



EXERCISE: Completing Innate Defense Responses

The first part of this exercise is for any time you've experienced a frightening event and wanted someone to comfort you. The second and third parts can be found in 'The Body Awareness Workbook for Trauma'.

Part 1: Kind Eyes and a Loving Embrace

Recall a traumatic or frightening event when you needed someone safe to hold and soothe you and this didn't happen. *This time* you'll change the experience to a positive one.

For example: Mary Ellen remembered a time when her mother was extremely late to pick her up from school. She was four years old. She stood alone outside the school gates, waiting, very scared. Her mother arrived, stressed. She missed seeing how scared her daughter was. As they drove home, Mary Ellen sat in the back seat, still in a dazed state. She chose this event to work with and heal. When she recalled the memory, she imagined her mother smiling as she got out of the car, holding her, telling her everything was fine and that she loved her. As she imagined, Mary Ellen paid close attention to her body, which began to shift as she felt the comfort from her mother. Her breathing deepened, her shoulders relaxed, and she felt as if that old memory of being scared dissolved from her body.

1. Find a comfortable place to sit and notice how you feel.
2. Notice what changes as you recall the frightening event.
3. Rather than remember it as it happened, recreate the scene, being met with kind and loving eyes or a soothing embrace. Be creative

Read more in 'The Body Awareness Workbook for Trauma' by Dr Julie Brown Yau