

Why Does This Trigger Me Reflection

Introduction to the Practice

We all get upset, feel anxiety and get hurt. It's a natural part of being human. But sometimes, our reaction causes further pain to ourselves or may hurt other people.

If you are curious why an episode or a person bothers you, we have a gentle and compassionate process to follow.

Instead of beating ourselves up or judging others, we seek to explore one or more of the following:

- What part of me was I trying to protect?
- What did I really need at that moment?
- What was the moment trying to teach me?
- Where was love trying to break through?

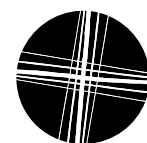
We've created this process to help you explore these questions, not as a chore, but as a doorway into grace. Checking in... Digging in... Bringing in...

*If you would like to observe what this process looks like before trying it for yourself or just to continue to practice this skill and see a variety of perspectives, consider attending a **Drop-in Self Awareness meeting**. They occur most second Sundays after church. Everyone is welcome, you just show up and observe two people practicing this work. You can also view example videos on the website.*

Our reactions to episodes that trigger us can range from mildly uncomfortable to very upsetting. In general, they are characterized by unpleasant physical sensations, judgmental thoughts, & afflictive emotions that affect our sense of well-being.

If you are ready to proceed, follow the steps below:

1. Think about the situation that triggered you. This is your "episode."
2. Begin by **regulating your nervous system**, slow down, breathe, and feel your feet on the ground. There are many helpful breathing and body scanning techniques to try. Here is one example, 4-7-8 Breathing: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat for 2 minutes. Return to this practice any time it feels helpful.
3. Now find "Part 1: Checking In" on the following pages, and write down the answers to those questions
Gentle reminder: return to "regulating your nervous system" at any time it feels helpful.
4. You can stop here. Or if you want to explore this episode more deeply, write down the answers to the questions in "Part 2: Let's Dig Deeper & Explore Why the Episode Triggered Me".
Return to "regulating your nervous system" at any time it feels helpful.
5. You can stop here. Or if you want to explore even more, proceed to Part 3: "Bringing in a Common Thread Listener".
Return to "regulating your nervous system" at any time it feels helpful.



Part 1: Checking In

The Episode

Describe the episode that triggered you. To simplify this inquiry, please focus on just one episode and describe what happened. Elaborating on your feelings and reaction will come later. *Some examples are: a) a friend says I'm not there when she needs me. b) a co-worker points out my mistake in front of my team.*

Three Centered Awareness

We receive wisdom from our body, mind, and heart. Let's check in with each seat of wisdom.

What are you sensing? How did your **body** feel when it happened? Try to bring up the memory of what happened and notice any sensations in your body. This can be really hard to access, and it is okay if you don't remember!

Some examples are: tight chest, sick to your stomach, rapid breathing, frozen, paralyzed, hot, clenched fists, tunnel vision

What are you thinking? What **thoughts** did you think during the episode? Sometimes it is hard to be honest about these thoughts because they seem mean or judgmental. It is okay to think these thoughts. Everyone thinks negative thoughts about other people and we are still good. Checking in and voicing these thoughts are part of the healing process.

Some examples of thoughts are listed below. Circle or write down any words that resonate or write in your own thoughts.

Examples of Thoughts: I was...

Abandoned
Abused
Accused
Attacked
Ambushed

Badgered
Banished
Beaten down
Belittled
Betrayed

Blamed
Boxed-in
Bullied
Cheated
Coerced
Conquered

Constricted
Criticized
Cornered
Deceived
Defeated

Demonized
Despised
Devalued
Diminished
Disapproved of

Discarded
Disdained
Disempowered
Disgraced
Disliked

Disrespected
Distrusted
Dominated
Emasculated
Exploited

Forced
Hindered
Hurt
Ignored
Impugned

Inadequate
Incompetent
Inept
Inferior
Insufficient

Insulted
Interrupted
Intimidated
Invalidated
Invisible

Isolated
Judged
Let down
Left out
Loathed

Manipulated
Misunderstood
Nagged
Neglected
Ostracized
Outnumbered

Overcome
Overwhelmed
Overworked
Passed over
Patronized

Picked on
Pressured
Provoked
Powerless
Punished

Pushed away
Put down
Rejected
Replaced
Ridiculed
Run over

Scapegoated
Scolded
Set up
Shamed
Slandered

Stifled
Stupid
Subordinated
Subservient
Threatened

Unappreciated
Unheard
Unseen
Unsupported
Unwanted
Used

What thoughts are you having about what happened to you?

How was the other person in this episode wrong?

How did they frustrate or anger you?

What did they take away from you or prevent you from doing?

How were they wrong and what should they change?

What did you want them to do differently?

Reviewing the words you circled, does one word stand out more than the others? Please elaborate.

Other: I was thinking...

What are you *feeling*? What feelings did you feel when it happened?

Below are some example feeling words. Circle or write down the words that resonate or add your own.

Feeling Words List: I felt...

Afraid	Brokenhearted	Disgusted	Harried	Listless	Sad
Agitated	Concerned	Disheartened	Heavy	Lonely	Scared
Alarmed	Confused	Dismayed	Helpless	Miserable	Sensitive
Angry	Contempt	Distressed	Humiliated	Mournful	Shaky
Anguished	Dejected	Disturbed	Hurt	Nervous	Stressed
Annoyed	Depressed	Embarrassed	Impatient	Numb	Threatened
Anxious	Despairing	Exhausted	Indifferent	Overwhelmed	Tired
Ashamed	Detached	Frustrated	Insecure	Panicky	Unsafe
Bitter	Disappointed	Grief	Jealous	Resentful	
Bored	Discouraged	Guilty	Jittery	Restless	

Part 2: Let's Dig Deeper Into the Story & Explore Why This Episode Bothered You

What are some things you like about yourself or feel are your positive characteristics?

I am... *Some examples are: Good parent, partner, peacemaker, advocate, achiever, creator, scholar, supporter, fun-maker, doer, easy-going, principled, helpful, friendly, persuasive, practical, frugal, loyal, dependable, spontaneous, strong willed, goal-oriented, other (insert your own word).*

How did this episode challenge the positive ways you show up in this world? In other words, did it challenge your image, your strengths, how you feel about yourself, or how people may perceive you?

What are some of the characteristics you don't like about yourself?

I can be... *Some examples are: Lazy, workaholic, depressed, arrogant, suspicious, gluttonous, mean, short-tempered, judgmental, unreliable, dishonest, needy, manipulative, vengeful, passive aggressive, other (insert your own word).*

How did this episode potentially expose these characteristics you may see as flaws?

If you are familiar with your Enneagram type, how did your personality characteristics show up in this episode?

People need to feel a sense of power and control.

Did this episode make you feel like you have less agency over yourself and your life? If so, please elaborate?

People need to feel affirmed of their value and worth.

Did this episode make you feel less affirmed or that you are not good, worthy of love, successful, or enough? If so, please elaborate.

People need to feel safe and secure.

Did this episode make you feel less safe—physically, emotionally, psychologically, or spiritually? If so, please elaborate.

Check into the past.

Review the sensations, thoughts, and feelings you explored. Have you experienced these before? As a child? As an adult? Please describe what you remember. Do you notice any patterns in the way you think and feel?

Part 3: Bringing in a Common Thread Listener

If it feels safe to you, consider making an appointment with one of our listeners. A listener is someone from our community who's been walking this path too and knows how to hold sacred, compassionate space for you. Several members of Common Thread Church are experienced as safe and nonjudgmental listeners.

Listeners are not therapists, but there is so much healing when another human listens deeply to us without judgment. To see a list of our current Self-Awareness Listeners and make direct appointments with one of them go to: <https://commonthreadchurch.org/sa-listener-appointment/>

When you make an appointment, the listener will reflect with you on the information that came up in this episode. The listener will ask questions in an effort to deepen the inquiry and will gently explore the deeper truths emerging for you.