

## Process of Self-Exploration

When triggered by something or someone – we can find great benefit from connecting with the internal mechanism of vulnerability that has become activated. In particular, it can provide some clarity regarding what we need from ourselves and/or others.

**Step 1.** Make a conscious decision to engage in a process of self-exploration after having been triggered by something that was said or done.

**Step 2.** Take 2-3 deep breaths, exhaling slowly. Then, check in with yourself to see which of the statements below connects best with your experience of the trigger (select only one).

### WHAT TRIGGERED ME?

- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 01. I felt excluded.                  | 13. I felt like the bad guy.         |
| 02. I felt powerless.                 | 14. I felt forgotten.                |
| 03. I felt unheard.                   | 15. I felt unsafe.                   |
| 04. I felt scolded.                   | 16. I felt unloved.                  |
| 05. I felt judged.                    | 17. I felt like that was unfair.     |
| 06. I felt blamed.                    | 18. I felt frustrated.               |
| 07. I felt disrespected.              | 19. I felt disconnected.             |
| 08. I felt a lack of affection.       | 20. I felt trapped.                  |
| 09. I felt uncared for.               | 21. I felt a lack of passion.        |
| 10. I felt lonely.                    | 22. I felt like I couldn't speak up. |
| 11. I felt ignored.                   | 23. I felt manipulated.              |
| 12. I felt like I couldn't be honest. | 24. I felt controlled.               |

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**Step 3:** Take another deep breath, exhaling slowly. Close your eyes and connect with your earliest memory of having felt \_\_\_\_\_ (the item you selected from the list above), before the age of 12. Recall the scene with as much detail as possible, and with a focus on your emotional experience. Did you feel scared? Sad? Embarrassed? Mad? Did you tell anyone? If not – why? If so – what happened then?

**Step 4.** Ask yourself: What were my child-self's vulnerable needs at that time (comfort, validation, protection, compassion, understanding, patience, encouragement, love, etc.)?

**Step 5.** Imagine your child-self in your heart. Tend to them in a way that meets these needs, with words and action. For example, you might speak loving words of reassurance to them while placing your hands on your heart. Notice how your physical body responds. Take a few minutes to reflect on the experience of having gone through this process, including how your perception of the event / your needs may have changed.