



WHY YOU LOSE ACCESS TO YOURSELF

— IN —

Relationships



UNDERSTANDING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM
BEHIND REACTIVE PATTERNS, PROTECTION,
AND DISCONNECTION



COMPANION WORKBOOK



Reflection. Recognition. Return.

Lisa DePamphilis

EMBODIED • ROOTED • PRESENT





WELCOME!

Before we begin, I want to tell you something I wish someone had told me years ago.

There was a time when I genuinely believed I needed more healing.

More insight.

More understanding.

More spiritual growth.

Because I couldn't understand why I could feel so calm, wise, compassionate, and connected to myself one moment... and then completely lose access to those qualities inside certain relationships.

It was confusing.

And honestly, it was often painful.

The more self-aware I became, the less sense it seemed to make.

What I eventually discovered changed everything.

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The issue wasn't awareness.

The issue was access.

I could access compassion, wisdom, perspective, and connection when life felt calm.

But when emotional pressure rose, my nervous system moved into protection faster than I could remain connected to myself.



WELCOME (CON'T)

This workbook is designed to help you begin recognizing where that happens for you.

Move slowly.

There are no right answers.

No grades.

No perfect responses.

Just an opportunity to become more curious about what happens inside you when relationships become emotionally challenging.

Let's begin.



ABOUT LISA

For a long time, I couldn't understand something.
I could feel grounded, compassionate, self-aware, and deeply connected to myself when I was alone.

But relationships seemed to change everything.
A difficult conversation.
Someone pulling away.
A misunderstanding.

Suddenly, access to all of that wisdom seemed to disappear.
My mind would race.
I'd become reactive.
Defensive.
Overwhelmed.
Or spend days replaying conversations long after they were over.

The more self-aware I became, the less sense it seemed to make.
That question eventually became the foundation of my work.

After decades working in health, wellness, counseling, personal growth, and nervous system education, I came to understand something that changed everything for me:

Many self-aware women are not lacking awareness.
They're losing access to awareness when emotional pressure rises.

Today, through the Embodied Presence Framework™, workshops, private mentorship, and the Embodied Repair™ YouTube channel, I help women understand the protection patterns that emerge in relationships and learn how to remain connected to themselves when those patterns appear.

Because healing isn't becoming someone new.
It's learning how to stay connected to who you already are when life gets hard.

I'm glad you're here.
Lisa



PART ONE

THE PRESENCE GAP™

One of the most important questions we can ask is this:

Who am I when I feel safe?

And who do I become when I don't?

For many women, the difference between those two experiences is enormous.

This is what I call the Presence Gap™.

The distance between the self you can access when calm and the self you can access when emotionally activated.

Reflection

When I feel grounded and emotionally safe, I am:

When I feel connected to myself, I tend to be:

- Compassionate
- Thoughtful
- Calm
- Warm
- Open
- Curious
- Loving
- Trusting
- Creative
- Present
- Other:

Now take a breath.



PART ONE

THE PRESENCE GAP™

Think about a recent conflict, disappointment, misunderstanding, or emotionally difficult interaction.

During emotional activation, I tend to become:

- Defensive
- Anxious
- Overwhelmed
- Shut down
- Numb
- Angry
- Critical
- Withdrawn
- Hypervigilant
- Disconnected
- Other:

Reflection 1.

What qualities become difficult for me to access when I feel emotionally unsafe?

Reflection 2.

When I lose access to myself, what version of me tends to appear?



PART TWO

RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE LENS OF PROTECTION

Most of us assume we react to what is happening in a relationship. But often we are reacting to what our nervous system expects might happen.

Those expectations are rarely conscious. They live beneath awareness.

In the body.

In memory.

In old experiences of connection, disappointment, criticism, abandonment, misunderstanding, or emotional unpredictability.

Over time, the nervous system develops expectations about relationships. And when uncertainty appears, protection begins preparing for what it believes could happen next.

Take a moment and answer honestly.

Not from who you wish you were.

Not from what you've learned.

But from what feels true in your lived experience.

Continue to the next page.



PART TWO

RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE LENS OF PROTECTION

When relationships feel uncertain, I often find myself:

- Seeking reassurance
- Monitoring changes in tone
- Overthinking interactions
- Pulling away emotionally
- Becoming independent quickly
- Assuming something is wrong
- Avoiding difficult conversations
- Shutting down emotionally
- Becoming defensive
- Trying harder to earn connection
- Losing trust quickly
- Feeling confused about what is true

Reflection 1.

When uncertainty appears in relationships, what does my nervous system seem to prepare for?

Reflection 2.

What does this protection pattern believe it is protecting me from?



PART ONE

THE PRESENCE GAP™

Complete the following sentences without overthinking them.

People usually...

Conflict usually leads to...

Love often feels...

If I express my needs...

If someone is upset with me...

When connection feels uncertain...

The thing I'm most afraid might happen is...



PART THREE

DISCOVERING YOUR PROTECTION PATTERN

Protection is not a flaw.

Protection is what the nervous system does when it believes connection may be threatened.

Most women have one or two primary protection patterns.

Let's explore yours.

FIGHT

When I feel emotionally threatened, I may:

- Become defensive
- Become critical
- Blame others
- Feel irritated quickly
- Need to prove my point
- Become controlling
- Feel anger before sadness

Total Checked: _____

FLIGHT

When I feel emotionally threatened, I may:

- Overthink
- Analyze everything
- Replay conversations
- Obsess about outcomes
- Search for certainty
- Become restless

Total Checked: _____



PART THREE

DISCOVERING YOUR PROTECTION PATTERN

FREEZE

When I feel emotionally threatened, I may:

- Go blank
- Lose words
- Shut down
- Feel numb
- Withdraw
- Feel stuck

Total Checked: _____

FAWN

When I feel emotionally threatened, I may:

- People-please
- Avoid conflict
- Prioritize others
- Ignore my needs
- Minimize myself
- Say yes when I mean no

Total Checked: _____

Reflection 1.

Which protection pattern feels most familiar?

Reflection 2.

How do you think this pattern has been trying to help you?



PART FOUR

YOUR ACTIVATION MAP

Think about a recent trigger.

Not your biggest trigger.

Just a recent one.

What happened?

What did you notice in your body first?

- Tight chest
- Racing heart
- Stomach tension
- Shallow breathing
- Numbness
- Heat
- Collapse
- Other:

What thoughts appeared?

What protection response followed?

- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze
- Fawn

What happened afterward?

Where did I lose access to myself?



PART FIVE

PRESENCE CAPACITY™

Rate yourself from 1–10.

1 = Very Difficult

10 = Usually Available

When emotional pressure rises...

I can remain connected to myself.

I can stay present while uncomfortable emotions move through me.

I can tolerate uncertainty without immediately seeking relief.

I can hear perspectives that differ from mine.

I can stay connected to compassion while upset.

I can recognize protection before it fully takes over.

I can repair after conflict.

I can return to myself after activation.



PART FIVE

PRESENCE CAPACITY™

Reflection 1.

Which area feels strongest?

Reflection 2.

Which area would create the biggest shift if it improved?



PART SIX

PRESENCE UNDER PRESSURE™

The next time you notice activation beginning, move through these five questions.

NOTICE

What am I experiencing right now?

ORIENT

What is actually happening?

SLOW

Can I soften my pace by ten percent?

STAY

Can I remain connected to myself here?

RESPOND

What would I choose if protection wasn't leading?



A FINAL NOTE

If this workbook has shown you anything, I hope it has shown you this:
Many women spend years trying to fix what happens inside them when relationships become difficult.

They criticize themselves for becoming reactive.

For shutting down.

For overthinking.

For people-pleasing.

For losing access to the version of themselves they know is there.

But what if the problem isn't a lack of awareness?

What if the problem is that protection arrives faster than presence?

What if the reactions you've struggled with aren't evidence that you're broken...

but evidence that your nervous system has been working very hard to keep you safe?

The goal isn't to get rid of protection.

The goal is to recognize it sooner.

To understand what it is trying to do.

And to slowly build the capacity to remain connected to yourself while it unfolds.

Not afterward.

Not once you've calmed down.

While it is happening.

Because healing isn't becoming someone new.

It isn't achieving perfect regulation.

And it isn't never getting triggered again.



FINAL NOTE (CON'T)

Healing is learning how to stay connected to yourself when emotional pressure rises.

One moment.

One conversation.

One choice at a time.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your journey.

With warmth,

Lisa DePamphilis

Creator of the Embodied Presence Framework™

Founder of Embodied Repair™

CONTINUED LEARNING

[YouTube: Embodied Repair](#)

[Private Mentorship for Embodied Relational Healing](#)

[From Protection To Presence™ Workshop](#)