Theresa Babbs-Durrant

MENTAL HEALTH COACH & THERAPIST

Is the Past Showing Up in My Present?

A gentle reflection guide for noticing patterns, at your own pace

Before you begin

This guide focuses on patterns you notice in the present: how you react, what unsettles you, what your coping costs. You do not need to write about, remember or revisit anything that happened. Not everyone who finds this useful has had a traumatic experience, and not everyone who has will recognise these patterns. Nothing here can tell you whether you have experienced trauma or have any condition.

This resource is for personal reflection and general information only. It is not a diagnostic tool, a clinical assessment or a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis or treatment, and it cannot tell you whether you have a mental health condition. Your answers stay with you. They are not collected or reviewed by me. This resource is for adults (18+).

Go gently

Go at a pace that feels manageable. If anything feels too much, stop, put this down and use the settling practice in Part 3, or do something ordinary and comforting. You can come back to it later or not at all. This guide isn't suitable as a substitute for support if you are in distress, or if you are currently in an unsafe situation. See the support box at the end.

Part 1: Noticing in the present

When do I react more strongly than the moment seems to need?

Which tones, silences or changes of plan unsettle me most?

When do I find it hardest to relax, even when nothing is wrong?

What similar dynamics keep showing up in my relationships or work?

What does my way of coping cost me, and what does it give me?

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Part 2: Then and now

Patterns often begin as sensible ways of coping. This grid is for exploring that gently. You can leave it blank if nothing comes to mind, and you never need to name an event.

A present-day situation	What I feel or do now	What this may once have helped me with	What I'd like instead
A friend cancels plans	*I feel dismissed and go quiet*	*Perhaps staying quiet once felt safer than asking*	*To say "I'm disappointed" and still feel okay*

Part 3: Settling practice

Use this whenever you'd like to feel steadier, before, during or after the rest of this guide.

- Feel your feet on the floor and the chair holding your weight.
- Name five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell and one you can taste.
- If it feels comfortable, breathe in gently for a count of four and out for a count of six. If focusing on your breath feels uncomfortable, skip it and keep to the grounding steps instead.

Part 3: Where I notice it in my body

Chest ☐	**Stomach** ☐	**Jaw** ☐	**Shoulders** ☐
Throat ☐	**Hands** ☐	**Head** ☐	**Not sure yet** ☐

Part 5: What I'm learning about myself

Finish these sentences in a kind, curious voice, as if you were speaking to someone you care about.

I tend to_____when_____.

That makes sense, because_____.

What might help me feel safer or steadier is _____.

Moving Forward

Many people find that patterns shift slowly, through understanding and through steady, safe relationships, rather than through force. There is no timeline, and no right way to do this. Some people choose to explore it with a therapist, at a pace they control.

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When it may be worth speaking to someone

You don't need to reach a particular threshold to ask for support. You might consider speaking to your GP or a qualified therapist if what you've noticed has lasted more than a couple of weeks, is affecting your sleep, work or relationships, or feels hard to carry alone. Those are reasons to reach out, not signs that anything is wrong with you.

If you need support now

- In an emergency, or if you feel you can't keep yourself safe: call 999.
- Samaritans (free, 24 hours): 116 123.
- Shout (free text support, 24 hours): text SHOUT to 85258.
- Northern Ireland: Lifeline (free, 24 hours): 0808 808 8000.
- If a relationship feels unsafe: National Domestic Abuse Helpline (England) 0808 2000 247, 24 hours. Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline (Northern Ireland) 0808 802 1414, 24 hours. In Scotland and Wales, please search for your national domestic abuse helpline.

Worried about your health? Speak to your GP. Out of hours, call NHS 111 in England, Scotland or Wales. In Northern Ireland, your GP surgery will direct you to the out-of-hours service.

If you'd like to talk it through

If something here resonated and you'd like help making sense of it, I'd be glad to hear from you. You are welcome to book a free, no-obligation consultation. There's no pressure to, and nothing in this resource needs to be shared with me.

Providing Counselling Services
in Windermere, and online
across the UK

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