

ABSENT PARENTS

— OVERCOME EMOTIONAL NEGLECT —

*A workbook designed to help you recover
from childhood emotional neglect*

Emotional Neglect

Growing up in an emotionally neglectful environment can affect our self-esteem and our adult relationships, but the good news is that this reality can change. We can heal this negative childhood experience and improve our relationship with ourselves and with others. Let's start by taking a look at your journey.

MY JOURNEY

How was your relationship with your parents during childhood? Do you feel that one or both of them were absent? Were they there physically but not emotionally as you needed, or were they not there at all? How did that make you feel? Tell your adult-self about it from the perspective of your child-self. While doing this try to don't let your adult morals devalue what you felt when you were little. Just listen to your inner child.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the prompts above. The box occupies the majority of the page's vertical space below the introductory text.

MY REACTION

What defense mechanisms did you use at that time to deal with the physical or emotional absence of your mother/father? Maybe you stopped asking for help because you felt you couldn't count on her/him, maybe you stopped sharing your worries because you didn't want to upset her/him, or maybe you became too hard on yourself because you thought that if you were perfect things would be different. What was your reaction?

TAKING CHARGE OF MY LIFE

Now that you have reflected on the defense mechanisms you used at that time, consider which are still active in your life and list them on the left column. For example, if you stopped sharing your concerns with your parents when you were little, perhaps that behavior has been perpetuated and expanded in such a way that today it is difficult for you to share your concerns with your friends and partner. You know that these old ways don't serve you anymore and are just holding you back. So, think about new behaviors and take charge of your life.

OLD WAY	NEW WAY

It's Okay To Feel...

It's normal to have some trouble understanding our feelings if we lived in an emotionally neglectful environment. It's normal because our feelings were not heard by one of our parents, or even by both. Although this may have happened in a more profound or subtle way, we can all improve the way we see and deal with our feelings.

TODAY I'M FEELING...

Use this monthly tracker to register how you feel every morning and afternoon. Choose the colors you prefer for each feeling and start coloring your days. After every entry, use the next page to better understand each feeling. If you feel that one month was not enough, print this page again and continue the exercise.

A circular monthly tracker with 31 days. Each day is divided into AM and PM sections. The center of the circle is labeled 'MONTH' with a horizontal line for writing the month name.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraged | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grateful | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed | <input type="checkbox"/> Doubtful | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe | <input type="checkbox"/> Insecure | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Scared | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealous | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motivated | <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated | <input type="checkbox"/> Inferior | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspired | <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

UNDERSTANDING MY FEELINGS

Describing our feelings using other words helps us to understand them better. And why is this important? It's important because it helps us to be more compassionate towards ourselves and others, which is essential for healthy relationships. Write your feelings on the left column as they come up and take some time describing them on the right column. For example, if you are feeling happy, you may describe it as content, energized, and excited. And when a feeling you've already described comes up again, see if you have anything to add.

WHEN I'M FEELING	I MEAN

Your Desires Matter

It's normal to feel that our desires and needs are not important. This happens because they were neglected in the past and it's even more evident if both parents were absent. But the truth is that they matter, and we can start seeing them in a different way. Let's put things in perspective.

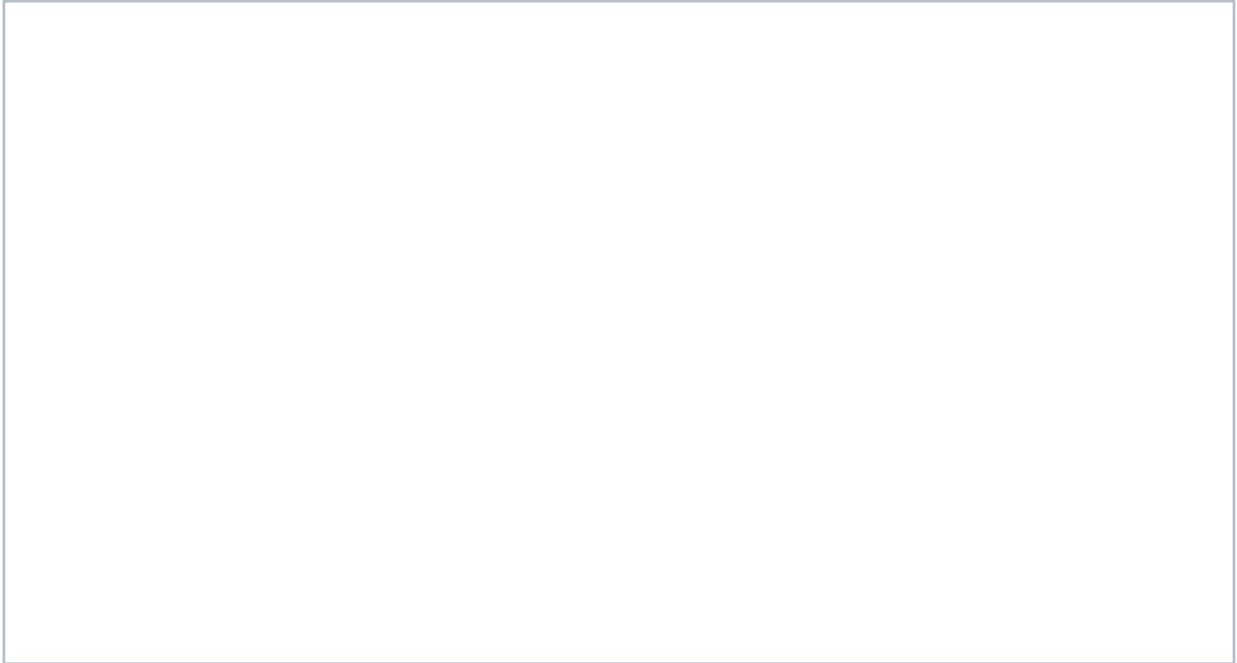
MY DESIRES

It's time to acknowledge your desires and needs. Reflect about your deep desires and needs and list them in the grid below. Write down even the ones you think are unimportant or kind of ridiculous. The next exercise will help you put things in perspective.

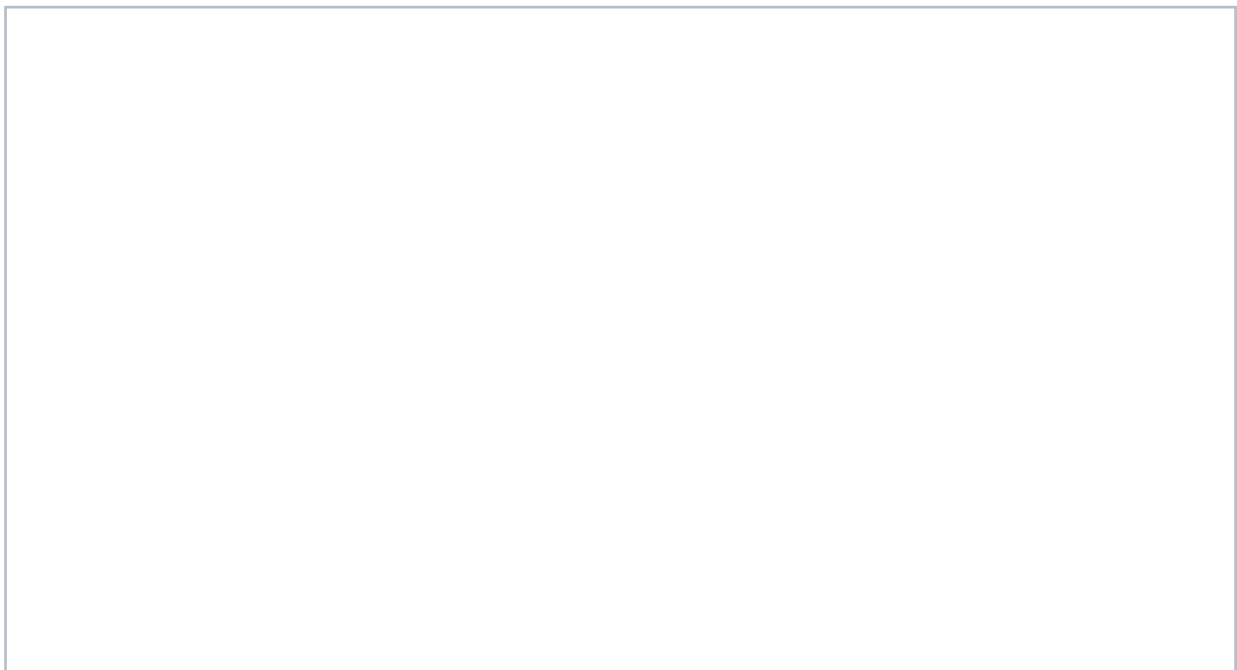
GAINING PERSPECTIVE

To put things in perspective, think about the person you most love in the world and answer the following questions. This way of thinking will help you accept your desires and needs and change your belief that they are unimportant or just too much to deal with.

1. IF THIS PERSON HAD EXACTLY THE SAME DESIRES AND NEEDS AS YOU, WOULD YOU THINK THEY ARE RIDICULOUS AND UNIMPORTANT? WHAT WOULD YOU THINK?



2. WOULD YOU BE SUPPORTIVE AND HELP HIM/HER? WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THIS PERSON?



Nurture Yourself

We can heal any wounds we may have due to our childhood experience by reparenting ourselves. And a large part of the healing process is nurturing ourselves physically with self-care practices and emotionally with comforting words.

COMFORTING WORDS

List in the grid below all the beautiful and comforting things you wish you had heard from your absent mother/father and get used to saying those words to yourself. You can start by telling them when you're taking care of yourself. For example, when you are taking a shower or doing your skin care routine. It's normal if you don't know what you would like to have heard from your absent mother/father. Choose your favorite messages from the next page.

INSPIRATION BOARD

I LOVE YOU

I WILL
TAKE CARE
OF YOU

YOU DON'T HAVE
TO BE AFRAID
ANYMORE

I'M PROUD
OF YOU

IF YOU FALL
DOWN I WILL
PICK YOU UP

I
BELIEVE
IN YOU

I LOVE BEING
YOUR PARENT

I WILL
KEEP YOU SAFE

YOU
MAKE ME
HAPPY

I'M GRATEFUL
FOR YOU

YOU ARE SO
WONDERFUL

YOU CAN
ASK FOR HELP

MY WORLD
IS BETTER
WITH YOU

I KNOW
YOU CAN
HANDLE THIS

YOU ALWAYS
MAKE ME
LAUGH

YOU BRIGHTEN
MY LIFE

YOU ARE
AWESOME

YOU
MAKE ME
SMILE

YOU HAVE
MY HEART

I LOVE
SPENDING TIME
WITH YOU

I LOVE YOU
JUST THE WAY
YOU ARE

I TRUST YOU

YOU ARE
BEAUTIFUL

I WILL ALWAYS
BE HERE
FOR YOU