

SAFE Experience of Living Freely (SELF)

Many people have experienced situations at in their life where they have not felt seen, heard, validated or safe. This creates a body memory in the nervous system that can override cognitive thought. This body memory is one of danger that triggers old survival defenses such as lashing out, running away, blaming, shaming, addiction, perfectionism, co-dependency, narcissism, rage, or other coping patterns.

In order to change these old defenses, one has to retrain the body memory so that it feels safe. Repetition, self-compassion and nonjudgmental witnessing help shift the old memory, so you can then begin to write a new story of safety in the body.

This worksheet will help you create a **SAFE Experience of Living Freely (SELF)**

These four aspects of feeling **SAFE** help to bring awareness and healing to the body:

1. **Self-sourcing** emotional needs
2. **Affirmations** of safety
3. **Feelings as clues** to needs and desires
4. **Expressing emotions** to move the old patterns out of the body

Self-Source: We can never go back to change our past. What we can do is discover our unmet emotional needs and find ways to self-source our own needs. For example: If you were not heard or listened to as a child, you might not really be listening and honoring yourself. How can you listen to **YOU**? Make a list of your emotional needs in a particular situation. Now make a list of ways you can self-source those needs.

Affirmations: Remember that you were born lovable and worthy of love and belonging. Write affirmations that remind you of that. For example: I am lovable, or I am worthy of love and belonging.

Feelings as cues: Pay attention to what you are feeling. Many of us have been raised to stop feeling. This creates conflict and incongruency in the body memory. All feelings are okay. All behavior isn't. Learn to acknowledge your feelings and find a safe place to express them. For example: You are resentful that your friend has more free time and money to enjoy her life. Paying attention to the feelings allows you to let them go. Not acknowledging them can result in passive aggressive or hostile behavior such as unkind or abusive comments.

Express emotions: Finding a safe place to express emotion without hurting yourself or anyone else requires recognizing the feelings as a cue. The next step might be writing about them, and/or telling a therapist or a safe friend. Writing, drawing, or moving the energy of the emotion is important to release it from the body memory.

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Self-Sourcing

Make a list of your emotional needs in this particular situation: *(example: No one is around to listen to my story. I am feeling alone and unheard. I need to be heard.)*

Now make a list of ways you can self-source those needs: *(example: I can journal, draw, paint, write poetry or play music. I will listen to myself and I know I am never truly alone.)*

Write **affirmations** that remind you that you are lovable:

I am **I AM** *(example: listening to my own story.)*

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