

# HOW TO START HEALING

## *A Beginner's Guide*

BY BRANDILYN HALLCROFT



SIMPLE STEPS TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY  
BACK TO YOURSELF

# WELCOME FRIEND

I'm so glad you're here. Starting your healing journey can feel overwhelming, but you've already taken the first step just by being curious enough to read this guide. Healing is not about fixing yourself because you are not broken. It's about returning to the truth of who you are beneath all the layers life has put on you.

I created this guide as a gentle starting point. Remember, go at your own pace, honor your feelings, and come back to these practices anytime you need them.

With love,

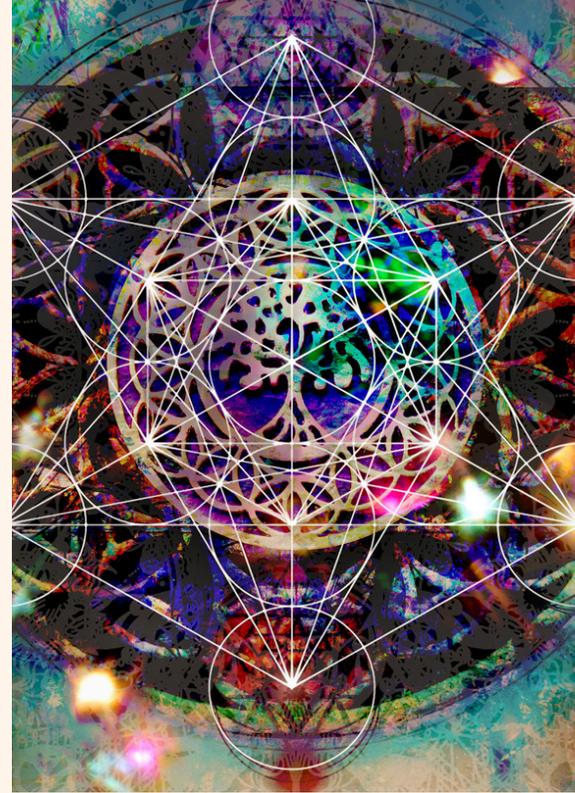
*Brandilyn*



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# HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK



This workbook is designed for beginners who want to understand where to start. Each step builds on the last, guiding you through awareness, observation, reflection, and compassionate action.

Here's how to use it:

- Read each section slowly.
- Write down your honest thoughts in the prompts provided.
- Repeat the daily affirmations aloud or silently in your mind.
- Return to any step whenever you feel stuck.

You deserve to heal at your own pace. If you want more guided support, my journals and new book dive deeper into each of these practices.

QUESTIONS?

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# STEP ONE: AWARENESS

# AWARENESS

HEALING STARTS WITH AWARENESS. BEFORE YOU CAN CHANGE ANYTHING, YOU NEED TO NOTICE WHAT IS HAPPENING WITHIN YOU AND AROUND YOU.

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Many think awareness is simply knowing what is happening around them, like being aware that someone is upset or that there is tension in the room.

While that is a form of situational awareness, true awareness in healing is about you.

Awareness is not just noticing external situations. It is about noticing your internal world:

- Your feelings
- Your sensations
- Your thoughts
- Your energy
- Your reactions

Another common misconception is that awareness and observation are the same thing. They are connected but different.

- Awareness is the initial noticing. It is “I feel tightness in my chest” or “I feel sad right now.”
- Observation is exploring what you noticed. It is “I feel tightness in my chest. When did it start? What triggered it?”

Think of awareness as a flashlight turning on in a dark room.

Observation is moving the flashlight around to see what is there.

**“The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance.”**

**~ Nathaniel Branden**





# WHY AWARENESS MATTERS

Without awareness, you are walking through life on autopilot, driven by subconscious patterns and reactions that you may not even realize are guiding your choices.

Awareness creates a pause. It allows you to step out of your habitual patterns and ask:

What am I feeling right now?

Where is this emotion in my body?

What thoughts are running through my mind?

## Try this practice:

Take a slow, deep breath. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable. Ask yourself:

What am I feeling right now?

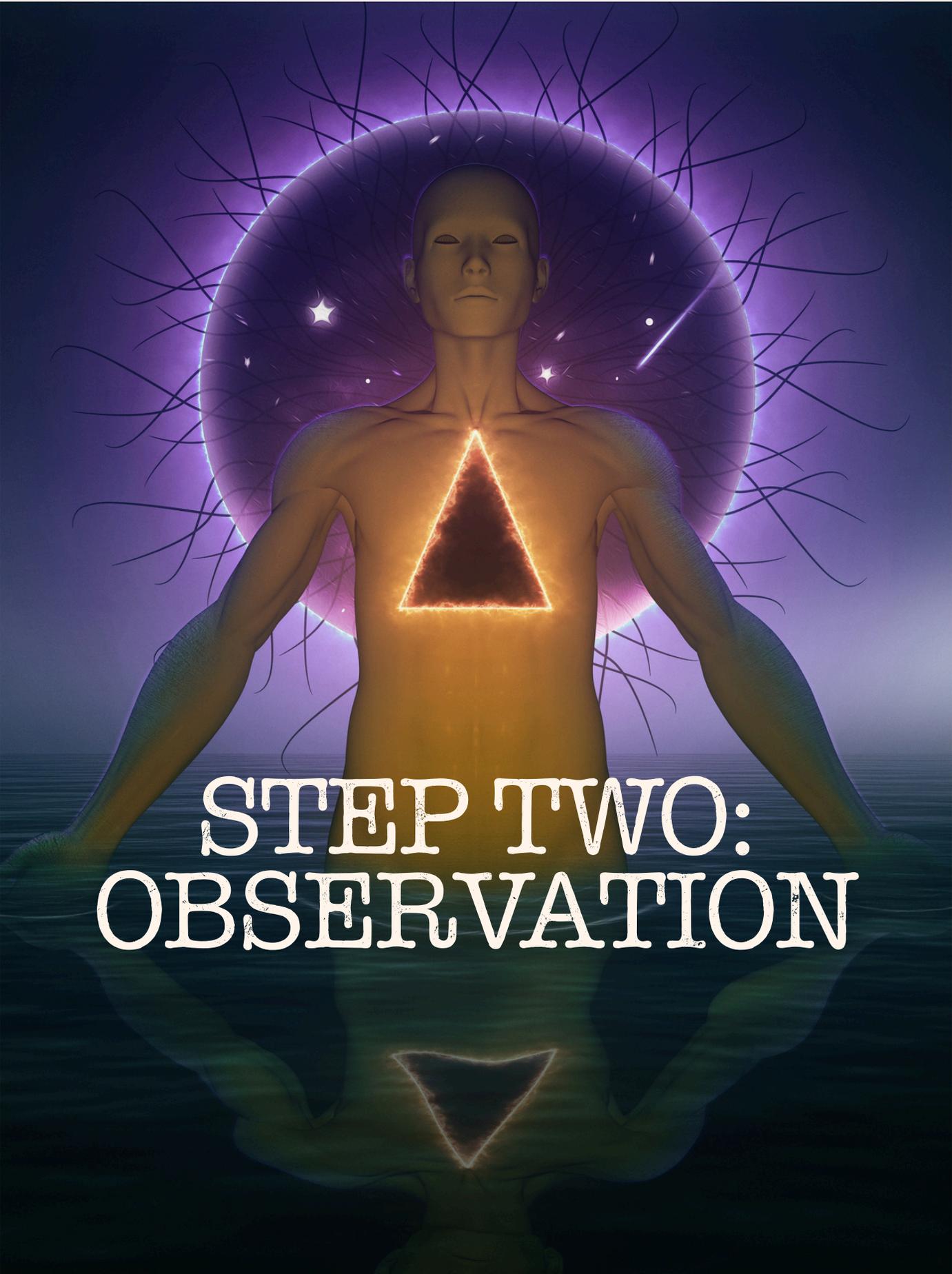
Where do I feel it in my body?

If I could name this feeling with one word, what would it be?

Write down what comes up without judgment, without trying to fix it, and without making it mean anything about who you are. This is pure awareness – noticing your internal truth in this moment.

“Awareness is the first step in healing.”

Dean Ornish

A 3D rendered human figure in a meditative pose, standing on a dark, reflective surface. The figure's chest is illuminated by a glowing orange triangle. Behind the head is a large, glowing purple circle with a complex, web-like pattern of thin lines radiating from it. The background is a dark, gradient sky with a few stars and a thin purple line. The text "STEP TWO: OBSERVATION" is written in a white, serif font across the middle of the figure's torso.

STEP TWO:  
OBSERVATION

# OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION IS WHERE HEALING BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE. WHILE AWARENESS TURNS ON THE LIGHT, OBSERVATION HELPS YOU SEE WHAT'S THERE WITHOUT TURNING AWAY.

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## The Power of Observation

Observation is not about analyzing yourself harshly or picking apart your flaws. It's about becoming a curious witness to your own experiences. When you observe yourself, you are practicing non-attachment. You are learning to observe your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors without becoming entangled with them or letting them define you.

## Why Observation Matters

Most of us move through life reacting to situations without

ever pausing to understand what is happening inside. Observation gives you that pause. It creates space between what you feel and what you do next.

For example:

- Instead of thinking, “I’m so angry, I want to yell,” and then yelling,
- You observe, “I notice I feel anger rising in my chest. My jaw is tight. My thoughts are racing about how unfair this feels.”

In that moment of observation, you create choice. You are no longer driven by the feeling alone.

To acquire knowledge, one must study; but to acquire wisdom, one must observe.

~ Marilyn vos Savant





# OBSERVATION WITHOUT JUDGMENT

One of the most challenging aspects of observation is doing it without judgment. Your mind might quickly label your feelings as bad or wrong. But observation is not about labeling – it is about seeing.

When you observe neutrally, you learn:

- How your emotions show up physically
- What thoughts are tied to those emotions
- What patterns repeat themselves in your life

## Try this practice:

Today, take five minutes to sit quietly. As you sit:

Notice your breath without trying to change it.

Scan your body from head to toe. What sensations are there?

Warmth, coolness, tightness, tingling?

Notice what thoughts come up. Observe them like clouds passing in the sky. You don't need to chase them or push them away.

Write down your observations:

What did you notice in your body?

What thoughts appeared?

What emotions were present?

Remember, observation is simply seeing what is there, so you can respond with wisdom instead of reacting on autopilot.

# STEP THREE: REFLECTION



# REFLECTION

REFLECTION IS WHERE AWARENESS AND OBSERVATION COME TOGETHER  
TO CREATE MEANING AND GROWTH.

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## What is Reflection?

Reflection is the process of examining what you have become aware of and observed to gain a deeper understanding of it. It is about connecting the dots between your thoughts, feelings, reactions, and the situations around you.

## Why Reflection Matters

Without reflection, awareness and observation remain passive. You might notice your feelings or patterns, but not understand why they exist or how they impact your life.

Reflection helps you:

- Identify repeating patterns
- Understand the root causes of your reactions
- See how your thoughts and beliefs shape your experiences
- Gain insights that lead to healthier choices

## Reflection is Not Rumination

Reflection is often confused with rumination. Rumination is getting stuck in a loop of overthinking, self-criticism, and rehashing situations without resolution.

Reflection, on the other hand, is intentional. It is asking:

- What happened?
- How did it make me feel?
- Why did I feel that way?
- What can I learn from this?

Reflection seeks understanding and growth, not self-punishment.

"The unexamined life is  
not worth living,"  
~ Socrates





# REFLECTION: TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCES INTO WISDOM

Reflection also helps you integrate your experiences into your self-concept in a healthier way. When you take time to reflect, you give meaning to what happened without letting it define your worth. Instead of seeing challenges as evidence that you're failing, reflection allows you to see them as lessons shaping your growth. This builds resilience because you begin to trust that every experience, even the painful ones, holds wisdom for you to carry forward.

## Try this practice:

Write about it using these prompts:

What happened? Describe the situation objectively.

What did I feel in that moment? Name the emotion(s).

Where did I feel it in my body?

What thoughts were running through my mind?

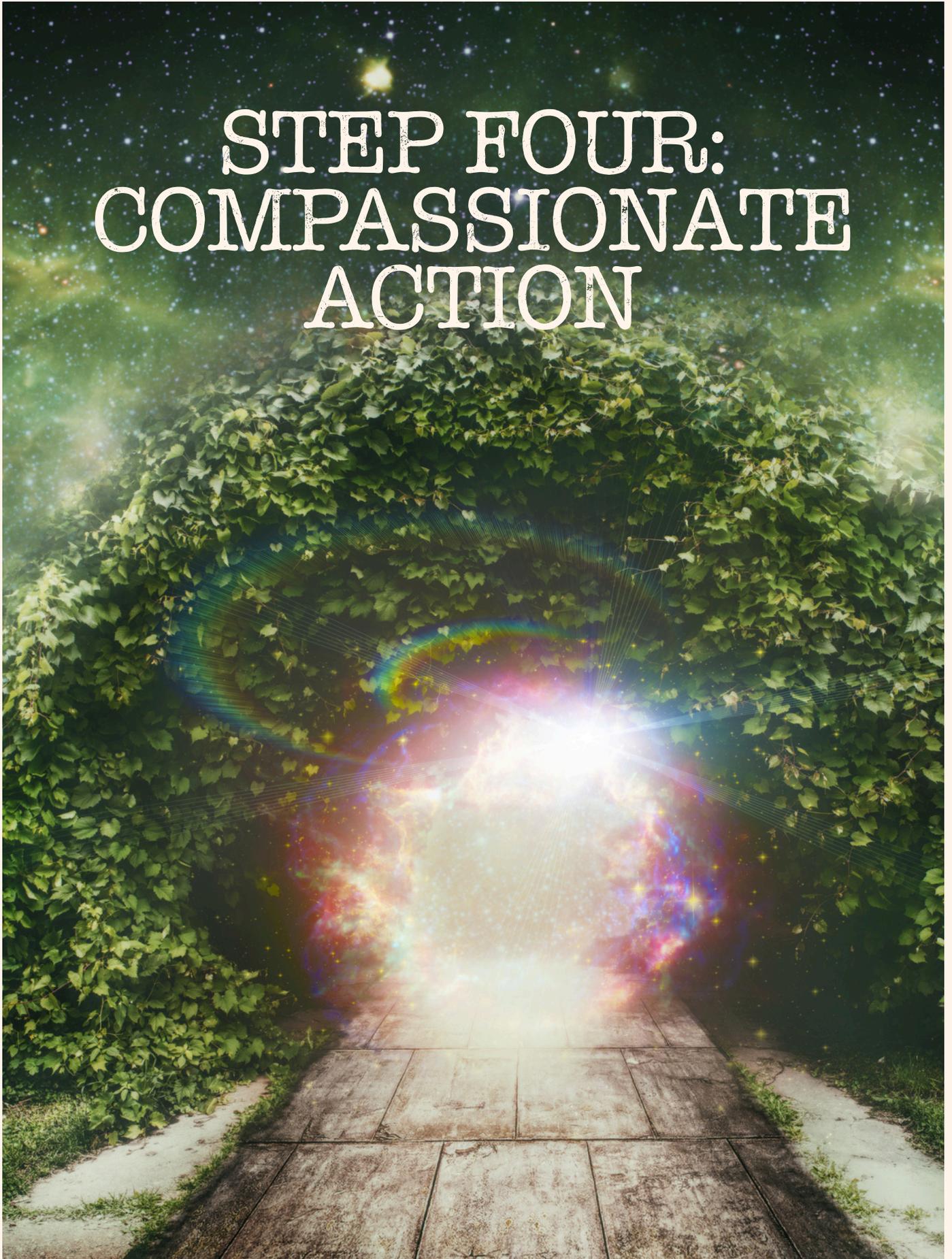
Why did this situation affect me so strongly? Is it tied to past experiences or beliefs?

What do I need to give myself right now to feel supported?

The Gift of Reflection

When you reflect, you begin to see yourself more clearly. You start to understand your triggers, unmet needs, and the stories you tell yourself. This understanding creates freedom, because what you can see, you can change.

# STEP FOUR: COMPASSIONATE ACTION



# COMPASSIONATE ACTION

COMPASSIONATE ACTION IS WHEN YOU TAKE A SMALL STEP TO SUPPORT YOURSELF. IT IS NOT ABOUT FORCING CHANGE, BUT ABOUT GENTLY SHIFTING.

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Awareness, observation, and reflection set the foundation, but compassionate action is where change begins to take form in your daily life.

What is Compassionate Action?

Compassionate action is not about fixing yourself or forcing transformation overnight. It is about taking small, intentional steps rooted in kindness towards yourself. It asks: “What is the most loving thing I can do for myself right now?”

These actions might seem simple,

but they are powerful because they shift you out of old patterns and into choices that align with your healing.

## Why Compassionate Action Matters

Often, when people think about healing or self-improvement, they approach it with a harsh attitude. They believe they need to push harder, be stricter, or eliminate everything they perceive as “bad” about themselves. But healing does not come from punishment; it comes from compassion.

Compassionate action matters because:

- It teaches your nervous system the importance of safety and gentleness.
- It builds self-trust by showing yourself that you will respond with care.

It replaces cycles of self-abandonment with self-support.





# WHAT DOES COMPASSIONATE ACTION LOOK LIKE?

Compassionate action can be:

Setting a boundary with someone who drains you

Taking a 10-minute walk to clear your mind

Drinking water when you realize you've been dehydrated

Speaking to yourself kindly after making a mistake

Taking a break when you feel overwhelmed instead of pushing through

These actions may seem small, but they create ripples that build a life rooted in self-respect and peace.

## Try this practice:

Ask yourself right now:

What is one small, compassionate thing I can do for myself today?

How can I make this choice feel easy instead of overwhelming?

Write it down, and then commit to doing it today. Notice how it feels to choose yourself with kindness.

"Compassion and tolerance are not a sign of  
weakness,  
but a sign of strength."  
Dalai Lama.



# DAILY AFFIRMATIONS



# CHOOSE ONE EACH DAY OR CREATE YOUR OWN:

- I am allowed to take up space and time to heal.
- I release what no longer serves me with love.
- I am not my thoughts; I observe them with compassion.
- Each breath brings me closer to peace.
- I am worthy of love and understanding.
- I choose to respond to myself with kindness in every moment.
- My small steps create meaningful change in my life.
- I honor my feelings without letting them define me.
- I create space within me to grow and heal.
- I trust that gentle action leads me towards peace.





# JOURNAL PROMPTS

Use these to deepen your practice



DATE

MOOD

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# WHAT DOES HEALING MEAN TO ME RIGHT NOW

YOUR THOUGHTS

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GOALS

TO DO

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# WHERE IN MY LIFE DO I FEEL MOST STUCK?

YOUR THOUGHTS

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GOALS

TO DO

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# WHAT IS ONE SMALL ACT OF SELF-COMPASSION I CAN GIVE MYSELF TODAY?

YOUR THOUGHTS

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GOALS

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# WHO DO I NEED TO FORGIVE, INCLUDING MYSELF?

YOUR THOUGHTS

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GOALS

TO DO

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# WHAT WOULD MY LIFE FEEL LIKE IF I FULLY HEALED FROM THIS?

YOUR THOUGHTS

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GOALS

TO DO

# NEXT STEPS ON YOUR JOURNEY

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Healing is a lifelong journey, and this is just the beginning.

If you're ready to dive deeper, my new book "Unshakeable: Mastering Yourself in a Messy World" is now available on Amazon. It offers worksheets, prompts, and a deeper exploration of these practices to guide you further on your path.

You can also explore my collection of prompt journals, designed to support your healing with daily reflections, guided exercises, and space to process your thoughts at your own pace. Each journal focuses on a specific area of growth to help you build emotional strength, self-awareness, and inner peace.

