

TRAUMA WHISPERS BEFORE IT ROARS

Companion Workbook

Chapter 3: Wired to Survive

Pre-publication Draft – Print single page/ no duplex for additional writing space

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.
- Removed spaces from journal questions
- Changed webpage from OneEmprima.com/books/ to OneEmprima.com/traumawhispers/
- Added Why We Do This Work and This Chapter Was Intended to Help You... sections

Last updated: October 1, 2026

How to Give Feedback

Complete this chapter packet, then visit the 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.

Supply List (Optional)

- Colored pencils

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Why We Do This Work

Chapter 3 is where you meet your protectors.

In Chapter 2, you learned to recognize a whisper. Now you learn which part of you has been answering it, and how.

Your survival responses are not flaws. They are strategies that worked.

Fight can look like being direct. Flight can look like being productive. Freeze can look like being thoughtful. Fawn can look like being kind. That is why these patterns can hide for decades. They get rewarded. They get promoted. They blend in. But a response that kept you safe once can keep running long after the danger is gone.

I know what it feels like when a response has nowhere to go. In Kuwait, a Major two echelons above me asked to review my slide deck two days before a big finance briefing. He outranked me, so he briefed first. I sat there and watched him present my slides with my name replaced by his. Warm rage rolled through me. My jaw locked. My fists clenched. Every cell in my body was ready for a fight I wasn't allowed to have. That rage wasn't only about slides. It carried every time I had been unseen, uncredited, and still expected to keep performing.

This chapter asks you to map which responses your nervous system reaches for first, and who you might have learned them from. Find the sentence your trauma taught you to repeat. Look for the barriers that are lower than they feel. Name the mask your body still reacts to. And before you look at what hurt, gather evidence of your own courage.

You don't have to shame the response. You only have to update it.

That is where protection becomes a choice instead of a reflex.

Awareness & Alignment Prompts

1. Which primary survival response appears most often around the people closest to you?
What does it ask them to carry because you cannot? Complete exercise 1 before answering.
2. Look at the Collective/Cultural Expression column for your primary response, page 78–79.
Where do you see that same pattern playing out in a group you belong to: a family, a team, a community?
3. Which sentence from the examples on page 95 ("I'm fine," "It wasn't that bad," "Other people had it worse") tightened your chest or caught in your throat? What's your "lie"? Where did you first learn to say it?

Additional Journal Prompts

1. Of the secondary responses, Fix, Flop, Fib, Forget, or Forecast, *page 90–92*, which one shows up when your primary response isn't enough? Describe the last time it took over. What happened before, during, and after?
2. Think of a barrier in your life that is lower than it feels, *page 87–89*. What would it take for your nervous system to believe there's another side?
3. Pick one line from the four questions on *page 93* that stung the most when you read it. Journal for ten minutes without editing yourself, starting with that question as your first sentence.

EXERCISE 1**Mapping Your Fear and Stress Responses, *page 78***

After rereading each of the primary and secondary stress and fear responses in the book, map out which survival response your nervous system leans on the most. Think about when and why they come forward, and who you might have learned that response from. You may find that you utilize more than one, depending on the situation. And different ones, depending on the role the person plays in your life or the familiarity of the current event to your past.

RANK	RESPONSE	SITUATION (when I feel..., when someone else...)
	Fight	
	Flight	
	Freeze	
	Fawn	
	Fix	
	Flop	
	Fib	
	Forget	
	Forecast	
	Something not mentioned	

EXERCISE 2**Courage Anchors**

Recall five badass things you have done, even if you never intend to do them again. It could be leaving an abusive relationship, rappelling down a building, giving a public speech, earning your PhD, or doing something else that required more courage than you knew you had.

These moments become courage anchors: evidence you can return to when the next scary thing asks you to doubt your courage. Then, take your five and write them in your book on page 391 as part of your Stand-Down Kit™.

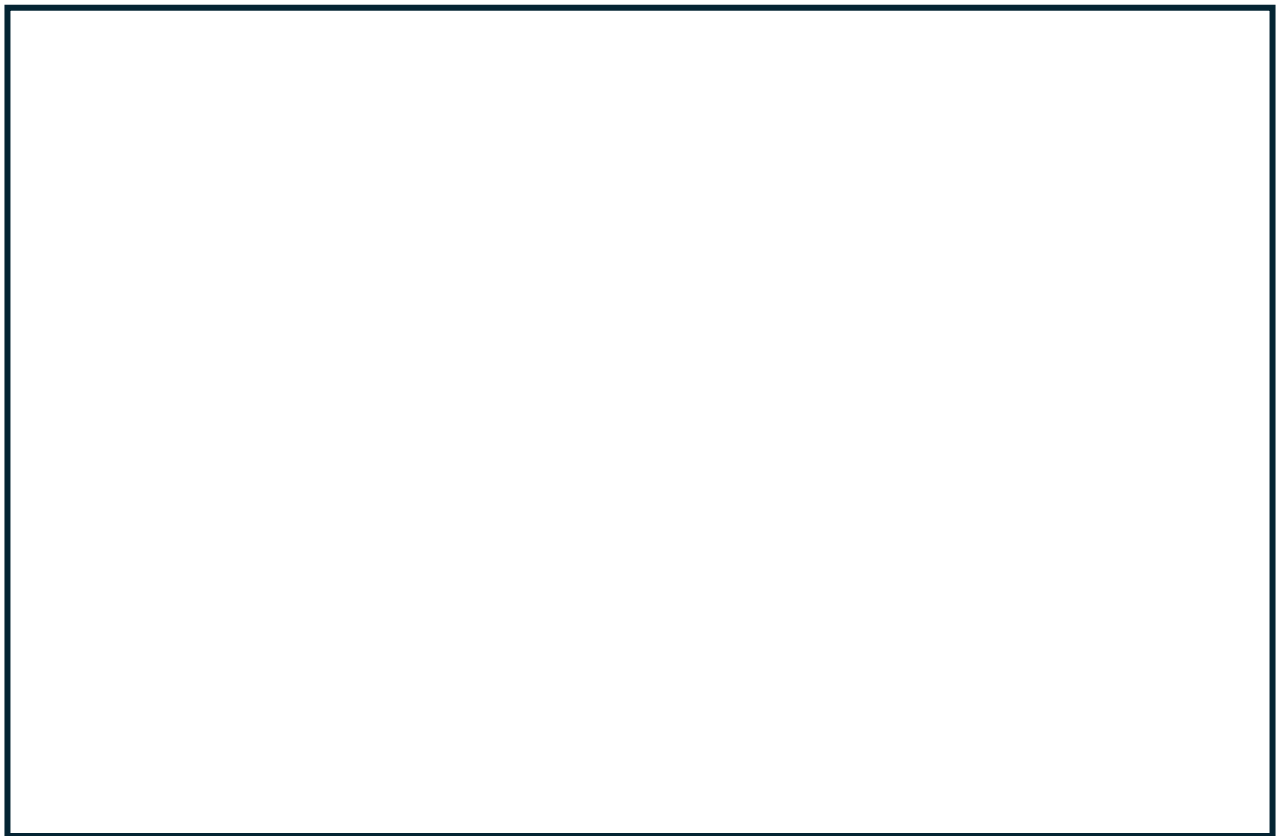
NAME THE ANCHOR	EMOTIONAL RESPONSE	WHAT THIS PROVED TO ME
Ex. "The Ski Mogul Moment"	Absolutely terrified. Tears running down my face. Frozen in motion.	This isn't as scary as accidentally skiing down that black diamond trail. If I did that, I can do this.

EXERCISE 3

Draw Your Mask, *page 94*

Your nervous system doesn't just remember what hurt you. It also remembers what it looked like, sounded like, smelled like, or felt like in the room. Like the crows who learned to recognize one face as danger and passed that recognition to crows who were never even there, your body may still react to a mask long after the real threat is gone.

1. What does your mask look like? It might be a literal face, a tone of voice, a specific room, a time of day, a phrase, a color, a smell. Draw it, sketch it, symbol it, or describe it below.



2. Where does this mask show up in your life today? Name the situations where your body responds as if it's still there.
3. What's different now? What evidence exists that you're not in that room anymore?
4. What would your body need to see, hear, or feel to finally believe the danger has passed?