

TRAUMA WHISPERS BEFORE IT ROARS

Companion Workbook

Chapter 12: The Pandemic as a Global Trauma Stone

Pre-publication Draft

This is a living document.

Changes will be implemented as suggestions arrive.

Changes made since last update:

- Early and advance reader (free) copies printed prior to launch date of 8/12/26 may not match the page numbers noted in the workbook. Readers may need to look for the content on neighboring pages.

Last updated: September 26, 2026

How to Give Feedback

Complete this chapter packet, then visit the OneEmprima.com/books/ or use the QR code on page 21 of your book to access the online feedback form and share your thoughts.

Let us know what helped in the book or workbook, what felt unclear, where you needed more room, and what you want to see included in the future editions of the book or companion workbook.



Check in before you begin. Where are you on the Roar Scale?

If you're at a 5 or above, turn to your Stand-Down Kit before continuing.

Why We Do This Work

The pandemic happened to all of us, but it did not happen to all of us in the same way.

Some people lost someone they loved. Others lost jobs, businesses, relationships, routines, milestones, physical touch, community, trust, or years they expected their lives to look very different.

Some people were terrified. Some were angry. Some were lonely. Some found relief in having permission to stay home. Some were expected to keep showing up while the rest of the world shut down.

And then, eventually, the world started moving again. Years passed and time went on, but that did not necessarily mean everything inside us moved with it.

We do this work because some experiences have a clear before and after. The pandemic was harder to locate. Things disappeared slowly. Rules changed repeatedly. Important moments passed differently than we expected them to. Some losses were grieved. Others barely had names.

This chapter is not asking you to decide what should have happened, who was right, or how anyone else should feel about that period.

It is asking something much more personal:

What happened to you?

And is there anything from that time that you never really got to put down?

Which parts of your life changed enough to leave something behind? Check any that apply.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Safety | ☐ Work, career, or purpose | ☐ Identity |
| ☐ Physical touch | ☐ School or education | ☐ Anger |
| ☐ Connection or belonging | ☐ Parenting or caregiving | ☐ Time or missed milestones |
| ☐ Trust | ☐ Relationships | ☐ Trust in institutions or authority |
| ☐ Grief | ☐ Faith or worldview | ☐ Something else: |
| ☐ Health or your relationship with your body | ☐ Financial security | ----- |

Circle the one that still feels the least complete.

Awareness & Alignment Prompts

1. What changed most in your everyday life?
2. Who or what did you miss most?
3. What feeling do you most associate with that period?
4. What did you get used to that once felt strange?
5. What never completely returned to the way it was before?

Examples:

Friendships.

Faith/worship attendance.

Feeling safe in crowds.

Going out drinking and dancing.

Being in the same working space as coworkers.

My business.

My relationship with my parents.

My marriage.

Me.

Additional Journal Prompts

1. What did you lose during the pandemic that you never thought of as something you were allowed to grieve?
2. What important moment happened differently than you expected: a birth, death, graduation, wedding, birthday, retirement, deployment, homecoming, diagnosis, goodbye, or something else? What was missing from that moment?
3. Who were you expected to be during that period? Who actually took care of you?
4. When life began moving again, what did other people seem ready to move past that you weren't finished with yet?

EXERCISE 1

What Changed, What Returned, What Didn't

When enough things change at once, we don't always have time to understand each loss separately. We adjust because we have to.

Work moves home. School closes. Someone gets sick. Visits stop. Holidays change. Money gets tighter. Touch becomes complicated. Plans disappear. We learn new rules and then learn another set when those change.

Eventually, many parts of life return. But “returned” and “repaired” are not the same thing.

This exercise is meant to help you see what changed, what came back, and what may still be waiting for acknowledgment.

Think of each area below like a gas tank. Using 0–100%, estimate how much of what you needed was available to you before, during, and after the pandemic. Then check whether that part of your life returned fully, returned in a different or more adaptive form, or never fully returned.

For example, you may have already been burned out from a toxic job, so work before the pandemic may have been at 10%. When you were allowed to work from home, it may have risen to a tolerable 50%. That change may have given you enough time and energy to find a job that better fit your needs, bringing work to 70% afterward.

	Before	During	After	Returned Fully (in some form)	Never Returned (or partially)
Household/Family Relationships					
Social Relationships					
Work/School					
Home					
Health/Body/Weight					
Community					
Touch/Connection					
Routines					
Trust					
Sense of Time					
Planning for the Future					
Purpose					



1. Which answer surprised you most?
2. What have you been calling “back to normal” that actually became something different?

Not every change during the pandemic was a loss. Some changes showed us what had not been working long before the world shut down.

The pandemic changed parts of my life for the better, too. Before it, most of my work and relationships were geographically close to me. Once so much of the world moved online, I began meeting and working with people in countries I may never have encountered otherwise. My world got physically smaller for a while, but in another way, it became much larger.

I also started writing *Trauma Whispers Before It Roars* during the pandemic. Had that period of my life unfolded differently, I don't know that you and I would be meeting on these pages today.

That doesn't erase what the pandemic cost me or anyone else. It simply means that something difficult can change the direction of our lives in ways that aren't entirely negative.

EXERCISE 2

The Ending That Never Happened

Human beings mark transitions.

We gather. We hug. We sit beside hospital beds. We attend funerals. We celebrate graduations. We welcome babies. We retire from jobs. We say goodbye. We stand beside people when something important begins or ends.

During the pandemic, many of those moments happened differently or did not happen at all.

Life continued anyway.

This exercise is not about recreating the past. It is about recognizing whether something important happened without the acknowledgment, witness, ritual, or ending you needed.

What happened?

What should have happened around it?

Who should have been there?

What did you need to say, hear, do, receive, celebrate, mourn, or witness?

What part of that still matters now?

Does this need repair, remembrance, acknowledgment, ritual, or simply permission to finally call it a loss?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Repair | ☐ Celebration |
| ☐ Remembrance | ☐ Conversation |
| ☐ Acknowledgment | ☐ Nothing more; I simply needed to name it |
| ☐ Ritual | ☐ Something else: _____ |
| ☐ Grief | |

EXERCISE 3

The All-Clear

There was no single day when everyone stepped outside and the pandemic was over.

There was no universal finish line. No school bell indicating the end of the day. No giant “Alarm Black” announcement like the ones that blast over the speakers on the military base in Baghdad telling us the danger had passed.

Instead, doors opened at different times. Rules changed. People returned to work, school, restaurants, airports, churches, gyms, family gatherings, and ordinary life at different speeds.

Your calendar may have moved forward before every part of you understood that the conditions had changed.

This exercise asks you to notice what your nervous system may still be preparing for.



What became normal for you during the pandemic?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Staying home | ☐ Preparing for shortages | ☐ Distrusting people |
| ☐ Avoiding crowds | ☐ Working from home | ☐ Distrusting institutions |
| ☐ Keeping distance | ☐ Being alone | ☐ Expecting bad news |
| ☐ Monitoring symptoms | ☐ Being constantly available to others | ☐ Avoiding making important plans |
| ☐ Expecting plans to change | ☐ Watching for danger | ☐ Other: _____ |

Which of these still serves your life today and which no longer needs to be on duty?

Evidence That Life Has Changed: Name three things that are true today that were not true during the period you were most braced.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What can your body safely stop preparing for?

This Chapter Was Intended to Help You...

...give language to a period of your life that may have been easier to survive than to understand while you were living through it.

The pandemic was shared, but your experience of it was personal.

You may have discovered losses you never called losses. Changes you adapted to so quickly that you never stopped to ask what they cost you. Important moments that happened without the people, rituals, touch, celebration, witness, or endings you expected.

You may also have discovered things you gained.

A slower pace. A different priority. More time with someone you love. Permission to leave something that was no longer working. A different relationship with work, home, family, health, or yourself.

Both can be true.

The purpose of this chapter was never to tell you how you should feel about the pandemic.

It was to help you notice what your life and body learned while you were living through it, what still belongs with you, and what may finally be ready to hear:

You do not have to pretend everything went back to normal. It didn't. But you can begin showing your body what is no longer happening.