

# TRAUMA WHISPERS BEFORE IT ROARS

## Companion Workbook

### Chapter 5: Trauma Lives in Your Home

*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.
- Renamed chapter in book and workbook to Trauma Lives in Your Home
- Added more exercises
- Removed extra spaces in journal prompts since people are using backside of printed pages or a journal. Each question will be a separate page in the companion workbook.
- Changed website link to [OneEmprima.com/traumawhispers/](https://OneEmprima.com/traumawhispers/)

*Last updated: September 17, 2026*

### How to Give Feedback

Complete this chapter packet, then visit [OneEmprima.com/traumawhispers/](https://OneEmprima.com/traumawhispers/) 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.*

## Awareness & Alignment Prompts

1. How much of what you noticed is within your control to change *in this moment*, and how much is not? Be honest about your current capacity, finances, health, time, support, and living circumstances. This will help you assess your home with clear eyes rather than unrealistic expectations. If the roof is leaking but you cannot afford to repair it, that is a financial obstacle, not evidence of a hidden trauma block. What is truly within your control right now?

Complete the exercises before answering the next two questions.

2. What is one small change you can make to bring your home into the present moment? It could be moving furniture, discarding or donating old items, repurposing items, painting a room a new color. You get to choose.
3. If your home no longer needed to impress, protect, or apologize to anyone, what would you change? What is on your “I wish I could, but I can’t” list? For some, it’s having a painting easel or a treadmill in the living room instead of a couch. For others, it’s brighter paint on the walls or mismatched furniture. Is it truly impossible, or have you simply never given yourself permission to consider that you can?

## Additional Journal Prompts

Complete the exercises before answering the questions.

1. Which room or object produced the strongest response in your nervous system? List the things that caused a reaction: your nervous system to cringed, face to contorted, or body froze. What does that room or item hold, remember, or prevent? Describe what that items or room means to you.
2. If a therapist, friend, or trusted person walked through your home (with the intent of being able to hold up a mirror to you without any judgment) what might they see that you could not? *page 134*
  - a. Do you have more locks, cameras, lights, or other security measures than are typical in your neighborhood? Do they respond to a current risk, a past lack of safety, or both?
  - b. Whose comfort is prioritized in your home? Where have you arranged your space around someone else's preferences, moods, needs, or reactions?
  - c. What standards were you taught a "good" home should meet? When your home does not meet those standards, whose voice do you hear? What does it say?
  - d. Does every person in your household have evidence that they belong there? Who has the most physical space? Who has the least?

Are you ready to share your findings with your therapist, a friend, or trusted person?

## EXERCISE 1

### The Walkthrough, *starting on page 136*

**Note #1:** Your home is not evidence for a diagnosis or a judgment about your worth. It is a living environment that may reveal what your nervous system has learned to hold, hide, repeat, or protect. It may also reflect a busy lifestyle, children, physical limitations, financial restrictions, and other realistic restrictions. This isn't a space of right and wrong; this chapter exists to show you what may be whispering, not resentment for resources you do not have access to.

Walk slowly through each space in your home. Ask gentle questions, not to judge, but to translate what your space may be whispering. Notice how you feel as you enter each room, then pay attention to the individual objects within it.

You may find a box of military gear, old uniforms, athletic trophies, or photographs from a time when you felt proud, capable, or fully yourself—and realize you have not felt that way in a long time.

Move through each room with care. Notice what draws your attention, what you avoid looking at, and what changes in your body, thoughts, or emotions. Let your nervous system guide the discovery without pressuring yourself to understand or change anything yet.

**Note #2:** This walkthrough is not meant to be completed in one sitting. It may take several hours, days, or weeks to complete. That's okay. There is no right pace, only your pace. Stopping after one room and returning later can be embodied wisdom. You can come back to this exercise even if you have continued reading the book.



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

Start the walkthrough at the edge of the property. This might be the parking lot of your apartment building or the sidewalk in front of your house.

Observe your nervous system's overall response as you walk toward the entrance.

Check in again just before entering your personal space. This might be the front, side, or garage door you use to enter your home, or the main entrance to your apartment building.

What does your body do at each stage?

- Does it become harder to breathe? Does your chest ache? Do your shoulders drop in defeat, tense in anticipation, or soften with relief?

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- Do you exhale in relief? Do you breathe better? Do you feel a sense of “I’m finally home?”
- Do you have no reaction at all? You do not need to force a feeling.

| Space                 | My unfiltered initial response | What I noticed after I became aware of it |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Approaching the home  |                                |                                           |
| Entering the home     |                                |                                           |
| Living room           |                                |                                           |
| Kitchen               |                                |                                           |
| Your bedroom          |                                |                                           |
| Your primary bathroom |                                |                                           |

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| Space                          | My unfiltered initial response | What I noticed after I became aware of it |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Bedroom closet or storage area |                                |                                           |
| Garage or other space          |                                |                                           |
| Attic or other space           |                                |                                           |
| Basement or other space        |                                |                                           |
| Exterior                       |                                |                                           |

## THE PEACEFUL AND THE HEAVY

After completing your walkthrough (even if it took days or weeks), reflect:

Three spaces that felt PEACEFUL or PLAYFUL:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Three spaces that felt HEAVY:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Three items in your home that YOU LOVE AND CHERISH:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Three items that you are ready to get rid of right now!

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Three things you can change to feel more at home (like building custom garage cabinets).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE 2

### Present Obstacle, Personal Preference, or Past Pattern?

It's been said before, and it will be said again: your home is information, not indictment. Before interpreting anything, separate what is happening now from what may have been carried forward from the past.

This exercise is designed to bring awareness to trauma that *might* be reflected in your living environment. The same object, behavior, or arrangement can mean something different in every household and even to different people living in the same household.

Account for disability, poverty, caregiving, grief, culture, neurodivergence, chronic illness, limited space, rented housing, shared living, a demanding season, personal preference, and what genuinely brings you joy. These are not details to dismiss. They are part of the context. Context keeps awareness from becoming self-judgment.

Look for patterns that may reflect a nervous system still responding to an earlier time. One way to recognize a past pattern is to ask:

If the original wound healed, would I naturally use, arrange, or experience this space differently?

#### Example 1: An overloaded refrigerator

**Present obstacle:** You are feeding a large household, caring for someone, preparing for an event, or making fewer shopping trips because of your schedule, health, transportation, or budget.

**Personal preference:** You enjoy having choices, cooking in batches, buying in bulk, or keeping a well-stocked kitchen.

**Possible past pattern:** You keep more food than your household could reasonably use because an earlier version of you remembers hunger, instability, deprivation, or never knowing when food would be available again. Discarding expired food creates anxiety, guilt, or fear.

**Ask yourself:** Does the amount of food support my present life, or is part of my nervous system still preparing for a shortage that is no longer happening?

#### Example 2: A closet filled with oversized clothing

**Present obstacle:** Your clothing reflects your job, climate, current health, changing body, finances, or what is practically available to you.

**Personal preference:** Oversized clothes are comfortable, functional, or genuinely part of your style.

**Possible past pattern:** The clothing helps you hide your face, body, shape, gender expression, scars, weight, sexuality, or identity because being seen once felt unsafe.

**Ask yourself:** Am I wearing this because it feels like me, or because disappearing inside it still feels safer than being seen?

### Example 3: Multiple locks, cameras, lights, or barriers

**Present obstacle:** You face a current safety concern, live in an area where additional security is reasonable, or have been advised to take specific precautions.

**Personal preference:** Security systems help you feel prepared and do not interfere with your daily life.

**Possible past pattern:** Your surroundings are currently safe, but your nervous system continues building protection against a danger that belonged to an earlier home, relationship, deployment, neighborhood, or period of life.

**Ask yourself:** What current threat is this protecting me from? If there is no current threat, what earlier danger might my body still be expecting?

### Example 4: Laundry baskets, furniture, or objects surrounding the bed

**Present obstacle:** The room is small, storage is limited, mobility needs affect the arrangement, or the setup is temporary.

**Personal preference:** You like having needed items close and the arrangement feels comfortable.

**Possible past pattern:** The objects create distance, barriers, or an early warning system that helps your body feel protected while sleeping.

**Ask yourself:** Is this arrangement convenient, or is it also guarding me? What happens in my body when I imagine the path to my bed being completely clear?

### Example 5: Family photographs that have not been updated

**Present obstacle:** Printing and framing photographs has not been a priority during a demanding season.

**Personal preference:** You value older photographs and enjoy keeping them displayed.

**Possible past pattern:** The photographs preserve the last period when your family felt intact, safe, successful, connected, or recognizable. Updating them may require acknowledging a death, divorce, estrangement, changed body, aging child, or version of life that has ended.

**Ask yourself:** Am I preserving a memory I love, or am I keeping my home emotionally paused at a time I am not ready to leave?

For each object, room, or arrangement that catches your attention, consider:

1. What practical circumstances explain this?
2. Is this a genuine preference that supports me or brings me joy?
3. Does my body react as though this object or arrangement is doing a protective job?
4. What earlier experience might have made this pattern necessary?
5. If that earlier wound healed, what might naturally change in this space?
6. What, if anything, is within my control to change *in this moment*?

You do not have to alter your home simply because you recognize a pattern. Awareness comes first. Sometimes the most aligned action is changing something. Sometimes it is understanding why it is there. And sometimes it is honoring that your current circumstances, not your trauma, are shaping the space.

| What I notice | What best explains it | What is within my control right now |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
|               |                       |                                     |
|               |                       |                                     |
|               |                       |                                     |
|               |                       |                                     |
|               |                       |                                     |
|               |                       |                                     |
|               |                       |                                     |



### EXERCISE 3

## Stone Soup Recipe, *page 144*

In the Stone Soup story, the stone may have brought people to the stock pot, but it was not what nourished them. Nourishment came from the ingredients each person contributed and from the experience of gathering.

Consider the recipe items you need in your life and compare that to the items you currently have. What ingredients would make it more nourishing for you?



### My Personal Recipe for Human Connection

A generous helping of:

A steady supply of:

A little more:

Much less:

The ingredient I have been craving:

The ingredient that is hardest for me to find:

The ingredients I can offer others:

Look at your recipe. Are the people gathered around your life capable of helping you create it? What ingredient could you ask for instead of continuing to hope someone will know you need it?

**EXERCISE 4 (OPTIONAL)**

## Hosting & Attending Stone Soup Supper

**STONE SOUP HOST HOME PREPARATION:**

1. Start with ONE trusted friend who has also read Chapter 5
2. Both of you bring your copy of the book and workbook
3. Decide whose home you'll walk through first
4. Prepare a simple meal to share afterward
5. Set a timer for 15, 30, or 45 minutes per home, maximum 90 minutes total per day

The code phrase to initiate: "Up for some Stone Soup?"

The code phrase to break or end the exercise: "The Soup is Getting Cold."

## STONE SOUP WITNESS GUIDE

*When you are the WITNESS walking through your friend's home*

### Ground Rules

- ☐ I will observe without fixing. ("I notice..." not "You should...")
- ☐ I will ask curious questions. ("What does this space feel like to you?" not "Why is this here?")
- ☐ I will reflect, not judge. ("This room feels heavy" not "This room is a mess")
- ☐ I will hold space, not hold court. My job is witnessing, not advising.

**Once you identify a room or item that has a constricting reaction, ask the modified Inner Awareness Questions specific to this situation:**

1. What does this object or space represent to you?
2. Where does this feeling/pattern originate?
3. How long has it been this way?
4. How might keeping the room this way, or holding on to the item be helping you?  
(Remember, it's helping, otherwise we would be doing something different. We keep it until we have awareness to move to something better.)
5. What would be the most helpful action I can take as the witness to support you?

If they are unsure, give them some options to pick from or add your own:

- Having you hold up an inexpensive full-size mirror up so they can see how their face and body reacts when holding an object or seeing a room.
- Repeating the exact words that your friend uses to describe the object or room, so they can hear it come back to them like an echo.
- Being the one to hold the object because it might be too hard to for your friend to carry the responsibility of touching it.
- Suggesting other ways the object can be used to change how the body reacts (such as repainting an end table a different color, replacing it with an equal but different item, etc.)
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