



The Finding Yourself **WORKBOOK**

A Learning Companion
Based On The Video:

“Stuck, Triggered, & Crushed? How
Therapy Helps Us Heal the False Self
and Find Our True Identity.”

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INTRODUCTION LETTER

Welcome to the Finding Yourself Workbook!

Congratulations on taking this step toward self-growth and reflection. This workbook is designed to help you understand yourself more deeply and to open up possibilities for new choices. Perhaps, you arrive here after connecting with the words “Stuck, Triggered, and Crushed”—labels that speak directly to the heartbreak and uncertainty of life.

If you find yourself quietly struggling with these feelings or experiencing a diminished sense-of-identity, know that you are not alone. These experiences are not personal failures; they are understandable responses to loss, attachment injuries, and disconnect from knowing yourself.

This journey is about reclaiming a stronger sense-of-self and considering the question, “When did you forget who you are?” These pages are intended to illuminate practical and hopeful pathways, offering insights and space for reflection.

The workbook offers thoughtful prompts, ideas, and exercises intended to transform the feeling of being lost into a renewed perspective. It is an invitation to deepen your understanding of yourself and reconnect with your inner wisdom and resilience.

I hope this resource serves as an encouraging support for you.

Sincerely,

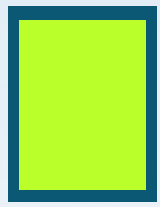
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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

A Guide for Your Process

This workbook helps you understand yourself more deeply and open up new possibilities. Like archaeology, you're digging into layers of experience—some buried, some obvious, all meaningful. The work happens when you show up as yourself, wherever you are. Keep digging—the pieces connect as you go deeper. Finding yourself is fundamentally about acceptance—accepting what is, rather than fighting what isn't. Your willingness to look honestly is where change begins.

Getting Started

Dive in wherever feels right. You might be at your kitchen table, on a park bench, or during your lunch break. What matters isn't the setting—it's your willingness to be honest. Some exercises feel like puzzle pieces; others feel like looking into a mirror. Both bring clarity to your patterns.

Moving Through the Pages

Work sequentially or jump to sections that grab you. Feeling stuck? Start there. Crushed by loss? Head to those pages. This workbook comes from the video "Stuck, Triggered, & Crushed? How Therapy Helps Us Heal the False Self and Find Our True Identity." Watch the video on YouTube or on my website.

When to Reach Out

Consider working with a therapist when ready to explore deeper. These pages open doors—sometimes you need a guide. As the creator of this workbook, I help people reconnect with parts of themselves that are hidden and lost. If you're curious about working together while *Finding Yourself*, send me a message at alanrobarge.com.

ABOUT ME

Working With Clients

I'm Alan Robarge, a psychotherapist with over 20 years of experience supporting clients who feel stuck, triggered, and crushed. My work is about finding relief and a renewed sense of possibility.

My approach is about bringing awareness to how old patterns show up in our body and mind today, recreating the past in our present. Together, we identify the buried feelings and core beliefs that anchor these old patterns, then work to undo them and change them.

We transform past suffering and trauma into new resources of strength and resilience. This workbook offers practical tools drawn from my method—hopefully, helping you reclaim choice and momentum.



Want to Work Together?

If you are curious about scheduling a session, then please reach out.

I welcome hearing from you.

LEARN MORE

Click live link above.

THE PURPOSE

Identifying What You Want To Work On

Name Your Focus

Similar to beginning therapy, growth happens when you guide your own process, naming your needs and goals with honesty and self-trust. This page is your space to explore what matters to you most—right now. Write down your intentions for using this workbook. By doing so, you're strengthening agency, just like you would when working with a therapist. Pause, then reflect. What do you want?

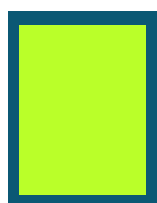


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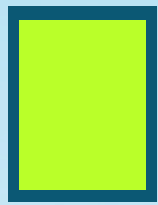
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UNDERSTANDING DISCONNECTS

Experiencing Stuck, Triggered, and Crushed

When life feels overwhelming and groundless, many of us experience a deep, visceral sense of being stuck, triggered, or crushed. These aren't merely vague or fleeting feelings; they are specific and profound indicators of fundamental disconnections within ourselves and from the world around us. Understanding these states is the first step toward reclaiming your sense-of-self and finding your way back to wholeness.

Life Review Question

What does stuck, triggered, and crushed mean to you?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Inventory

What memories surface when you reflect on these three feeling states?



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____

FEELING STUCK

Disconnected From Resources

To feel stuck is to experience a profound disconnection from your inner and outer resources. It's that agonizing moment where you just don't know how you're going to get through a situation, a feeling, or a life transition. Like being stranded in an unfamiliar place, you might feel a kind of pervasive helplessness, a sense that nothing is possible, or that you have no viable choices left. The experience of being stuck can feel like time stands still, a frozen state where you desperately wait for something to change, but nothing does.

Reviewing The Ideas

- "Stuck" signifies a disconnection from essential resources, both internal and external.
- This state often manifests as helplessness, confusion, and a feeling that no choices are available.
- Resources are anything we utilize to function in good health and navigate life's challenges.

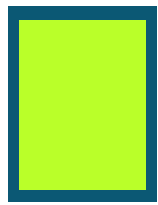
Life Review Question

When feeling stuck, what happens to your thinking, beliefs, and self-esteem?

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

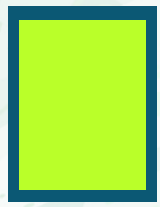


JOURNALING OPTIONS

Explore These Writing Prompts

- When I feel stuck, I notice I am disconnected from...
- My personal experience of feeling "stuck" often shows up as...
- A time I recall needing help but feeling like there was 'no help' was...
- The feeling of helplessness in my body is best explained as...

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



NAMING RESOURCES

Inventory Internal Resources

Resources are absolutely vital for our well-being and our ability to navigate life's inevitable challenges. These can be powerful internal qualities we possess, often lying dormant until we learn to recognize and activate them.

Examples of internal resources include clarity of mind, which is the direct opposite of confusion, allowing you to see situations with clear perspective. Confidence, too, is an inner resource that helps combat self-doubt and allows you to move forward.

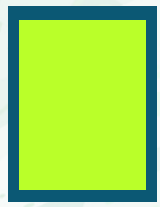
The ability to identify that you have choices, even when faced with overwhelming heartbreak, is an incredibly powerful inner resource, countering the feeling that nothing is possible.

Your creativity, the capacity for compassion and kindness towards yourself and others, and even the ability to identify when you're projecting your own stories onto situations – these are all profound internal strengths that you carry within you.

Life Review Question

What are the consequences when disconnected from inner resources?

- _____
- _____
- _____



NAMING RESOURCES

Inventory External Resources

Just as our inner strengths are essential, external resources play an important role in our well-being and sense of connection.

Community ties remind us we're not alone in facing life's challenges; they help ease the isolation that can surface when we feel stuck, like during a lonely bus ride when no help is available.

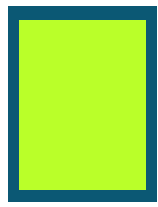
Meaningful work offers more than income—it brings purpose and direction, helping ground us when we feel uncertain. A safe home is another vital resource, providing a space to rest, recharge, and feel secure. Access to support, such as therapy, is critical too, offering a safe place to explore and heal from our struggles.

By learning to identify the external resources we have and understanding how to activate them, we unlock the fundamental ability to move through periods of being stuck and reclaim a sense of agency in our lives and the wider world.

Life Review Question

How does lack of external resources impact your mental health?

- _____
- _____
- _____



JOURNALING OPTIONS

Explore These Writing Prompts

- An internal resource I possess, even when I don't always feel it, is...
- An external resource I could intentionally utilize more often is...
- When I am able to identify my choices, I feel...
- When connected to inner resources, my body feels...

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

FEELING TRIGGERED

Disconnected From Calm

When you're triggered, the fundamental experience is a profound disconnection from a feeling of calm. This isn't just about a mental state of "peace of mind"; it extends deeply to a peace of body, a profound calmness in your physical being. When your nervous system is dysregulated, you might feel a pervasive sense of being bothered, provoked, or experience an anxious, frantic spinning in your mind. It is a feeling of "bees buzzing in your chest and body."

When we're not triggered, we feel grounded, centered, and emotionally neutral. Returning to this calm often involves a practice called titration, commonly used in trauma work. Titration is a gentle approach: you move slowly toward intense feelings, acknowledging them without getting overwhelmed. Then, you pause—perhaps taking a calming breath—allowing your nervous system to settle. After this brief break, you return attention to the intensity, gradually moving closer, but always with control. It's like a rhythmic dance between stepping in and pulling back, helping your body and mind find regulation. Through this process, you build resilience, gently guiding yourself back to a more peaceful, balanced state.

Life Review Question

When feeling triggered, how do your behaviors, thinking, and reactions change?

- _____
- _____
- _____

FEELING TRIGGERED

Mapping Dysregulation Exercise

Becoming familiar with how your body communicates dysregulation allows you to respond with more awareness and compassion. This exercise will support you in noticing and naming what you experience when you feel triggered.

List Your Body Signals

When you feel triggered or dysregulated, what physical sensations show up in your body? For example: tightness in your chest, butterflies in your stomach, clenched jaw, racing heart, shallow breathing, restlessness, hot or cold flashes, shakiness, buzzing sensations. Write down as many sensations as you notice.

Identify Thought Patterns

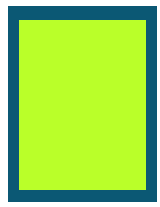
What thoughts or mental patterns do you notice during these moments? For example: racing thoughts, feeling scattered, catastrophizing, repeating worries. List a few that arise for you.

Map Your Grounded State

Recall a time you felt truly calm and centered. What physical sensations and thoughts were present then? List these peaceful cues for reference.

Reflection

Comparing these lists, what do you notice about how your body and mind communicate calm versus dysregulation? How might awareness of your unique signals help you return to balance?



JOURNALING OPTIONS

Explore These Writing Prompts

- When I'm feeling dysregulated, I notice my body feels...
- A physical sensation that signals to me I'm losing my calm is...
- The idea of "peace of body" for me means...
- An emotional signal that tells me I'm becoming overwhelmed is...

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

FEELING CRUSHED

Disconnected From Relationships

To be "crushed" is to experience a profound heartbreak, a shattering disconnection from relationship or connection itself. This painful state typically stems from a significant loss that has deeply impacted you – perhaps the ending of an important relationship, leaving you feeling fragmented. Our sense-of-self is a way of orienting to the world. It is an internal structure for maneuvering through life and often built around our relationships, much like scaffolding erected around a grand building. This scaffolding provides structure, support, and a way to navigate.

When a significant relationship ends, or when you experience another great loss that breaks your heart, that internal scaffolding can suddenly and violently implode, falling apart and leaving you feeling directionless and groundless. The psychological term for this precarious, in-between, suspended state is "liminal," signifying a transition place where you are neither here nor there. It's a deeply disorienting and often terrifying experience of being "between places" or even "between selves."

Life Review Question

Where do you find stability or support when feeling crushed by loss?

- _____
- _____
- _____

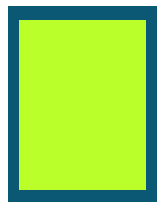
FEELING CRUSHED

Reviewing The Ideas

- "Crushed" signifies a disconnection from relationship and connection, often manifesting as heartbreak. It's tied to feelings of being shattered and fragmented.
- Loss can lead to feeling directionless and groundless, as if your internal "scaffolding" has imploded. The ways you usually orient to daily life are no longer reliable.
- The "liminal space" describes this in-between, suspended state of transition. You don't feel like yourself and question everything.

Remembering Your Losses: An Inventory

What Significant Losses Impacted Your Identity and Sense-Of-Self?	What Did Grieving Each Loss Teach You About Yourself?



JOURNALING OPTIONS

Explore These Writing Prompts

- The first relationship heartbreak that deeply impacted me was...
- When I experience a significant loss, I ask myself...
- A time I felt utterly "directionless" due to a loss was when...
- Feeling "shattered" or "fragmented" resonates with me because...

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS

Liminal Space: The Trapeze Act of Transformation

To truly understand the experience of loss and grief, imagine a trapeze artist soaring through the air. One hand desperately clings to the old bar—the past, what was—while the other reaches ahead, perhaps blindly, for a new bar—a new future, what might be. For a terrifying, suspended moment, the trapeze artist hangs in open space, neither holding onto the past nor having yet grasped the future. Below is only emptiness—no safety net, just a vast unknown.

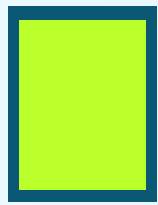
This vivid image captures the liminal space of loss and grief—that unsettling, in-between moment when you're suspended, not holding onto what was, and not yet connected to what might become. This uncertain suspension can trigger deep fear, often surfacing as a primal fear of abandonment.

When attachment bonds are threatened, damaged, or broken, the impact is so profound it can feel as though “I” myself have ended. For those with a history of attachment wounds, navigating loss can be incredibly challenging—almost impossible—without first developing a new internal resource or sense of self to guide you forward. Until this is found, you remain emotionally suspended, much like the trapeze artist, hovering between what was and what could be, without a stable foundation beneath you.

Life Review Question

What helps you cope when you feel stuck between the past and the future?





RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS

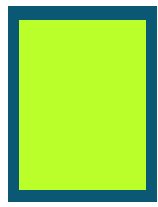
Liminal Space: Saying Hello And Goodbye At Same Time

At this stage of my life, I am saying goodbye to...	At this stage of my life, I am saying hello to...

Life Review Question

In what ways are you resisting and avoiding saying either hello or goodbye? Why?





JOURNALING OPTIONS

Explore These Writing Prompts

- When I think about handling endings, what happens to me is...
- A significant loss that left me feeling suspended and fearful was...
- The idea of "I end" when a relationship ends resonates because...
- A time I felt completely "in-between" during a transition was...

A series of horizontal dotted lines for journaling.

LIVING WITH A FALSE SELF

Behind The Persona

Many of us quietly live with a profound "lost sense-of-self," often hidden meticulously behind a manufactured persona or what is known as a "false self".

This isn't usually a conscious, deliberate deception, but rather a deeply ingrained adaptive strategy learned in response to early experiences of shame or powerful messages that told us it wasn't safe, welcomed, or acceptable to be our true, authentic selves.

Perhaps we were rewarded for diligently hiding certain parts of ourselves or, conversely, punished for daring to be authentic. This "socialization gone wrong" leads us to internalize a belief that the world is inherently hostile to our true being, so we learn sophisticated skills of deflecting, distracting, and performing.

Eventually, we internalize this false self so completely that we begin to genuinely believe it is real – we start believing our own game. We lose touch with ourselves to the point that we no longer really know who we are. We feel lost. We struggle to answer the question, "Who am I?"

Life Review Question

Who are you? Who are you becoming? Who are you not?







LIVING WITH A FALSE SELF

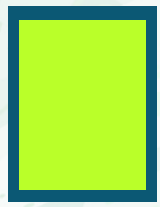
The Cost Of Pretending

This pervasive, often lifelong habit of constant pretending and guarding our true selves is an incredibly painful and exhausting way to live. It can feel like living as a "zombie"—going through life on autopilot, deeply dissociated from our bodies and real feelings.

Outwardly, we may seem highly successful, busy, and always projecting strength. We might smile and say, "I'm fine!" when asked how we are, even though deep down, we know we are anything but fine. Despite the confident façade, we feel a profound fragility and a sense that something essential is missing, something is fundamentally wrong.

This "I'm fine" charade can carry on year after year—five, twelve, even twenty-three years—until our whole life seems to pass us by, feeling as if it was lived against ourselves, in denial and deep self-abandonment. This deep, existential pain, this sense of being "not fine," is something most people don't talk about, don't fully grasp, or can't truly understand.

That is exactly why such suffering often emerges so strongly in the safe, confidential space of therapy. There, you are finally allowed—and genuinely encouraged—to drop the pretense. You get to be yourself, maybe for the first time, and there is immense, liberating freedom in that.



LIVING WITH A FALSE SELF

Identifying Your False Self Exercise: Part 1

This exercise invites you to gently and courageously examine the instances where you engage a "false self" and to begin understanding the profound impact this pretense has had on your life. This is not about judgment, but about compassionate self-awareness.

Reflect on Situations

Think about specific situations, relationships, or environments where you most often engage a "false self." Where do you tend to hide parts of yourself or pretend to be someone you are not?

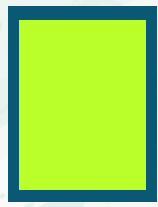
Consider:

- At work or in your career?
- With certain family members or friends?
- In romantic relationships?
- In social settings or with new acquaintances?
- When you feel vulnerable or insecure?

Identify Hidden Parts

What specific parts of you do you tend to hide? What qualities, opinions, emotions, or desires do you suppress or censor to maintain this persona?

- Is it your anger, sadness, fear?
- Is it your vulnerability or need for connection?
- Is it your unique interests or perspectives?
- Is it your true desires or ambitions?



LIVING WITH A FALSE SELF

Identifying Your False Self Exercise: Part 2

Explore the "Why"

What messages did you receive (explicitly or implicitly) that led you to believe it wasn't safe to be yourself in these situations?

Assess the Cost

Most importantly, what is the emotional, psychological, or even physical cost of this ongoing pretense? Be honest with yourself about the burden you might be carrying.

- Does it lead to exhaustion, anxiety, or depression?
- Does it make you feel empty or disconnected from yourself?
- Does it prevent you from forming authentic, deep relationships?
- Does it stifle your ambition or courage?

Buried Anger, Sadness, and Grief

Sometimes, this exercise brings up strong feelings, including anger, sadness, and grief. What feelings do you notice right now?

<i>Anger</i>	➤	_____
<i>Sadness</i>	➤	_____
<i>Grief</i>	➤	_____
_____	➤	_____
_____	➤	_____
_____	➤	_____

HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

The Mirror of Connection

At its very core, all effective therapy, counseling, and coaching is fundamentally about relationship repair. This expansive concept includes repairing vital relationships not only with others – whether friends, partners, or colleagues – but also with family members, and, perhaps most crucially, the relationship you have with yourself.

The scope of relationship repair extends even beyond people, encompassing your relationship with places and a sense of belonging, your relationship to your work and purpose, your connection to pets and to nature, and even venturing deeper into an existential or transpersonal perspective, exploring your spiritual connection to something greater and bigger than yourself.

Within the safe and contained space of a therapeutic relationship, the interactions that unfold between you and a therapist begin to powerfully reveal patterns of relating that are actively playing out in your life outside of therapy. This unique dynamic offers a profound opportunity – almost like an experiment in vulnerability and honesty – to practice being yourself.

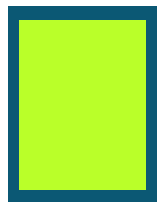
Through this process, you gain the clarity and support needed to practice changing old, unhelpful patterns and to deeply understand where those patterns originated, allowing you to create new, healthier ways of connecting. In this way, therapy becomes a reliable mirror, helping you see yourself.

HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

Seeing Ourselves Mirrored In Others

Our interactions with others act as powerful mirrors—they reflect back both our strengths and our growth edges. Each relationship is an opportunity to observe how we habitually think, feel, and behave with others. By noticing the patterns that arise, we build clarity about our needs, fears, longings, and core values. What patterns do you notice in your relationships?

1. ☐ Withdrawing when I feel hurt
2. ☐ Sharing genuine joy and celebrating others' successes
3. ☐ Over-explaining my feelings or justifying myself
4. ☐ Avoiding confrontation to keep the peace
5. ☐ Seeking approval or reassurance often
6. ☐ Trusting and acting on my own needs
7. ☐ Offering support and presence during others' hard times
8. ☐ Dismissing or minimizing my own needs
9. ☐ Communicating openly, even if it feels vulnerable
10. ☐ Becoming overly accommodating or self-sacrificing
11. ☐ Owning and expressing my boundaries
12. ☐ Feeling threatened by others' success or happiness
13. ☐ Being generous with encouragement and gratitude
14. ☐ Using humor to deflect from uncomfortable feelings
15. ☐ Allowing myself to be seen—even with my flaws
16. ☐ Initiating meaningful conversations
17. ☐ Becoming defensive quickly when criticized
18. ☐ Enjoying mutual vulnerability—sharing hopes and worries
19. ☐ Keeping emotional distance as protection
20. ☐ Asking directly for support when needed



JOURNALING OPTIONS

Explore These Writing Prompts

- The most important relationship I need to repair right now is...
- My patterns of relating with others often stem from...
- A meaningful relationship I have beyond people is with...
- One relational pattern I'm curious to understand better is...

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

Reclaiming Yourself: A Path to Wholeness

An underdeveloped false self, sustained by years of hiding, creates a deep, almost primal longing to be seen and found. Yet, paradoxically, there's often an equally strong discomfort—a deep resistance—in receiving genuine mirroring and being seen by another. We desperately want to drop the charade and put down the exhausting burden of pretending, but we often don't know how, or if it's truly safe to do so. It takes immense work, an exhausting internal tension, to maintain this manufactured self.

This is where the therapeutic process—and especially a good therapist—can become invaluable. In the safety of the therapy room, the opportunity to be seen is not only possible, but encouraged and honored. For many people, therapy may be the first place where their authentic self, with all its vulnerability, is met with acceptance and compassionate curiosity. This “seeing” isn't a passive observation; it's an active, engaged witnessing where the therapist reflects back not just what is on the surface, but also what lies hidden beneath—the fears, longings, and strengths waiting for acknowledgment.

The wound of not being seen or feeling like you don't matter, becomes the wound of not being able to recognize yourself. Reclaiming yourself means courageously discovering and rediscovering who you are—even resurrecting parts of you that have felt hidden or as if they've died. Therapy, then, becomes a vital process for recovering lost identity and finding your way home to a more authentic self. What parts of yourself are you reclaiming?

HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

Faces of Grieving Exercise

This powerful and insightful exercise is directly inspired by an art therapy technique I utilized as a hospice bereavement counselor. It offers a symbolic way to externalize and understand your internal landscape, especially in relation to grief, loss, or feelings of fragmentation. You're invited to create a Face of Grieving.

Set Up

- You'll need a few art supplies, paper, pens, markers, etc.

Draw an Oval

- Draw a simple oval to represent a "face." Don't worry about making it realistic; it can be abstract or symbolic of your current self or your grief. Face does not just mean the literal.

Express Your Feelings And "Parts" of Yourself

- Inside the oval, create an image that captures your experience of grief or your inner state. Use lines, shapes, colors, or collage. Be authentic—there's no right or wrong way.
 - **Examples**
 - Scrambled features to show confusion
 - Mosaic of torn paper for feeling fragmented

Title It

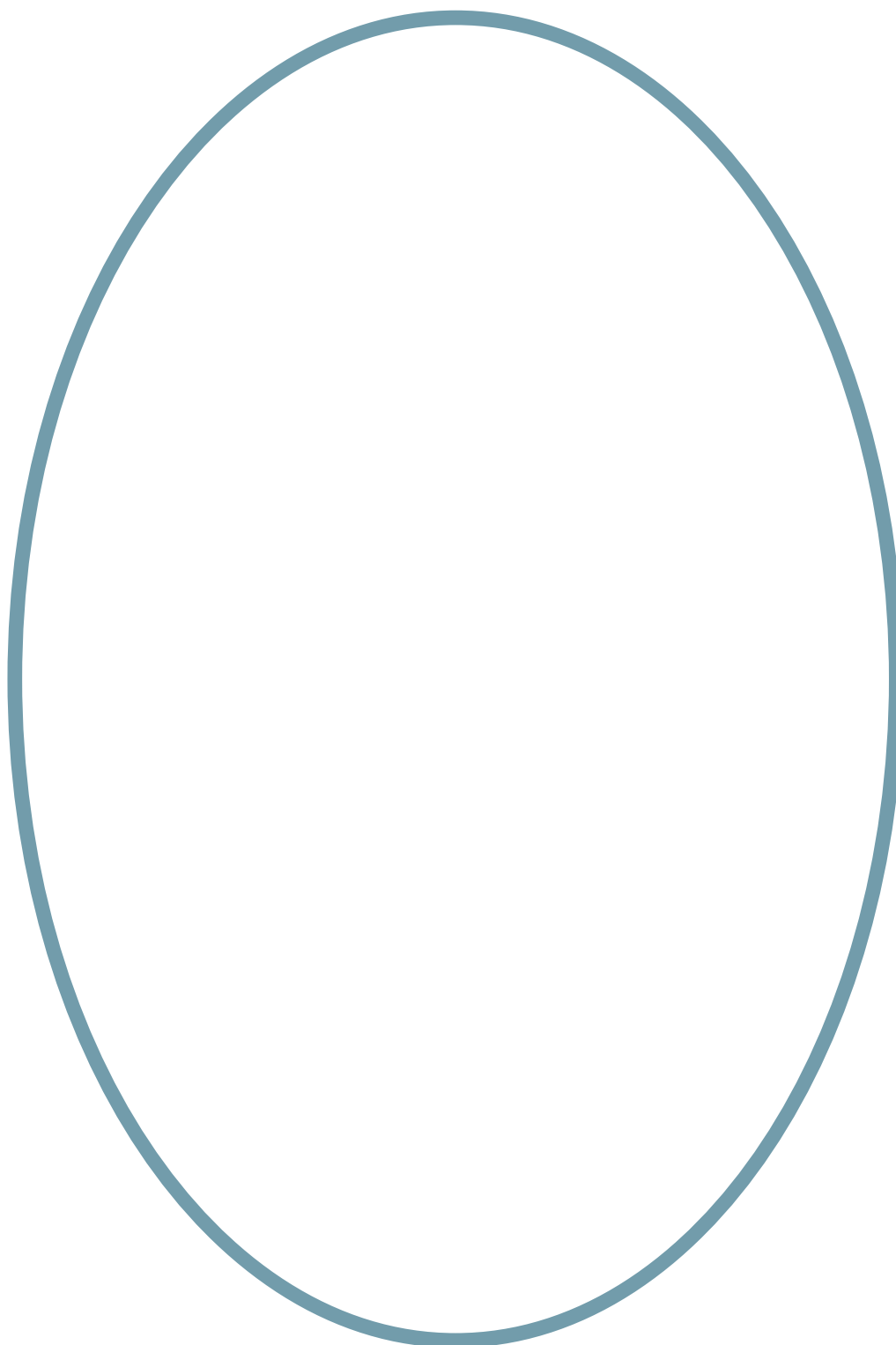
- Give your piece a title that reflects what you see or feel.

Reflect

- Below your art, write a brief reflection:
 - What is it expressing?
 - What do you feel or notice?
 - Which parts of yourself show up, and which feel hidden?

HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

Faces of Grieving Oval Template



EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS

The "Why Me?" of Suffering

When we face our suffering, unintegrated trauma, or feelings of abandonment, a deeply personal and agonizing question often arises: "Why me?" This isn't merely an abstract philosophical inquiry; it's a raw, immediate, and intimate question about the meaning of your own struggles, despair, depression, or attachment wounds. If we can't answer or find meaning in our suffering, we risk falling into a crisis of meaning—feeling directionless, numb, and uninspired.

This is the essence of existential pain: the nights spent staring at the ceiling, waves of anxiety washing over us, unmet needs echoing inside, and the persistent question, "What is my heart's true longing?" These kinds of existential questions frequently surface when working with a therapist, just as they do in solitary reflection. Therapy offers a unique space to bring these questions into the open, lessening the burden of facing them alone.

Healing, then, is about courageously engaging with these fundamental questions, whether in private contemplation or the supportive presence of a therapist. It means seeking meaning in experiences that may never fully resolve, finding ways to make peace with the tragedies of existence, and learning to carry them as part of our story—moving forward even when answers remain unclear.

Life Review Question

Where do you find meaning in your life?



THE POWER OF CHANGE

Tapping into Your Inner Compass

The deeply human drive to find a healing path is, at its heart, the innate drive to find yourself. This powerful, innate drive is a vital resource, a spark of spirit, a deep well of resilience that actively calls you towards growth, evolution, and profound relief from whatever suffering is aching in your heart. Even when you find yourself at the very end of your rope, feeling lousy and hopeless, the simple act of believing in change itself is a powerful and activating resource.

Change And Transition

Change and transition are related but different. Change is what happens to you, like starting therapy or moving to a new city. Transition is the inner process of adjusting to that change. For example, in therapy, the change might be beginning sessions, but the transition is learning to trust your therapist and opening up about your feelings. Change can be quick, but transition often takes time as you slowly get used to your new situation and find a new normal.

Intuitive Wisdom

Your inner wisdom is like the sun, a powerful, inherent source of clarity, insight, and direction that can, at times, become obscured or covered by clouds of confusion, self-doubt, or pain. When you're disconnected from this vital inner wisdom, life can indeed feel "overcast," diminished, dull, and profoundly disconnected from yourself.

Life Review Question

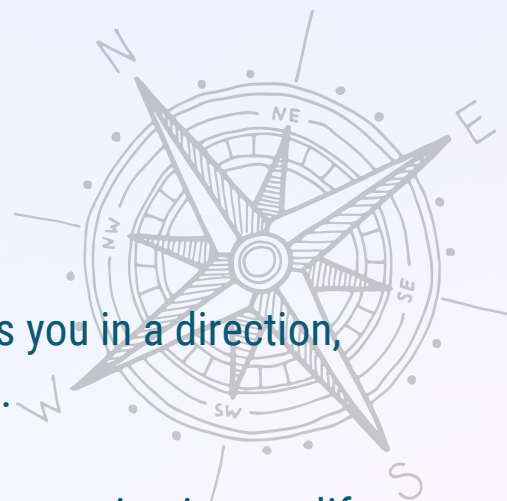
When life feels cloudy or uncertain, what helps you reconnect to your inner wisdom and sense of direction?



THE POWER OF CHANGE

Finding Your Inner Compass Exercise

Imagine a compass. A compass always points you in a direction, helping you find your way even if you feel lost.



- **North:** Represents **change**—new things happening in your life, like beginning therapy.
- **East:** Means the **transition**—the journey of your heart and mind adjusting to those changes.
- **South:** Symbolizes your innate **drive to heal**—the part of you that wants relief and growth.
- **West:** Stands for your **intuition**—your quiet, wise inner guide.

Instructions

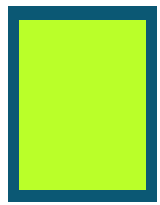
1. Draw a simple compass, labeling North, East, South, and West with the above meanings.
2. In each direction, write one word that comes up for you.
 - For example, North (change): **Start**
 - East (transition): **Courage**
 - South (healing drive): **Hope**
 - West (intuition): **Listen**
3. Take a moment to notice which direction feels strongest for you today. What happens if you move more in that direction?
4. Briefly write why that direction stands out for you.

➤ _____

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Path Forward

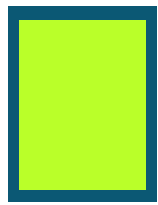
After facing my own life challenges and spending over twenty-three years as a therapist listening to many others, I've learned three key principles that guide my process of healing work. These simple ideas shape how I help clients and myself. May they also offer you clarity and hope when contemplating the best path forward.

Principle #1: The Message is in the Mess

This principle asserts that we discover deeper, often surprising, truths about our existence and about ourselves not by avoiding pain, but by courageously sitting with our discomfort and confusion. It's about consciously listening for what your pain, your challenges, or your "mess" is profoundly trying to teach you, rather than pushing it away. Our suffering often carries hidden messages, crucial insights that can unlock growth and healing.

Question for Reflection

If your pain is a messenger, then what is the message it is trying to deliver to you right now? Will you pay attention to the message?



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Start Where You Are

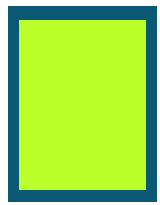
These three principles have proven themselves again and again in my work. They encourage us to accept ourselves and our circumstances honestly, meeting each moment as it arrives. When we begin exactly where we are, without judgment, new possibilities emerge. This openness creates space for insight, growth, and meaningful change.

Principle #2: Relief is in the Grief

This guiding principle emphasizes that self-knowledge and a deeper understanding of who we are begins when we allow ourselves to fully feel and process the pain that arises from life's inevitable losses. Instead of holding it in, trying to avoid it, or pushing it away, embracing grief is a pathway to relief and self-discovery. Grief, in its rawest form, can act as a powerful mirror, reflecting back to us essential truths about ourselves. It's a skill to look into the mirror.

Question for Reflection

If grief is a mirror, then what face do you see in its reflection? What are you learning about yourself in the face of your grief?



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Trust The Process

In my work as a therapist, I see how the constant stream of outside opinions can add to our confusion about healing. The three principles invite us to pause amid the noise and gently notice our own experience. In this space, reflection and connection become possible, allowing new understanding and growth to quietly unfold.

Principle #3: The Process is the Path

This principle reminds us that healing is not about arriving at some distant, perfect final destination tomorrow, as if it's a fixed point we suddenly reach. Instead, healing is a continuous, unfolding process about finding growth, meaning, and connection in each individual step that we are taking today. It is in this unfolding process where transformation happens. It's about finding clarity and meaning in our ongoing experience, not trying to force a specific outcome.

Question for Reflection

If the present moment is your teacher, then what lessons are you learning right now? How are these lessons helping you grow?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

THE A.R.T. of HEALING

A (Alan). R (Robarge's). T (Teachings). of Healing

The Message is in the Mess:

Deeper truths are discovered by sitting with pain and listening for its teachings.

Relief is in the Grief:

True self-knowledge emerges from feeling and processing life's losses, rather than avoiding them.

The Process is the Path:

Healing is an ongoing journey of finding growth and meaning in each present step, not a final destination.

Meditation and Reflection

Sit deeply with your suffering right now and let its lessons speak to you—don't rush for escape, because relief and self-knowledge rise from feeling it fully. Notice the nuance. Notice the layers. Notice the waves of intensity. Moments of clarity. Communication. Direction. What calls your attention? What are you learning about yourself? What are the next steps on your path? Trust the mess, grief, and process. Trust yourself in this moment. Be gentle with yourself.

WORKING TOGETHER



Continuing Your Healing

The process of meaningful change begins with insight—and you’ve taken the crucial step of looking inward. The transformation that follows is found in what comes next: sustained momentum, deeper self-inquiry, and intentional guidance as you move past longstanding obstacles.

If you are ready to continue this work, my practice is designed for individuals prepared to invest in their own growth. With over two decades of clinical expertise, I help clients unravel complex patterns and build a durable connection with themselves. Together, we’ll map the territory between where you are and where you want to be—with the structure, skill, and presence needed to unlock lasting change.

Your next move is clear: reach out to begin a conversation. Let’s discuss where you hope to go, and how we might work together to get you there. Every process has an inflection point. This could be yours. I welcome connecting. Here is a link to Getting Started.

Alan Robarge



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