risk

You deserve support, safety, and care.

Copyright and Usage

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You are welcome to share this resource with others for support, as long as:

- *You credit Rosa Tomassi-Bella and Compassionate Connection Therapy*
- *You do not alter the content in any way*
- *You do not use it for commercial purposes or financial gain*

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Blocks & Barriers: A Gentle Exploration of What's Holding You Back

A compassionate worksheet for reconnecting with clarity, choice, and self-trust

Introduction

Feeling stuck is a deeply human experience. It touches all of us at different points in our lives—not because we're failing, not because we're unmotivated, and not because we're “doing life wrong,” but because something inside us is responding to stress, uncertainty, or past experiences in the best way it knows how. Stuckness is often a sign that your mind or body is trying to protect you, slow you down, or help you cope with something that feels too big, too fast, or too overwhelming.

This worksheet is an invitation to pause and gently explore what might be happening beneath the surface. You don't need to push yourself. You don't need to have clarity. You don't need to be ready for change. Simply being curious is enough. Even the smallest moment of noticing can open a little more space inside you.

My hope is that these pages help you meet yourself with softness, understand your inner world with more compassion, and reconnect with the parts of you that still want movement, creativity, and possibility. You might discover something new, or you might simply feel a little more understood by yourself—and both are meaningful.

Take your time. Pause whenever you need to. There is no right or wrong way to move through this. Your pace is the right pace.

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How to Use This Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to be flexible, gentle, and supportive. You can use it in whatever way feels most nourishing for you. Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

Move at your own pace

You don't need to complete everything in one sitting. You can move through the sections slowly, revisit them over several days or weeks, or explore them in the order that feels most natural.

Choose the format that feels right

You can write your responses, think them through quietly, draw, speak them aloud, or simply sit with the questions. There is no expectation to produce anything polished or complete.

Let the questions guide you—not pressure you

Each section includes **open questions**. These are there to help you explore your experience more deeply, but they are *invitations*, not demands. If a question feels too big, too vague, or too overwhelming, you can skip it, return later, or choose a different one.

Use the sentence starters when you need a softer entry point

Every section also includes **sentence starters**. These are especially helpful when the open questions feel intimidating or when you're not sure where to begin. They offer a gentler, more structured way to ease into reflection. You can complete them with a single word, a phrase, or a full thought—whatever feels manageable.

Allow your answers to be imperfect

Your responses can be messy, incomplete, contradictory, or uncertain. This isn't a test. It's a conversation with yourself. Let your answers reflect where you are, not where you think you "should" be.

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Take breaks whenever you need to

If something feels too much, it's okay to pause. You can return later with fresh eyes or a calmer nervous system. Sometimes stepping away is part of the process.

Create a supportive environment

You might find it helpful to keep a notebook nearby, make a warm drink, light a candle, or sit somewhere comfortable. Small comforts can help your body feel safer as you explore tender places.

Return as often as you like

You may notice different things each time you revisit this worksheet. Your inner world shifts, even in subtle ways, and returning to these questions can help you track those changes with compassion.

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SECTION 1 — Naming What Feels Stuck

A gentle guide

Sometimes the first step toward understanding our inner world is simply noticing what feels difficult. Many people move through life carrying a quiet sense of heaviness, tension, or confusion without ever pausing to name it. This section offers a soft place to begin.

You're not being asked to explain *why* you feel stuck, or to justify it, or to fix anything. You're simply invited to acknowledge what feels tight, tangled, or unmoving inside you. Even a small moment of recognition can bring a surprising sense of relief—like turning on a light in a dim room.

If it feels hard to identify what's stuck, that's completely okay. Stuckness can show up in subtle ways: a task you keep circling around, a conversation you avoid, a dream you've quietly placed on a shelf, or a part of yourself that feels muted. You might notice it in your body—tension in your shoulders, a heaviness in your chest, a sense of dragging your feet through the day.

There is no right answer here. There is only what feels true for you in this moment.

Open Questions

These questions are invitations, not expectations. You can answer one, all, or none—whatever feels supportive.

- What parts of your life feel slow, heavy, or hard to move through right now? (*This could be something practical, emotional, relational, or creative.*)
- Where do you notice hesitation, avoidance, or emotional fatigue? (*For example: replying to messages, starting a project, making decisions, or even resting.*)

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- What situations or tasks feel harder than you expected, and what happens inside you when you approach them? *(Do you freeze, overthink, shut down, feel overwhelmed, or lose interest?)*
- Are there areas where you feel disconnected from your usual energy, confidence, or creativity? *(Maybe something that once felt easy now feels distant or foggy.)*
- What do you wish felt easier, lighter, or more possible? *(This can be something small, like getting out of bed gently, or something bigger, like reconnecting with a part of yourself.)*
- Is there anything you've been quietly carrying that feels too heavy to hold alone? *(Even if you're not ready to share it, you can acknowledge it to yourself.)*

Sentence Starters

Use these if you'd like a softer way in. Let them be imperfect, incomplete, or exploratory.

- I notice I feel stuck when...

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- Something that feels heavy for me right now is...
- I'm finding it difficult to...
- A part of my life that feels tangled is...
- I wish I could move more freely around...
- I'm realising that I've been avoiding...
- When I think about this area of my life, I feel...

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Tiny Practice

Take one slow breath. Let your shoulders drop, even slightly. Place a hand on your chest, your arm, or anywhere that feels comforting.

Quietly say to yourself: **“It’s okay to feel this way.”**

You’re not trying to change the feeling. You’re simply offering yourself a moment of gentleness—something many of us rarely receive.

A Sciency Bit

When we feel stuck, the brain often shifts into a protective state. The amygdala—the part that scans for danger—can become more alert, while the prefrontal cortex—the part that helps with planning, motivation, and flexible thinking—can temporarily step back.

This shift isn’t a sign that something is wrong with you. It’s your nervous system doing what it has learned to do: keep you safe.

Naming what feels stuck can help your brain recognise that the situation may not be dangerous, which gently invites the prefrontal cortex back online. Even a small moment of awareness can create a little more space, a little more breath, and a little more clarity.

SECTION 2 — Exploring What’s Beneath the Block

A gentle guide

Stuckness rarely appears out of nowhere. It often has roots—quiet, tender, sometimes long-standing. You might not always know what those roots are, and you don’t need to force yourself to uncover them. This section simply invites gentle curiosity.

Sometimes what looks like “I can’t get started” is actually “I’m scared of being disappointed again.” Sometimes “I’m procrastinating” is really “I’m exhausted and no one has noticed.”

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Sometimes “I don’t know why I’m avoiding this” is actually “This reminds me of something painful, even if I can’t name it.”

There is no expectation that you dig deep or uncover anything dramatic. Even noticing a faint emotional whisper—tension, heaviness, uncertainty, a sense of being overwhelmed—can be meaningful.

Think of this as sitting beside your experience rather than interrogating it. You’re not trying to fix anything. You’re simply allowing yourself to wonder, softly, about what might be happening beneath the surface.

Open Questions

These questions are invitations to explore, not demands for answers. Let them meet you where you are.

- What emotions might be sitting underneath the hesitation—fear, sadness, overwhelm, confusion, numbness, something else entirely?
- What feels tender or vulnerable about taking a step forward, even a small one?
- Are there past experiences—recent or distant—that might be shaping how you feel now?

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- What feels too big, too uncertain, or too risky for the part of you that's holding back?
- What might your mind or body be trying to protect you from—disappointment, pressure, judgment, exhaustion, being seen, being misunderstood?
- Is there a story you've been carrying about yourself that might be influencing this moment?
- What would feel unsafe, exposed, or overwhelming if you moved ahead too quickly?

Sentence Starters

Use these as gentle openings if the questions feel too broad.

- Underneath this block, I sense...
- A part of me might be afraid that...

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- I feel a heaviness when I think about...
- I wonder if this hesitation is connected to...
- Something I haven't fully acknowledged yet is...
- A quiet part of me might be saying...
- When I slow down, I notice that...

Tiny Practice

Place both feet on the floor. Notice one simple sensation—warmth, pressure, texture, weight, or contact.

Then gently say to yourself: **“I’m here with you.”**

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This small moment of presence can help your nervous system feel supported rather than overwhelmed.

A Sciency Bit

The nervous system is shaped by experience. When something in the present resembles a past hurt—even in subtle ways—the body can respond as though the old threat is happening again. This can create hesitation, shutdown, or a sense of “I just can’t.”

This response isn’t a sign of weakness or failure. It’s the brain’s way of trying to keep you safe based on what it has learned.

When you explore these layers gently, you help your brain distinguish between *then* and *now*. Over time, this can create more space for clarity, choice, and a sense of groundedness.

SECTION 3 — Imagining What Might Support You

A gentle guide

Support can take many shapes, and it doesn’t always look like taking action or making changes. Sometimes support is something quiet, permission to rest, a moment of reassurance, a boundary that protects your energy, or a connection that reminds you you’re not alone. Other times it’s something practical, like clearer structure, a softer pace, or a little more spaciousness in your day.

This section isn’t asking you to commit to anything or to push yourself toward solutions. Instead, it invites you to gently imagine what *might* help you feel steadier, safer, or more resourced. Even considering possibilities—without pressure to act on them—can create a sense of openness where things previously felt tight or closed.

Think of this as exploring what could support you in feeling more like yourself again. You’re not deciding. You’re simply wondering.

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? Open Questions

These questions are gentle prompts to help you explore what support might look like for you right now.

- What would help you feel a little safer or more grounded—emotionally, physically, or mentally? *(This might be rest, clarity, reassurance, or simply slowing down.)*
- What kinds of support feel nourishing rather than overwhelming? *(For example: quiet companionship, practical help, time alone, gentle accountability.)*
- What helps you feel capable, encouraged, or less alone when things feel heavy? *(Think about people, environments, routines, or inner reminders.)*
- What do you wish you had more of in your life right now—time, space, understanding, structure, softness, connection?
- What would make things feel even 5% easier or more manageable? *(Small shifts count—like tidying one corner, asking one question, or taking one breath.)*

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- What helps your nervous system settle—warmth, movement, stillness, nature, music, quiet, touch?
- What kind of support would feel gentle enough that you wouldn't have to brace yourself to receive it?

Sentence Starters

Use these if you'd like a softer way to explore what might help.

- I might feel more supported if...
- I feel more motivated when...
- I wonder if I need more...
- Something that could lighten the load is...

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- It might help me to gently consider...
- I feel steadier when...
- A small shift that feels possible is...

Tiny Practice

Write down one thing—just one—that brings you comfort. It could be:

- a song
- a place
- a person
- a memory
- a scent
- a phrase
- a texture
- a moment of the day

Keep it somewhere you can see or return to. Let it be a small anchor, a reminder that comfort exists and is available to you, even in tiny doses.

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A Sciency Bit

When you imagine supportive possibilities, your brain begins activating neural pathways associated with hope, safety, and problem-solving. This gentle imagining can reduce stress hormones and increase a sense of agency—even before anything changes externally.

The brain doesn't always distinguish between vividly imagining support and actually receiving it. Visualising what might help can create a subtle shift in your nervous system, making space for calm, clarity, and possibility.

SECTION 4 — Reconnecting With Your Sense of Self

✦ A gentle guide

When life feels heavy or tangled, it's common to lose touch with the parts of yourself that usually feel steady, vibrant, or grounded. Stuckness can create a kind of fog—one that makes it harder to remember what brings you joy, what matters to you, or what helps you feel like *you*.

This section isn't about forcing positivity or pretending everything is fine. It's about gently turning toward the parts of yourself that may have gone quiet but haven't disappeared. Even if they feel distant, they are still there—waiting, intact, patient.

Reconnecting with your sense of self can be subtle. It might show up as a small moment of curiosity, a flicker of interest, a memory of something you once loved, or a sense of “Oh... that feels like me.” These moments don't need to be big or dramatic. Even the smallest spark can remind you that you are more than this moment of stuckness.

Think of this as a gentle homecoming—an invitation to remember who you are beneath the noise, the pressure, and the overwhelm.

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? Open Questions

These questions are meant to help you rediscover the threads of yourself that feel true, steady, or meaningful.

- When do you feel most like yourself—calm, authentic, unmasked, or at ease? *(This might be with certain people, in certain places, or during certain activities.)*
- What activities, environments, or rhythms help you feel grounded, energised, or connected? *(Nature, creativity, movement, quiet, structure, spontaneity—anything that feels nourishing.)*
- What values still matter to you, even when things are hard? *(Kindness, honesty, curiosity, fairness, connection, creativity, rest—whatever feels true.)*
- What sparks even a tiny bit of curiosity, interest, or aliveness? *(A topic, a memory, a hobby, a conversation, a dream, a possibility.)*
- What parts of you feel steady, wise, or resilient—even if they only show up occasionally? *(A part that keeps going, a part that cares, a part that notices, a part that hopes.)*

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- When you imagine yourself at your most grounded or authentic, what qualities come to mind? (*Gentle, brave, thoughtful, playful, determined, compassionate—whatever resonates.*)

Sentence Starters

These can help you ease into reflection without pressure.

- I feel most like myself when...
- I used to love...
- I feel a small spark when...
- Even when things are difficult, I still care about...

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- A part of me that feels true is...
- I feel grounded when...
- Something that reminds me of who I am is...

Tiny Practice

Bring to mind a moment—big or small—when you felt proud, peaceful, connected, or simply *yourself*. It could be:

- a conversation where you felt understood
- a moment in nature
- a creative spark
- a time you helped someone
- a quiet morning
- a memory from childhood
- a moment of laughter

Let yourself linger there for a breath or two. Notice what that moment felt like in your body. You don't need to recreate it—just remember that it existed, and that it came from you.

A Sciency Bit

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Positive memory recall activates the hippocampus, a part of the brain involved in emotional regulation, learning, and resilience. When you revisit moments that felt meaningful or grounding, your nervous system receives cues of safety and familiarity. This can gently shift your body out of a stress-based state and into a more regulated one.

Even brief reconnection with memories of authenticity or joy can help your brain remember: **“I have felt like myself before. That part of me still exists.”**

SECTION 5 — Understanding the Protective Role of the Block

A gentle guide

Many blocks don't arise because we're unmotivated or incapable—they often appear because some part of us is trying to keep us safe. This protective part might be responding to old hurts, past disappointments, moments of overwhelm, or experiences where trying felt costly. Even when a block feels frustrating, it often carries a quiet wisdom: *“I don't want you to get hurt again.”*

This section isn't about labelling your block as “good” or “bad.” It's about recognising that your inner world is doing its best with the information it has. Protection can show up in many forms: hesitation, overthinking, avoidance, perfectionism, shutting down, or feeling frozen. These responses may have helped you cope at some point in your life—even if they feel unhelpful now.

Exploring the protective intention behind a block can soften the internal tension. Instead of fighting with yourself, you begin to understand yourself. And understanding often creates space for gentler choices, more compassion, and a sense of inner cooperation rather than conflict.

You don't need to force anything. You're simply invited to wonder.

Open Questions

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These questions help you explore the protective role of your block with curiosity rather than judgment.

- What might this block be trying to shield you from—disappointment, pressure, criticism, failure, success, being seen, being misunderstood?
- What feels risky, uncertain, or emotionally exposed about moving forward?
- What part of you might feel tender, vulnerable, or unprepared if you took a step?
- How might this block have helped you in the past—by slowing you down, keeping you safe, preventing overwhelm, or helping you cope?
- Is this protection still needed in the same way, or has your life changed since the pattern first formed?
- What might this protective part be afraid would happen if it loosened its grip?

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- If this block could speak, what might it say about its intentions?

Sentence Starters

These can help you approach the protective layer with softness.

- I wonder if this block is trying to protect me from...
- A part of me might be afraid that...
- If I imagine letting go of this block, I feel...
- Even though this block is frustrating, I can see that...
- This hesitation might be connected to...

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- A protective part of me might be saying...
- I'm beginning to notice that...

Tiny Practice

Place a hand over your heart, stomach, or anywhere that feels comforting. Take a slow breath.

Quietly say to yourself: **“Thank you for trying to protect me.”**

You're not agreeing with the block or giving it control. You're simply acknowledging its intention—an intention that likely formed during a time when you needed it.

This small moment of appreciation can soften inner resistance and create a sense of internal safety.

A Sciency Bit

Protective responses often come from the brain's threat-detection systems, especially the amygdala. These systems learn from experience—sometimes very early in life—and they can become automatic. When something in the present feels even slightly similar to a past hurt, the brain may activate old protective patterns without conscious awareness.

Recognising the protective intention behind a block helps reduce internal conflict. When the nervous system feels understood rather than pushed, it becomes easier for the prefrontal

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cortex—the part of the brain involved in planning, reflection, and choice—to re-engage. This creates more space for gentler, more flexible responses.

SECTION 6 — Imagining Gentle Next Steps

A gentle guide

When you're feeling stuck, the idea of taking a step—any step—can feel overwhelming. That's why this section focuses on *gentle* next steps, not big leaps or dramatic changes. You're not being asked to transform your life or push yourself beyond your capacity. Instead, you're invited to imagine movements that feel soft, manageable, and kind.

A gentle next step might be something so small it barely looks like a step at all: opening a notebook, taking a breath before responding to a message, sitting near a task you're not ready to start, or allowing yourself to rest without guilt. These tiny movements matter. They signal to your nervous system that you're not stuck forever—you're simply moving at a pace that honours your energy, your history, and your humanity.

This section is about possibility, not pressure. You're not committing to anything. You're just exploring what might feel doable, supportive, or even slightly hopeful.

Open Questions

These questions help you gently explore what “next” could look like—without urgency or expectation.

- What feels possible—not ideal, not perfect, just *possible*—from where you are right now?

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- What tiny step sparks curiosity rather than pressure or dread?
- What would “beginning again” look like in the smallest, kindest way?
- What would support you—emotionally, practically, or physically—in taking one gentle step?
- What reminder would help you stay kind to yourself as you move forward?
- What would a compassionate version of progress look like for you today?
- What step feels small enough that you wouldn’t need to brace yourself to take it?

Sentence Starters

Use these if you’d like a softer way to explore what might come next.

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- If I were to begin gently, I might...
- One small step I feel curious about is...
- If fear wasn't in charge for a moment, I might...
- A tiny shift that feels doable is...
- I want to remind myself that...
- I don't have to do everything; I could just...
- A compassionate next step could be...

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Tiny Practice

Choose one action that takes less than two minutes. It could be:

- stretching your arms
- drinking a sip of water
- opening a window
- writing one word
- placing a hand on your heart
- standing up and sitting back down
- lighting a candle
- sending one gentle message
- taking a slow breath

Let it be enough. Tiny steps count. They always have.

A Sciency Bit

Small actions activate the brain's reward pathways, releasing dopamine—a neurotransmitter linked to motivation, pleasure, and a sense of momentum. When you take even the smallest step, your brain registers it as progress, which makes future steps feel more achievable.

This is why tiny steps are not trivial. They're neurologically powerful. They help shift your nervous system out of shutdown and into a state where possibility feels a little more reachable. Over time, these small movements can create meaningful change—gently, steadily, and at your own pace.

Closing

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If you've reached this point, pause for a moment and acknowledge yourself. Not for productivity. Not for insight. Not for doing the worksheet "right." Simply for showing up to your inner world with honesty, curiosity, and care.

Turning inward can be tender work. It asks for courage, softness, and patience. The fact that you've spent time here—listening, wondering, noticing—matters. It speaks to a part of you that is still reaching toward understanding, toward steadiness, toward yourself.

Stuckness is not a personal failure. It is not a flaw, a weakness, or a sign that you're falling behind. It is a signal. A story. A protective response. A moment in time that says, "Something here needs gentleness."

You are allowed to move slowly. You are allowed to rest. You are allowed to change your mind. You are allowed to begin again—gently, imperfectly, and in a way that honours who you are and what you've lived.

If nothing feels different yet, that's okay. If things feel tender, that's okay. If you're leaving with more questions than answers, that's okay too. Growth often begins quietly, beneath the surface, long before anything becomes visible.

May this worksheet be a companion you can return to whenever you need a moment of grounding or clarity. May it remind you that your inner world deserves patience. May it help you meet yourself with the same compassion, softness, and understanding you so generously offer to others.

And above all, may you remember: You are not stuck alone. You are simply in a moment—and moments can shift.