



Gently Reclaiming Your Light

**A Small Companion for Healing, Grounding,
and Beginning Again**

By Rev. Sheri

Welcome

This small booklet was created for anyone healing from trauma, harm, loss, or a deeply difficult season of life.

Perhaps you have survived something that changed you. Perhaps you are rebuilding after a relationship, experience, or period of crisis that left you feeling disconnected from yourself. Or perhaps you simply know that a part of you needs gentleness right now.

Whatever brought you here, please know this:

You are not broken.

You are not failing because healing has taken longer than you expected.

You do not have to become the person you were before. You are allowed to become someone new—someone who knows more clearly what safety, dignity, compassion, and peace mean to you.

There is no correct way to use this booklet. You may read it from beginning to end, open it only when you need encouragement, or return to a particular page again and again.

You are welcome to move slowly.

With compassion,

Rev. Sheri

You Are in Charge

Before we begin, there is something important I want you to remember:

You are in charge of your experience with this booklet.

You never have to write about what happened to you. You never have to answer a question that feels too personal or complete an exercise that does not feel helpful.

You may:

- Skip any page.
- Stop at any time.
- Keep your eyes open during grounding practices.

- Change an exercise to make it more comfortable.
- Return another day—or decide not to return at all.
- Choose what feels supportive for you.

You do not have to forgive anyone to deserve healing.

You do not have to understand why something happened before you can begin caring for yourself.

You do not have to make peace with harmful behavior.

Most importantly, you do not have to prove your pain in order for it to matter.

Your healing belongs to you. It may unfold in your own time and in your own way.

Returning to the Present Moment

When memories, emotions, or worries become overwhelming, it may help to gently reconnect with the place where you are right now.

You do not need to close your eyes. Simply look around you and move through these steps at a pace that feels comfortable.

Notice:

- Five things you can see.
- Four things your body is touching.
- Three sounds you can hear.
- Two slow, comfortable breaths.
- One thing you need in this moment.

Your need might be water, rest, quiet, space, reassurance, movement, warmth, support, or simply another breath.

If counting feels difficult, choose one nearby object and study it. Notice its shape, color, texture, and smallest details.

You are not trying to force your feelings away. You are gently reminding yourself:

I am here in this present moment.

If this exercise makes you feel more uncomfortable, you may stop. Not every practice works for every person, and honoring that is also an act of self-care.

A Tangible Reminder

If you received a Compassion Heart or another small comfort object with this booklet, hold it in your hand.

Notice its weight.

Run your fingers over its surface. Observe its shape, temperature, colors, and texture.

Let this small object bring your attention back to what you can see and feel right now.

As you hold it, choose one of these reminders:

I am here in this moment.

I belong to myself.

My feelings are allowed.

I may move at my own pace.

I am worthy of gentleness.

I am worthy of safety and care.

I can take one moment at a time.

You may keep your heart somewhere you will see it, carry it with you, or hold it when you need a physical reminder that you are not alone.

Its presence does not erase what you have experienced. It simply gives you something tangible to return to—a small symbol of compassion, strength, and hope.

What Healing Can Look Like

We sometimes imagine healing as a moment when the pain disappears and everything finally feels peaceful.

Often, healing is much quieter than that.

Healing may look like:

- Resting without explaining why you are tired.
- Saying no when you once would have said yes.
- Recognizing a pattern you could not see before.
- Allowing yourself to feel anger.
- Grieving what you should have received but did not.
- Asking someone trustworthy for help.
- Leaving a conversation that feels harmful.
- Resisting the urge to explain your boundary repeatedly.
- Laughing without immediately feeling guilty.
- Rediscovering something that once brought you joy.
- Having a difficult day without turning against yourself.
- Realizing that another person's behavior was not your fault.
- Choosing not to return to a situation that continues to cause harm.
- Beginning again, even if you have begun again before.

Healing is not always comfortable. Sometimes it is the moment you can no longer ignore what hurts. Sometimes it is the anger that tells you something was not right. Sometimes it is the boundary that disappoints someone else but protects something precious within you.

A difficult day does not erase the healing that has already taken place.

You may be healing in ways you have not yet learned to recognize.

When Your Mind and Body Stay on Alert

After a frightening, harmful, or deeply distressing experience, you may continue reacting as though danger could return at any moment—even when part of you knows that the experience is over.

This does not mean you are weak, broken, dramatic, or failing to move forward. Trauma can affect the way your mind and body respond to reminders, stress, relationships, and uncertainty.

Some people experience:

- Unwanted memories, distressing dreams, or flashbacks
- Strong emotional or physical reactions to reminders
- Feeling constantly watchful, tense, or on guard
- Being easily startled by sounds, movements, or surprises
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Avoiding people, places, conversations, or situations that bring back painful memories
- Feeling numb, disconnected, or far away from yourself
- Irritability, anger, fear, sadness, guilt, or shame
- Difficulty trusting others or feeling safe
- Losing interest in things you once enjoyed

These are sometimes called trauma responses. Many people experience some of them after a traumatic event. Experiencing one or more does not necessarily mean that you have post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

PTSD is a condition that a qualified mental-health professional can diagnose when a particular combination of symptoms continues over time, causes significant distress, or interferes with daily life.

For people who have experienced repeated, prolonged, or interpersonal trauma, the effects may also include difficulty regulating emotions, a deeply wounded sense of self-worth, or difficulty feeling close to others. Some professionals use the term complex PTSD to describe this pattern.

A diagnosis is not a judgment about your character. It is one possible way of understanding what you are experiencing and identifying forms of support that may help.

Effective treatments and compassionate professional support are available. If these experiences are making daily life difficult, you deserve the opportunity to speak with a trauma-informed mental-health professional.

Whether or not you ever receive a diagnosis, your experience is real.

Your reactions may have developed while you were trying to survive something overwhelming. You can honor the ways they once protected you while gradually learning what helps you feel safer now.

You are not your symptoms.

You are a whole person having understandable responses to experiences that were difficult to endure.

When You Blame Yourself

People who have been harmed often look back and wonder:

Why didn't I see it sooner?

Why did I stay?

Why did I trust them?

Why didn't I say something?

Why did I return?

Why didn't I protect myself differently?

These questions can become a painful way of holding yourself responsible for choices someone else made.

You responded with the knowledge, support, resources, fears, and options available to you at the time. You may have been trying to survive, protect someone, preserve hope, avoid greater harm, or make the best decision you could in an impossible situation.

Knowing something now does not mean you could have known it then.

Trusting another person does not make you responsible for their betrayal.

Loving someone does not make you responsible for their harmful behavior.

Hoping someone would change was not a moral failure.

If self-blame appears, you might ask yourself:

- What would I say to someone I loved who had experienced this?
- Am I expecting my past self to know what I know today?
- What circumstances made my choices more complicated than they now appear?
- Am I carrying responsibility that belongs to someone else?
- What would it mean to offer my past self understanding instead of judgment?

You do not need to answer every question. Choose only the one that feels most helpful and, if you wish, write your thoughts in your journal.

You deserved compassion then.

You deserve compassion now.

Boundaries Are Not Punishment

A boundary is not something you create to punish another person.

It is a way of recognizing what you need in order to feel safe, respected, and whole.

Your boundaries may involve:

- How someone is permitted to speak to you.
- What behavior you will remain present for.
- How much contact you want.
- Which subjects you are willing to discuss.
- Who has access to your home, time, body, or personal information.
- Whether a relationship can continue.
- What you will do if harmful behavior happens again.

You are allowed to create distance from someone you love.

You are allowed to forgive someone without inviting them back into your life.

You are allowed to wait for consistent evidence of change.

You are allowed to recognize that an apology has not been followed by different behavior.

You are allowed to change your mind when you receive new information.

You are allowed to protect your peace even when someone else does not understand.

A boundary does not require another person's agreement in order to be valid.

You may feel sad, guilty, frightened, or uncertain after establishing a boundary. Those feelings do not automatically mean the boundary was wrong. They may simply mean that choosing yourself is unfamiliar.

Safety is a worthy reason.

Peace is a worthy reason.

Your well-being is a worthy reason.

Listening to What You Need

Trauma and prolonged stress can teach us to focus so completely on other people's feelings, reactions, and needs that we lose touch with our own.

Take a moment to ask:

What do I need more of today?

Perhaps you need:

- Rest
- Space
- Reassurance
- Quiet
- Support
- Nourishment
- Movement
- Creativity
- Protection
- Understanding
- Hope
- Connection
- Time alone
- Permission to feel
- Permission not to talk

You do not have to meet every need today.

Choose one and ask:

What is one small way I can honor this need?

If you need rest, perhaps you can sit down for five minutes.

If you need support, perhaps you can send one honest message.

If you need quiet, perhaps you can silence your phone for a little while.

If you need hope, perhaps you can remember one difficult thing you have already survived.

Your needs are not inconveniences.

Listening to them is one way of rebuilding trust with yourself.

Small Acts of Reclaiming

After experiences that diminish your voice, choices, or sense of self, small decisions can become meaningful acts of reclamation.

Today, you might:

- Choose what you want to wear.
- Listen to music you enjoy.
- Rearrange one small area of your home.
- Make a comforting drink.
- Write one honest sentence.
- Spend a few minutes outside.
- Silence an unwanted notification.
- Choose not to respond immediately.
- Contact someone who feels safe.
- Return to a hobby you once enjoyed.
- Eat something that helps you feel nourished.
- Rest before everything is finished.
- Do something simply because you like it.
- Say yes to something that brings you joy.
- Say no to something that drains you.

You do not have to transform your entire life today.

Reclaiming your life can begin with one choice that belongs entirely to you.

Remembering Who You Are

What happened to you may have affected how you see yourself, but it did not erase the truth of who you are.

There are parts of you that survived.

There are parts that protected you.

There are parts that became quiet and waited until it felt safer to return.

There may also be parts of you that are only now beginning to emerge.

If you would like to reflect in your journal, choose one of these prompts:

- Something I know about myself that no one can take away is...
- I feel most like myself when...
- One strength that helped me survive is...
- Something I once loved and would like to welcome back is...
- One thing I have learned about what I deserve is...
- The life I am slowly creating has room for...
- A part of myself I would like to know again is...
- One thing I want my future self to remember is...

You do not have to know exactly who you are becoming.

You are allowed to discover yourself slowly.

When the Day Feels Too Heavy

Some days, everything may feel like too much.

On those days, you do not have to solve your whole life. You do not need to understand everything, make every decision, or know exactly what comes next.

You can focus on the next safe and gentle step.

You might:

- Place both feet on the floor.
- Take one comfortable breath.
- Drink a little water.
- Hold your Compassion Heart or another grounding object.
- Move to a place that feels safer.
- Wrap yourself in something soft.
- Contact someone you trust.

- Eat something simple.
- Postpone a decision that does not need to be made today.
- Remind yourself of the current date and where you are.
- Let today be about getting through today.

Try saying:

This moment is difficult, but I do not have to face every future moment right now.

I can take care of the person I am in this moment.

I am allowed to seek support.

I am allowed to begin again tomorrow.

Surviving a difficult day is enough.

You Are More Than What Happened

What happened to you may always be part of your story, but it is not the whole truth of who you are.

You are also every act of courage that brought you this far.

You are every moment you chose to continue.

You are the wisdom growing from what you have learned.

You are the tenderness you still carry.

You are the boundaries you are learning to honor.

You are the dreams that survived, even when they became quiet.

Like a wildflower growing through difficult ground, you may carry evidence of every storm you have endured—and still turn toward the light.

You do not need to bloom according to anyone else's season.

You do not need to look untouched in order to be whole.

You are still growing.

You are still becoming.

There is more to your story.

An Optional Spiritual Reflection

If spiritual language feels comforting to you, you may use the following prayer. If it does not, you are welcome to receive these words simply as a loving intention—or skip this page entirely.

Creator,

Meet me gently in this season of healing.

Help me remember that I am worthy of safety, dignity, tenderness, and love.

Strengthen the parts of me that are learning to trust my own voice again.

Guide me toward people and places that honor my humanity and support my healing.

Help me release the burdens that were never mine to carry.

When the way forward feels uncertain, show me the next safe and gentle step.

Remind me that I am not broken, forgotten, or alone.

May I reclaim my voice, my choices, my hope, and my light—gently, slowly, and in my own way.

Amen.

When You Need Additional Support

This booklet offers compassionate encouragement, but it is not a replacement for counseling, medical care, legal advice, crisis intervention, or emergency assistance.

Healing does not have to be something you do alone. Support may come from:

- A trusted friend or family member
- A licensed counselor or therapist

AngelMessenger.net

- A domestic-violence or survivor advocate
- A spiritual care provider
- A local crisis center or community organization
- A medical professional
- A support group

If you are in the United States and experiencing relationship abuse, you can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline:

Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Text START to 88788

Visit TheHotline.org for confidential chat and additional resources.

If you are experiencing emotional distress or a mental-health crisis in the United States, call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Support is available at 988Lifeline.org.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, contact local emergency services.

Please remember that phone calls, text messages, internet activity, downloaded documents, and browsing history may be visible to someone with access to your phone or computer. Use these resources only in a way that feels safe for your circumstances.

Reaching for support is not weakness. It is one way of choosing not to carry everything alone.

A Closing Blessing

May you remember that you are worthy of a life in which you do not have to abandon yourself to be loved.

May you find safe places to rest and compassionate people to walk beside you.

May you learn to trust the quiet wisdom within you.

May you offer tenderness to the person you were, compassion to the person you are, and hope to the person you are becoming.

May you reclaim your voice, your choices, your joy, and your light—gently, slowly, and in your own way.

You are worthy.

You are seen.

You are not alone.

With peace and compassion,

Rev. Sheri

A Final Reminder

Healing is not a race.

You have not fallen behind.

Begin wherever you are.

Take what helps.

Leave what does not.

And when you need to, rest.

Your light is still within you.