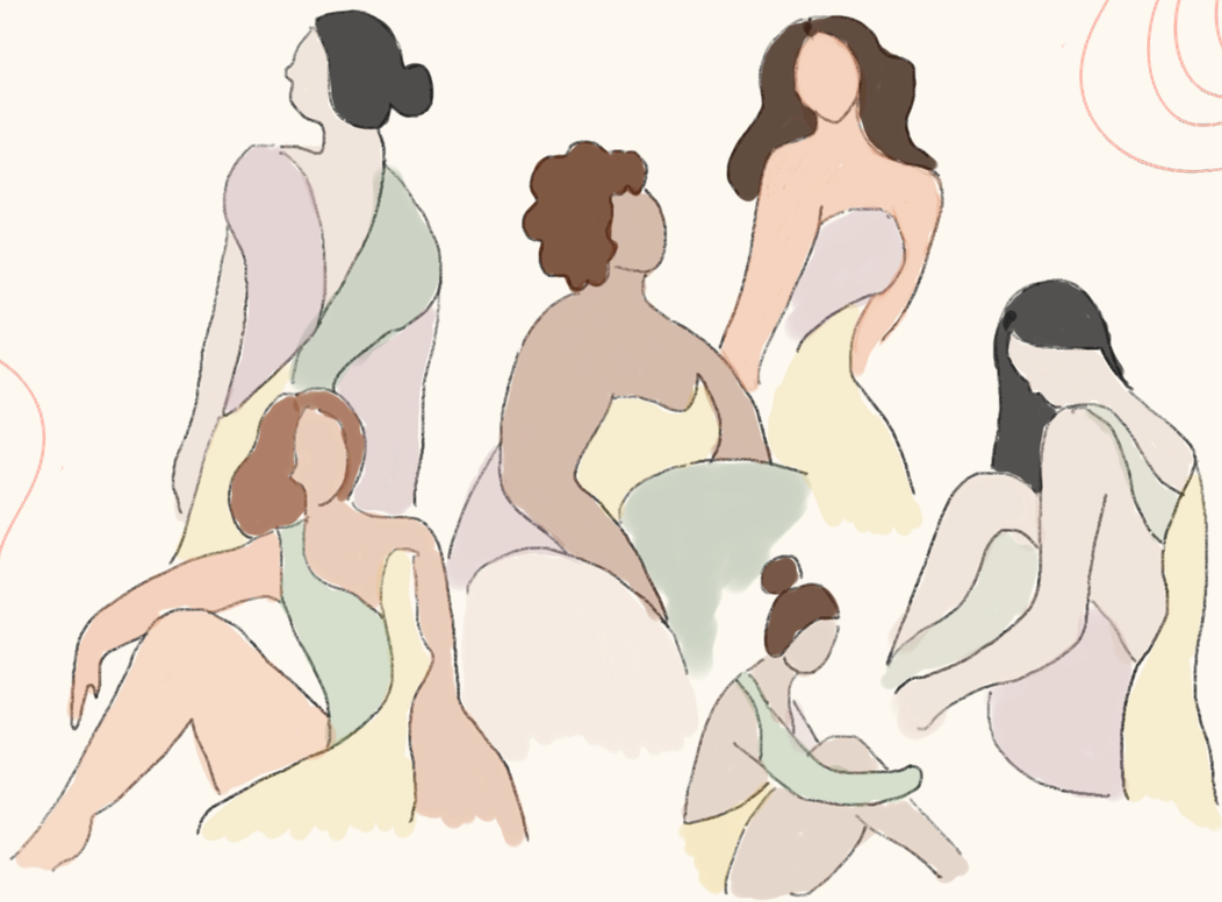


BODYLOGUE

*Facilitating a healthier conversation
with your body*



Barkha and Rimjhim Surana

**BREATHE. STRETCH. MOVE. WALK. RUN. JUMP. DANCE.
SWAY. REACH. CLIMB. BALANCE. BEND. TWIST. LIFT.
CARRY. FEEL. SENSE. SEE. HEAR. TASTE. SMELL.
TOUCH. SWEAT. SHIVER. TREMBLE. ACHE. THROB.
TINGLE. ITCH. HUNGER. THIRST. DIGEST. ABSORB.
ELIMINATE. MENSTRUATE. OVULATE. CONCEIVE.
NURTURE. HEAL. RECOVER. REPAIR. REGULATE.
PROTECT. DEFEND. FIGHT. ADAPT. SLEEP. DREAM.
WAKE. REST. RESTORE. RECHARGE. LAUGH. CRY.
GRIEVE. LOVE. DESIRE. FEAR. WORRY. CELEBRATE.
COMFORT. SOOTHE. ENDURE. GROW. STRENGTHEN.
SOFTEN. CHANGE. SHIFT. TRANSFORM. EXPAND. AGE.
EVOLVE. REMEMBER. FORGET. LEARN. SCAR. HEAL.
ENDURE. EXPERIENCE. EXPLORE. CONNECT. BECOME.**

The page features decorative topographic map lines in a light brown color, located in the corners and along the sides. The lines are concentric and wavy, creating a sense of depth and texture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are deeply grateful to friends and family who reviewed drafts, tried activities, offered feedback, and shared ways to make bodylogue better.

We also want to thank the women who, over the years, have shared vulnerably and honestly about their bodies, experiences, struggles, and growth. Your stories helped us think more deeply, ask better questions, and create something that we hope feels thoughtful, inclusive, and human.

BARKHA'S JOURNEY



Barkha Surana is a cultural and consumer researcher who works with brands across beauty, fashion, lifestyle, technology, and FMCG. Her work explores how identity, culture, and everyday experiences shape the ways people see themselves and engage with the world around them. She has also recently completed her body confidence coach training.

An anecdote from my journey with my body

For most of my life, I felt comfortable in my body. While there were occasional comments about my appearance, they didn't really shape how I saw myself. That changed when I developed an appearance-related autoimmune skin condition called Lichen Planus Pigmentosus (LPP), which caused greyish patches to appear across my face. There was no clear treatment or cure, and doctors struggled to explain what was happening. As I searched for answers, I was advised to stop heavy exercise to reduce inflammation. Working out had always made me feel strong and like myself, and slowly, I watched that version of me change. I lost muscle, I lost shape, and my body and face no longer looked familiar to me. I stopped caring about how I dressed and withdrew a little from the world around me. I became hyper aware of the beauty standards and expectations I had previously taken for granted. Well-meaning advice and constant questions about my skin often left me feeling as though my body had become a problem to solve.

For a long time, I approached my body with frustration and blame, searching for answers and trying to regain control. But over time I slowly began relating to my body with more compassion. I learned that care did not have to come through punishment, and that I could seek change without making my body the enemy. My skin still carries the marks of that experience, and my relationship with my body remains a work in progress. But it has taught me that understanding our bodies is often less about finding perfect answers and more about learning to meet ourselves with a little more kindness and acceptance than we did before.

RIMJHIM'S JOURNEY



Rimjhim is a design practitioner who has expertise working in sexual and reproductive health across South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean. Her work has helped organisations navigate complexity and develop impactful solutions. She is passionate about understanding lived experiences, facilitating collaboration, and translating knowledge into usable tools, strategies.

An anecdote from my journey with my body

My relationship with my body has almost never been straightforward. If I had to pick an anecdote about my body that helped me shift my relationship with it, it would be the time I developed Bell's palsy at 21, a condition that temporarily paralyses one side of the face. It was the first time I became acutely aware of my body, since it changed how I looked to the world. Although I recovered, the slight asymmetry it left behind on my face remained a source of self-consciousness for years. I struggled to smile without covering my face and didn't like eating in public. While I was focused on my appearance, I was paying far less attention to what was happening elsewhere in my body. Over the years, I developed PMOS, struggled with migraines, body fat, acne, fatigue, and stress. Any attempt at fixing my body felt overwhelming.

What took me much longer to realise was that my body was telling me things and I wasn't really listening. That happened in my early thirties, through therapy and self-reflection, and I began paying more attention to how I felt physically and emotionally. I started noticing my patterns, understanding my limits, and recognising that rest, nourishment, and self-awareness mattered as much as a health routine.

This dialogue with my body has in no way been straightforward. It's been baby steps, and I certainly haven't figured it all out. I still get frustrated, ignore body signals, and wish things were easier. But over time, my relationship with my body has shifted. Instead of seeing it as something to fight against, I've become more curious about what it's trying to tell me, and what it likes and dislikes. In turn my body has been feeling better, less tired, more rested and so much more mine."

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OUR INTENTION

Most of us spend a lifetime in our bodies without knowing how to truly understand or live inside them. We learn to manage and judge them, but not how to live in alignment with them. Between routines, beauty standards and the constant pull to perform, it becomes easy to disconnect from our bodies. Over time, we stop noticing how our experiences are shaping the way we feel about our bodies, and how our bodies respond to the world around us.

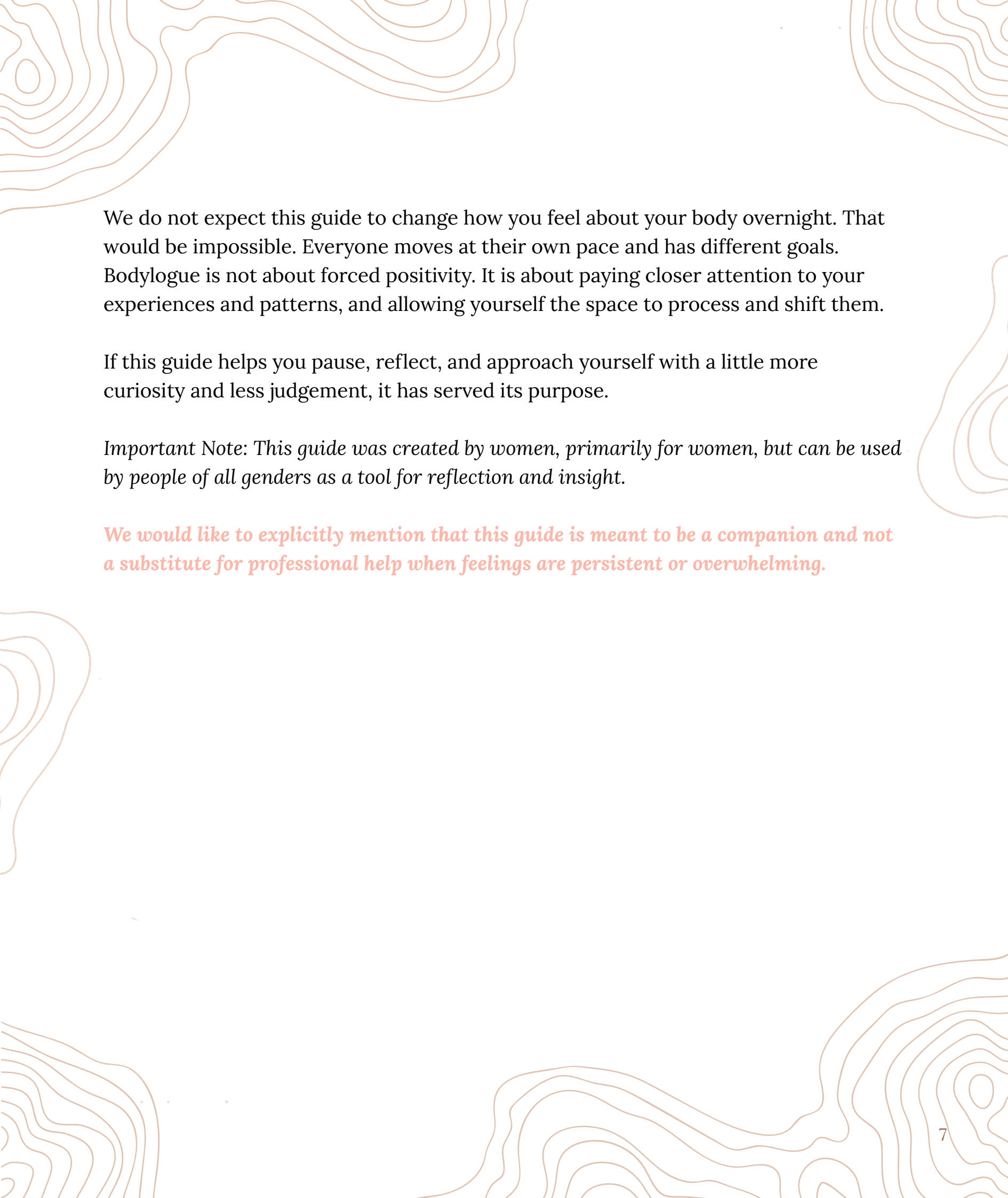
This guide emerged from years of conversations between us and our friends who, when discussing our bodies, spoke not just about appearances, but also about emotions like embarrassment, discomfort, and change.

In our own lives, we've both had moments of feeling at home in our bodies and moments of feeling like strangers in them. There have been times when social comments stuck with us for far too long and when illness, stress, weight changes, or shifting life stages made us rethink our relationship with our bodies. There have also been moments of reflection when we realised how much our bodies hold onto, and that illnesses may have been ways that the body was expressing its discomfort.

We did not create this guide from a place of having figured everything out. We created it while still learning. It is intended as a set of tools to help you reflect and become more aware about the relationship you have with your body.

We hope this guide can be three things for you:

- **a mirror**, that helps you better understand your body's story so far
- **a companion**, that you can return to as your body and life change
- **a process**, that can help you move towards greater awareness and honesty



We do not expect this guide to change how you feel about your body overnight. That would be impossible. Everyone moves at their own pace and has different goals. Bodylogue is not about forced positivity. It is about paying closer attention to your experiences and patterns, and allowing yourself the space to process and shift them.

If this guide helps you pause, reflect, and approach yourself with a little more curiosity and less judgement, it has served its purpose.

Important Note: This guide was created by women, primarily for women, but can be used by people of all genders as a tool for reflection and insight.

We would like to explicitly mention that this guide is meant to be a companion and not a substitute for professional help when feelings are persistent or overwhelming.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a collection of exercises and practices designed to help you become more aware about the narratives you may have built over time, the feelings you feel, and the way that you speak to your body.

You can move through the exercises in the sequence they appear, or choose a section that feels right for you. **Use what serves you.** You do not have to complete every exercise. Some may feel necessary, while others may feel misaligned with where you are right now. Trust that, and choose the ones that call out to you.

You may resonate with some of the exercises immediately, while others may feel more relevant at different points in life. You can use Bodylogue again and again, whether its during a difficult phase with your body or simply when you want to reconnect with yourself. Each time you revisit an exercise, you may notice something new. You may even surprise yourself with how much has shifted from the last time you did it.

There are 3 themes in this book. Every theme follows a simple but intentional structure which will guide you from awareness → reflection → practice. Below is a breakdown of how each theme is structured:

1. Journaling prompt - the foundation

Each theme begins with a journaling prompt to help you access your inner knowing. These prompts help you notice what you currently believe and feel about your body.

2. Words / Knowledge - a repositioning

The written reflections in each theme are meant to give you a different perspective and reframe how you think about your body. They offer context and language for things you may have felt but never articulated.

3. Exercises & Practices - the heart of the work

These exercises will help build awareness through reflection and practice. They will guide you to map your inner world, uncover the stories you've held onto, experiment with new ways of relating to your body, and practice daily habits that build self trust.

A few other things to note as you dive in to Bodylogue:

Everything is connected

The exercises in this guide are interconnected. When you do one, it influences how you experience the others by default. Our relationships with our bodies are complex and fluid, and we believe that the more we explore it from different angles, the more our awareness expands.

We suggest moving slowly and honestly

We recommend not pushing yourself with deadlines. Consistency is probably more important than how much you do and when you finish. Take breaks when you need to. Let emotions surface and get processed. To stay connected to this journey, it might be helpful to set aside dedicated time each week to work with your body.

Maintaining a journal while working through this guide will help

You can use it to write your responses to journal prompts, do your exercises, and record any insights that might come up. Having everything in one place will enable tracking your progress over time.

Several templates are provided to assist with the exercises

You can print them out and use them as they are, be creative and adapt them to your specific scenario, or create your own.

Finally, do remember that you are not doing this for your body. You are doing this with your body. Let this be a dialogue.

THE BODY & THE SELF



Journaling Prompt

When I see myself in the mirror, what are my first thoughts?

(Be as descriptive as possible. You could choose to write feelings in words or you could use analogies, whatever works best for you.)

LISTENING TO THE BODY'S WISDOM

We begin experiencing the world through our bodies long before we have words for it. As children, we feel warmth, hunger, comfort, fear, care, and discomfort through the body first. These early experiences shape how we understand ourselves and navigate the world. As we grow older, we imbibe messages about bodies. About how they should look, how they should behave, and how we will be judged based on them. We start paying attention to appearance, weight, skin, hair, posture, and the ways our bodies are seen by others. Over time, many of us begin treating the body as something to be controlled, focussing mostly on what is visible externally.

Our relationship with the body is also shaped by experiences of acceptance, shame, affection, exclusion, confidence, and pain. The body carries these without us being fully aware of them. It probably gives us signs too, but more often than not these are ignored resulting in unhealthy habits or illnesses.

To listen to the body is to accept that the body carries truths the mind ignores. The body remembers joy through laughter, relaxation when you sigh in relief, grief in the way shoulders tighten, and anger in the a jaw or fist clench. It stores fatigue in the bones, tenderness in breath, and resilience in every healed scar. It gives us the gift of sensing and intuition.

To realise how much the body carries and how it may have protected you in moments you did not know you needed protecting, might help us move from a relationship of control to one of care with the body. We might then honour the signs it gives us, and treat its fluctuations as messages instead of failures.

Listening to the body is an act of self-recognition. It is a way of reminding yourself that wholeness isn't something you earn through perfection but something you return to, through presence. When you treat the body with respect, when you lean toward its needs and honor its limits, you reclaim parts of your relationship with your body.

BODY MAP

This exercise will help you explore how you feel about different parts of your body. By mapping and reflecting, you can uncover the stories you carry and begin building a kinder connection with those parts of yourself.

Step 1: Prepare Your Outline

Refer to the body outline diagram at the end of this activity (or draw your own simple outline of a body).

Step 2: Mark Your Feelings

On the body outline...

- Place a tick (✓) on parts of your body you feel good about or appreciate.
- Place a cross (✗) on parts of your body you don't feel so good about.
- Use another symbol (like a star ★ or heart) for body parts that stand out to you in a special way like places that feel unique, meaningful, or significant.

Step 3: Reflect on the Stories

Write a few sentences in your journal for each body part you marked.

For each mark you made, pause and ask yourself:

- Why do I feel this way about this part of my body?
- What memories, experiences, or influences shaped this feeling?

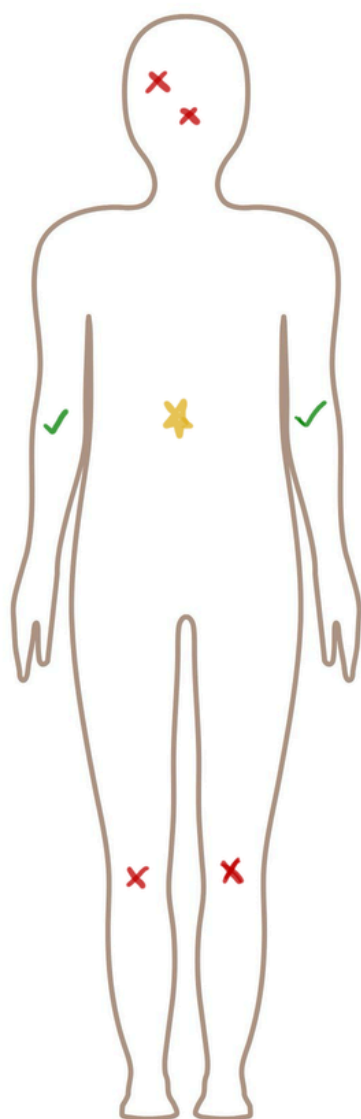
You can use the table below (or recreate it in your journal) to organize your thoughts as you move through this exercise.

BODY PART	SYMBOL (✓ ✗ ★)	HOW I FEEL	STORY/MEMORY BEHIND THIS FEELING

Step 4: Reconciliation

Now step back and imagine this body map was created by a friend. Think about what you would say to them? And would you feel the same way if these thoughts were about someone you care for? If it helps you can write this down.

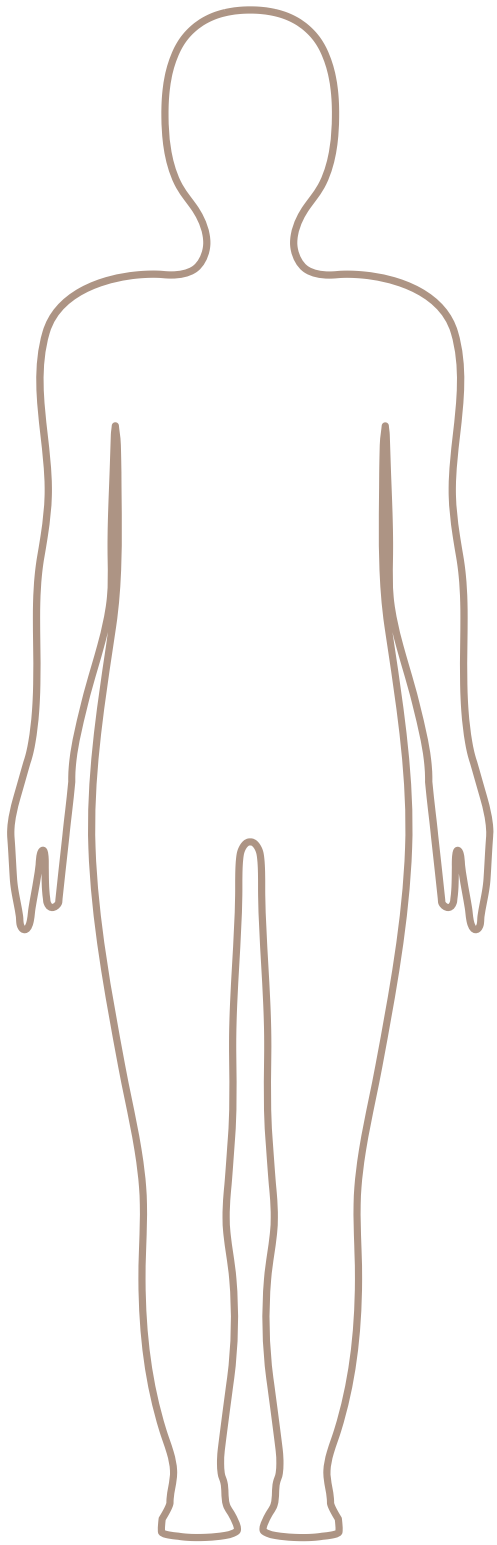
Example of a Body Map



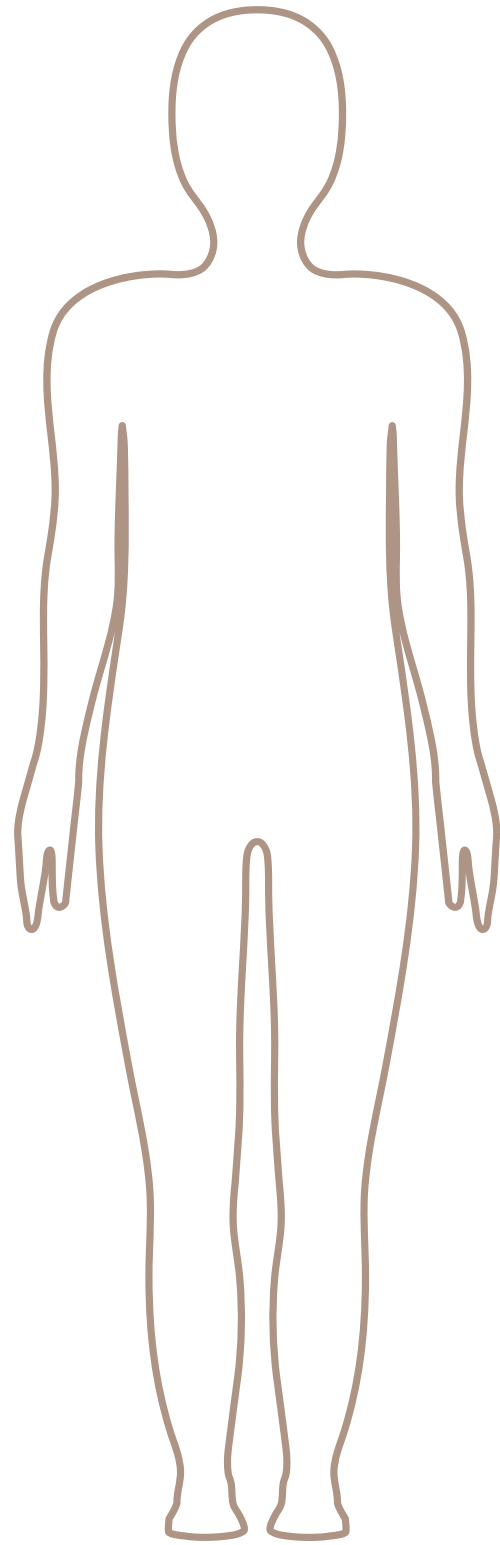
Body Part	Symbol ✓ X ★	How I Feel	Story/Memory Behind This Feeling
Arms	✓	I like how long and strangely shaped my arms are.	I started to notice my arms when I was working out and really began to like how long and differently shaped they are.
Body Type	★	I feel good about my overall shape.	A lot of people comment on my body type being too skinny or that I will fly away or am underweight or don't eat well but I have learnt to accept my body over time and I really like
Nose	X	I feel self-conscious and use makeup to make it look sharper.	Comparisons with others growing up and emphasis on my nose being big and not sharp.
Legs	X	I feel insecure about them and try to cover them.	My legs are crooked and a constant reminder by my mom made me notice this.
Eyes	X	I feel that my eyes ruin the proportion of my facial features.	My eyes close when I laugh so I feel like it doesn't look very proportionate so I don't particularly love it.

Note: This example is intentionally simplified to show how the exercise works without shaping your answers since it could look very different for each one of us. Your experience will likely be more layered, so take your time and be as thorough as you can in your reflections.

Below is a body outline that you can use for your own body map



FRONT



BACK

BODY APPRECIATION

Our bodies support us every day in ways we may not realise. This exercise helps celebrate all the amazing things our bodies do for us and the feelings they bring.

Take a moment and write down 10 things you're truly grateful to your body for. Think about what it does every day and how it helps you enjoy life. Specifically also think about the body parts that you (X) ed in the body map.



Examples:

- I'm grateful my legs carry me on my evening walks.
- I'm grateful for the way my smile brightens my day and others'.

Pro tip: Create a mini poster or collage with your list. It could be on a page in your journal or a separate sheet you decorate with colors, drawings etc. Hang it somewhere you'll see it daily as a reminder of everything your body does for you.

THE EVOLVING BODY

Our bodies are not static. They change in response to age, health, relationships, routines, rest, pleasure, grief, and the everyday conditions of our lives. Some changes are easy to notice, while others happen more discreetly through shifts in energy, sleep, hunger, strength, or mood. Even when we are not fully aware, the body is constantly adapting, adjusting and talking to us.

Many of us carry fixed ideas about how our bodies should look, feel, or function, and then when the body changes because of factors like age or illness, it can feel difficult to keep up. We find ourselves holding onto old expectations and ideas while living in a body that no longer feels the same.

Living in an evolving body means recognising that change is not a problem to solve, but a natural part of being alive. It means paying attention to how our needs, capacities, habits, and relationship with ourselves shift over time, and honoring those changes by living in alignment and dialogue with our bodies.

Awareness does not happen instantly. Understanding the body and accepting it are often different processes. Paying closer attention can slowly change the way we relate to ourselves by helping us see the body less as something to constantly fix, and more as something that grows and changes alongside us.

BODY TIMELINE

Creating a timeline of your life and body's story is a way to make sense of how your relationship with your body has evolved over time. It allows you to see patterns, decisions, and change more clearly.

By mapping your body story across time, you begin to see how both past experiences and future desires influence how you inhabit your body today. Each event, whether painful or empowering, holds lessons for us. Be open to those as you do this exercise.

Step 1 - Draw Your Timeline (Find an example of this at the end of the exercise)

- Take a blank sheet of paper.
- Draw a horizontal line from left to right - this is your life's timeline.
- Mark key stages: childhood, teenage years, early adulthood, now, and future.

Step 2 - Recall Body Memories

- Think about the moments or events that shaped your relationship with your body - things like winning a beauty competition, getting bullied, going through puberty, experiencing a health scare, seeing gym progress, or hearing people's comments about your appearance, etc.
- Plot these events along your timeline.
- You can write words, short sentences, or even draw small symbols for each memory.

Step 3 - Add Emotion Markers

- Next to each event, note how you felt at the time.
- Use simple words (e.g., free, judged, powerful, invisible, loved, disconnected).
- You could also use colours - warm for positive emotions, cool for difficult ones.

Step 4 - Reflect on Patterns

Step back and look at your map. Ask yourself:

- Looking at my timeline, which moments had the biggest impact on how I see my body today?
- How did those moments shape my beliefs about the body - ideas about beauty, worth, strength, or capability?
- What patterns or themes do I recognize across different life stages - repeated comments, recurring feelings, or similar experiences?
- When did I feel most at ease or comfortable in my body? What was happening around that time?
- When did I first start seeing my body as a problem? What influenced that shift?
- Are there experiences I've outgrown, yet still carry in my self-image?
- If I could change anything about my Life & Body timeline, what would it be and how might that reshape my life today?

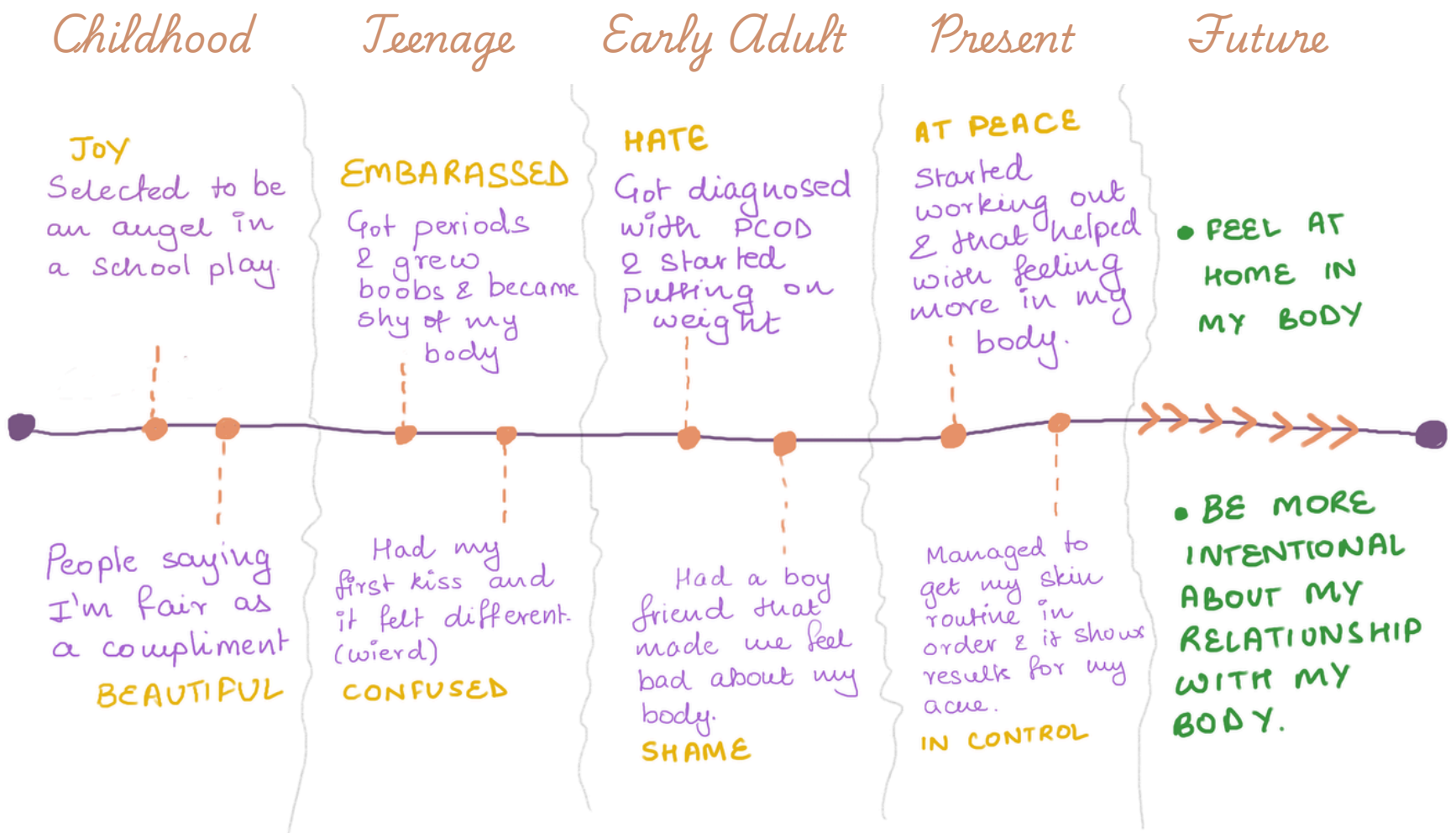
Step 5 - Look Ahead

- Extend your timeline into the future - look ahead to a number of years that feel comfortable for you. It could be 2 years, 5 years or 10 years
- Ask: "What kind of relationship do I want to have with my body moving forward?"
- Write one or two intentions or hopes for your future body story.

Step 6 - Reflect on the reasons for your journey

- Why do I want to take this journey with my body, and what does "feeling at home in it" mean to me?
- What do I hope to experience or discover as I grow - more ease, strength, confidence, peace, or something else?
- How will I know I'm moving in the right direction -what will start to feel or look different in my daily life?
- What will help me stay committed to this journey when it feels slow or hard?
- What patterns, beliefs, or habits might I need to leave behind - and what qualities or supports do I want to carry with me?

An Example: Body Timeline



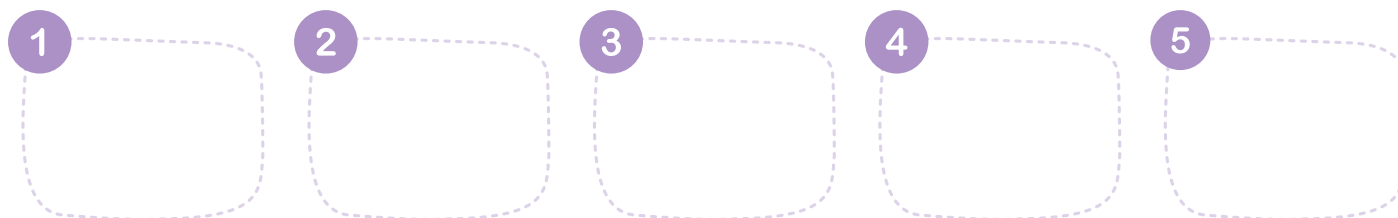
Note: This example is intentionally simplified to show how the exercise works without shaping your answers since it could look very different for each one of us. Your experience will likely be more layered and might include many more events, so take your time and be as thorough as you can in your reflections.

TOP 5 FEELINGS

This exercise aims to shift how you feel in your body. The words you choose to describe yourself have the power to shape your beliefs. By picking the feelings you want to live with, you start writing a new body story filled with kindness.

Step 1: Choose your top 5 feelings

Select five feelings that describe how you most want to feel in/about your body.



1 2 3 4 5

Step 2: Bring your feelings to life

For each word, ask yourself:

- What can I do that helps me feel more [insert word]?”
- Write down simple, realistic actions for each one.
 - *Example: If you chose Free → go for a walk, dance to your favourite song, or wear clothes that make you feel comfortable and confident.*
 - *Example: If you chose Radiant → practice a skincare ritual you love, or do some meditating and morning stretching*

Step 3: Daily practice

Each day, pick one action from your list and do it. Even small moments count. Acknowledge the action in your journal and write how it made you feel.



Today I choose to feel:

I felt this by:

Including these small actions daily, will help you practice living these feelings.

THE BODY & SOCIETY



Journaling Prompt

What messages have I received over the years about my body from sources around me?

(Sources can include family, friends, media, institutions etc.)

THE SOCIAL MIRROR

From the moment we are born, our bodies are met with expectations. Some are spoken aloud and others are absorbed during childhood. People and cultures around us send messages about how a body should look and behave to fit in. These messages embed themselves into our thinking, forming ideas of what is acceptable and what is not.

Some influences can help us feel more at ease in our bodies. A parent who celebrates us, friends who make us feel safe, a partner who reassures us, or a community that values care, rest, and movement can build a sense of confidence and belonging. Then there's other influences that are more difficult to carry and can leave a lasting impact, like comments about weight or appearance, comparisons with others, pressure to look a certain way, or cultural ideals that value only certain kinds of bodies. Media adds another layer to this. We are constantly exposed to images, advice, and beauty standards that can make our own bodies feel like they are not enough or always in need of improvement.

Over time, these influences shape how we eat, dress, move, and participate in the world. They influence what feels comfortable or uncomfortable, which spaces feel welcoming, and whether we feel visible, confident, or out of place. Understanding these influences is not about blaming ourselves or others. It is about recognising the different forces that have shaped our relationship with our bodies. When we begin to identify these messages more clearly, we can start questioning the ones that limit us and hold onto the ones that help us feel more grounded and supported.

Paying attention to the social and cultural influences around us can give us the power to question them, loosen their grip over us, or let go of what no longer serves us. This in turn enables us to build a more conscious relationship with our body, that is shaped less by expectation and more by awareness, choice, and self-understanding.

BODY ECOSYSTEM

Many voices, environments, and experiences around you play a role in shaping your views about your body. Some are supportive and some challenging. This exercise will help you visualise your “body ecosystem” by mapping the influences around you and reflecting on how they affect your body story. There is an example of what this looks like at the end of the exercise.

Step 1: Draw yourself at the center

On a blank page, draw a circle in the middle and write “Me” inside it. This represents you and your body.

Step 2: Map your influences

- Think of all the influences that shape how you think about or interact with your body. These could be people, places, communities, media, or other environments.
- The more specific you are, the more meaningful your map will be. For example: instead of just writing “Social Media,” you could write “Instagram influencers” or “a specific fitness account.” Ultimately, it is entirely up to you to decide how broad or specific you would like to be.
- Some examples to spark ideas:
 - Mother / Father / Sibling(s)
 - Friends (by name or group)

- Romantic partner(s)
- Specific teachers or peers
- Media (Instagram, magazines, movies, YouTube)
- Society & Culture
- Religious/Community context

Draw each influence as a circle around you. Place them closer if they have a stronger influence, and further away if the influence is weaker.

Note: We often tend to focus on the negative influences. Make sure that you are thinking of both positive and negative influences.

Step 3: Add voice to your Influences

- Next to each influence, write down a phrase capturing its “message.”
 - Example: Mother → “Be careful, don’t eat too much.”
 - Example: Friend → “You’re strong, I admire you.”

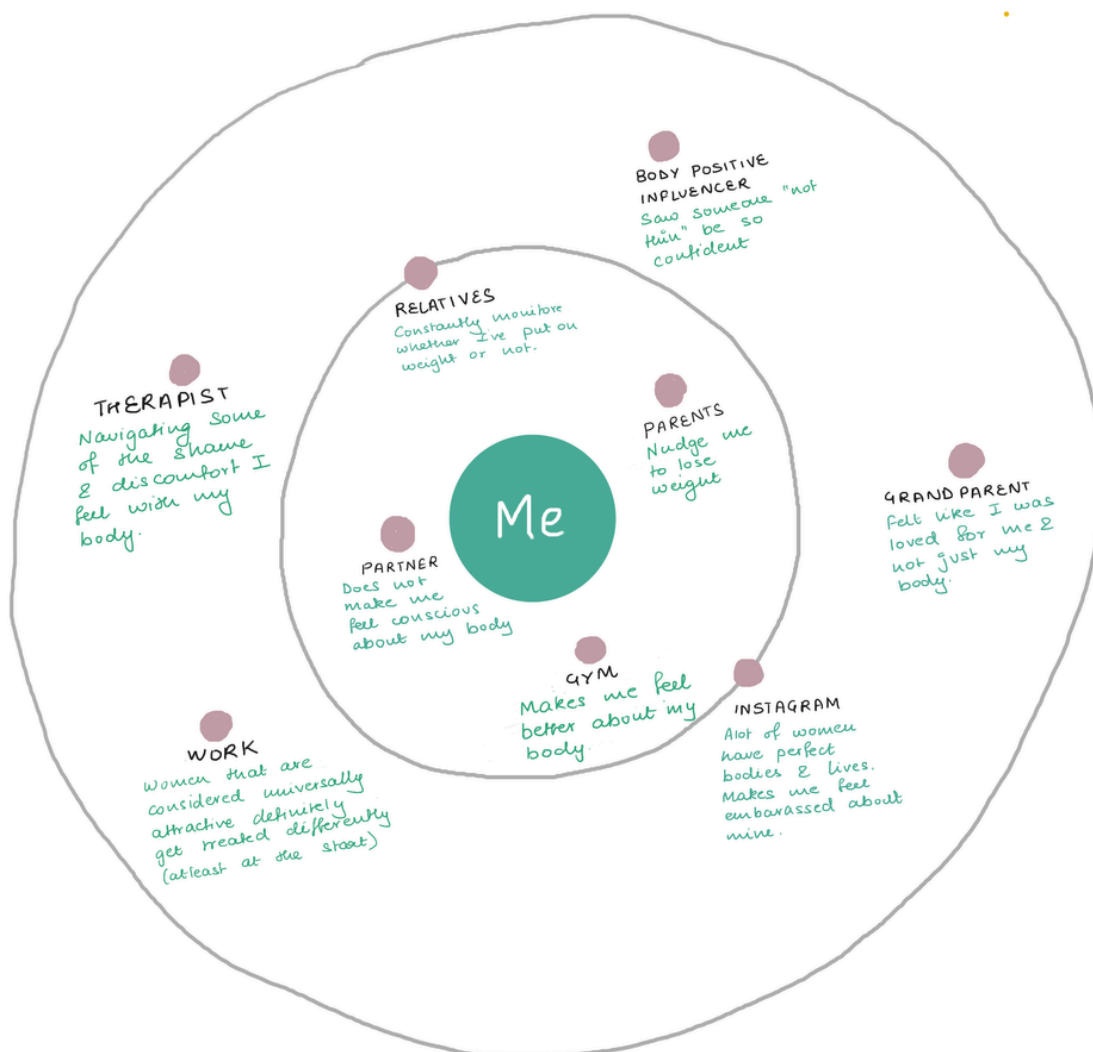
Step 4: Reflect on the map

Once your ecosystem map is complete, pause and look at it. Ask yourself:

- Which influence surprised me the most when I drew it out?
- Which voices feel loudest in my ecosystem and which ones do I want to hear more often?
- Do I notice any patterns in the messages I've written down?

- What's one small boundary or action I can take to create a healthier ecosystem for my body? (Examples: Limit time on specific accounts that trigger comparison, share openly with a friend or sibling about how certain comments affect you, practice daily affirmations or gratitude rituals, etc.)

An Example: Body Ecosystem



Note: This example is intentionally simplified to show how the exercise works without shaping your answers since it could look very different for each one of us. Your experience will likely be more layered, so take your time and be as thorough as you can in your reflections.

REVISITING THE BODY YOU GREW UP IN

Many of the thoughts we carry about our bodies started when we were young. The purpose of this exercise is to help you return to that younger version of yourself, notice the messages you received, and replace them with words of care and kindness. *If you do not resonate with this exercise or you feel that it is not relevant for you, then please feel free to leave it out.*

Follow the steps below:

Step 1 - Picture your younger self

Close your eyes and imagine yourself as a child at the age when you first started noticing or worrying about your body. Don't overthink this. Stay with whatever comes to mind. Hold that image.

Step 2 - Remember the messages

Write down a few of the things you felt and heard about your body at that time. These might have come from yourself, family, friends, teachers, or any other person in your life.

Step 3 - Write a letter to your younger self

Start with...

Dear younger me, I want you to know...

- Share what you wish you had heard instead.
- Remind your younger self of all the wonderful things your body allowed you to do.
- Offer your younger body words of comfort and acceptance. This could be an apology from all the people that had said something rude, it could be telling your younger body that you will take care of it. Anything that you feel is right to say in the moment and comes from your heart.
- Make a promise to your younger self on how you intend to treat your body going forward.

Here is a template for the letter if you'd like something more structured to get you started. We recommend handwriting this so your body actually feels it.

Dear younger me,

I'm thinking of you today. I remember how you felt about our body then. I remember the thoughts you carried and the things you heard from others and from yourself.

I want you to know...

(What did you need to hear back then? Write it here.)

Your body was never the problem. Your body was doing its best to grow, learn, and play. You didn't deserve judgment, harm, comparison, or criticism.

Here are the things I want you to remember about your body...

(What did your body allow you to do as a child? Write about joy, energy, movement, fun, comfort.)

If you were hurt by the things others said or did, I'm so sorry. You deserved kindness, safety, and love. You deserved to feel proud and free inside your body.

Here is what I want you to feel now...

(What comfort would you like to give your younger self?)

And here is my promise to you going forward...

(How will you care for your body differently from now on? What commitment do you want to make?)

I'm not here to change you. I'm here to protect you now and to treat our body with the respect and gentleness it always deserved.

With love,
Your older self

THE BODY & DAILY LIVING



Journaling Prompts

How does the food I eat make me feel - in my body, in my mood, and in the memories it brings up?

How do my clothes affect the way I feel about myself, and what do they make me believe about who I can be?

How does my body move through my day and what do those movements tell me about what I need, how I feel, and how I relate to myself?

DANCING WITH THE WORLD

We meet the world through our bodies. Through them, we taste, touch, speak, feel and dress. Every bite of food, every outfit we choose, every movement or stillness is part of an ongoing conversation between who we are inside and the world we interact with outside. The body is not separate from experience.

One of the most intimate places this dialogue unfolds is in the act of eating. Food is far more than nutrition. It is memory, culture, comfort and identity. The way we eat holds stories of childhood rituals, family tables, celebrations, stress, hunger, and pleasure. When we pay attention to these small moments, they shift from sub-conscious behaviours into rituals of connection.

Clothing, too, participates in this subtle exchange. What we wear is often the first thing the world notices, but it is also a way we notice ourselves. Colours, textures, silhouettes, they mirror the emotions we carry or the energy we want to step into. Some days we dress to feel held, other days to feel bold, sometimes to hide and sometimes simply to feel like ourselves again.

And then there is movement. Not exercise, necessarily, but the smaller things. The way we walk when we are anxious, how our body settles when we rest, the expressions that come out when we are happy or overwhelmed. These movements become easy to overlook because they become part of everyday life.

As you move into the next few exercises, think of it as paying closer attention to what is already there.

RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

These prompts will help you notice how you think about food in relation to your body. They guide you from being critical towards kindness, and help you see food as something that nourishes and supports you rather than something to fear and fight.

Exercise 1: Thinking of a positive food story.



Prompt: When has food made me feel strong, capable, or comforted?

- Write a short story of that moment (what you ate, where you were, what was happening, how your body responded).
- End with: “At this moment, my body and my food were on the same team.”

Exercise 2: Think of a time that you were critical about your body because of food.



Prompt: When have I eaten something and then criticized my body?

- Write the full scene (what you ate, where you were, what your inner voice said).
- Now rewrite the same moment with a kinder perspective: what did this food give you (energy, comfort, pleasure, relief), why might you have needed it, could that need sometimes be met in another way, (If yes, try that other way when you can.)
 - End your reframed version with: “This food gave me _____, and my body knows how to process it.”
 - Thank the food for what it offered you in that moment

Exercise 3: Practice Gratitude for food



Prompt: What food can I thank today?

- Pick one food you ate in the last week and write a short thank-you note. You can begin with “Thank you for giving me...”
- Name the energy, comfort, focus, flavour, or support it provided.

We recommend repeating these three exercises on a weekly OR whenever you feel stuck in negative food-body thoughts. Use different foods, memories, and situations each time.

Over time, you’ll notice your relationship with food shift. Food will start to feel like something that enables you and something to enjoy. You may also find yourself eating with more ease and mindfulness.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CLOTHES

Clothes impact how we feel in our bodies. This exercise helps you understand your relationship with clothing. It reinforces that clothes can be a way to express identity, comfort, and confidence. They do not have to be seen as a way to hide or correct your body.

Step 1: Wardrobe Audit

Choose:

- 3 items of clothing you love or enjoy wearing, and
- 3 items you avoid or dislike

Step 2: Reflect On Each Piece

For each item, write down your responses to the following:

1. How do I feel when I wear this?
2. Do I choose this for myself or because I think it meets others' expectations?
3. If this piece of clothing could speak, what would it say about me?
4. Why do I keep this item? What purpose does it serve?

Optional experiment:

Try wearing one of the “avoided or disliked” items at home for 10 minutes. Do not evaluate your body, just focus on how the clothing feels. Write down any positives and any negatives you notice.

Step 3: Shift From Correction to Expression

Make a short list of adjectives you want your clothes to express (strong, bold, free, artistic, cozy, playful). Use this as your future wardrobe compass, instead of “Does this make me look thin/acceptable?”

Answer these two prompts to anchor your new approach and look at clothes in your desired way:

- What do I want my clothes to say about me?
- How can my clothes serve me, instead of me serving them?

RELATIONSHIP WITH MOVEMENT

This exercise will help you explore the everyday ways your body moves through the world and use those observations to deepen your understanding, and appreciation for your own lived physical experience.

Step 1: Observe Everyday Movements

Think about and observe the different ways your body naturally moves during the day. These do not need to be workouts or intentional exercise (they can be).

Some examples: Stretching after waking up, walking while on the phone, dancing while cooking, curling into bed after a long day, sitting cross-legged, rushing when anxious, carrying bags, groceries, children, responsibilities, swaying to music, taking deep breaths during overwhelm

Write down 5–10 movements your body does regularly.

Step 2: Reflect on Meaning

Choose 3 movements from your list and reflect on them.

For each one, ask yourself:

- When do I usually do this movement?
- What emotion or need might be connected to it?
- Does this movement make me feel comforted, restricted, energized, protected, calm, disconnected, expressive?
- Is this movement something I enjoy, avoid, or barely notice?
- What might this movement say about what my body needs?

Step 3: Notice Patterns

After you have done this for a few weeks look at your reflections together, and notice any patterns you see.

Ask yourself:

- Do I move gently with my body or mostly push through it?
- When does my body seem most relaxed or most tense?
- What movements feel most natural or comforting to me?
- Are there movements I associate with stress, shame, or performance?
- Which movements make me feel most connected to myself?

Step 4: Close with Affirmation

Complete the following sentences:

- “My body naturally moves toward _____ when it needs comfort.”
- “I feel most like myself when I am _____.”
- “One movement I want to do more consciously is _____.”

End with:

- “My body has been communicating with me through movement all along.”

LOOKING AHEAD



BECOMING YOUR FUTURE BODY

Every new season of life asks us to meet our body again... with clearer eyes, softer expectations, and a deeper sense of care. The body you inhabit today is not the body you lived in five years ago, and it will not be the body you carry five years from now. It grows and recalibrates with you. It is always changing because you are always changing.

This part of the journey is a chance to reflect on the kind of relationship you want to build with your body moving forward. Instead of focusing only on appearance, it can help to ask broader questions: How do I want to feel in my body? What kind of care, support, or attention do I want to give it? What habits or patterns no longer serve me?

The exercises ahead are meant to help you set small, realistic goals that feel meaningful to your life and needs. These goals do not have to be dramatic or perfect. They can be simple shifts in how you exist, move, eat, speak to yourself, or pay attention to your body.

Building a healthier relationship with the body is usually a gradual process. Some changes will become noticeable, while others may happen silently over time. What matters is creating practices that help you feel more connected to the body you live in now, while making space for the person you are still becoming.

MY BODY PERSONA

The goal of this exercise is to temporarily step out of your usual self-talk and imagine your body as if it were another person - a character with its own personality, needs, emotions, boundaries, and desires.

By doing this, our hope is that you separate what you think your body should be from what your body is actually asking for. The persona is meant to help you develop empathy for your body, just as you would with a friend, partner, or child you care about. This makes room for kindness, respect, and collaboration instead of judgment or control.

Below are a few steps that describe all the different things you can think about when creating your body persona. At the end of the steps you will also find a template that you can use and an example that will provide inspiration for you to create your own body persona.

Step 1 - Name & Describe the Body Persona you would like to have.

Remember to listen to your body as you do this.

- Give your body a name (it can be playful or symbolic).
- Imagine your body as a person or character.
- Write a few descriptors:
 - Personality traits (reliable, sensitive, playful, stubborn etc)
 - Energy style (calm, fiery, flexible, slow, quick to react etc)

Example: “My body is like a wise friend. She is strong but gets tired when overworked. She is gentle but demands respect when ignored.”

Step 2 - Goals & Desires

- Ask yourself: “What does my body persona want most?”
- Write 2-3 goals from your body’s point of view.

Example: “I want to move with ease. I want to feel safe and supported most of the time.”

Step 3 - Frustrations & Challenges

- Ask: “What upsets my body persona?”

Example: “Being ignored until pain shows up. Being spoken about harshly. Being compared to others.”

Step 4 - Needs & Supports

- Ask: “What does my body need from me?”

Example: “More rest. More water. Gentler self-talk. Movement that feels joyful, not difficult.”

Reflection

- How is this persona similar or different from how you usually think of your body?
- What would change if you treated your body like this persona every day?

MY BODY PERSONA'S NAME

Who is my body as a person?

PERSONALITY TRAITS

ENERGY/VIBE

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

My body is like ...

MY BODY'S GOALS AND DESIRES

WHAT UPSETS MY BODY

WHAT DOES MY BODY NEED?

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

How is this persona similar or different from how I normally think of my body?

What would change if I treated my body like this persona every day?

An Example: Body Persona



PERSONALITY TRAITS:

Stubborn, Reliable, Shy
Sensitive

Energy / Vibe: *Calmly Chaotic*

Character description: *Piku is a bit like the weather. Unpredictable but has both good & bad days.*

Goals / Desires

- Piku wants consistent care.
- Piku wants to look & feel healthy.
- Piku wants to grow & be challenged in a healthy manner.

What upsets Piku ...

- When Piku does not get the rest needed.
- When Piku feels unheard.

What Piku needs ...

- Piku needs to be listened to and responded to.
- Piku needs more rest, better sleep & more pampering.

Note: This example is intentionally simplified to show how the exercise works without shaping your answers since it could look very different for each one of us. Your experience will likely be more layered and might include many more events, so take your time and be as thorough as you can in your reflections.

GOAL SETTING

Now that you've met your body as a persona, it's time to turn that understanding into small, intentional steps. Think of this as creating an agreement between you and your body.

Step 1: Listen to What Your Body Wants

Read through what your body persona said it wants most.

Ask yourself:

- What changes or actions would help meet those needs?
- What might make my body feel supported, safe, and seen?
- Which goals feel nourishing?

Step 2 : Write up to 5 Goals

Use your body persona as a guide to create these goals. Each goal should feel realistic and compassionate.

Examples:

- "I will stretch for 10 minutes each morning to connect with my body first thing in the morning."
- "I will speak kind words to my reflection, especially on days I feel critical."
- "I will pause to notice when I am tired and choose rest over pushing through when possible."
- "I will try one joyful movement a week, it could be dancing, walking, or yoga. I will do this not just for calories, but also for connection."
- I will build a regular body care routine that I do everyday. It could be as simple as moisturising.
- I will take my body out on a pampering date to the spa or get a pedicure once a month.

TRACKING MY GOALS

Tracking your goals will help you notice progress and patterns over time. It would be great to use a tracker as a place to record how your body responds to care, and to celebrate small wins.

Step 1: Create a Simple Tracker

You can make a chart, list, or use symbols (✓ / ✗ / 🧡) to mark your goal.

For example:

Goal	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Notes / Feelings
Move with ease (10 min stretch)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Felt calmer
Speak kindly to my reflection	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	More ease midweek

Step 2: Weekly Check-In

At the end of each week, reflect on the following questions:

- Did I keep the promises I made to my body?
- What actions made me feel connected or grounded?
- What moments of care or awareness stood out this week and felt good?
- What got in the way, and how can I adjust my goal to be easier on me?

Step 3: Reflect on the Bigger Picture

Every month, revisit your goals. Ask:

- Which ones feel natural now?
- Which ones feel forced, do they need rethinking?
- What new needs is my body expressing?
- Do I want to tweak my goals?

Even though we use a tracker here do remember that this practice is not about control. It's about conversation.

OUR HOPE

As you reach the end of this guide, we hope you can pause for a moment and recognise the courage and effort it takes to look inward. Exploring your relationship with your body is not simple work. It asks of you to sift through memories, unlearn inherited beliefs, confront old stories, and sit with old ignored feelings. If you've arrived here with more awareness, feeling gentler about your body, and having more language for your experience, give yourself a pat on the back.

This guide was created to hold space for honesty, discomfort, and possibility. Your body has held so many versions of you. It has remembered things you forgot and carried you through moments you thought you couldn't survive. As you worked through these pages, you may have seen glimpses of that history, and perhaps glimpses of the future you hope to create.

Our hope is that this guide becomes something you can return to whenever needed. The prompts, reflections, and exercises here are designed to meet you where you are, whether that's a place of curiosity, confusion, or transition. Each time you revisit an exercise, you will meet a new version of yourself, someone who has lived a little more, and learned a little more.

The real work continues beyond these pages. It continues in the way you speak to yourself when you see your reflection, the pause you take before judging your body, the awareness you bring to eating, dressing, moving, or simply being. It continues in the narratives you rewrite, the boundaries you set, the compassion you practice, and the decisions you make about what you no longer want to carry.

Your relationship with your body will keep evolving. Some days will feel natural, and some will feel difficult, and BOTH are part of the process. What matters is that you stay connected. Keep listening. Keep reflecting and Keep choosing a kinder story, even when it feels difficult.

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***We would love to hear your experiences
(both the good and bad) of using this guide.***

***Please do share your feedback by writing to
us - thebodylogue@gmail.com***

