

# The Survival Strategies Map

## *Understanding the Patterns That Once Protected You — and What They're Costing You Now*

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### Welcome

This guide is not about fixing you. It's about helping you understand yourself. The ways you respond to stress, the habits that feel automatic, the parts of you that shut down or overextend — they all have a history. They were formed for a reason. They helped you survive.

But what kept you safe back then may be keeping you stuck now.

The Survival Strategies Map is designed to help you explore these patterns with compassion and curiosity — so you can begin to create more choice, more space, and more connection in your life.

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### Core Survival Responses

Our bodies and nervous systems are wired to protect us from overwhelm. These responses are not chosen consciously. They happen fast and automatically. Here are five of the most common:

#### 1. Fight

- **How it may show up:** Irritability, control, defensiveness, perfectionism
- **Body cues:** Jaw tension, clenched fists, tight shoulders, heat or agitation
- **What it protects:** Vulnerability, feeling powerless
- **What it costs:** Connection, trust, softness

#### 2. Flight

- **How it may show up:** Overworking, anxiety, chronic busyness, avoidance
- **Body cues:** Restlessness, racing heart, shallow breathing, difficulty sitting still
- **What it protects:** Fear of failure, being overwhelmed
- **What it costs:** Rest, presence, rootedness

#### 3. Freeze

- **How it may show up:** Numbness, zoning out, procrastination, disconnection
- **Body cues:** Coldness, low energy, dissociation, difficulty initiating

- **What it protects:** Fear of making the wrong move, fear of danger
- **What it costs:** Aliveness, momentum, visibility

#### 4. Fawn

- **How it may show up:** People-pleasing, over-apologizing, difficulty saying no
- **Body cues:** Tight throat, shallow breath, nervous smiling, scanning others' emotions
- **What it protects:** Fear of rejection, loss, conflict
- **What it costs:** Authenticity, boundaries, self-trust

#### 5. Collapse

- **How it may show up:** Hopelessness, giving up, withdrawal, chronic fatigue
- **Body cues:** Heaviness, slumped posture, lack of energy or voice
- **What it protects:** Overwhelm, despair
- **What it costs:** Motivation, self-worth, possibility

### Reflective Prompts

Use these prompts to gently explore your own patterns. There are no right or wrong answers — only honest ones.

- Which of these patterns feels most familiar to me?
- When does this strategy tend to show up?
- What might it be trying to protect me from?
- What is it costing me?
- What do I notice in my body when it shows up?
- Is there something I need in those moments?

### Begin Noticing

Start by simply noticing when these patterns arise. Don't try to change them right away. Just observe:

- What does it feel like in your body?
- What emotion is present underneath the strategy?
- Can you bring compassion to the part of you that's trying to protect you?

You don't have to force transformation. Awareness is the first act of freedom.

## Gentle Closing Practice

**Place a hand on your heart or another area that feels safe.** Take a few slow breaths. Say to yourself:

“This pattern helped me survive. I’m allowed to grow beyond it.”

Stay here for a moment. Let your body know you’re listening.

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## Final Note

Healing doesn’t mean getting rid of parts of you. It means integrating them. Your survival strategies are not your fault — and they’re not your future.

With curiosity, patience, and support, you can choose something new.

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## Want Support Mapping Your Way Forward?

This guide is just a beginning.

Exploring your survival strategies can bring clarity — and sometimes, strong emotions. You don’t have to do this work alone. If you’re ready to go deeper, I offer trauma-informed, somatic coaching to help you gently unwind these patterns and move toward more freedom, ease, and connection.

Together, we’ll work at the pace your nervous system can handle — creating real change from the inside out.

If this resonates, I’d be honored to walk alongside you.

**To learn more or schedule a consultation:**

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With much love,  
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