

# Worksheet: Is This Me — or Is This Trauma Speaking?

*A step-by-step guide to help you pause, check, and respond from clarity.*

**Use this before you speak, text, confront, explain, or emotionally react.**

If you're unsure, that's okay — this worksheet is designed *for that moment*.

Take your time.

There is no rush.

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## SECTION 1: BODY CHECK (Before thinking)

Do not analyse.

Just notice what is happening *in your body right now*.

Circle or tick what applies:

- ☐ My chest feels tight, heavy, or compressed
- ☐ My breathing feels shallow or fast
- ☐ My jaw, throat, neck, or shoulders feel clenched
- ☐ I feel restless, buzzy, shaky, or on edge
- ☐ I feel pressure to say something immediately

**How many boxes did you tick?**

Write the number here: \_\_\_\_\_

**Guidance:**

- **0–1 boxes** → your body may be relatively settled.  
You might still have feelings, but your system isn't in alarm.
- **2 or more boxes** → your nervous system is activated.  
This means your body is preparing for threat, even if none is actually present.

**Examples of activation:**

- “My jaw is tight and my chest feels heavy. I feel like I need to say something right now or I'll lose my chance.”
- “My breathing feels shallow and my shoulders are up around my ears. I can't sit still.”
- “My stomach feels knotted and my thoughts are racing. I keep replaying what just happened.”
- “I feel buzzy and on edge, like I need to fix this immediately.”
- “I feel frozen but also panicked — like I don't know what to do, but I know I can't relax.”

If your body is activated, it doesn't mean you're wrong, dramatic, or overreacting.

It means your system is protecting you based on past experience.

Nothing needs to be decided yet.  
Regulation comes first.

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## SECTION 2: TIME TEST (Present or Past?)

Finish this sentence honestly:

“This reaction feels connected to...”

Tick ONE:

- ☐ Only what is happening right now
- ☐ Something familiar that I’ve felt before
- ☐ A pattern that keeps repeating in my life
- ☐ I’m not sure, but it feels old

**Write a few words if helpful:**

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### **Guidance:**

If you chose anything other than “*only what is happening right now*”, trauma is likely influencing your response.

Trauma doesn’t mean the feeling is fake.  
It means it has history.

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## SECTION 3: URGENCY CHECK (This is a key divider)

Answer YES or NO to each:

- ☐ YES ☐ NO — I feel pressure to resolve this immediately
- ☐ YES ☐ NO — I’m afraid something will be lost if I don’t speak
- ☐ YES ☐ NO — I’m replaying or rehearsing what to say
- ☐ YES ☐ NO — I need reassurance to calm down
- ☐ YES ☐ NO — I feel panicky about being misunderstood

**How many YES answers?** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Guidance:**

- 0–1 YES → likely present
- 2 or more YES → trauma voice is active

Example:

"I keep thinking if I don't explain myself now, they'll pull away."

Your true voice does not require urgency to exist.

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## SECTION 4: INTENTION CHECK (What are you really wanting?)

Complete this sentence without censoring yourself:

"If I speak right now, I want \_\_\_\_\_."

Examples:

- "...them to reassure me."
- "...them to stop being distant."
- "...to feel calm again."
- "...to know I'm safe."
- "...to feel chosen."

Now answer this question:

Is this about **relief** or **expression**?

Tick ONE:

- ☐ Relief (I need my nervous system to calm down)
- ☐ Expression (I want to share something true)

**Guidance:**

- Relief → trauma is speaking
- Expression → you may be ready to speak

There is nothing wrong with wanting relief — it just means **pause first**.

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## SECTION 5: LANGUAGE CHECK (What does your message sound like?)

Write the sentence you *want* to say (or the gist of it):

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Now check which list it fits better:

**Does it sound like:**

- ☐ explaining
- ☐ defending

- ☐ proving your point
- ☐ accusing
- ☐ justifying your feelings
- ☐ asking the same thing repeatedly

→ This usually means trauma is speaking.

**Or does it sound like:**

- ☐ naming a feeling
- ☐ stating a need clearly
- ☐ setting a boundary
- ☐ asking a simple question
- ☐ expressing without pressure

→ This usually means you're more present.

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## SECTION 6: FINAL CHECK (Let the worksheet decide)

Count how many sections pointed to trauma activation:

- Body Check → ☐
- Time Test → ☐
- Urgency Check → ☐
- Intention Check → ☐
- Language Check → ☐

**Total sections indicating trauma:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Result:**

- 0–1 → likely you
- 2–3 → mixed (pause recommended)
- 4–5 → trauma is speaking

If trauma is speaking, **do not speak yet.**

Not because you're wrong —  
but because the microphone is in the wrong hands.

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## SECTION 7: WHAT TO DO NEXT (Simple, practical)

Say this to yourself:

“This is activation. I don’t need to act on it.”

Choose ONE option (not all):

- ☐ Step away for 10–20 minutes
- ☐ Take slow breaths until your body softens
- ☐ Write what you want to say, but don’t send it
- ☐ Say to the other person:

“I need a moment before talking about this.”

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### **IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

- Trauma speaking does not make you manipulative.
  - Pausing does not make you avoidant.
  - Your feelings are real — timing matters.
  - Speaking later from clarity protects connection.
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### **WHEN YOU STILL CAN’T TELL**

Use this rule:

**If you’re unsure, pause.**

Your true self can wait.

Trauma cannot — that’s often how you tell the difference.