

TRAUMA WHISPERS BEFORE IT ROARS

Companion Workbook

Chapter 14: The Six Layers of Belonging

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: October 1, 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 first three sections of the book examined what happened to you. You traced your whispers, named your stones, listened to your body, and met parts of yourself that may have been waiting a long time to be seen.

Chapter 14 turns the work outward.

Your healing does not end with you.

Every person you share space with is already feeling some version of your nervous system. Your children. Your partner. Your coworkers. The stranger in the doctor's waiting room. When you change, the invisible web between you changes too. Some people will rise to meet you. Others will resist. Either way, the terms of the relationship begin to change.

The Six Layers of Belonging give that ripple a map: Self, Household, Friends & Family, Community, Nation, and Belief System. Each layer holds a piece of the safety, identity, and connection every human being needs. When a layer fractures, it hardens. It keeps trying to protect you, but it mutes love, joy, and purpose in the process. When it begins to heal, it becomes your first field of impact.

I know what it feels like when the layers break. Mine fractured one after another: my body and mind, my marriage, my friends and family, my veteran community, my country, and finally my beliefs. In the rubble, I began to see what I couldn't see while the layers were intact. Each one served a purpose. And each one, when restored, became a bridge for someone else to cross.

This chapter also asks you to look honestly at how you care for people. Tend-and-Befriend can be one of the most beautiful parts of being human: gathering, protecting, sharing the load. But when trauma shapes it, care can blur into overgiving, caretaking that costs you, or loyalty to people who harm you. We need each other, but we do not need to disappear to belong.

And it asks you to find your sector of influence. Not the whole world. The territory your daily life actually touches. A classroom. A kitchen. A team meeting. A group chat. The people your presence affects don't care whether your sector reaches twelve people or twelve million. They care about consistency.

You don't have to heal the world. You have to heal for the rooms you actually walk into.

That is where your healing stops being only yours.



Awareness & Alignment Prompts

1. As you read Chapter 14, which of your six layers did your body respond to first? What did that response feel like?
2. Who is already feeling the ripple of your healing, whether or not you have said a word?
3. Where in your life has care become compulsory instead of chosen?
4. Where do you feel useful in a way that fills your cup and theirs? Where do you feel used?



Additional Journal Prompts

1. The son story: Think of a relationship where you have been waiting for the other person to change. What might shift if you focused on your own boundaries, responses, and energy instead? Who might rise to meet you? Who might resist?
2. The September 11 story: Think about a time helplessness filled your body and had nowhere to go. Where did that energy end up? Did you choose your sector of influence, or did dysregulation choose it for you?
3. The spaghetti dinners: What is your version of a pot of spaghetti? What can you offer that your nervous system, skills, and circumstances can genuinely hold?
4. The Bridge Builder: The old man had already crossed the chasm. He built the bridge anyway, for someone who would come after him. What chasm have you crossed that someone behind you still has to face?



EXERCISE 1

Your Belonging Blueprint

At the end of Chapter 14, the Somatic Practice asks you to add what you notice to your Six Layers diagram in your workbook. This is that diagram, with more room than the book could give you.

You can map all six layers at once, or come back to one layer at a time. There is no right pace here.

Step 1: BREATHE THROUGH IT.

Place one hand on your heart and one on your belly. Starting with Self, move outward through each ring as you breathe. Notice where your breath flows easily and where it catches or feels heavy.

Step 2: MARK THE CRACKS.

Draw a jagged crack across any ring that still feels fractured.

Step 3: SHADE THE HEALING.

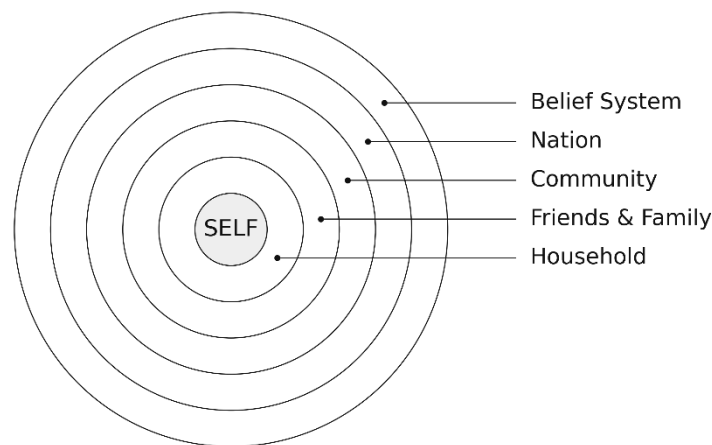
Shade in any ring, or part of a ring, where healing has already taken hold.

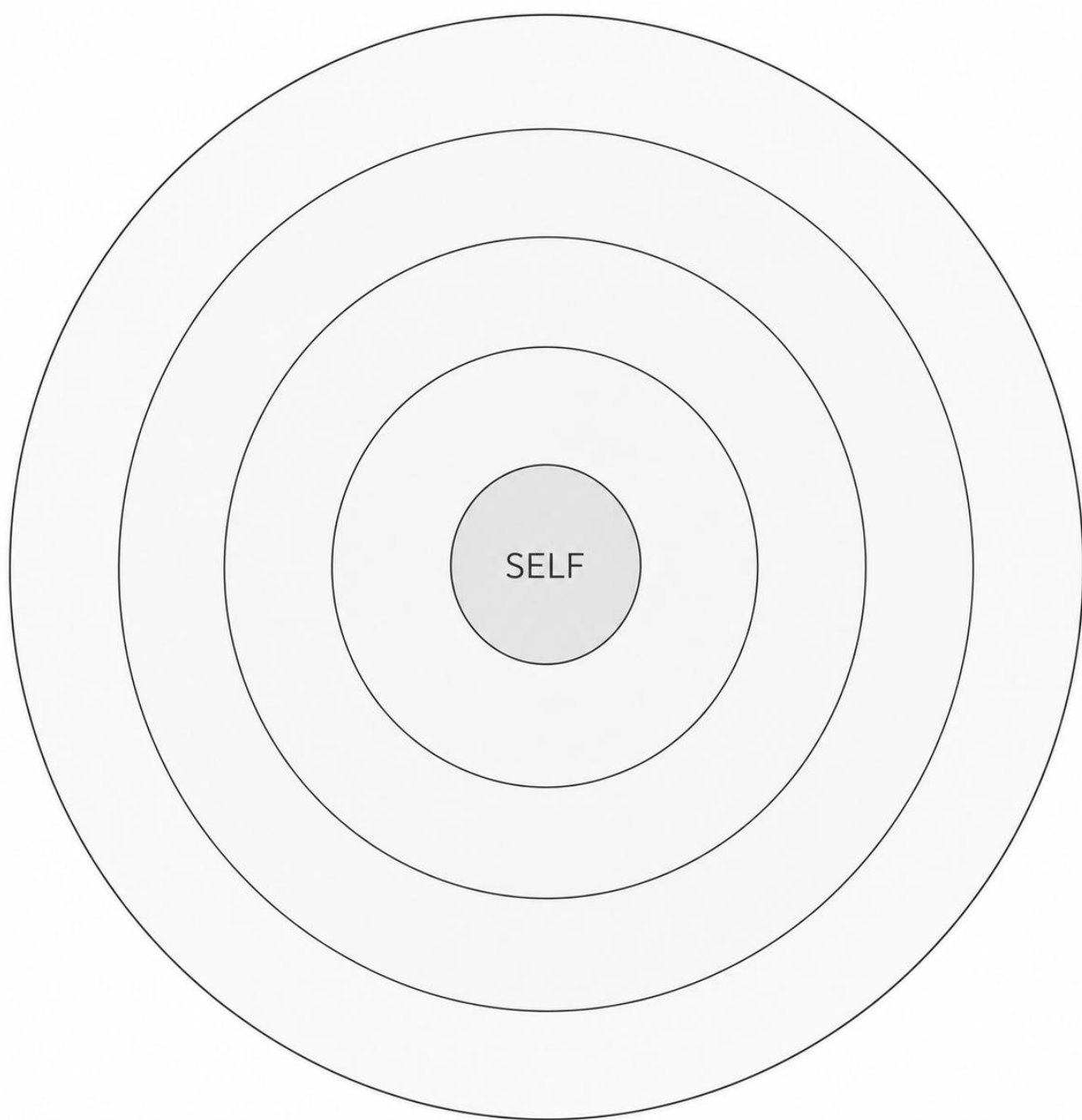
Step 4: LEAVE THE REST.

Leave the rest blank. That blank space is simply where you haven't gotten to yet.

Step 5: FILL IN YOUR LAYERS.

If it helps, write inside each ring: names, places, groups, beliefs, or anything that lives in that layer for you. Some people and places may belong in more than one ring. Layers overlap. What matters is that each one has room to breathe.





After You Map

Look at your blueprint as a whole. When one layer weakens, another can temporarily carry the load. When one strengthens, the others expand to meet it.

1. Which layer is carrying the most weight for the others right now?
2. Where did you shade first? What helped that layer begin to heal?
3. Which cracked layer is asking for your attention next? What would one 1% act of belonging look like there this week?



EXERCISE 2

Tending or Fawning?

In Chapter 14, I compared two ways of moving toward people under stress.

Fawn says: “I’ll become whatever you need so you won’t hurt me.”

Tend-and-Befriend says: “Let me gather us so we’re all safer.”

From the outside, they can look exactly the same. Both move you toward people. The difference lives inside you: why you moved, who benefited, and what it cost.

Think back over the last two weeks. List the moments you cared for, helped, smoothed over, or showed up for someone. Then sort them honestly. This isn’t about grading yourself. It’s about noticing the pattern.

What I did	Chosen or compulsory?	Who benefited?	What did it cost me?

Tending can be life-giving when it is chosen and costly when it becomes compulsory. Your nervous system gets a vote, not a veto.

1. Which act of care would you do again exactly the same way?
2. Which one would you do differently? What would the mutual, bounded version look like?



EXERCISE 3

The Rooms You Actually Walk Into

Your sector of influence is the territory your daily life actually touches. Taylor Swift’s sector reaches hundreds of millions. Yours might reach twelve. Both matter.

List the rooms you walk into in a typical week. They might be physical rooms, like your kitchen, a classroom, the school pickup line, or a team meeting. They might be digital rooms, like a group chat or a comment section. Then be honest about what you usually carry in with you.

The room	Who’s in it?	What do I usually bring in?	My 1% move

Choose one room. For one week, practice your 1% move there. Pause on the threshold and let your breath arrive before you do.

1. At the end of the week, what changed in the temperature of that room?
2. What changed in you?

Influence isn’t reserved for CEOs and politicians. You hold it at home, at work, and in every room you enter.



This Chapter Was Intended to Help You...

...see that your healing was never only yours. The Six Layers of Belonging gave you a map of where belonging is formed, fractured, restored, and carried outward: from your Self, through your Household, your Friends & Family, your Community, and your Nation, to the Belief System that filters back through all of them.

You looked at the difference between care that empties you and care that is chosen and shared. You named the rooms you actually walk into and the influence you already hold there, whether or not anyone calls it leadership.

You are not being asked to fix your family, your community, or your country. You are being asked to steward the field you stand in.

Chapter 14 was not intended to make you responsible for everyone.

It was intended to show you that your presence already matters.

