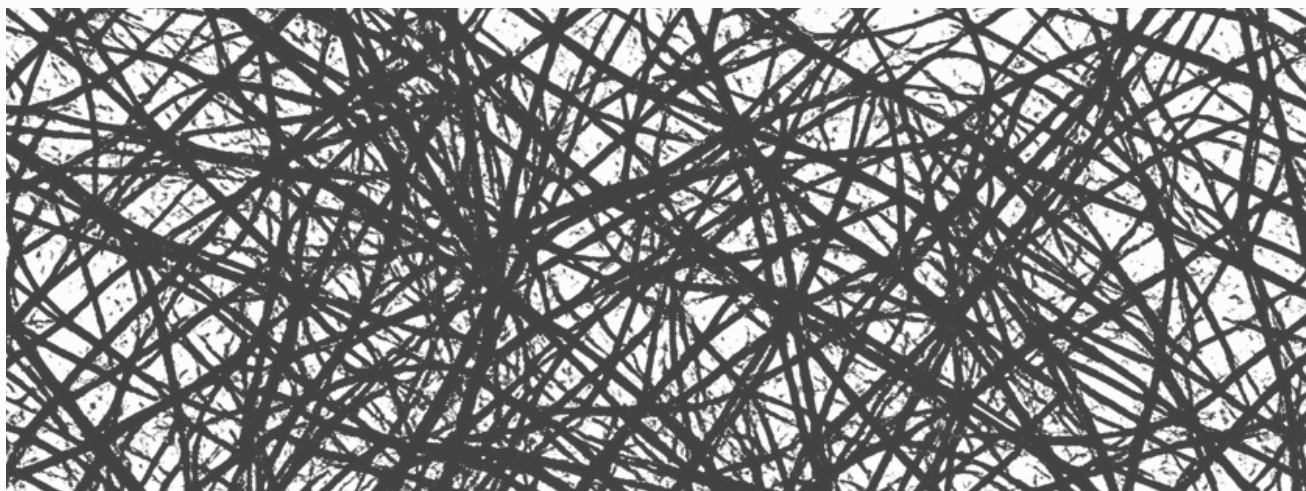


Meet Your Nervous System

*A gentle guide to noticing your body's signals and
responding with curiosity, rather than judgment.*

GABRIELLA LEHMKUHLE



Orientation

Your nervous system is constantly working behind the scenes, shaping how you experience the world, relate to others, respond to stress, and recover from life's challenges. Much of this happens automatically, often before you're even aware of it.

Learning about your nervous system isn't about becoming an expert or trying to control every response. It's about becoming more familiar with the patterns, sensations, and signals your body is already communicating.

This mini workbook offers a gentle place to begin. Through a combination of brief education and guided reflection, you'll start noticing how your mind and body work together in everyday life. There are no right or wrong answers, and nothing you need to accomplish. Simply approach each page with curiosity and move at a pace that feels supportive.

If something doesn't resonate, feel free to skip it. If you discover something meaningful, pause and spend time with it. Every small moment of awareness helps strengthen your relationship with yourself.

Felt Sense

Your felt sense is your body's internal experience. Before thoughts or emotions become clear, your body first communicates through sensations. If it feels safe, notice what you're sensing right now by following these eight steps.

1. LOCATION

Where do you notice a sensation?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Chest | ☐ Limbs |
| ☐ Throat | ☐ Whole body |
| ☐ Belly | ☐ Hard to locate |
| ☐ Shoulders | ☐ _____ |

2. INTENSITY

How strong is the sensation?

- ☐ Very Mild
☐ Mild
☐ Moderate
☐ Strong
☐ Very Strong

3. QUALITY

What does it feel like?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ☐ Tight | ☐ Sharp |
| ☐ Soft | ☐ Dull |
| ☐ Heavy | ☐ Smooth |
| ☐ Light | ☐ _____ |

4. SIZE

How much space does it take up?

- ☐ Small
☐ Medium
☐ Large

5. MOVEMENT

Does it move?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Pulsing | ☐ Spreading |
| ☐ Fluttering | ☐ Still |
| ☐ Rising | ☐ Stuck |
| ☐ Sinking | ☐ _____ |

6. DIRECTION

How does it move?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Pulling in | ☐ Expanding |
| ☐ Pushing out | ☐ Collapsing |
| ☐ Sinking | ☐ Circling |
| ☐ Rising | ☐ _____ |

7. ENERGY

What is the energetic tone?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Warm | ☐ Electric |
| ☐ Cool | ☐ Numb |
| ☐ Hot | ☐ Activated |
| ☐ Cold | ☐ Flat |
| ☐ Tingling | ☐ _____ |

8. OVERALL EFFECT

How does it affect your whole body?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ Grounded | ☐ Open |
| ☐ Restless | ☐ Guarded |
| ☐ Heavy | ☐ _____ |

Nervous System States

Felt sense often reflects the state of your nervous system. As your body responds to safety and threat, it shifts among these three main protective states.

MOBILIZATION

Your body is preparing to protect you through action. When you feel safe, you may be energetic, active, motivated, and playful. When you feel threatened, you may notice anxiety, irritability, racing thoughts, muscle tension, restlessness, and feeling stuck in "fight or flight."

ENGAGEMENT

Your body trusts itself enough to engage with life. When you feel safe, you may be calm, curious, connected, flexible, present, and able to think clearly. When you feel threatened, you may notice stress or fear while remaining able to pause, adapt, connect with support, and respond intentionally.

IMMOBILIZATION

Your body is protecting you by conserving energy. When you feel safe, you may be restful, reflective, dreamy, or meditative. When you are threatened, you may notice numbness, exhaustion, disconnection, hopelessness, and feeling stuck in "freeze or flop."

These states are not "good" or "bad." Each is your body's way of trying to help you adapt. The goal isn't to stay in one state all the time, but to better understand your patterns and build a supportive relationship with your nervous system.

WHAT PATTERNS DO YOU NOTICE IN YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM?

Support Your Nervous System

Each nervous system state may benefit from different forms of support. Explore the practices below with curiosity. Notice what feels most supportive for your current state.

MOBILIZATION

Often benefits from slowing down, grounding, containment, and predictability.

- ☐ Lengthen your exhale.
- ☐ Press your hands together or press your feet into the floor.
- ☐ Wrap yourself in a blanket or place a hand over your heart.
- ☐ Notice your body in your environment.
- ☐ Slow the speed of your words, thoughts, and movement.
- ☐ Reduce stimulation.

ENGAGEMENT

Often benefits from connection, curiosity, and experiences that support flexibility.

- ☐ Talk kindly to yourself, make eye contact with yourself, offer supportive self-touch.
- ☐ Connect with a loved one and express gratitude for them.
- ☐ Move your body in ways that inspire confidence.
- ☐ Engage in activities that bring meaning.
- ☐ Create, play, or explore something.
- ☐ Notice what helps you feel like yourself.

IMMOBILIZATION

Often benefits from movement, sensory input, energy, and supportive connection.

- ☐ Stand up and gently shake out your arms and legs.
 - ☐ Open a window or step outside.
 - ☐ Splash cool water on your face.
 - ☐ Play upbeat music.
 - ☐ Walk for five minutes.
 - ☐ Reach out to someone safe.
-

Your nervous system is always changing. Return to these pages whenever you'd like to check in with yourself, noticing what feels different and what stays the same.