

COME BACK TO YOUR BODY

THE MINI GUIDE



*A Gentle Companion for the
Season After Treatment*

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MEDICAL & WELLNESS DISCLAIMER

This guide is for emotional wellness, spiritual support, and educational purposes only.

It does not diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any medical condition.

It is not a substitute for medical advice, oncology care, mental health treatment, or guidance from licensed healthcare providers.

Always consult your oncology team or medical provider regarding new or worsening symptoms, medication or treatment decisions, or physical or mental health concerns.

Any healing practices included (breathwork, grounding, journaling, reflection, etc.) are intended as complementary, supportive tools — not medical treatment.

INTRODUCTION — A SOFT LANDING FOR YOUR HEART

You've been through more than most people will ever understand.

When treatment ends, the world often expects relief, gratitude, and a return to normal.

But inside, many survivors feel quiet, unsettled, foggy, or unsure of who they are now.

If this is you, hear this clearly:
You are not doing anything wrong.
You are not behind.
You are not weak.
You are not broken.

You are in survivorship — a season almost no one prepares you for.

This mini program exists to meet you right where you are.



HOW TO USE THIS MINI GUIDE



You do not need to read this in order.
You do not need to complete it.
You do not need to fix yourself.

This guide is designed to be returned to gently.
Take what helps.

Leave what doesn't.
Come back when you're ready.

If and when you feel ready for deeper exploration, reflection, and support, the full **Survivorship Guide** expands on these themes slowly and intentionally.



01

WHEN YOUR EMOTIONS FEEL TOO BIG (OR TOO MUCH)

*Fear of recurrence · Anxiety · Overwhelm ·
Emotional spiraling*

If no one has said this to you yet, let me be the one:

The emotional crash after cancer is real.

When treatment ends, the adrenaline that carried you starts to drop.

The urgent appointments slow down.
The constant stream of decisions quiets.

And everything your body, mind, and spirit did not have time to feel during treatment... starts to surface.



You might notice sudden waves of anxiety, panic for “no reason,” fear that any sensation means the cancer is back, dread before scans or follow-ups, guilt for not feeling “grateful enough,” shame for not bouncing back, or feeling like you’re “too much” emotionally.

None of this means you’re going backwards.

It means your body is starting to come out of constant emergency mode, and feelings may surface as part of that transition.



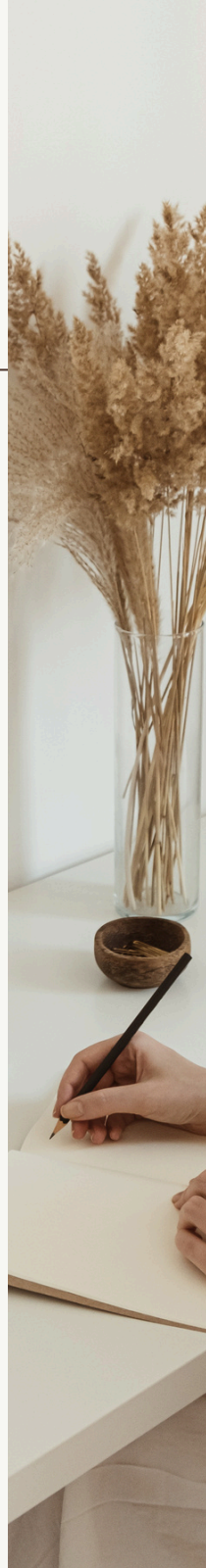
WHY THIS HAPPENS

(Gently Explained)

During treatment, your nervous system was in a form of constant crisis mode.

Your body and brain were focused on the plan, the appointment, the numbers, whether treatment would work — sometimes simply getting through the day.

You survived on adrenaline, fear, instinct, and focus.



WHY THIS HAPPENS

(Gently Explained)

In survival mode, the body prioritizes getting through, not processing.

When the danger state eases, your body finally has space to tell the truth about what happened.

That truth can come out as *tears, numbness, anger, anxiety, fear, or emotional exhaustion*.

This isn't you failing.

This is your nervous system trying to complete the stress cycle — the body's natural process of moving from threat back into safety.

FIGHT / FLIGHT / FREEZE

GROUNDING PRACTICE FOR BIG FEELINGS

Sit or lie somewhere you feel as safe as possible.

Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly.

Let your shoulders drop.

Relax your jaw, even just a little bit.

Let's start to notice your breath, *when you're ready...*

Inhale gently through your nose for a count of four.

Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of six.

Repeat five to eight times.

Quietly remind yourself: **"I am safe right now." "My body is recalibrating." "This feeling is temporary."**

You are not forcing the emotion away.

You are letting your body know it is not alone — you are there, supporting yourself, your nervous system.

WHEN FEAR HITS AT NIGHT



Nighttime can be the hardest — when the world is quiet and your mind gets loud.

“Not every sensation is danger.” “My body is trying to heal, not harm me.” “If this still worries me tomorrow, I can talk to my doctor.” “Right now, I choose as much peace as I can.”

Fear is often a memory of what you’ve been through.

It does not automatically mean something bad is happening now.

JOURNAL PROMPT FOR EMOTIONAL RELEASE



If you have the capacity, write at the top of a page:
“What fear is asking for my attention today?”

Let your pen move without judgment.

Putting fear on paper makes it something you can see
— not something that only lives inside your body.

IF YOU'RE FEELING THIS WAY...

If you're feeling panicked, shaky, overwhelmed, or scared of the future, it doesn't mean you're failing at survivorship.

It means your body is finally telling its truth.

You are not too much.

You are not broken.

You are healing — loudly, messily, and honestly.

Every day looks different.

Be gentle and kind during this healing time.





02

WHEN FATIGUE TAKES OVER & YOU CAN'T GET UP

*Bone-deep exhaustion · Collapse after treatment ·
Wired-but-tired · Feeling “behind”*



If you feel more exhausted now than you did in the middle of treatment, please know:

You're not lazy. You're not unmotivated. You're not "not trying hard enough."

You are coming down from survival mode.

During treatment, your body relied on emergency energy — adrenaline, cortisol, stress hormones, and sheer will.

This kind of energy is powerful, but it is not sustainable.

It is crisis fuel.

When the crisis phase ends, that fuel shuts off.

And what many survivors feel next is collapse.

WHY POST-TREATMENT FATIGUE IS SO INTENSE

Your body is doing deep, invisible work right now.

Even if you look fine on the outside, your system may be repairing tissues and organs, calming an overworked immune system, resetting hormones, recalibrating the nervous system, processing trauma, and releasing stored stress.

This kind of healing happens quietly, internally, and slowly.

Fatigue is not your enemy. It is your body saying:
“I finally have a chance to repair. Please slow down so I can.”

Many survivors struggle here because our culture does not value rest — especially the kind you cannot see or measure.

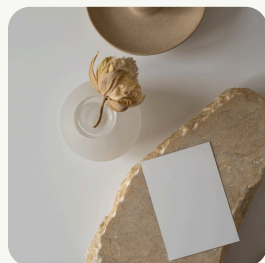
THE SOFT MORNING RESET



- When you wake up, stay in bed for a moment and notice your breath. Slowly sit up without rushing.
- Roll your shoulders gently. Place one hand on your heart and one on your belly.
- Take five slow breaths, exhaling longer than you inhale.
- Whisper to yourself: “My body is healing. My pace is my own.”
- If possible, drink warm water and stretch gently for 30–60 seconds.

MICRO-RESTORATION PACING

Instead of asking how much you can get done today, ask how many micro-rest moments you can give yourself.



Signs you may need a pause include tightness in the chest, brain fog, heaviness in the body, irritability, tired eyes, or the urge to cry or shut down.

When that happens, stop for one minute. *Put your feet on the floor. Inhale through your nose. Exhale with a soft sigh.*

Remind yourself: “I’m allowed to rest before I collapse.”

A TWO-MINUTE VAGUS NERVE RESET

Sit upright with your feet on the ground.

Inhale gently and exhale with a long sigh, repeating four to five times.

Hum softly for 30 seconds to stimulate the vagus nerve.

If available, hold a cool or room-temperature glass against your cheek for 10–15 seconds.



IF YOU FEEL “BEHIND”



Many survivors feel like life moved on while they were surviving.

Your body spent that time keeping you alive, which required a different kind of energy and focus.

You are not on the same timeline as people who have not been through serious illness.

Your only job right now is to do the next gentle thing — not the next impressive or productive thing.

IF YOU'RE FEELING THIS WAY...

If fatigue is knocking you down or you feel guilty for needing so much rest, you are not failing.

You are healing in real time.

Just because you cannot see the work happening does not mean it is not profound.





03

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE ANYMORE

*Identity loss · Numbness · Emotional unraveling ·
Grief for your old self*

One of the quiet griefs of survivorship is this feeling:
“I don’t recognize myself anymore.”

You may look familiar on the outside, but inside, everything feels rearranged.

You might notice feeling disconnected from your old interests, not caring about things you used to love, feeling emotionally flat or numb, feeling like you’re watching your life from the outside, or grieving who you were before — even longing for your old self and the roles you once played.

This experience is deeply unsettling — and deeply common.

It doesn’t mean you’ve disappeared.

It means you’ve been changed by something life-altering.

WHY THIS HAPPENS



Cancer and its treatments don't just affect the body — they interrupt identity.

For a long time, your energy went toward surviving, complying with treatment, managing appointments, making hard decisions, tolerating uncertainty, and trying to stay engaged in day-to-day life.

In that process, many parts of who you were went quiet — turned down or placed on pause.

This isn't because those parts are gone.

It's because your system temporarily reorganized around survival.

WHY THIS HAPPENS

After treatment, when the urgency fades, people often expect their old self to simply return.

But survivorship doesn't work that way.

Instead, many people enter an in-between phase — no longer who they were before, not yet sure who they're becoming.

That space can feel empty, confusing, or unsettling.

And it deserves compassion — not pressure.



ABOUT NUMBNESS

Numbness is not a flaw.

It's often the nervous system's way of saying: **“I need a break from feeling everything at once.”**

When emotions have been intense or prolonged, the body sometimes turns the volume down to protect you.

This doesn't mean you're disconnected forever.

It means your system is pacing itself. It is in protection mode.



GROUNDING WHEN YOU FEEL UNFAMILIAR TO YOURSELF

Place one hand over your chest. Feel the contact.

Take a slow breath. Silently or out loud, remind yourself:

- I am still here.
- I am allowed to change.
- I don't need to know who I am all at once.

Identity doesn't return through force. It re-emerges through safety.



IF YOU'RE FEELING THIS WAY

If you feel lost, numb, or like a stranger to yourself, it doesn't mean you're broken.

It means you are between versions of yourself.

That space is not empty — it's transitional.

You are allowed to move slowly.

You are allowed to grieve who you were.

You are allowed to become someone new in your own time.

Both matter. Both deserve care.





04

WHEN YOUR BRAIN FEELS FOGGY OR SLOW

*Chemo brain · Cognitive fog · Forgetfulness · Slow
processing*

Let's normalize something right now:

Chemo brain and post-treatment brain fog are real.

You are not “making it up.”

You are not just “getting older.”

You didn't suddenly become less intelligent.

You may notice forgetfulness, losing your train of thought mid-sentence, trouble concentrating, reading the same paragraph over and over, feeling mentally “slow” or fuzzy, or struggling to multitask like before.



WHY THIS IS HAPPENING

Your brain has been dealing with toxic stress, potential treatment effects, sleep disruption, emotional overload, ongoing vigilance, and constant planning and re-planning.

When the nervous system stays in fight-or-flight for a long time, the brain diverts energy away from higher-level functions like memory, focus, and creativity and toward survival.

This isn't damage — it's adaptive protection.

Deep inside, the body prioritizes pathways that keep you alive and temporarily turns down others.

Your brain worked unbelievably hard to help you survive.

Now it needs time, safety, and gentleness to recover.

GENTLE COGNITIVE RESET

When your brain feels stuck, look around and name three things you can see, two things you can hear, and one thing your body is touching.

Then take one slow breath, intentional big inhale, with slow exhale. repeat if it feels good

This brings you out of mental fog and back into your body and the present moment.



SOFT SELF-TALK FOR FOGGY DAYS

Instead of asking what is wrong with me or telling yourself you can't think, try gently reminding yourself:

“My brain is healing.”

“I survived something huge.”

“Slow is still progress.”

Your brain hears how you speak to it.

Kindness is not fluff — it is nervous system medicine.



NOTICING THOUGHT LOOPS

Brain fog often triggers repetitive thoughts like: “What’s wrong with me?” or “I should be better by now.”

These are stress responses, not truths.

When you notice one, pause and name it gently: “This is a stress thought.”

Then offer a softer alternative: **“My brain is recovering.” or “I am allowed to go slowly.”**



REFLECTION (OPTIONAL)

You may write, think, or simply notice:

- What does my brain need more of right now?
- What helps me feel mentally supported, even a little?
- What would I say to someone I love on a foggy day?



IF YOU'RE FEELING THIS WAY

If you're forgetting things, losing words, or feeling mentally slower than you used to, it doesn't mean you're broken.

It means your brain is recovering from a massive workload.

You are allowed to take things one thought at a time.





05

WHEN YOU FEEL MISUNDERSTOOD OR ALONE

*Feeling unsupported · Being misunderstood ·
Pressure to be “back to normal”*

One of the most painful parts of survivorship is feeling like everyone else moved on, while you're still in it.

At first, people may have checked in frequently, brought meals, asked for updates, or offered support.

As treatment ended, many people stopped asking as much, assumed you were better now, or expected you to bounce back.

For many survivors, this season is actually harder in ways people don't see.



WHY PEOPLE PULL AWAY (EVEN IF THEY CARE)

Most people are not taught how to sit with long-term pain. They may feel helpless or unsure of what to say.

Some assume no news is good news, or are afraid to ask.

Others want the story to have a happy ending and believe the hardest part was treatment itself.

None of this makes your experience less real.

It simply means there can be a gap between your reality and their understanding.

SOFT BOUNDARY SCRIPT

When someone expects more from you than you can give right now, you can say:

**“I’m still healing in ways that aren’t visible.
I don’t have the energy I used to, but I care
about staying connected.**

I just need to move more slowly right now.”

This is gentle but clear.
You are not attacking
— you are informing.



WHEN SOMEONE MINIMIZES WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH

If someone says, “At least it’s over,” or “You look great, you must feel so much better now,” you might respond:

“I’m grateful treatment is over, but this season is actually harder in ways people don’t see.”

You do not owe anyone a detailed explanation if you don’t have the energy.

Even one sentence can reset the tone.

WHEN YOU FEEL ALONE

You are not too needy. You are not dramatic. You are not a burden.

You are a human being who went through something life-altering and is now living with the quiet aftermath.



IF YOU'RE FEELING THIS WAY

If you feel misunderstood, unsupported, or like your needs are too much, nothing is wrong with you.

It means your reality deserves compassion — especially from you.



A GENTLE SUPPORT PRACTICE

- Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly.
- Take a slow breath in through your nose, and a longer exhale through your mouth.
- Silently say: “It makes sense that I feel this way.”
- Repeat once or twice, letting your body settle.
- This is not about fixing anything.
- It is about allowing grace and understanding to calm your nervous system.





06

WHEN THE FUTURE FEELS UNCERTAIN

*Fear of moving forward · Pressure to rebuild ·
Unclear next steps*

When you spend months or years living in survival mode, your brain adapts.

You learn to think in short-term windows — this week, this scan, this surgery.

The future can feel blurry because the present has been so loud.

When treatment ends, people may ask what's next, whether you're going back to work, or if you're excited to move on.

Inside, you may feel scared to plan, afraid to hope, or overwhelmed because the ground doesn't feel solid yet.

THE GENTLE RECLAIMING OF LIFE

You do not have to design your whole future.

You only need to gently re-enter one part of life at a time.

Ask yourself: **What is one area I feel even slightly curious or open about right now?**

It might be exploring a hobby, reconnecting with one supportive friend, adding one small wellness rhythm, or allowing yourself a few minutes a day to imagine stability.

Keep it small. Keep it kind.



A GENTLE CLOSING

If your future feels blurry, frightening, or overwhelming, it does not mean you don't have one.

It means your nervous system is still learning that the danger has changed shape — and that safety can be built slowly.

You only need the next soft step — not the whole staircase.

