



Discover Your Soul Self

Awaken. Reflect. Become Whole.

What Pathway Did My System Just Run?

A practical guide for tracing a reaction from the event to the behaviour - and finding the point where you can create a different outcome.

Why this matters

Most of us notice the reaction at the end. We notice that we shut down, became defensive, chased reassurance, over-explained, withdrew, or said something we later wished we had said differently.

But behaviour is usually the last part of a much faster internal pathway. Before the behaviour appeared, your system had already interpreted the event, changed state, created meaning, generated emotion, and prepared an action.

The pathway we are going to trace

Event -> Old Filter -> Body State -> Field Signal -> Meaning -> Emotion -> Behaviour

This worksheet helps you slow that pathway down. You are not trying to prove that every reaction comes from the past. Sometimes something happening now genuinely hurts, annoys, disappoints, or concerns you. The useful question is: **what did the present event become once it passed through my system?**

Use this worksheet when...

- A reaction felt much bigger than the event seemed to require.
- You behaved automatically and only understood it afterwards.
- You keep getting a similar outcome in different situations.
- You want to separate what happened from what your system predicted it meant.
- You want to practise a new response without pretending you should feel nothing.



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The Pathway, Step by Step

Each step answers a different question. Keeping them separate helps you see where the reaction changed direction.

1. Event

What actually happened?

Keep this factual. "They cancelled dinner" is an event. "They do not care about me" is already a meaning.

2. Old Filter

What did my system already know how to look for?

An old filter may sound like: feedback means failure, silence means rejection, disagreement means danger, or I have to keep people happy.

3. Body State

What happened physically?

Did you drop, freeze, tighten, heat up, speed up, go numb, brace, scan, or stay reasonably present?

4. Field Signal

How did your whole system begin meeting the moment?

Did you pull inward, become guarded, reach for reassurance, manage the atmosphere, defend, or stay open enough to keep choosing?

5. Meaning

What did the event become?

The current story may be: I failed. They are leaving. I am in trouble. I need to prove myself. Or: this is uncomfortable, but I do not know what it means yet.

6. Emotion

What feeling followed that meaning?

Fear, shame, anger, sadness, guilt, disappointment, anxiety, vulnerability, curiosity, or something else.

7. Behaviour

What did the emotion push you toward?

Withdraw, defend, chase, fix, explain, attack, apologise, say yes, go quiet, pause, ask a question, or respond clearly.

A useful rule

Do not start by asking, "Was my reaction wrong?" Start by asking, "**What pathway produced it?**" Understanding the sequence gives you far more useful information than judging the final behaviour.



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Worked Example 1 - Feedback

Event: Someone says, "I think this part could be clearer."

Path A - Collapse

Old filter: Feedback means I failed.

Body state: Stomach drops, shoulders sink, mind goes blank.

Field signal: Pulls inward; less eye contact; wants the conversation to end.

Meaning: I am not good enough.

Emotion: Shame, sadness, embarrassment.

Behaviour: Go quiet, stop asking questions, abandon the project.

Path B - Protection

Old filter: Feedback means I am being attacked.

Body state: Tightens, speeds up, scans.

Field signal: Guarded, defensive, ready to prove or correct.

Meaning: I need to prove myself.

Emotion: Anxiety, anger, pressure.

Behaviour: Interrupt, justify, over-explain, bring evidence.

Path C - Connection

Filter: Feedback is information, not identity.

Body state: Feels the sting but stays present enough to think.

Field signal: Steady, open, available.

Meaning: This is uncomfortable, but I can decide what is useful.

Emotion: Mild discomfort, vulnerability, curiosity.

Behaviour: Listen, ask for clarification, agree with what fits, disagree with what does not.

What changed?

The words did not change. The pathway did. Connection did not remove all discomfort. It changed what the discomfort was allowed to become.



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Worked Example 2 - Cancelled Plans

Event: Someone you were looking forward to seeing cancels your plans.

Possible old pathway - Collapse

Old filter: People leave when I need them.

Body state: Energy drops; chest feels heavy.

Field signal: Pulls inward and disconnects.

Meaning: I am not important. Nobody shows up for me.

Emotion: Sadness, loneliness, rejection.

Behaviour: Withdraw, stop making plans, act as if you do not care.

Another old pathway - Protection

Old filter: Cancellation means I need to secure the connection.

Body state: Speeds up and becomes alert.

Field signal: Reaches, scans, manages.

Meaning: Are they pulling away? Did I do something wrong?

Emotion: Anxiety, urgency.

Behaviour: Ask repeated questions, push for a new plan immediately, seek reassurance.

A more connected pathway

Filter: Plans changed. I do not yet know what this means.

Body state: Notices disappointment without collapsing or escalating.

Field signal: Stays present.

Meaning: I am disappointed, but disappointment is not proof of abandonment.

Emotion: Disappointment, maybe mild sadness.

Behaviour: Acknowledge the disappointment, reschedule if appropriate, or make other plans.

The important distinction

The goal is not to talk yourself out of disappointment. The goal is to stop adding certainty where you do not actually have information. **“I am disappointed” may be true. “They are abandoning me” may still need checking.**



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Map Your Own Pathway

Choose one recent reaction. Use the same event all the way through this page. Write what actually happened before you explain why it happened.

1. What actually happened?

Write only the observable event. Example: "They replied with one word."

2. What old filter may have been activated?

What did your system already expect this kind of event to mean?

3. What happened in my body?

Drop, freeze, tighten, heat, numbness, urgency, scanning, heaviness, or something else?

4. What field signal did I move into?

Did I pull inward, defend, reach, manage, disconnect, or stay present?



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Map Your Own Pathway - Continued

Now follow the reaction from the state into the meaning, emotion and behaviour.

5. What meaning did my system create?

Finish the sentence: "This means..."

6. What emotion followed?

Name the emotion as simply as you can.

7. What behaviour did that emotion push me toward?

What did I do, or strongly want to do?

Separate the Event From the Meaning

A body reaction can be completely real while the conclusion attached to it still needs checking. The examples below show the difference.

EVENT - WHAT I KNOW	MEANING - WHAT I ADDED
They cancelled plans.	I am not important.
They disagreed with me.	They do not respect me.
They said "Okay."	They are angry.
They gave feedback.	I failed.



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Event vs Meaning - Your Turn

The aim is not to prove your first interpretation wrong. It is to separate facts from conclusions long enough to see what you actually know.

What do I actually know happened?

Describe the event without motives, predictions or conclusions.

What did I decide it meant?

Write the interpretation exactly as it appeared, even if you now think it may not be true.

What do I not know yet?

What information is missing? What would you need to ask, observe or wait for before deciding?

A useful check

Ask: **"If I removed the meaning for a moment, what would be left?"** Sometimes the answer is simply a cancelled plan, a delayed message, a disagreement, a question, or feedback. That does not make your feelings unreal. It just stops the interpretation from pretending to be the event.



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What Would Connection Look Like Here?

Connection does not mean becoming calm, agreeable, passive, or emotionally flat. It means having enough space to notice what is happening and still choose your response.

Connection might sound like...

- “That stung. I need a moment before I answer.”
- “I can feel disappointed without deciding I am being rejected.”
- “I hear the feedback. Let me work out which part is useful.”
- “I disagree with you, and I do not need to prove myself into the ground.”
- “I do not know what that message means yet.”
- “My body is reacting, but I can check the facts before I act.”

1. What would help me regain a little more capacity?

A pause, movement, slower breathing, asking for time, food, rest, clarification, support, or reducing the immediate demand?

2. What response would keep me connected to myself?

Not the perfect response. One response that is less automatic and more chosen.

3. What new evidence could this response create?

Examples: I can survive disagreement. I can hear feedback without becoming the feedback. Someone can be disappointed and I can remain okay.

Keep this in mind

A new meaning is not just a prettier sentence. Your system updates through experience. Small, repeated experiences give the body evidence that another pathway is possible.

Keep exploring

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