

THE HIDDEN WAYS YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM TRIES TO HELP

*A gentle guide to understanding
some of the surprising ways your
brain and body work to keep you
safe.*

INTRO

Have you ever found yourself rehearsing conversations, holding your breath while opening an email, or struggling to switch off at the end of the day?

This guide explores some of the hidden ways our nervous systems try to protect us, and invites you to replace self-blame with self-understanding.



THESE MOMENTS MIGHT FEEL FAMILIAR...

Many of us experience little moments throughout the day that we barely notice.

Holding our breath.

Checking our phone without thinking.

Preparing for conversations that haven't happened yet.

Replaying conversations that have already finished.

Finding it difficult to fully relax.

These aren't random habits.

Often, they're automatic responses that our nervous systems have learned over time in an attempt to help us feel prepared, protected, or safe.

Your brain is constantly predicting what might happen next. Much of this happens automatically, long before you're consciously aware of it.

HOW MANY OF THESE SOUND LIKE YOU?

		YES	NO
1	Rehearsing conversations before they happen.	☐	☐
2	Thinking of the perfect response hours later.	☐	☐
3	Holding your breath while reading emails.	☐	☐
4	Tensing your shoulders without realising.	☐	☐
5	Constantly checking your phone.	☐	☐
6	Preparing for the worst before anything has happened.	☐	☐
7	Finding it difficult to switch off.	☐	☐
8	Feeling mentally exhausted after a day of overthinking.	☐	☐

If you've ticked several of these, you're certainly not alone.

WHAT YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM MIGHT BE TRYING TO DO

01

YOU NOTICE YOURSELF...

Rehearsing conversations.

Your nervous system may be trying to...

Prepare for uncertainty.

02

YOU NOTICE YOURSELF...

Holding your breath.

Your nervous system may be trying to...

Stay alert.

03

YOU NOTICE YOURSELF...

Checking your phone repeatedly.

Your nervous system may be trying to...

Look for certainty or new information.

04

YOU NOTICE YOURSELF...

Replaying conversations.

Your nervous system may be trying to...

Make sense of what happened and learn from the experience.

Did you know?

The nervous system often prefers what feels familiar over what feels new, not because familiar is always better, but because it's more predictable.

FROM SELF-BLAME TO SELF- UNDERSTANDING

INSTEAD OF SAYING...

I should be coping better

I always overthink everything

Why can't I just relax?

There's something wrong with me.

Why am I like this?



TRY ASKING...

What has my body learned over time?

Could this response be trying to protect me?

What changes when I respond with curiosity instead of criticism?

What if this response makes more sense than I realise?

What might my nervous system be trying to prepare me for?

A MOMENT TO REFLECT

Question 1

Which response feels most familiar to you?

Question 2

When do you notice it happening most often?

Question 3

What might your nervous system be trying to protect you from?

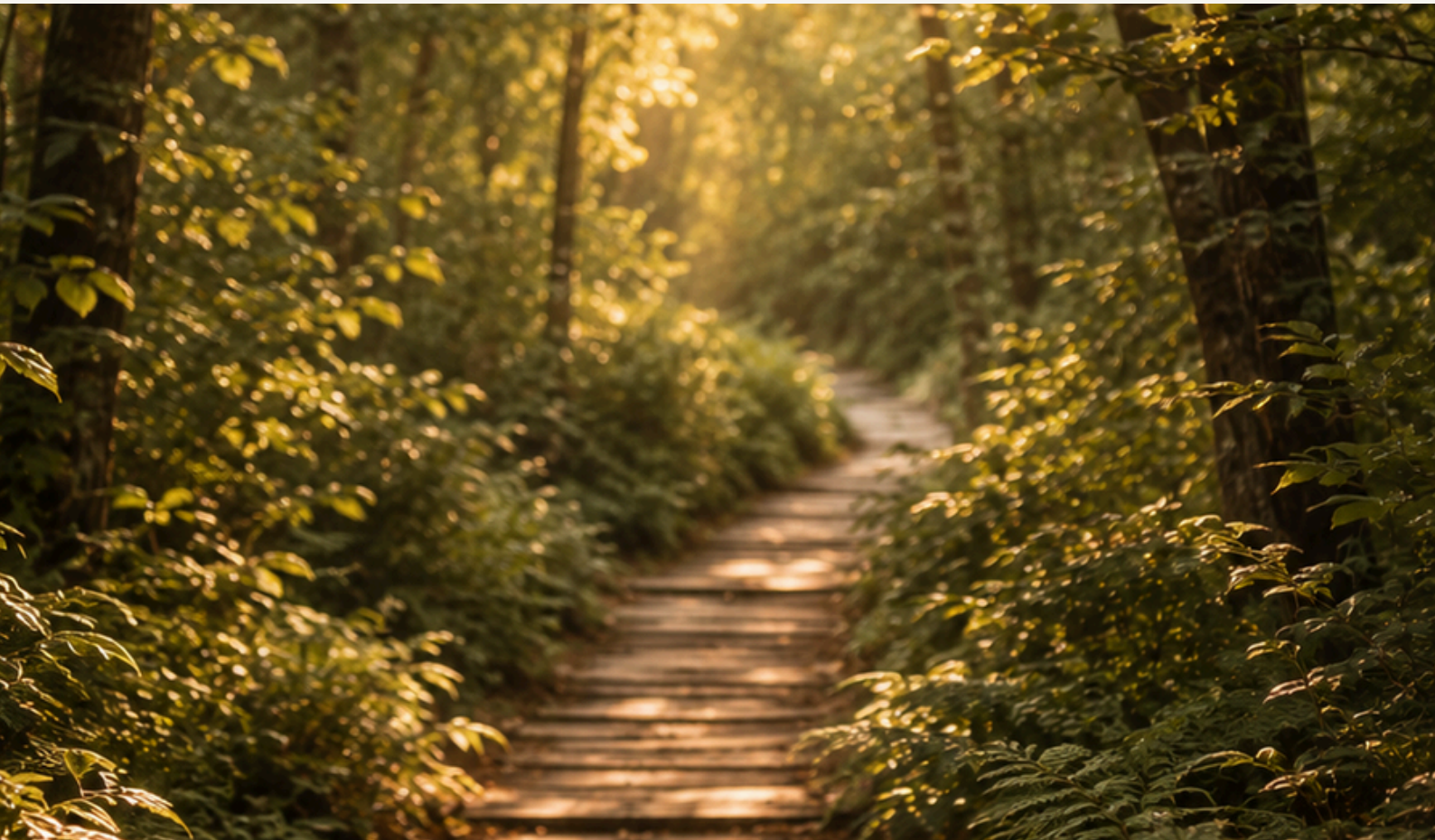
Question 4

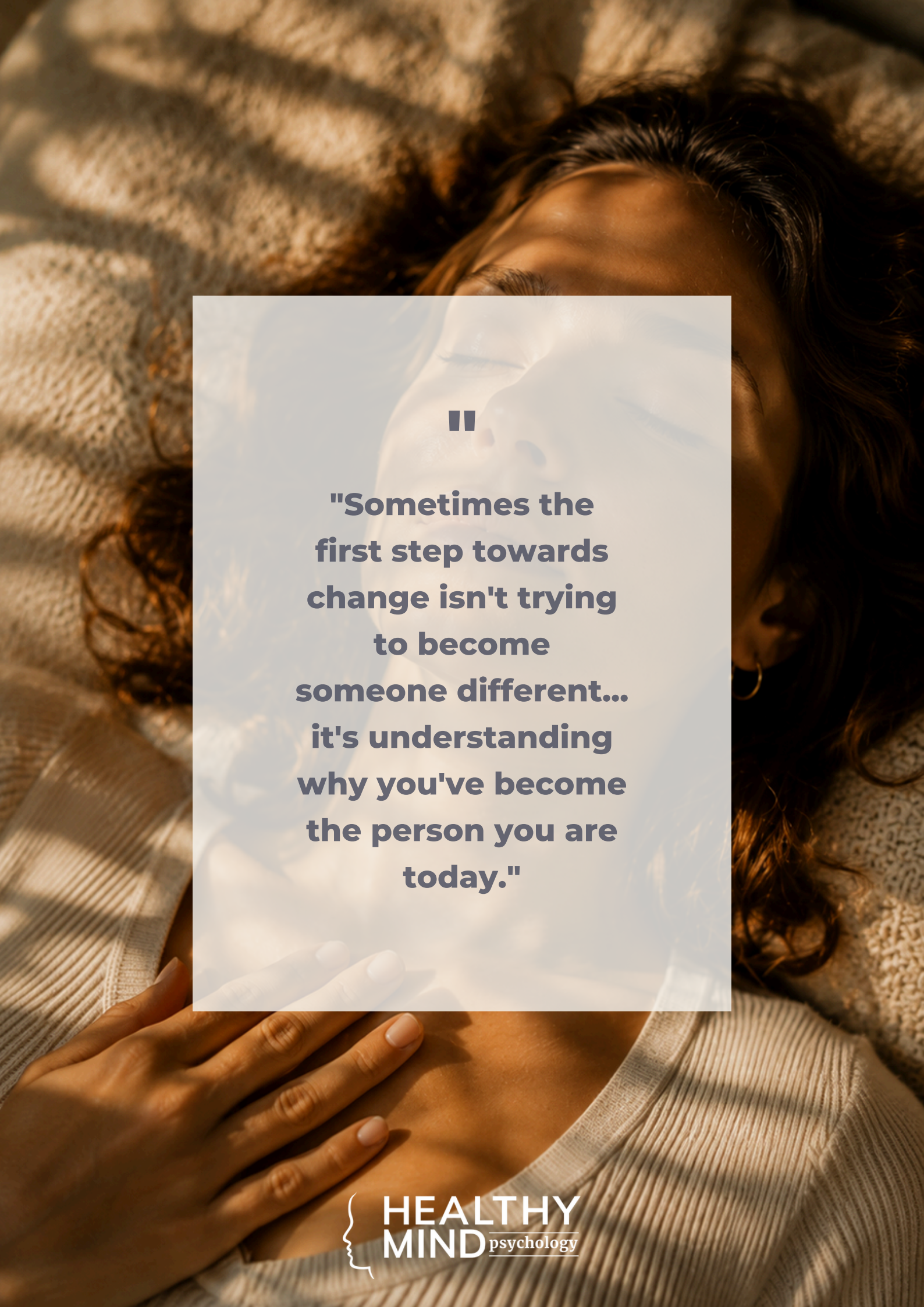
One thing I'd like to meet with more curiosity this week is...

A FINAL THOUGHT...

Our nervous systems are constantly learning from the experiences we have. Sometimes those lessons help us. Sometimes they leave us feeling stuck in patterns we don't fully understand.

But understanding doesn't mean judging ourselves. It means becoming curious. Because perhaps many of the responses we criticise in ourselves aren't signs that something is wrong. Perhaps they're signs that our brains and bodies have simply been doing their best to protect us.



A woman with long, wavy brown hair is lying down, her head tilted back and eyes closed. She is wearing a light-colored, ribbed sweater. Her hands are resting on her chest. The background is a soft, out-of-focus pattern of light and shadow, suggesting sunlight filtering through leaves. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing a quote.

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**"Sometimes the
first step towards
change isn't trying
to become
someone different...
it's understanding
why you've become
the person you are
today."**