



Your Personal Trigger Map

Recognizing Your Patterns & Personal Vulnerabilities

*Awareness is your power. With awareness comes choice.
With choice comes freedom.*

No labels. No shame. Just honest clarity and God's grace.

Flourish with Rhonda

@flourishwithrhonda • www.flourishwithrhonda.com

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Welcome

Welcome to **Your Personal Trigger Map** — a deep-dive workbook designed to help you identify the specific triggers, patterns, and vulnerabilities unique to your relationship with alcohol.

While many people share common triggers — stress, loneliness, social pressure — your triggers are uniquely yours. This guide helps you map your personal landscape of vulnerability so you can navigate it with awareness and intention.

Cognitive Insight: Awareness interrupts automaticity. When you can NAME your trigger before it activates your response, you create space for conscious choice.

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Feelings Vocabulary Guide

You can't process what you can't identify.

*Many women say they feel "fine" or "stressed" when something much deeper is present.
Use this guide to name what you are truly feeling so you can bring it to God with honesty and intention.*

<i>Sad</i> • Disappointed • Hurt • Lonely • Discouraged • Grieving	<i>Anxious</i> • Worried • Overwhelmed • Uncertain • Restless • Fearful	<i>Angry</i> • Frustrated • Irritated • Resentful • Defensive • Bitter
<i>Ashamed</i> • Embarrassed • Unworthy • Regretful • Inadequate • Self-critical	<i>Joyful</i> • Hopeful • Grateful • Peaceful • Encouraged • Content	<i>Loved & Connected</i> • Accepted • Supported • Valued • Understood • Secure

Pause and Reflect

What emotion am I feeling most strongly today?

What might this emotion be trying to tell me?

What do I need right now?

How can I bring this feeling to God with honesty and grace?

Part 1: Understanding Your Trigger Landscape

What Is a Trigger?

A trigger is any internal or external stimulus that activates your automatic response to reach for alcohol. Triggers can be:

- **Emotional** — stress, loneliness, anxiety, boredom, shame
- **Environmental** — specific places, times, people, events
- **Physical** — hunger, fatigue, hormonal changes
- **Social** — peer pressure, family dynamics, celebrations
- **Habitual** — routine patterns like always drinking on Friday nights
- **Developmental** — childhood wounds, unmet needs, attachment patterns

The Trigger-Craving-Action Loop

X TRIGGER — internal or external cue

-L CRAVING — emotional or physical response

↓ ACTION — reaching for a drink

sL TEMPORARY RELIEF — followed by regret

Your goal is to interrupt this loop at the TRIGGER stage — before the craving takes hold.

Part 2: Your Personal Trigger Map

Exercise 1: Time-Based Triggers

When are you most vulnerable? Consider the patterns across your week.

- What time of day do you most crave a drink?
- Are there specific days of the week that are harder?
- Are there seasons or months when you are more vulnerable?

Your Reflection Space:

Exercise 2: People-Based Triggers

Which people or relationships activate your vulnerabilities? This is not about blaming anyone — it is about recognizing where you need extra awareness.

- Which people make you most likely to reach for a drink?
- Are there specific family members, friends, or colleagues who trigger you?
- Who pressures you to drink? Who enables your drinking?
- Who supports your clarity and growth?

Your Reflection Space:

Exercise 3: Emotion-Based Triggers

This is often the deepest trigger. Alcohol is a numbing agent — it temporarily silences difficult emotions. Understanding which emotions drive your drinking is crucial.

- What are you feeling right before the urge hits?
- Do you drink to escape stress? Loneliness? Shame? Anxiety? Boredom?
- Are there specific emotions that feel unbearable without alcohol?
- What would you feel if you did not numb with alcohol?

Your Reflection Space:

Exercise 4: Situation-Based Triggers

Certain situations or environments can automatically activate your response.

- Are there specific events that trigger you? Parties? Holidays? Dinners out?
- Do certain environments make you more vulnerable?
- Are there situations where you feel social pressure to drink?
- Are there "permission-giving" situations? Like "It's Friday" or "Everyone is drinking"

Your Reflection Space:

Part 3: Childhood Wounds & Developmental Triggers

Your relationship with alcohol did not start in adulthood. It began in childhood. The wounds, unmet needs, and patterns you learned as a child created the vulnerability that alcohol now fills.

Cognitive Insight: When basic emotional needs were not met in childhood — safety, belonging, validation, unconditional love — we learn to seek those needs elsewhere. For many, alcohol becomes the substitute.

Exercise 5: Childhood Wounds & Attachment Patterns

Your attachment style — how you learned to relate to others and manage emotions — was formed in childhood. Understanding this pattern helps you recognize why you reach for alcohol.

- **Secure Attachment:** You felt safe, loved, and supported. You learned to regulate emotions and trust others.
- **Anxious Attachment:** You felt uncertain about love and safety. You may drink to manage anxiety about relationships.
- **Avoidant Attachment:** You learned that emotions were not safe to express. You may drink to numb feelings you learned to suppress.
- **Disorganized Attachment:** You experienced inconsistency, chaos, or trauma. You may drink to manage hypervigilance and fear.
- How would you describe your childhood? Safe? Chaotic? Loving? Neglectful?
- Did your parents respond to your emotional needs or did you learn to suppress emotions?

- Were you encouraged to express feelings or told to toughen up?
- Did you feel safe asking for help or did you learn to handle everything alone?
- How did your parents handle stress, emotions, or difficult situations?

■ Rhonda's Reflection: What I Learned as a Child

Growing up in my home, feelings were not something we talked about. They were something we moved past, pushed down, or simply did not acknowledge. I did not realize it at the time but I was learning a pattern that would follow me for decades.

I mirrored what I saw. When something was hard, you numbed it. You did not sit with it, process it, or bring it into the light. You just kept moving.

What I know now is that God gave us feelings for a reason. They are not weakness. They are not something to be ashamed of or hidden away. They are information. They are the language of our hearts.

I did have one safe place as a child. We had a housekeeper who I felt genuinely safe with. She was kind and present in a way that I treasured. Looking back I realize how much that one safe relationship meant to a little girl who needed to be seen.

If you grew up in a home where feelings were not safe, I want you to know something important. This journal, this process, this community is your safe place now. You are allowed to feel here. You are allowed to be honest here. God is not afraid of your feelings, and neither am I.

Be true to who you are. Your feelings are valid. Processing them is not weakness. It is healing.

— With love and grace, Rhonda

Your Reflection Space:

Exercise 6: Unforgiveness as a Trigger

Unforgiveness is a powerful trigger. When you hold onto resentment, anger, or hurt, you carry a burden that alcohol temporarily relieves. But the relief is temporary — the resentment returns, often stronger.

Unforgiveness is not about condoning what someone did. It is about releasing the burden of carrying their offense. When you do not forgive, you give that person power over your peace.

- **Toward parents:** They did not give me what I needed. They were absent, critical, or hurtful.
- **Toward family members:** They hurt me, enabled my drinking, or judged me.
- **Toward yourself:** I cannot forgive myself for what I have done. I am ashamed of who I was.
- **Toward God:** God let this happen. God did not protect me.
- **Toward others:** They wronged me, betrayed me, or did not understand.
- Who do you struggle to forgive?
- How does holding onto this unforgiveness make you feel?
- When you think about this person or situation, do you reach for a drink?
- What would it feel like to release this burden?
- What is keeping you from forgiving?

■ Rhonda's Reflection: The Freedom of Forgiveness

I want to share something about forgiveness that took me a long time to understand.

I have done the work of forgiving the people who hurt me most deeply. And what I found on the other side of that work was not what I expected. It was not just relief. It was compassion.

I genuinely feel sorry for the people who are not capable of real, true love or the ability to be genuine and authentic. When I think about what their lives must have been like, what their childhoods must have looked like for them to end up that way, I feel sadness for them more than anything else.

That shift from bitterness to compassion was one of the most freeing things I have ever experienced. Because bitterness kept me locked in the pain. Compassion set me free from it.

Holding onto unforgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to get sick. It does not hurt them. It only hurts you. And it keeps you reaching for something to numb the pain of carrying it.

Forgiveness does not mean what happened was okay. It does not mean you have to have that person in your life. It simply means you are choosing to stop letting their actions determine your peace.

You deserve peace. God designed you for it. Let it go so you can walk into the freedom He has for you.

— With love and grace, Rhonda

Colossians 3:13

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Your Reflection Space:

Part 4: Family Drinking Patterns & Intergenerational Patterns

Your family's relationship with alcohol shaped your own. Whether your family drank heavily, abstained completely, or had a complicated relationship with alcohol, you learned something about what alcohol means and does.

- Did your parents or caregivers drink? How much? How often?
- What was the mood or behavior when they drank?
- What messages did you receive about alcohol, explicit or implicit?
- Did you learn to use alcohol to manage emotions by watching your family?
- How do your family's patterns influence your drinking today?

Your Reflection Space:

Part 5: Unmet Emotional Needs

Every child has basic emotional needs: safety, belonging, validation, unconditional love, being heard, being seen. When these needs are not met, we carry a wound. As adults, we seek ways to fill that wound. For many, alcohol becomes the substitute.

- **Safety:** I did not feel physically or emotionally safe.
- **Belonging:** I felt like an outsider. I did not fit in.
- **Validation:** My feelings were not acknowledged. I was not enough.
- **Unconditional Love:** Love felt conditional on my performance.
- **Being Heard:** No one listened to me. My voice did not matter.
- **Being Seen:** I was invisible. No one really knew me.
- **Permission to Feel:** Emotions were not safe. I had to suppress how I felt.
- Which of these needs were NOT met in your childhood?
- What need is alcohol filling now?
- What would it feel like to have that need met in a healthy way?
- Who or what could provide that need now?

Your Reflection Space:

Part 6: Your Trigger Response Plan

Now that you have identified your triggers, it is time to create a plan for how you will respond when they arise.

The Four-Step Response Plan

Step 1: Pause and Name It

When you feel a craving, pause and ask: What triggered this? Is it time-based, people-based, emotion-based, situation-based, or developmental?

Step 2: Feel It, Do Not Fight It

Instead of immediately reaching for a drink, sit with the feeling. What emotion is underneath? What need is it pointing to?

Step 3: Choose Differently

With awareness you have choice. What could you do instead? Call someone? Go for a walk? Journal? Pray? Process the emotion?

Step 4: Reflect and Learn

After you have navigated the trigger, reflect. What did I learn? What worked? What will I do differently next time?

My Top Three Triggers:

1.

What I will do instead:

2.

What I will do instead:

3.

What I will do instead:





Closing Reflection

Your triggers are not your enemy. They are information. They are showing you where you need support, where you need to process emotions, where you need to set boundaries, and where you carry childhood wounds that need healing.

With awareness comes choice. With choice comes freedom.

You are not your triggers. You are the one who can choose to respond differently. And every time you pause, feel, and choose differently, you are rewiring your brain. You are creating new neural pathways. You are healing.

Your transformation did not start yesterday. It started the moment you decided to look honestly at your triggers and your patterns. That is courage. That is wisdom. That is the beginning of freedom.

A Gentle Reframe

Instead of: "I have so many triggers. I will never be free."

Consider: "I am becoming aware of my patterns. Each trigger I recognize is an opportunity to choose differently. My awareness is my power."

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

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*Awareness creates choice.
Choice creates change.
Change creates freedom.
One trigger at a time.*

With love and grace,
Rhonda