



TRANSFORMING TRIGGERS

A WORKBOOK FOR
INSIGHT & GROWTH

JENNIFER MCKEEVER, RCC, SEP



INTRODUCTION

We've all had moments where something small sets off a big emotional reaction. Maybe it's a comment, a look, or a situation that seems ordinary, but suddenly, you're overwhelmed, upset, or confused, wondering, *Why did that hit me so hard?*

These are emotional triggers - echoes from our past that show up in the present. And while they can be painful, they also hold valuable clues about our deeper emotional landscape.

This workbook is designed to help you explore those moments with curiosity instead of judgment. Through simple, guided exercises, you'll begin to uncover the roots of your triggers and learn how to meet them with greater awareness and compassion.

We'll draw from two powerful healing frameworks to support this process: **Object Relations Theory** helps us understand how our early relationships, especially with caregivers, shape the way we see ourselves and others. These early patterns often live on in our adult reactions.

Inner Parts-Based Healing invites us to see our inner world as made up of different "parts," each with its own voice, story, and emotion. Some parts carry old wounds. Others try to protect us. By getting to know them, we can begin to shift from reacting out of pain to responding from presence.

This is not about fixing yourself. It's about understanding yourself, so you can navigate life with greater freedom, choice, and self-trust. Let's begin.



3 STEP PROCESS

STEP ONE

IDENTIFY & REFLECT

When you feel triggered, take a moment to pause. Notice what's happening around you and inside you. What emotions are rising? What just happened that stirred them?

Slowing down creates space. It helps you move from being swept up in the reaction to becoming curious about it. And that curiosity is the first step toward deeper understanding and real change.

STEP TWO

EXPLORE THE ROOTS

Use the self-inquiry and journal prompts to explore what this trigger might be pointing to.

Is there a past experience, relationship, or unmet need that feels familiar here?

These reflections can help you connect the dots between your present reaction and deeper layers of your history.

STEP THREE

ENGAGE YOUR INNER PARTS

The exercises ahead will help you identify the different "parts" of yourself that show up when you're triggered, like the part that jumps in to protect you, or the part that feels hurt or afraid.

Instead of pushing these parts away, you'll learn how to meet them with curiosity and compassion, allowing you to begin building a more supportive and healing relationship with your inner world.

IDENTIFY & REFLECT

Think of a recent time when you felt triggered. Use the following writing prompts to explore the situation in detail.

Triggering event:

What sensations did you feel in your body?



What emotions did you feel?



What thoughts did you have about the other person?



What thoughts did you have about yourself?



How is this familiar or a pattern in your life? What other situations or people does this remind you of?

EXPLORE YOUR ROOTS

Which past relationship or experience might this trigger be connected to?
Consider the different ways this past relationship may influence your expectations and reactions in the present.

Journal Reflect on your past relationship. What emotions or needs were unmet?

Journal How do these unmet needs show up in your current life?

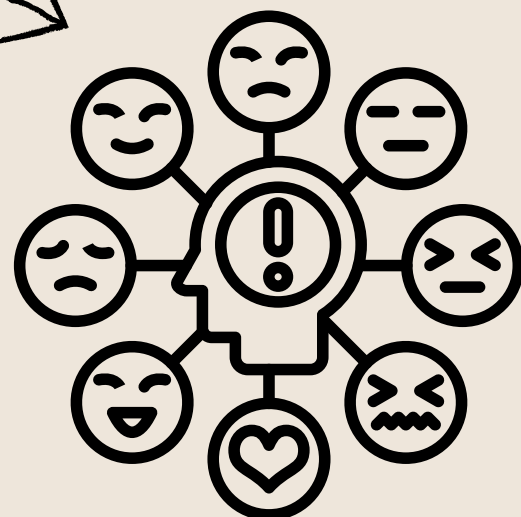
Journal How might this past relationship influence your current perceptions and reactions?

Today, I discovered this about myself:



Our Inner

PARTS



01

Self

Each of us has a core Self, which is the essence of who we are: compassionate, calm, curious, and wise. It is the natural leader of our internal system

02

Parts

Surrounding this Self are different "parts" of the mind, each with its own thoughts, feelings, and roles.

03

Purpose

These parts often form in response to life experiences, especially challenging ones, and they may take on protective roles or carry pain.

04

All Parts Belong

These parts are aspects of ourselves that need understanding and care, rather than something to get rid of.

05

Identify

Identify the different "parts" of yourself that are involved in the trigger (e.g., protective parts and parts carrying pain). Approach these parts with curiosity and compassion.

06

Solution

By building a relationship with our inner parts and addressing their needs, we can help them heal and return to a more balanced state, allowing our core Self to guide us more fully in life.

IDENTIFYING YOUR PROTECTIVE PARTS

Protectors are parts of our personality structure that work hard to keep us safe and in control by managing our day-to-day lives. They focus on preventing pain and discomfort. Below are some signs that a protector part may be working hard to keep you away from the vulnerability and hurt of a trigger.

PERFECTIONISTIC

- ☐ DRIVEN TO OVER-ACHIEVE
- ☐ DISTRACTING YOURSELF BY WORKING MORE
- ☐ FEELING THE NEED TO CONTROL YOUR ENVIRONMENT, EMOTIONS, OR OTHER PEOPLE
- ☐ TAKING ON MORE THAN YOUR SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

CRITICAL OR CONTROLLING

- ☐ QUICKLY BECOMING DEFENSIVE
- ☐ BLAMING OTHERS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FEELING VULNERABLE
- ☐ COMPELLED TO ARGUE OR FIGHT RATHER THAN TRY TO CALM DOWN
- ☐ EASILY FINDING FAULTS AND THINGS TO CRITICIZE ABOUT OTHERS

AVOIDING OR NUMBING

- ☐ AVOIDING CERTAIN PEOPLE OR SITUATIONS BY PROCRASTINATING
- ☐ SEEKING COMFORT THROUGH FOOD, ALCOHOL OR DRUGS
- ☐ INCREASED TIME SPENT SCROLLING SOCIAL MEDIA
- ☐ BINGE WATCHING SHOWS TO CALM YOURSELF OR NUMB OUT

SELF-SABOTAGING

- ☐ AVOIDING RESPONSIBILITIES
- ☐ SABOTAGING RELATIONSHIPS
- ☐ ENGAGING IN RISKY BEHAVIOURS
- ☐ DISTRACTING FROM PAIN BY CREATING CHAOS OR CRISIS



IDENTIFYING YOUR VULNERABLE PARTS

When we are triggered, the most vulnerable parts of us that hold deep emotional wounds, often from childhood or past trauma, can respond in intense and overwhelming ways. Here are some common ways these inner parts respond:

UNWORTHINESS OR SHAME

- ☐ FEELING INADEQUATE AND 100% AT FAULT OR WRONG
- ☐ AUTOMATIC BELIEFS LIKE, "I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH," OR "THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME"
- ☐ INTENSE FEELINGS OF GUILT
- ☐ WANTING TO AVOID PEOPLE AND WITHDRAW FROM LIFE

FEAR OF REJECTION OR ABANDONMENT

- ☐ FEELINGS OF PANIC OR LONELINESS
- ☐ FEELING DESPERATE FOR REASSURANCE AND CONNECTION
- ☐ STRONG SENSE OF HOPELESSNESS OR HELPLESSNESS
- ☐ INTENSE FEAR WHEN SITUATIONS TRIGGER MEMORIES OF REJECTION, ABANDONMENT, OR BETRAYAL.

INNER CHILD EMOTIONS

- ☐ CHILDLIKE FEELINGS OF VULNERABILITY, FEAR, OR CONFUSION
- ☐ A SENSE OF EMOTIONAL REGRESSION, WHERE YOU FEEL SMALL OR SCARED
- ☐ FEELING AS IF YOU'RE BACK IN A PAINFUL SITUATION FROM YOUR PAST
- ☐ FEELING OVERWHELMED, TRAPPED, OR POWERLESS

PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

- ☐ TIGHTNESS IN THE CHEST, RAPID HEARTBEAT, HEADACHES
- ☐ STOMACH ACHES OR NAUSEA
- ☐ FEELING FLOATY OR SLEEPY
- ☐ A SENSE OF HEAVINESS OR TENSION, CAN BE HARD TO BREATHE

ENGAGING YOUR PARTS

Now that you have identified some of your inner parts most active when triggered, take some time to inquire into and journal on the following questions:

Journal

When you felt triggered, what part of you was most active? Was it a protective part or a vulnerable part?

Journal

Describe this part in detail. How does it feel in your body? What thoughts or memories come up when you focus on this part?

Journal

What does this part want for you? What is it trying to protect you from or achieve for you?

Today, I discovered this about myself:



BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

Now that you understand what is happening for some of your inner parts when triggered, take some time to inquire into and journal on the following questions:

Journal

How do you feel toward this part of yourself? Can you approach it with curiosity and a willingness to listen?

Journal

If you could speak to this part from your core self, what would you say? How can you reassure it and meet its needs in a healthier way?

Journal

Imagine giving this part what it needs. How does this change your experience of the trigger?

Today, I discovered this about myself:

INTEGRATING INSIGHTS &

MOVING FORWARD

Take a moment to fill in the checklist below with supportive self-care practices. What helps you stay grounded, calm, and connected to your wiser, more present self - especially when you're feeling triggered or overwhelmed? Think of activities, routines, or resources that bring you back into your body, soothe your nervous system, or reconnect you to what matters. These are your personal tools for regulation and resilience.

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Now that you've have insight into what's beneath your triggers, ask yourself: What can I do to support myself, both in the moment and in the bigger picture? You might consider immediate actions, like grounding techniques or breathwork. And you might also explore long-term steps, like setting healthy boundaries, having honest conversations, or seeking support from a therapist or healing community. There's no one right answer - just your next right step.

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____



CONCLUSION

Working with emotional triggers is not a one-time fix - it's a journey. One that calls for patience, self-compassion, and a willingness to keep showing up for yourself, even when it's hard.

As you've seen, your triggers often point to something deeper, like old wounds, unmet needs, or forgotten parts of yourself that still carry pain. By exploring these roots and building a relationship with the different parts within you, you create space for healing, clarity, and meaningful change.

This isn't just about understanding the past. It's about reclaiming your power in the present.

Come back to these questions and exercises whenever you need. Triggers shift as we grow, and each time you return to this work, you'll likely discover something new.

Most of all, be gentle with yourself. The fact that you're even engaging in this process speaks to your strength and your longing to live with more awareness and connection. Your triggers aren't just obstacles; they're messengers. With curiosity and care, they can guide you toward deeper self-knowledge, stronger boundaries, more authentic relationships, and a more grounded, present version of you.

You're doing brave, important work. Keep going.



About Jennifer



Jennifer McKeever is a somatic psychotherapist and supports people worldwide to heal from the impacts of trauma. Inspired by the interconnection of mind and body and the resilience of the human heart, she has guided thousands in their healing and personal growth journey over the past 30 years. She believes that our essential purpose in life is to awaken, activate and experience the boundless potential inside each of us.

She holds two Master's Degrees: the first in Chinese Medicine and the second in Psychotherapy and Spirituality. Additionally, Jennifer is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP) and faculty for the BioDynamic Breathwork and Trauma Release Institute (BBTRI). Her passion is facilitating the unique healing that occurs when people come together in group processes, and she is honoured to lead some of the most intensive and life-changing retreats in the world today.

**READY FOR THE
NEXT STEP?**

**FIND THE RIGHT
PROGRAM FOR
YOU**



support@jennifermckeever.com

www.jennifermckeever.com