



FREE GUIDE

Narcissistic Trauma

Survival Guide

How to Stop Disappearing and
Come Back to Yourself

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WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

This book is for you if you have long been the one who smooths things over, stays quiet about your own needs, and makes sure everyone else is comfortable first.

- You say "everything's fine" even when your chest is tight and something inside you sinks.
- You feel ashamed for needing support, rest, space, or help.
- People call you "low-maintenance," yet inside you carry a loneliness that is hard to explain.
- You sense someone's mood shifting before they have said a word.
- At night you replay conversations, wondering if you came across as too much.
- You are always there for others, but struggle to be there for yourself.
- You were told you were "too sensitive," "too emotional," or "just too much."
- You are exhausted from being a safe place for everyone while feeling almost no one truly sees you.

If you recognise yourself here, nothing was wrong with you. You simply became very skilled at surviving in relationships where it was never truly safe.

And you can find your way back to yourself.

BEFORE WE BEGIN

You were never "too much." You simply had to carry feelings that no one helped you hold.

If you are reading this, there is a good chance you have spent years believing something was wrong with you.

Perhaps you thought you were needy because you wanted comfort.

Perhaps you thought you were dramatic because you hurt more deeply than others.

Perhaps you thought you were weak because you could not "just let it go."

And perhaps you grew so accustomed to being calm, helpful, and easy that you forgot how much it cost you.

This is pain that often lives quietly. It can make you feel as though you exist only alongside other people's feelings — what do they need? what are they feeling? what will keep them close?

But I want you to hear this clearly:

Nothing was wrong with you.

Your nervous system was doing its job.

Very early on it understood: if you stay convenient, helpful, and agreeable, connection is preserved. It understood that honesty might cost you closeness. And so you adapted.

You became whoever it was safest to be. That was not weakness — it was a remarkably intelligent survival strategy.

This book will help you understand what happened, why it happened, and what healing can look like — without shame and without pressure.

You do not need to become harder.

You need to feel safe enough to stop abandoning yourself.

Being Convenient Is Not the Same as Being Kind

Sometimes convenience is just fear with good manners.

You avoid conflict. You soften your truth. You become whoever the moment seems to call for. From the outside this can look like kindness. From the inside it often feels like pressure.

"Being convenient" is not simply "being a good person." It is what happens when your body has learned that the safest option is to keep others comfortable.

Your body may activate this response when it believes:

- conflict could end in rejection
- someone else's displeasure feels like danger
- their feelings matter more than yours
- keeping the connection matters more than telling the truth

In real life this can look like:

1. You are exhausted, yet you still say yes when asked to help, listen, or do one more thing.
2. Someone hurts your feelings, and you end up consoling them because they felt awkward about your pain.
3. A friend makes a cutting joke at your expense, and you laugh — because making the moment uncomfortable feels worse.
4. You agree to dinner, family plans, or a celebration, then lie awake at night feeling trapped inside your own yes.
5. You re-read a message ten times, checking the tone, trying to make sure nothing you said could cause someone to pull away.

So little is said about being "convenient" precisely because, from the outside, it can look like a good thing — like helpfulness, like calm, like love.

Being convenient is not the same as being loved.

How You Learned This

You were not born shrinking. You learned it in relationships where your full self was not safe.

No one comes into the world believing their needs are a problem. That is learned — usually slowly, usually in relationships that shaped your body long before you had words for what was happening.

You may have learned to be convenient if you grew up:

- walking on eggshells around the adults in your life
- constantly reading the room to catch their mood before they noticed yours
- feeling responsible for the emotional climate of your home
- receiving warmth when you were easy, quiet, and helpful
- facing silence, shame, or punishment when you had big feelings
- being told you were "too sensitive" or "too dramatic"

In those homes, children become experts at reading the room — learning to sense a parent's mood from the rhythm of their breathing alone. You learn when to go quiet. You learn when to smile. You learn to hide what hurts.

Your body understood: keeping the connection is safer than being fully honest. That was not a conscious choice. It was an adaptation. It was a nervous system saying: "I know how to keep us close. Let me do that."

Sometimes parents truly did the best they could with what they had. And sometimes even their "best" still left you alone with feelings too large to carry by yourself. Both things can be true.

They could have loved you, and you could still have learned that your emotions were inconvenient to them. That kind of pain is hard to name — it just feels like the background hum of your entire life.

Your body learned: stay lovable, stay useful, stay small.

The Hidden Cost of Being Convenient

Being convenient for everyone around you is not a virtue if it means no one ever has to notice your pain.

The chronic expression of this pattern carries its own quiet grief — not always loud, not always visible, but deep enough to touch every corner of life.

Because when you spend years becoming whatever others need, you stop hearing your own signals: hunger, anger, preferences, pain, desire, limits. And after a while that loss becomes so familiar you no longer call it a loss. You call it having an easy-going nature. You call it being loyal.

But beneath it, there is often a very tired part of you, quietly asking: "When will someone ask about me?"

1. You no longer know what you want

When someone asks what you would like for dinner, where you want to go, or what you need right now — there is an emptiness inside. Not because you have no desires, but because your body learned: check everyone else first. Even a small choice can trigger anxiety, not because the choice is big, but because somewhere inside, wanting still feels dangerous.

2. You attract people who take

People who enjoy open access to your time, energy, and care are often strongly drawn to you. Not because something is wrong with you, but because you were taught to override your own discomfort and call it love. Perhaps you keep hoping: if I give enough, explain enough, forgive enough, someone will finally handle my heart with care. That hope is deeply human — and that is precisely why it hurts so much when it ends up in the wrong hands again.

3. You feel empty even when you are loved

Someone may text you every day, want to be near you, even say they love you — and you still feel alone. Because they may love the version of you that agrees, stays convenient, asks for little, and does not complicate things. Being loved for the version of yourself that disappears is one of the loneliest feelings in the world.

4. Your body carries the resentment you never said aloud

Perhaps you do not raise your voice. Perhaps you do not complain. Perhaps you tell yourself everything is fine, because you always have. But your body keeps score regardless.

This can show up as:

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- shoulders that never fully relax
 - stomach pain before seeing certain people
 - a tight jaw from words you held inside
 - fatigue that sleep does not fix
 - numbness that makes it hard to know what you feel at all
 - sudden anger that comes out sideways, because the real feeling could never be expressed directly

Your body is not "being dramatic." It is carrying every "no," every hurt, every anger that was never given air.

The deepest wound: you did not wake up one morning and decide to disappear. It happened quietly. You said: "Whatever's easiest for you." You said: "I don't mind." You said: "It doesn't matter." You said: "Honestly, I'm fine."

"I no longer know what I actually want." That moment is not simply burnout — it is the shock of how long you have been leaving yourself behind.

Being convenient is not the same as being loved. Being needed is not the same as being cherished. And that part of you that aches at these words is not broken.

It is the part that knows: you were not made only to survive.

Signs You Carry Narcissistic Trauma

Recognising the pattern is the first act of coming back to yourself.

You may have developed these patterns if some of the following feel deeply familiar:

1. You say yes and feel irritation in your body before the sentence is even finished.
2. You rehearse conversations in the shower, in bed, in the car – searching for the one version that won't upset anyone.
3. You apologise for your tone, for your timing, for your feelings, for your expression, for simply existing.
4. You change your laughter, your words, or your opinions depending on who you're with.
5. You fear being misunderstood more than you fear being treated badly.
6. You rush to ease tension even when you have done nothing wrong.
7. You look back at a sent message and try to work out whether you sounded too needy, too rude, too strange – or simply "too much."
8. You shrink the moment you hear disappointment, coldness, or irritation in someone's voice.
9. You turn a simple boundary into a five-minute explanation, trying to make your "no" easier for the other person to bear.
10. After a conversation you feel shaky, drained, or strangely invisible – even though nothing obviously "bad" seemed to happen.

Your body may also be speaking:

- your stomach drops when someone shifts their tone
- your heart races before a simple "no"
- you smile while your throat tightens
- you freeze when someone asks what you want

If you recognise yourself in these pages – just breathe. You do not need to do everything at once.

Your people-pleasing, your perfectionism, your hyper-responsibility – these are not flaws. They are patterns that once helped you survive. You do not have to be perfect to be worthy. You already are.

The Path Back to Yourself

Healing is not when you become harder to love. It is when you no longer need to disappear for love to stay.

Many people fear healing because they think it will make them cold – selfish, sharp, distant, difficult. But real healing does not do that.

It does not take your softness away. It helps you keep your softness without giving others unlimited access to you. Healing is not becoming a different person. It is your nervous system learning a different way to live.

That means healing does not look perfect. It looks more honest. It looks calmer. It looks more steady. It feels like staying with yourself in the places where you used to leave yourself behind.

STEP 1 – RETURN TO YOUR BODY

Narcissistic trauma severs the connection to your body. Begin by noticing your breath. Feel your hands and feet. Observe where fear and shame live in your body. Simply be with those sensations.

Healing lives here too – in the body slowly learning new truths, such as:

- I can disappoint someone and still be safe
- I can say no and still be loved
- I can feel things without becoming a problem
- I can stay in connection without reshaping myself for every person
- I can belong without betraying myself

At first this almost always feels uncomfortable. That does not mean you are doing it wrong. It means your body is practising a new way of being in relationship.

STEP 2 – NOTICE THE PATTERNS

Begin to notice what happens inside you in real time:

- You pause before answering, instead of saying yes from panic.
- You notice someone is upset and do not automatically decide you are the cause.
- You say "I need to think about that" – and let it be enough.

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- You don't reply to a message for a while without immediately spiralling into fear that the relationship is over.
 - You feel guilt after setting a boundary, but you do not rush to undo it.

These may sound like small things. They are not small. For a nervous system trained to always adjust, moments like these are enormous.

The healed version of you can still be kind. Thoughtful. Deeply caring. But now your care includes yourself. Now your kindness has edges. Now your yes is real. And your no is real too.

This is not selfishness. This is what self-trust looks like after years of self-abandonment.

Beneath all that pleasing, performing, and endless peacekeeping, there is a version of you – more real, less afraid, more alive.

The version of you that existed before you learned to disappear is still inside. Healing is making it safe enough for her to return.

And she has been waiting a long, long time.

YOUR NEXT STEP

If something on these pages touched something deeply personal – it is meant to. And from here, you do not need to carry all of this alone.

Find me on Instagram

I share short, honest material about nervous system responses and healing – in plain language that is actually useful.

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Go deeper when you feel ready

Coming Home to Yourself

A guided resource and meditation session: "My Calm Space"

Your nervous system needs a resource before it will allow real change. Start here – with self-care and creating your own safe, calm place.

Recommended reading

Complex PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving – Pete Walker

The Body Keeps the Score – Bessel van der Kolk

Waking the Tiger – Peter A. Levine

Anchored – Deb Dana

Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors – Janina Fisher

Harmony with yourself is possible.