

TRAUMA WHISPERS BEFORE IT ROARS

Companion Workbook

Chapter 8: Childhood Trauma

The Classroom of First Wounds

Pre-publication Draft

This is a living document.

Changes will be implemented as suggestions arrive.

Changes made since last update:

- Early and advance reader copies printed before the August 12, 2026, launch may not match the page numbers noted in this workbook. Readers may need to look for the referenced content on neighboring pages.

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How to Give Feedback

Complete this chapter packet, then visit <https://oneemprima.com/traumawhispers/> or use the QR code on page 21 of your book to access the online feedback forms to share your thoughts on the book and workbook.

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. When you needed comfort, protection, nourishment, attention, or help, what usually happened?
2. Which quality in you may be more than a personality trait and instead be an adaptation that once kept you safe?
3. Who, if anyone, saw beyond your behavior and recognized what you were carrying? What did their presence change? If no one did, what would you have needed a safe witness to notice, say, or do?
4. What curiosity, play, imagination, or interest became quieter while your attention was focused on staying safe or managing the emotional climate around you? Where does that part of you still try to return?

Complete Exercise 1, then rank your three most prominent adaptations from childhood and compare them with your top three today. Which adaptation was most prominent in childhood? Which is most prominent in adulthood?

Childhood	Now
1.	
2.	
3.	

Additional Journal Prompts

1. What messages did your early environment teach you about love, safety, needs, belonging, or worth? What would you say to the child who learned that message?
2. Complete Exercise 2. Which adaptation has cost you the most? It may not be your dominant adaptation, but it may be the most emotionally costly. What has that cost been financially, interpersonally, socially, physically, emotionally, or in another area of your life?

EXERCISE 1 – EXTENDED FROM BOOK

Childhood Adaptation Map

Childhood trauma is not only what happened. It is also how you had to adapt to find whatever safety was available. On page 193 of the book, you explored one childhood adaptation and what it protected you from. This exercise widens the lens. Map the adaptations that shaped you, compare how they operated in childhood, and notice which ones remain active today. Skip what does not apply to you.

The younger you adapted before they had adult language, power, or options. This exercise asks what the adaptation protected—not what was wrong with the child who needed it.

Do not force a memory or fill every row. Record only what feels true. Several adaptations may have worked together, and the same behavior may have served different purposes in different environments.

Adaptation (and age you first learned to use it)	How it appeared in childhood (behaviors, beliefs)	What it helped you survive in childhood	Where it appears now (What is it costing you?)
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Shrinking

**Performing or
overachieving**

Pleasing or fawning

Silencing

Adaptation (and age you first learned to use it)	How it appeared in childhood (behaviors, beliefs)	What it helped you survive in childhood	Where it appears now (What is it costing you?)
Disappearing, freezing, or going numb			
Over-giving or becoming the emotional parent			
Bracing or staying hyper-aware			
Becoming self- sufficient too early			
Another adaptation			

EXERCISE 2

Early Messages and Adult Echoes

Children often absorb patterns before they can consciously interpret them. The message you carried forward may not have been spoken aloud. It may have been learned through repetition, silence, punishment, withdrawal, inconsistency, or the emotional atmosphere of the home.

Separate what the child concluded from what the adult can understand now. The childhood message made sense in the environment where it formed. It does not have to remain the rule.

Message you learned	How you learned it	How it echoes in your adult life	What you know or want to practice now
Love must be earned			
Safety is unpredictable			
Silence keeps me safe			
My needs are too much			
Rest has to be earned			
Other people's emotions are my responsibility			
Calm means something bad is coming			
Other message			

EXERCISE 3

Meet Your Loyal Guardian

You met fight, flight, freeze, and fawn in Chapter 3. On page 118 in Chapter 4, you encountered the Trauma Stones as loyal guardians that remained on duty long after the original emergency ended. Chapter 8 returns to those guardians through the adaptations that first took on protective roles in childhood.

You are here to give one of your loyal guardians an identity (or all, if you wish). Imagine it as a superhero, mythological figure, military guard, shape-shifter, creature, or avatar.

What does it look like? What does it call itself?

Use this chart as an example to create your own based on your interests and beliefs.

Adaptation	Superhero-style	Mythic title	Fantasy role
Fawning <i>sensing what everyone needs before they say it</i>	The Room Reader	The Keeper of Harmony	The Court Bard
Freezing or disappearing <i>helping you become quiet, still, or difficult to find when being noticed felt dangerous</i>	The Vanishing Veil	The Keeper of the Hidden Flame	The Shadow-Walker
Fighting or controlling <i>determined never to let anyone catch you unprepared again</i>	The Front-Line Defender	The Warden of the Iron Gate	The Fortress Paladin
Hypervigilance <i>always scanning the horizon and preparing for what could go wrong</i>	Captain Forecasting	The Far-Seeing Sentinel	The Watchtower Oracle

These guardians are not villains. Each one developed a power that helped you survive, belong, avoid harm, or preserve connection. But every superpower can cause harm when it remains activated in an environment where it is no longer needed.

Design Your Guardian

1. What is your guardian's name? It should have a cool name.
2. What does your guardian look like? Male, female, non-gendered, humanoid? Describe its clothing, posture, expression, armor, tools, colors, symbols, functions, or surroundings.
3. What is its superpower?
4. When did it first go on duty? You do not need an exact memory. Describe the type of environment or situation it learned to manage.
5. What was its original mission? What was it trying to protect, prevent, preserve, or help you survive?
6. What activates it now? What does it notice before the rest of you recognizes that something feels unsafe?
7. What has this guardian done well? What strength, skill, wisdom, or capacity did it help you develop?
8. What collateral damage does its power create when it takes over your adult life? What's the cost?
9. What does this guardian need to understand about your life, resources, relationships, or authority now?
10. If it no longer had to perform its original mission, what new assignment could use the same power without repeating the old survival pattern?

A Message to Your Guardian

Complete the following statements.

Thank you for protecting me by:

You first went on duty when:

You helped me survive, preserve, or protect:

You do not have to disappear. But you no longer have to:

Your new assignment is: