

Coming Home to Your Body

Journaling #1

WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A STRESSFUL SITUATION, WHAT IS YOUR GO-TO PATTERN?

Fight:

- Feel defensive? Try to prove yourself? Have a need to be right?
- Lash out? Lose your temper?

Flight:

- Disconnect or ignore what's happening. Pretend that it isn't happening or that you aren't feeling what you're feeling.
- Stay busy and distracted to avoid facing the situation or your feelings?
- Avoid conflict or confrontation. Leave the room.

Freeze:

- Shut down or go quiet, hoping things will resolve

themselves on their own.

- Your mind goes blank and you have trouble expressing yourself or connecting with others.
- You totally forget that the stress even happened and struggle to remember large parts of your life and childhood.

All of it:

- Sometimes you lash out.
- Sometimes you run away.
- Sometimes you shut down or go blank.

WHICH OF THESE DO YOU CONNECT WITH AS YOU OBSERVE YOUR LIFE?

Note: None of these responses are bad or wrong and YOU are not bad or wrong for having them.

These are your NATURAL survival responses and are intended to keep you safe and it's your AUTONOMIC (automatic) nervous system that's in charge of these responses.

EXAMPLES:

- Let's say you're out for a night with your best friend and a guy who gives you real creep vibes comes up and starts hitting on her. Perhaps your friend's tendency is to freeze but you're able to step up and tell this guy to back off. This is a healthy fight response.

- Let's say you're chopping beets for an evening salad and the knife slips out of your hand and towards the floor. Your automatic leap away from that knife is a healthy flight response.

- Let's say you're suddenly attacked by a large dog from behind and in that moment, you're unable to fight or flee. The overwhelm of the situation causes your system to numb to a degree where you don't experience the distinct details of the pain and trauma. This is a healthy freeze response.

This last response, by the way, happens easily in children who rely on their caregivers to keep them safe and alive. They can't just leave or defend themselves so something as seemingly simple as a disapproving look or a shaming tone can cause an immediate freeze response. Kids with anxiety disorders are those who experienced this consistently

enough that they were never able to 'thaw' and end up living in a constant state of freeze, which is simply covering up an overload of fight/flight energy.

And if we move into adulthood in this state? This is where we develop chronic illness, more severe anxiety disorders, compulsive behaviors, repeating patterns, depression and the like.

So again, there is nothing wrong with you. This is a healthy system responding to trauma.

And the most amazing news is, it's by learning to internally witness (FEEL!!!) our internal fight/flight/freeze responses that we can integrate this stuck energy back into our system and heal.

That's the capacity we're going to start building with these understandings and exercises.

It's not a fast process, or an easy one. But if we're patient, it's a true freedom path.