

A Nervous System Check-In Map

Understanding how your body has been trying to protect you

This is not a diagnosis.

This is not a test.

This is not about labeling yourself.

This is a self-check-in to help you notice how your body may be responding to stress, illness, or long-term overwhelm.

Read slowly. Notice what feels familiar.

More than one pattern may apply.

Your body knows.

What If Your Body Isn't Broken?

If you live with chronic illness, autoimmune symptoms, or unexplained health issues, it can start to feel like your body is failing you.

But what if your body is not broken at all?

What if it has been responding exactly as it was designed to respond when it feels under threat? The nervous system does not choose responses based on logic; it chooses based on safety.

Your nervous system is an incredibly intelligent adaptive system. It constantly learns from past experiences, both conscious and subconscious, storing information about perceived threats and how it responded. Over time, it develops automatic protective patterns designed to keep you safe, prioritizing survival above all else, even comfort or ease.

These responses, while potentially uncomfortable or debilitating now, were once brilliant survival strategies. They made perfect sense at the time, helping you navigate difficult or overwhelming situations. Understanding this adaptive intelligence allows us to approach our symptoms not as flaws, but as deeply ingrained protective mechanisms of a body striving to keep us alive.



These are protective responses

Not personality traits or character flaws

You may recognize one or several

Patterns can shift and overlap over time

There is no wrong place to land

This is simply information to understand yourself

Understanding Survival Responses

The patterns described in this guide are survival responses. They belong to the sympathetic nervous system—the system responsible for protecting you when your body perceives threat.

This system is meant to turn on when needed and turn off when the threat has passed.

When threatened, the sympathetic nervous system activates the "fight or flight" response, an adaptive system prioritizing quick survival.



Digestion slows

Energy is diverted away from non-essential functions



Heart rate increases

Prepares the body for immediate physical action



Muscles tense

Readiness for fight, flight, or freeze response



Immune function suppresses

Long-term health is temporarily paused for survival



Focus narrows

Attention is acutely directed towards the perceived threat



There is another state your body is designed to spend much of its time in.

This is the parasympathetic state, often called *rest and digest*.



Digests efficiently

Absorbs nutrients and supports healthy metabolism



Repairs tissue

Reduces inflammation and promotes cellular healing



Balances hormones

Supports endocrine system regulation



Supports immunity

Strengthens your body's natural defenses



Feels settled

Creates clarity, presence, and inner calm

The Goal Is Flexibility

1

What health is not about

- Never entering survival mode
- Always staying calm
- Eliminating protective responses
- Never feeling stressed

2

What health is about

- Being able to move out of survival
- Returning to rest and digest
- Flexibility between states
- Restoring natural regulation

Many people with chronic illness are not stuck because they enter these states. They are stuck because their nervous system has not been able to fully return to rest and digest.

The goal is not to eliminate fight, flight, freeze, or fawn. The goal is to restore the body's ability to shift between states with flexibility and ease.

Pushing Through Mode



Productive while exhausted

You stay in motion even when your body signals for rest



Rest feels unsafe

Slowing down brings frustration or discomfort



Angry at your body

You feel betrayed when symptoms appear



Symptoms flare when stopping

Your body reacts when you finally pause



Pressure to stay strong

You feel you must keep going no matter what



This response often develops when the body learned it had to push through discomfort to survive.

It is not stubbornness. It is protection.

Always On Mode

This may feel familiar if your mind rarely feels quiet, you feel internally restless or buzzy, sleep is light or disrupted, relaxation feels uncomfortable, or you feel like you always need to stay ahead of something.

Mind rarely quiet

Thoughts cycle continuously, even during rest periods

Internally restless

A buzzing sensation that never quite settles

Sleep disrupted

Light, fragmented, or hard to initiate

Relaxation uncomfortable

Letting go feels strange or even threatening

Always staying ahead

A constant internal pressure to prepare or anticipate

This is not anxiety in the way most people think of it.

It is your body staying alert to keep you safe.

Functional Shutdown Mode



This may feel familiar if you feel heavy, foggy, or flat—if motivation is low even when you want to care, you can function but feel disconnected, pushing yourself makes symptoms worse, or you feel numb, withdrawn, or checked out.

"I feel like I'm moving through water"

"I know I should care, but I just... don't"

"Everything feels distant and muffled"

This response is often misunderstood.

It is not laziness. It is conservation.

Your body is trying to preserve energy and prevent further harm.

Keeping The Peace Mode



Prioritize others' needs

Your own needs consistently come second or not at all



Struggle to say no

Saying yes feels automatic, even when you're depleted



Downplay symptoms

You minimize what you're experiencing to avoid burdening others



Responsible for others' comfort

You feel accountable for how people around you feel



Ignore your body's signals

Internal cues take a back seat to maintaining harmony

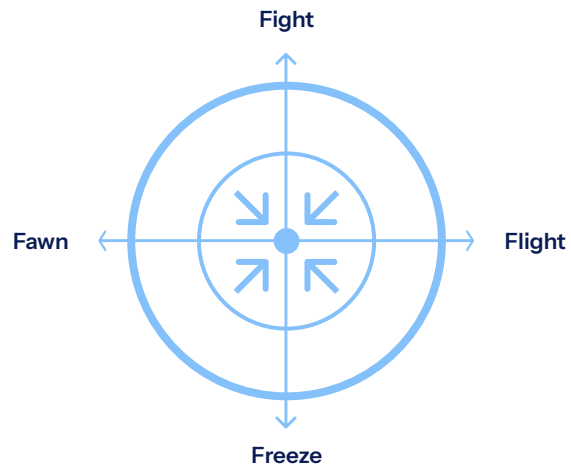


This response trades self-attunement for safety.

It often develops when staying connected felt more important than expressing needs.

Putting It Together

Most people do not live in just one survival pattern. The body is designed to move in and out of these states and return to rest and digest when it feels safe.



Chronic illness often develops when the nervous system becomes locked in survival and cannot easily return to a parasympathetic state.

These responses are not mistakes

They are intelligent adaptations your body created

Healing begins with understanding

Not by forcing your body to calm down

A Gentle Next Step

If one or more of these patterns felt familiar, you are not imagining it.

Your body has been working very hard to protect you.

 **This understanding is the foundation of the Recalibration Method.**

Not fixing. Not forcing. Not overriding your body.

But restoring safety and capacity so your system can finally shift.



Recognition

You've taken the first step by noticing these patterns



Compassion

Understanding your body's protective responses without judgment



Exploration

If you are ready to explore this work with support, you are invited to learn more

You deserve support that honors what your body has been doing all along.