

Regulate to Relate

*Simple Nervous System Tools to Help You Stay Calm,
Present & Connected, Even When Emotions Run
High*





Welcome

You care deeply about your relationships, and you want to show up with more patience, clarity, and calm.

But some days, it feels like your body has other plans.

You snap when you meant to stay kind.

You shut down when you long to stay open.

You say “yes” when you’re aching to say “no.”

You’re not broken. And you’re not alone.

These are nervous system responses, not personality flaws.

In this guide, you’ll learn why this happens... and discover 5 simple, science-backed tools to help you feel more grounded and connected so you can show up the way you want to, even when life feels intense.

Let’s begin.



Lee



Why your nervous system matters in relationships

Your nervous system is your body's built-in safety system. It's always scanning your environment, even without your awareness, for cues of safety or danger.

When it picks up on stress, tension, or conflict, it can shift into survival states:

- Fight – snapping, irritation, defensiveness
- Flight – overthinking, people-pleasing, avoidance
- Freeze – zoning out, emotional numbness, going quiet
- Fawn – self-abandoning, saying “yes” to keep the peace

These are protective responses — not character flaws.

They're your body's way of keeping you safe.

But here's the good news:

You can learn to work with your nervous system so you can move from reaction to connection.

That's what regulation is:

Finding your way back to calm, safety, and choice.

Tool 1. The Grounding Touch

Sometimes, just feeling your own hands can be the reset you need. When everything feels scattered or overwhelming, this simple touch reminds your body: I'm safe.

Use it when: you're feeling anxious, scattered, or overwhelmed in a conversation.



Try this:

1. Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly.
2. Gently press in, noticing the warmth and weight of your hands.
3. Take 3 slow breaths. Feel your body supported by the ground or chair.
4. Whisper to yourself: "I am here. I am safe. I can respond."

WHY IT HELPS?

Grounding through touch signals safety to your nervous system and helps you come back to the present moment.

Tool 2. The Extended Exhale

Your breath is one of the most powerful tools you have, and it's always with you.

When emotions are high and everything feels like too much, slowing down your exhale can gently guide your nervous system back to safety.

Use it when: you feel triggered and want to snap, shut down, or escape the moment.

Try this:

1. Inhale slowly through your nose for a count of 4.
2. Exhale gently through your mouth for a count of 6 to 8 — like you're sighing out tension.
3. Repeat 3 to 5 times. Let your shoulders drop with each exhale.
4. You can even add a soft sound or sigh on the outbreath to help release what you're holding.

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Just bring your attention back to the rhythm of your breath. Let each exhale be a quiet reminder: I don't need to fix this right now. I just need to breathe.



WHY IT HELPS:

A longer exhale activates your parasympathetic nervous system, your body's natural "rest and restore" mode.





Tool 3: Orienting to Safety

When your thoughts are racing or you feel emotionally overwhelmed, it's easy to get stuck in your head or feel like the walls are closing in.

This simple practice helps bring you back into your body and into the here and now.

Use it when: you feel disconnected, foggy, or mentally spiralling.

Try this:

1. Gently turn your head and slowly look around the space you're in.
2. Let your gaze land on different things — a lamp, a photo, a window, a plant.
3. Name 3 colours, 3 shapes, or 3 objects you see.
4. Let your eyes settle on something soothing or familiar.
5. Say quietly to yourself: "I am here. I am safe. This moment is OK."

WHY IT HELPS?

Your eyes send cues of safety to your brain. Looking around helps interrupt spiralling thoughts and bring your system back to the present.

You're not trying to change how you feel just reminding your nervous system that right now, you're not in danger.

Tool 4. The Body Check-In

It can be hard to know what you need when you're disconnected from your body. This gentle pause helps you tune in without judgement so you can better understand what's going on beneath the surface.

Use it when: you're unsure how you're feeling or need to make a decision.



Try this:

1. Pause. Take a breath. Let your attention drop from your head to your body.
2. Ask: "What's happening in my body right now?"
3. Gently scan from head to toe. Is there tension in your jaw? Tightness in your chest? A knot in your stomach?
4. Get curious: Where do I feel something? What does it feel like?
5. Place a hand on the area you notice most, and breathe softly into it.

This isn't about fixing or analysing, it's about noticing. Simply bringing kind awareness to your internal state can be enough to shift it.

WHY IT HELPS?

Body awareness is the first step to regulation. When you name it, you can work with it, not be ruled by it.

Tool 5. The “Safe Anchor” Visualisation

When life feels overwhelming, you can gently guide your nervous system toward calm by imagining a place or person that makes you feel safe. This practice helps you build an internal anchor you can return to no matter what’s happening around you.

Use it when: you're flooded with emotion, feeling disconnected, or longing for comfort.

Try this:

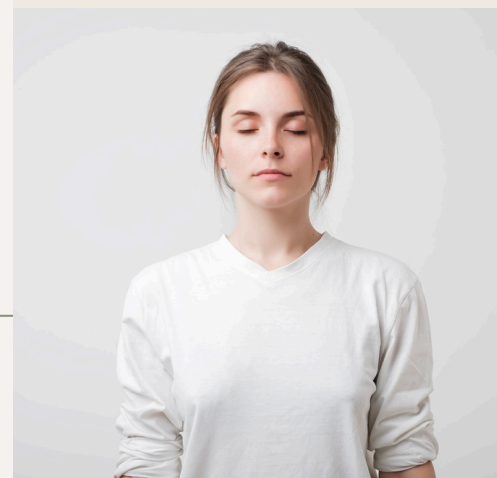
1. Find a quiet moment and close your eyes.
2. Picture someone, somewhere, or something that helps you feel completely safe and supported.
 - This could be a loved one, a pet, a peaceful place in nature, or even a warm blanket or scent.
3. Imagine yourself there. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel on your skin or in your chest?
4. Let yourself rest in that scene for 30 seconds to 2 minutes or longer if it feels good.

This is a resource you can return to anytime. Over time, this inner sanctuary becomes easier and quicker to access.



WHY IT HELPS:

Your nervous system doesn't know the difference between real and imagined safety. This practice offers a powerful reset.





Final thoughts

You don't need to be calm all the time to have healthy relationships.

You just need the tools to find your way back.

These practices aren't about "fixing" you. They're about gently supporting the real you.

Because when your nervous system feels safe...

You feel more you — clear, grounded, and connected.
And the people around you feel that shift too.

WANT TO DIVE DEEPER?

Imagine feeling less reactive and more at ease in your body and your relationships.

I help women release chronic stress and reconnect with themselves through trauma-informed nervous system coaching.

If you're ready to shift from emotional overwhelm to calm confidence, book your free 15-minute connection call today.

Let's move gently from survival to a life that feels safe, spacious, and fully yours.



Book a connection call

Thank you

*for choosing to nurture your nervous system.
The more you come back to calm, the more connected
and present you can be with the people who matter
most.*