



THE Embodied Self

My Nervous System Map

Understanding your body's language and signals

Your nervous system is not broken. It is brilliant — it learned to protect you. This worksheet helps you get to know it, so you can begin to work with it rather than against it.

Part 1 — My Three States

The polyvagal model describes three primary nervous system states. Read each description and notice what feels familiar.

 VENTRAL VAGAL <i>Safe & Connected</i>	 SYMPATHETIC <i>Fight or Flight</i>	 DORSAL VAGAL <i>Shutdown & Freeze</i>
<p>Calm, open, present. Able to connect. Curious. Resourced. Body feels easy.</p> <p><i>What this looks like for me:</i></p>	<p>Anxious, reactive, on edge. Heart racing. Restless. Mind spinning. Hard to settle.</p> <p><i>What this looks like for me:</i></p>	<p>Numb, flat, disconnected. Heavy. Hard to care. Fog. Going through the motions.</p> <p><i>What this looks like for me:</i></p>

Part 2 – My Warning Signs

Each state has early warning signs – signals the body sends before you are fully in the state. The earlier you notice, the easier it is to shift.

My early signs that I am moving into fight/flight (sympathetic): e.g. jaw clenching, shallow breathing, irritability, scrolling...

My early signs that I am moving into shutdown (dorsal): e.g. going quiet, numbness, dissociation, exhaustion, flatness...

Part 3 – What Brings Me Back

List the specific tools, people, places, and practices that reliably help you return to your ventral vagal (safe and connected) state.

What helps when I'm anxious / activated	What helps when I'm flat / shut down

Part 4 – My Current State Check

Right now, in this moment – where are you? Circle or mark your honest answer.

Overall nervous system state:

Completely shut down 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Flooded / overwhelmed*

Body tension level:

Completely relaxed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Extremely tense*

Sense of safety in the body:

No felt sense of safety 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Full felt sense of safety*

<i>What is my body telling me right now?</i>