

# RESTORING THE HEART

Gentle Practices for the Healing Mother



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From CEN to Wholeness

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Dear reader,

This guide is a gift — an invitation to begin, or to continue, the work of softening the distance that has sometimes stood between you and those you love.

You don't have to "fix" everything.

Healing begins with tiny, kind gestures toward yourself.

Choose one or two practices at a time. Let them grow roots.

Presence is not a demand but a gradual return.

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### How to Use This Guide

- **Skim first:** Get a sense of the whole, then choose what speaks to you.
  - **Start small:** Five minutes, even two, is enough for today.
  - **Repeat often:** Familiar practices work best over time.
  - **Make space for support:** Share a practice with a friend, partner, or therapist.
  - **Don't push through distress:** If a practice stirs too much pain, pause and tend to your safety first.
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# Gentle Grounding Rituals

Presence grows where the body feels safe enough to stay.

These are *practical, tiny things* to anchor you in the here-and-now:

## Morning Roots

- Before picking up your phone, sit or stand at the edge of your bed.
- Place your feet flat on the floor.
- Inhale slowly for a count of four; exhale for a count of six.
- Whisper inwardly: *I am here. This day can begin gently.*

## Grounding with the Senses

When you feel pulled away by shame or spiraling thoughts:

- Name **five things you can see**,
- **four things you can hear**,
- **three things you can touch**,
- **two things you can smell**,
- and finally **one taste** you notice.

## Anchor in the Ordinary

- When washing your hands or dishes, notice the warmth of the water.
  - When folding laundry, notice the textures.
  - Let these ordinary actions be tiny pauses where your body says: *I'm safe enough.*
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# Meeting Your Inner Child

The distance you sometimes feel from your own child often echoes the distance once imposed on you.

## The Photo Companion

Keep a photo of yourself as a child somewhere visible.

Each time you notice it, let your eyes rest on your younger self and say quietly:

“I see you. I’m glad you’re here.”

## A Gentle Visit

- Sit somewhere quiet.
- Close your eyes and picture yourself at 5–6 years old sitting nearby.
- Offer them a warm drink, a small blanket, or simply your presence.
- Say inwardly: *You had to protect yourself. I am with you now.*

## Sensory Soothing

Think of one small comfort you longed for or enjoyed as a child — a lullaby, a scent, a favorite soft object.

Offer yourself that comfort now as an adult.

This act helps bridge the gap between the child you were and the mother you are.

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# Micro-Moments of Connection with Your Child

Healing presence grows through small, ordinary gestures.

- Pause during bedtime to meet your child’s eyes softly, without expectation.
- Reach out with a gentle touch on the shoulder or hand when passing by.
- When your child tells a story, lean in and mirror their tone of excitement.
- Offer simple words at unexpected times:  
“I like being with you right now.”
- Share a small ritual — a bedtime song, lighting a candle for homework time, a warm drink after school.

Connection does not need grand events — it’s woven through dozens of small threads each day.

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# Pathways Through Shame

Shame can feel like an invisible wall between you and those you love.  
It needs gentleness, not force.

## Name and Normalize

Pause and name it quietly: *This is shame speaking.*

Remind yourself: *Shame visits many of us; it's not proof that I'm failing.*

## Move the Body

Sometimes shame is too strong for words.

Step outside or to another room and shake out your hands, roll your shoulders, or walk slowly.

## Speak to Yourself as to a Friend

Place a hand over your heart and say:

"I'm feeling ashamed right now, and I can offer myself kindness."

## Small Repair with the Child

If you spoke harshly or withdrew in shame:

- Take a breath.
- Go back and say simply:  
"I'm sorry I sounded sharp. That wasn't your fault."

This models accountability and helps rebuild trust.

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# Journaling Prompts for Presence

Choose one or two prompts a week.

Write without worrying about grammar or length.

- A small moment today when I felt even a little more present was...
- When shame showed up today, it said... and I responded by...
- A memory from childhood that still feels alive in me is...
- A way I comforted myself today was...
- One gesture I can offer my child tomorrow is...

You may draw, use colors, or even record voice notes — whichever feels most natural.

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## Rituals of Nourishment and Rest

Your presence needs a steady, cared-for body.

- Drink water when you remember; keep a glass in sight.
- Choose one easy nourishing meal or snack you can rely on.
- Step outside daily, even for three breaths of fresh air.
- Accept small help when it's offered — a neighbor picking up groceries, a friend babysitting for an hour.
- Choose one evening a week to slow down — dim lights earlier, keep screens off.

These are not indulgences; they're the soil from which calm, steady presence grows.

## When to Reach for Support

If you notice that disconnection or shame remains overwhelming despite these gentle steps, it's worth seeking steady support.

A therapist, counselor, or even a support group focused on attachment or childhood emotional neglect can help you feel less alone and guide you in practical ways.

Reaching out for help is not a sign of weakness; it's a wise investment in your capacity for connection.

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## Closing Words

Presence is built one breath, one small choice, one gentle return at a time.  
You don't have to wait for the perfect moment to begin.

Every time you pause, notice, and turn toward yourself or your child, you stitch another thread into the fabric of healing.

You are not alone.

Each tiny act of kindness — to yourself and to your child — is a real, tangible step toward wholeness.

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