

When Your System Is Tired, Not Broken **A Gentle Mini-Course on Overwhelm**

Lesson 1 — *You're Not Broken*

This lesson is optional. You may pause or stop at any time. If you feel overwhelmed, reactive, numb, or constantly on edge, it does not mean there is something wrong with you. Very often, it means your nervous system has been working too hard for too long.

Overwhelm is not a character flaw.
It is not a lack of discipline.
It is not a failure to cope.

It is often the result of cumulative stress — life changes, uncertainty, responsibility, loss, pressure, or simply having to hold too much without enough recovery.

Your system learned to stay alert because it was necessary. That response made sense at the time.
This lesson is not about changing anything yet.
It is about removing fear and shame from what you're experiencing.

You are not broken.
Your system is tired.

Reflection (optional): note pages included
When did you first notice that things began to feel like “too much” — if anything comes to mind?
You're welcome to stop here.



Lesson 2 — *How Overwhelm Shows Up*

This lesson is optional. You may pause or stop at any time. An overactive nervous system doesn't always look dramatic. Often, it shows up quietly.

You might notice:

- difficulty resting even when tired
- feeling jumpy, irritable, or easily startled
- trouble focusing or making decisions
- looping thoughts or constant scanning
- sudden exhaustion or emotional shutdown

Some people experience tension.

Others experience numbness.

Both are valid responses.

These are not signs of weakness.

They are signs that your system is trying to protect you.

The goal here is not to track or monitor yourself.

It's simply to notice patterns — gently, without judgment.

Awareness creates space.

Nothing more is required.

Reflection (optional): Note page provided

What signals does your body or mind use when it's overloaded?

You're welcome to stop here.



Lesson 3 — Regulation Is Not Relaxation

You may have been told to “calm down,” “relax,” or “think positive.”

For an overwhelmed nervous system, this can actually make things worse.

Regulation does not mean forcing calm.

It means helping your system feel a little safer, a little steadier, a little less on guard.

Trying to relax when your system feels threatened can feel impossible — and that’s not your fault.

Regulation is about settling, not suppressing.
Supporting, not overriding.

Often, the body needs signals of safety before the mind can follow.

Small physical shifts matter more than mindset here.

Nothing dramatic is required.

Reflection (optional):

What happens when you try to force yourself to relax?

You’re welcome to stop here.



Lesson 4 — Gentle Ways to Settle the System

This lesson is optional. You may pause or stop at any time.

You do not need a long routine or special tools to support your nervous system.

Very small actions can help reduce load.

You might experiment with one of the following — or none at all:

- adjusting temperature (warm hands, cool face, fresh air)
- slow, gentle movement rather than stillness
- reducing sensory input (less noise, softer light)
- orienting to your surroundings and noticing what feels safe
- allowing your eyes to rest on something steady or familiar

These are not techniques to master.

They are options to try.

If something helps, even a little, that's enough.

If nothing helps today, that's okay too.

Your system learns through repetition, not effort.

Reflection (optional):

Is there anything that seems to reduce strain without much effort?

You're welcome to stop here.



Lesson 5 — *Living Gently With a Sensitive System*

This lesson is optional. You may pause or stop at any time. A sensitive or tired nervous system does not mean you need a smaller life.

It means you may need:

- more recovery time
- fewer simultaneous demands
- clearer boundaries
- gentler expectations of yourself

Living gently does not mean giving up independence or curiosity.

It means pacing life in a way that allows you to stay present rather than constantly recovering.

Over time, safety grows through consistency — not intensity.

You are allowed to design a life that fits your system, not fight it.

Reflection (optional):

What would it mean to pace yourself without shrinking your life?

You're welcome to stop here



Closing Note

This mini-course does not promise to remove overwhelm.

It offers understanding, permission, and practical support.

Sometimes, that is the most regulating thing of all.

Start where you are.

Return when you need to.

A compliment to the  *Steady Ground* Course that covers 6 key areas for gentle support. For individuals who are 55+, learning to navigate changes in their living situation - to meet them where they are.

***A calm. respectful approach to rebuilding
life after changes.***



A blank, lined page from a notebook. The page is made of a light brown, textured paper with a deckled edge. It features horizontal ruling lines. A yellow cover is visible on the left side, with the word "notes" printed vertically in a brown, sans-serif font. The word "my notes" is written in a brown, cursive script at the top of the page. There is a faint, light blue decorative swirl on the left side of the page.

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