

Exploring Our Triggers



When I get triggered, what sensations do I notice in my body?

What monkey-mind stories do I find myself looping in?

What uncomfortable emotions come up for me? (See the *Emotions when Your Needs/Longings/Values Are Not Satisfied* tool sheet.)

What emotions are hardest for me to acknowledge/feel because I have denied or disconnected from them?

Which of the **SIX EXTERNAL TRIGGERS** are especially challenging for me? (tone of voice, volume, choice of words, intensity, body language, field of energy)

What is my default reaction: **FIGHT** (attack back, defend, justify), **FLIGHT** (physically leave), or **FREEZE** (shut down mentally, physically, and/or emotionally)?

Who do I become when I don't get my way? (Examples: scared girl who withdraws, demanding boy who throws a tantrum.)

What "mind fields" (issues that bring up fear and other strong emotions) am I most vulnerable to?

- Jealousy
- Infidelity
- Money
- Drugs/alcohol
- Decision making
- Steps, exes, & in-laws
- Housework
- Kids
- Values
- Needs not met
- Family
- Religion
- Politics
- Beliefs
- Broken agreements
- Work issues
- Abandonment
- Betrayal
- Other _____

What do I feel like I need to protect myself from?

What are some coping mechanisms or strategies I use to get my needs met when I am triggered?

Which of **THE FIVE Ds** tactics (defend, deflect, deny, diminish, dominate) do I engage in to avoid responsibility?

Where did I pick up these strategies and tactics? Do they look familiar from my past?

What unmet needs/values are usually at the root of my triggers?
(See the *Universal Needs/Values/Longings/Desires* tool sheet.)

What do I need to feel safe, calm, and centered when I am triggered?

How can I prioritize these needs and get them met in a way that fosters connection, rather than alienating others with the energy of demand (i.e., "You need to do this for me because it's important to me")?

Transforming the Trigger into the Treasure

“The shadow seeks to find you as a blessing to help you heal. Until you turn toward it face it, own it, understand it, and love it fully back into wholeness, it will show up again and again in different patterns. It takes continuous work to keep these parts of you conscious and in your loving awareness. It’s why it’s called recovery and not recovered. As long as we are alive we will continually be revealing the parts of us that are unconscious as a way to grow, heal, and expand into the truth of love that we are.” ~ Emily Orum

COMMITMENT TO SELF-SOURCING WHEN TRIGGERED

Don’t make any decisions or have challenging conversations when triggered. Wait until you are connected and centered. Consider embracing the following commitment to yourself and your growth:

“When I am triggered, there is a part of me that needs my loving care and attention. Instead of seeking to get that from the outside world, I take powerful responsibility to get *myself* back to center, love, and connection.”

PROTOCOL

1. Once you notice you are triggered, slow way down, and go inside.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Drop into self-connection by breathing deeply and consciously. Feel your feet on the ground. Anchor yourself into presence by feeling yourself connected to the Earth.
4. Ask yourself, “What am I telling myself? What are the stories I am running about this situation, the other person, or myself?” (Let your mind go wild.)
5. Notice the energy of what you feel when you are up in your head, judging—blaming—making yourself or the other person wrong. Take two deep breaths and release an audible sigh, allowing the energy from your mind to drop down into your heart, your belly, your body.
6. Ask yourself, “What am I feeling? Where do I feel discomfort in my body? What sensations, textures, or memories are arising that want to be acknowledged, released, and/or expressed? (If you are having trouble identifying your feelings, you can refer to the *Feelings Inventory* t.)
7. Then inquire, “What am I needing?” (If you are having trouble identifying your needs, you can refer to the *Universal Needs/Values/Longings/Desires* tool sheet.)
8. Bring one hand to your heart and the other to your belly, breathing into your body to soothe your adrenals calm the fight or flight response.
9. Say to yourself, your heart, and your inner child:
 - I love you.
 - I am here for you.
 - You are safe.
 - Your feelings and needs are perfect and they matter.
 - (Insert any other affirmation(s) that help you feel honored, loved, and cared for.)
10. Breathe deeply, drawing calming, soothing, healing, and relaxing energy into your body and your being. Notice: “How do I feel now?”
11. If you still feel triggered or uncomfortable, continue breathing and running loving affirmations. Do this until you feel yourself coming from a loving space—connected, centered, and calm.