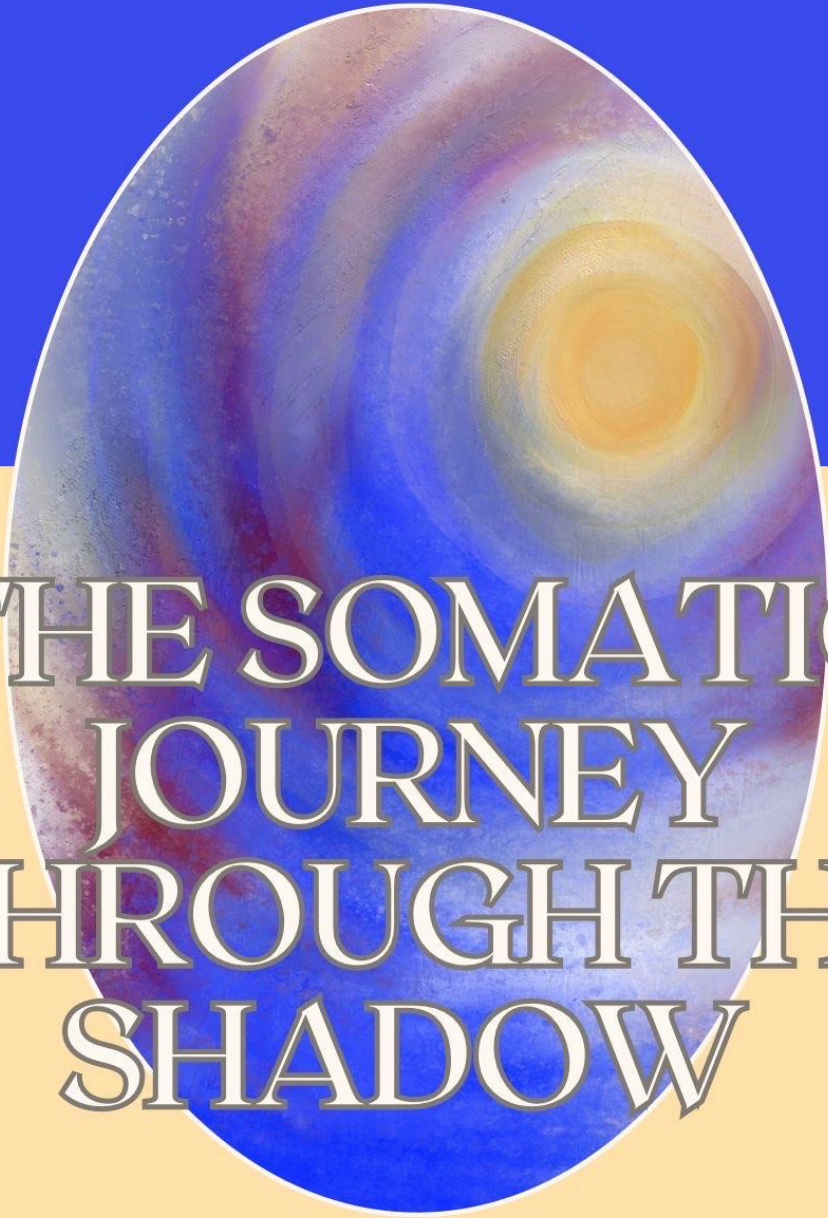




PSYCHIC SOMATICS



THE SOMATIC
JOURNEY
THROUGH THE
SHADOW

SHADOW WORK PROMPTS
THAT ENCOURAGE SELF-
AWARENESS AND PROMOTE
EMBODIMENT

WHAT IS SOMATIC SHADOW WORK?



TRAUMA-INFORMED, BODY-CENTERED HEALING

For those with trauma or PTSD, doing the inner work can not only be daunting, but also highly triggering. Talk therapy is great for some, but may trigger dissociation and re-traumatization in others. When we are chronically dissociated, we cannot connect to the body. As if that weren't complicated enough, the traumatized parts of ourselves remain unintegrated, often triggering unconscious patterns, beliefs, and actions that are embedded deep within the psyche, as well as the body! Shadow Work is the process of using self-inquiry to get to know these parts so that, through development of our newfound awareness, we can take steps to break these patterns. However, we cannot fully enter into this awareness if we are simultaneously dissociating from the body. This is where Somatic Experiencing comes in. When we are experiencing a trigger, the body may shake, or tense up. It may feel heavy and weighed-down, or, alternatively, it may feel light and ungrounded. These responses are natural, but can feel frightening or confusing in the moment, causing us to bypass them, or shut down. Somatic Experiencing seeks to bridge the gap between the body and the traumatized mind, allowing potentially uncomfortable feelings, sensations, and physical manifestations to arise and play out so that we may heal. Your body is highly intuitive! Are you ready to hear what it has to say?



DEMYSTIFYING OUR TRIGGERS

When we are triggered, it is common for the prefrontal cortex to shut down. This means that we are responding from the reptilian brain, or "survival mode." This is a completely natural response! However, it does mean that we may struggle to access logic, as well as memory, while in that state. When this happens, we often rely on something called Emotional Reasoning. Emotional Reasoning is when we feel so strongly about something (often due to triggers around trauma, or past experiences) that we assume that our feelings about a situation are reflective of an objective truth. One way to know if we are acting from a place of Emotional Reasoning is to reflect on what emotional "meaning" we may have assigned to the Triggering Event. Aside from the way that it makes you feel, is there evidence to support this perception? If not, what past experiences may have influenced this assigned meaning? Or, if so, is the evidence current? Is it measurable?

An example:

The Triggering Event: A good friend forgets your birthday, even though they have always remembered in the past.

What we make it mean (or, how we perceive it): "They must not care about me. Maybe we aren't as close as I thought we were." or, "Are they mad at me? Did I do something wrong? Maybe we are growing apart."

Maybe that is true! OR, maybe they have a lot on their plate, and didn't realize what day it was. If we project our assumptions or perceptions as absolute truth, we may miss the mark, and risk hurting ourselves and our relationship with our friend in the process.

EMBODIED SELF-ANALYSIS

With that in mind, try to think about what meaning or analysis you may have assigned to the current triggering event as you answer the following questions.

Question 1: What is currently triggering you?

Answer:

Question 2: What did you make The Triggering Event mean?

Answer:

Question 3: What experiences in childhood may have contributed to your perception/analysis of this event?

Answer:

Question 4: As a child, how did these experiences make you feel?

Answer:

Question 5: Where are you feeling this trigger, in the body?

Answer:



EMBODIED SELF-ANALYSIS

With that in mind, try to think about what meaning or analysis you may have assigned to the current triggering event as you answer the following questions.

Question 6: Is there anywhere in your body that currently feels safe?

Answer:

Question 7: Try to bring your awareness into that part of the body. Breathe into it. Can you do that? What do you feel?

Answer:

Try an activity that helps you connect with that part of you. If your feet feel safe, it may help to wiggle your toes, bend down and touch them, or walk around barefoot. If it is your arms that feel safe, pull yourself into a hug. Wrap your arms around your body, or run your hands gently up and down your arms. Remind yourself that you are safe! This part of your body feels safe, and we can "borrow" safety from that part and bring it into other parts. If you are struggling, that is okay! If you feel safe enough, try to be curious about whatever is blocking you. It may feel intense before it starts to ease up. Remember that you can put your hand over your heart at any time and tell yourself, out loud, that you are safe. It may help to hug the knees into the chest, and breathe into the self-hug. It is okay to feel overwhelmed, or even scared. This is a normal and natural physiological response to a perceived threat. Your body is not against you. In fact, these feelings and sensations are often the key to healing.

Question 8: If you were able to complete the above exercise, how are you feeling, now?

Answer:



EMBODIED EXPRESSION - A PLACE TO JOURNAL

If this is the first time you have ever tried that kind of exercise, it is normal to have a range of emotional or physical responses. You may feel overwhelmed, you may feel at peace, you may even feel disconnected and wonder, "Did I do that right?" Anything that comes up for you is completely valid, as every person is unique and will respond differently. It is important that we do not judge our responses, or lack thereof.



Please utilize the following space to journal, doodle, or otherwise express anything else that came up for you during or after the exercise. It is okay if you need to take a break and come back here later.

"I have come to the conclusion that human beings are born with an innate capacity to triumph over trauma. I believe not only that trauma is curable, but that the healing process can be a catalyst for profound awakening—a portal opening to emotional and genuine spiritual transformation."

Peter Levine, the Father of Somatic Experiencing



ANCESTRAL TRAUMA & HEALING FAMILY SYSTEMS



GENERATIONAL TRAUMA, SIMPLIFIED

Ancestral wounds can be observed as any set of patterns, belief systems, addictions, entity attachments, relationship wounds (etc) that we may inherit from our parents, or ancestors. These behaviors may be something we are aware of, or they may be unconscious. Though the concept of "generational curses" tends to be viewed as "new age," or "woo," it is actually backed by science.

A 2013 study found that mice who had been programmed to associate pain with the smell of cherries passed this trauma response down at least two generations. Therefore, ancestral or generational trauma can be more accurately observed as "Epigenetic Inheritance." Which begs the question...what is in my/your epigenetic inheritance? What have we been "programmed" to subconsciously fear or react to, and how can we get to the root of these ancestral traumas in order to transmute them and prevent further "passing down"?

As with anything else, healing from the wounds of our past (even in reference to a past life) starts with us. As you answer the following questions, pay attention to any sensations within your body. Do you feel tense? Anxious? Sad? Heavy? Nostalgic?

Important Note: If you begin to feel dissociated at any time, that is a sign to stop! Setting boundaries with the way that we interact with our body and our emotions will help to build trust within the body, which is necessary in order to heal. Pushing yourself past these boundaries can create risk of re-traumatization. It is okay to only move as quickly as the slowest part of you. Your best will always be enough!

Healing Family Systems

Parents or Parental Figures/Guardians

Answer the following questions with Epigenetic Inheritance in mind.

How have you been like your
Mother/Father?
(Perpetuated trauma traits)

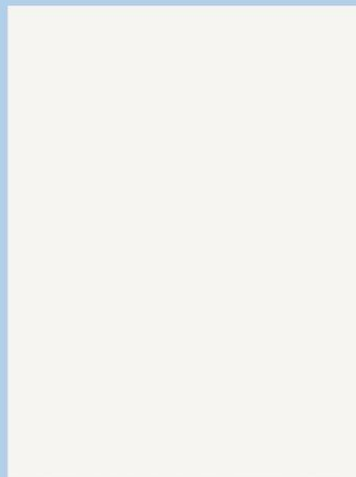
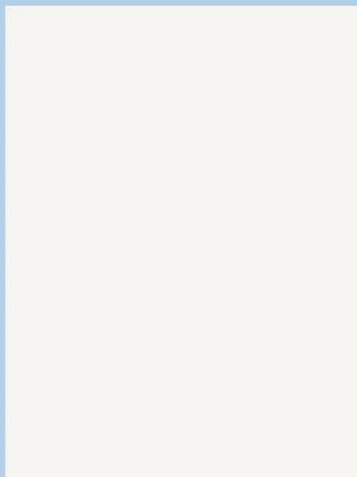
Example:

"My Mother had poor boundaries, so do I"

"My Father was an alcoholic. I struggle with that, too"

Mother/Guardian

Father/Guardian



**"The Only Way
Out Is
Through."**

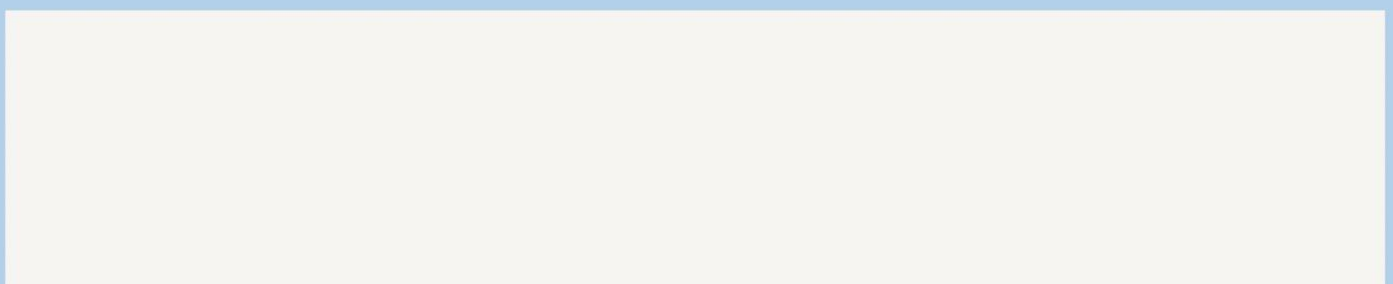
Robert Frost



Did your parents
inherit these behaviors from their parents?

Yes / No

It is common for us to experience the same traumas as our ancestors, until the initial wound is resolved.
What repeated patterns have you shared with your parents/caregivers concerning trauma?



Healing Family Systems

Parents or Parental Figures/Guardians

Answer the following questions with Epigenetic Inheritance in mind.

How have these repeated patterns contributed to your shared (inherited) trauma response?

Mother/Guardian

Father/Guardian

Example:

"Sexual abuse led to secrecy and emotional repression"

"Abusive relationships manifested as a familial power imbalance"



****The healthy man does not torture others—generally, it is the tortured who turn into torturers.***

— C.G. Jung, Psychology of the Unconscious



Have you ever witnessed growth or change in your parents behavior in these areas, even if only a little bit of growth?

Yes / No

Sometimes it can be difficult to notice growth in our parents or caregivers when we feel traumatized by them. If you need to, put your hand over your heart and remind your body that noticing growth doesn't negate the validity of your trauma. Take a deep breath. If you selected "Yes" to the above prompt, at which age did you notice this growth or change? How did it make you feel? If you selected "No," use the below space to write about how it has affected you to see your parent refuse responsibility or change.



Healing Family Systems

Parents or Parental Figures/Guardians

Answer the following questions through the lense of your Inner Child.

Example:

How would you describe your relationship with your Mother/Guardian as a child? What about your Father/Guardian?

"Mother: Overbearing, unemotional, confusing"
"Father: Strict, inconsistent, abusive"

Mother/Guardian

Father/Guardian

How would you describe your current relationship with each of your parents/parental figures?

Oftentimes, our childhood trauma and childhood triggers carry over into our romantic relationships. If you are not currently in a romantic partnership, feel free to use a past relationship, or even a close platonic friendship when answering the following questions.

Question One: Which parental perpetuated traits (either from Mother or Father) are you triggered the most to act on in your current romantic relationship? (Ex: When my partner doesn't do the dishes, I feel abandoned because my parents always left me to figure things out on my own.)

Question Two: Which of your partners actions trigger those trauma responses in you the most, and how can you show up for your inner child during that triggered state?



Body Check-In

Simple Somatic Exercises

Phew! That was a lot of work! You should be very proud of yourself. Sometimes, digging deep into the shadow can cause us to feel anxious, dissociated, dysregulated, depressed, irritable, etc. This can also manifest physically as the following sensations: Nausea, dizziness, feeling too hot or too cold, shaking and tremors, teeth chattering, etc. All of this is completely normal, albeit uncomfortable. Sometimes, the best thing to do is to allow the sensations to fully manifest. For example, if your teeth are chattering, see what happens if you choose not to repress it or stop it. When we bypass or shut down these important physical manifestations of emotion, the emotion doesn't actually go away. Instead, the sensation becomes trapped in the body, and will later manifest as sickness, disease, anxiety, and chronic fatigue. You may be thinking, "Uh-oh, but what if I have been bypassing or ignoring these sensations all along?" Have no fear! Healing and recovery are possible, and begin when we choose to become radically present with the Self to the best of our capacity every day. We begin to heal when we vow to the Self, "I am here for you. I will not leave you when things become uncomfortable. I choose to stay present with you. I may have abandoned or neglected you in the past, but I won't do that anymore. We (you and your body) are in this together." In the text box below, write (in whatever words you are comfortable with) a vow to your body. Speak this vow aloud, as many times as you need to. Pull your Self into a hug. When you are ready, consider trying one of the below exercises. There is no rush to do this, and you can come back to these whenever you feel comfortable. Never push your body beyond its capacity. Do what resonates, and leave the rest! You and your Body know best.

Dear body, I vow to...

Somatic Exercises



Shaking Exercise: Starting in a standing position, shake your arms and legs as if shaking something off of you. You can do this as gently or aggressively as you please.

Body Scanning: Works best while sitting or laying down. Starting at either your head or your feet, close your eyes and scan the length of your body. Pay close attention to any areas that feel tense, and consciously release that tension. Where do you feel pain? Strain? Discomfort? Notice how you feel, and actively relax those parts of the body. Breathe into the pain/strain, and create space through the breathe for relaxation.

Self-Hug Exercise: Can be done solo, or with a prop such as a firm pillow, or even a yoga block. With prop, simply pull the prop against your chest, feeling the weight and pressure, and leaning into that sensation. Without prop, place one hand over your heart, and the other hand under your opposite armpit. Pull your Self in closely.

Humming Exercise: This exercise is great for vagal toning. It aids in overall regulation of the nervous system, as well as encouraging boundary-setting by stimulating the throat. Hum a song, a tune, or just a specific frequency. It truly doesn't matter, just hum away! Fun Fact: Humming also releases nitric oxide, which increases serotonin, lowering stress & anxiety.

Breathing exercise: Sitting or laying down, close your eyes and notice your breathing. Do your best not to move around too much. Any time discomfort arises, bring your attention back into the breath. The goal is not to ignore the tension, it is to carry yourself through the tension, riding your breath like a wave, or a tide...in, and out.

Safety Recognition Exercise: Say outloud, "I am safe." Turn your head fully to the Right, "There are no threats." Repeat to the Left. "My surroundings are clear."



EMBODIED EXPRESSION- A PLACE TO JOURNAL



Wow! You have come SO far. Sometimes, it can be hard for us to acknowledge how much work we have put into ourselves. When it feels right, I would encourage you to flip back through the previous pages of this workbook and read over your responses and experiences. Feel free to use this journal space to write, draw, or otherwise express anything that comes up for you.

A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, intended for journaling or drawing.

A little bit about me: I created this free Somatic Shadow Work Journal because I believe in the power of Somatic Experiencing, as well as the spiritual, emotional, and physical transformation that is possible through Shadow Work. It is part of my souls impulse and mission to make this knowledge easily digestible, affordable, and accessible to all! I pray that, whatever state this finds you in, it is what you need in the moment.

With love,

Jayton

