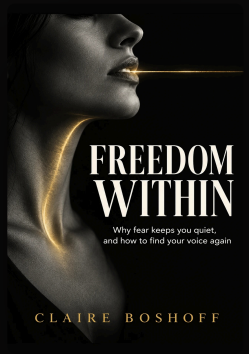


FREEDOM WITHIN · CLAIRE BOSHOFF

The Workbook

Every pen-and-paper page from the book, in one place you can type into, lock, and keep to yourself.



PRIVATE BY DESIGN

This file can be password-locked so nobody can open it but you. Page 1 shows you how, in about a minute.

BEFORE YOU WRITE A WORD

Keeping this to yourself.

This workbook asks you to write things you may not want another living soul to read. That is not paranoia, and you are not being dramatic. It is the single most common reason women stop doing this work: a notebook somebody else might open.

So before anything else, three things. The whole lot takes about a minute.

1. Lock it

Mac. Open it in Preview. File → Export → tick **Encrypt** → set a password.

iPhone or iPad. Open it in the **Preview** app, tap the file name at the top, tap **Lock**, turn on **Require Password**. On older iPads, touch and hold the file in **Files** and look for **Lock PDF**.

Windows. There is no built-in way. **LibreOffice** is free: open the PDF, then File → Export as PDF → Security tab → set a password.

Android. Use a PDF app that offers Protect or Lock. Google Drive and Files will not do it.

2. Rename it

A password hides what is inside. It does not hide the name on the outside. Call it something nobody would ever open. *Medical aid 2024. Car service records. Tax slips.* Dull is the whole point.

3. Put it somewhere boring

Not the desktop. Not Documents. Inside a folder, inside another folder, with a name that promises nothing. People who snoop look where things look interesting.

> *If all of that feels like too much, the simplest version is this: keep it on one device that nobody else uses, in a folder with a boring name, and make sure the device locks itself.*

HOW THIS WORKS

You can type straight into it.

Every box in this workbook is a box you can type in. Nothing needs printing unless you want it printed.

On a computer. Open it in Preview on a Mac, or Adobe Acrobat Reader on Windows. Type, then save.

On a phone or tablet. Open it from the **Files** app, or in **Adobe Acrobat Reader**. Not Apple Books. Books will let you read it beautifully and will quietly throw away everything you type.

If you would rather write by hand, print it. A4, single sided, and the boxes are sized for handwriting.

> *Don't do them well. Do them.*

You do not have to go in order, and you do not have to finish. Nothing in here is marked. If a page is not your page, turn past it. If a page is very much your page, that is usually the one worth sitting with.

The one thing I would ask is that you start with the next page, the sentence you didn't say, because almost everything after it comes back to that sentence.

This is written as coaching, not therapy. It is not a diagnosis or a treatment, and it is not a substitute for the care of a doctor, psychologist or counsellor. If you are in crisis, please reach out to someone who can be with you now. In South Africa, SADAG is on 0800 567 567, twenty-four hours a day, and Lifeline on 0861 322 322.

PART ONE

Why you're quiet

Nine pages of noticing. You are not fixing anything yet. You are only writing down what is true, which is harder and more useful than it sounds.

1 Your sentence

2 Your one word

3 What you did instead

4 All alone in this

5 Did they ask me?

6 Three layers down

7 The four rooms

8 Nobody is the villain

9 The bill

THE MORNING IN THE CAR

Your sentence

Think of one moment in the last month when you had something to say and didn't say it.

What happened

The sentence you didn't say, exactly as it was in your head, unedited, however unfair or small or ugly it sounds

Don't do anything with it yet. We carry this sentence through the whole book, and by the end you'll know how to say it.

LIVING IN FEAR

Your one word

Not what the world sees. The one you operate from, inside, on an ordinary Tuesday.

Your default emotion, one word

The names you've been giving it — easy-going, kind, strong, responsible

Where in my body do I feel it right now?

That's your starting point, and there's no shame in it. Everyone's starting point is somewhere.

THREE SHAPES FEAR TAKES

What you did instead

Go back to your sentence. Which did you do instead of saying it? It's usually more than one.

Took charge — and the fear under it

Fixed it — and the fear under it

Went still — and the fear under it

Notice which fear you wrote fastest.

THE ONE WHO TAKES CHARGE

All alone in this

When did you last feel all alone in this?

The situation

Who could have helped, and why you didn't ask. Don't judge the answer

Write “I'm scared, and I can't do this alone.” Could you say that out loud to the person you named? If not, what are you afraid would happen?

THE ONE WHO RESCUES

Did they ask me?

For one day, before you help anybody with anything, ask yourself: did they ask me? Keep the tally here.

Helped unasked

Waited

What you noticed, and honestly how it felt to wait

One thing you need, right now, for yourself. Not for anyone else. One thing

THE ONE WHO GOES STILL

Three layers down

Fill the first blank with whatever you're most stuck on right now. Then go deeper, twice.

I can't _____ because _____

...because

...because

Circle the one that drops your stomach. Then write, in your own words: This is not okay

Just to see what it looks like on paper. Don't do anything about it yet. Just let it be seen.

WE ARE ALL THREE

The four rooms

Your last week. Four dots, four dates, and the sentence you didn't say in each.

At work

At home

With the person who can hurt you most

Inside your own head

Look at the four sentences together. Notice they're the same sentence, wearing different clothes.

THE PERFECT STORM

Nobody is the villain

Your closest relationship or family. Where does each person go first when they're scared, and what are they afraid of?

Who goes where, and what each one is afraid of — not what they do

Nobody in this picture is the villain, and the fear I can change is...

WHAT IT COSTS

The bill

Two short lists. Be specific: a job, a friendship, a year, a song.

What my silence has cost me — five things

What I was afraid would happen if I spoke — five things

Of each fear: did it actually happen the times I did speak? Circle the ones that never did

Keep this page. You'll want it in Part Three.

PART TWO

Where the silence came from

Six pages on the body that learned this, and why. Not so you can blame anybody. So you can stop thinking there is something wrong with you.

1 The job you took

2 Your early sign

3 Is that true?

4 More than two doors

5 For her, and for you

6 The fourth voice

A BODY THAT LEARNED EARLY

The job you took

Peacekeeper, caretaker, invisible one, the one who fought back, the good girl. In your own words.

The job I took as a child

What that job protected me from

Thank you. I've got it from here

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM REMEMBERS

Your early sign

Pick one moment from your list so far. Close your eyes and go back to it.

Where it lived — neck, chest, stomach, jaw, hands, throat

What it was — heat, tightness, fog, restlessness

This is your early warning, and you will feel it before you understand it, every time.

WHY WE GO BACK

Is that true?

Finish it honestly.

The thing I'm most afraid will happen if I say what I really think is...

Is that true? Is it the whole truth?

WHAT FEAR DOES TO THINKING

More than two doors

One decision you're facing that feels like either/or.

The two options

Five more. They can be silly. They can be impossible

Notice what happens in your body as the list gets longer, and how many of the new options involve saying something.

WHY WOMEN, ESPECIALLY

For her, and for you

The last time you fought for somebody else, really fought, and won.

What you said

The thing you most need to ask for, for yourself

What you're afraid the second one will cost

What the silence has already cost

The woman who said the first one is entirely capable of saying the second.

THE INNER TRIANGLE

The fourth voice

Tonight, after something small goes wrong, write the three voices as they come, in their own words.

The attack

The collapse

The soothe

What you'd say to a friend in the same spot

Read the four side by side. Notice the fourth is the only one that would ever let her speak.

PART THREE

The way back

Ten steps, in order the first time. After that, whichever one you need.

1 Step 1 — Steady the body

2 Step 2 — Name it

3 Step 3 — Let it be there

4 Step 4 — Re-read it

5 Step 5 — The opposite action

6 Step 6 — Say what you need

7 Step 7 — One safe person

8 Step 8 — Forgive her, then them

9 Step 9 — Decide tomorrow tonight

10 Step 10 — Expect to fall back

STEP 1

Steady the body

Four in, hold four, four out, hold four. Four times.

Do the box breath now, four rounds. One line about what changed

This week's tally: before getting out of bed

Before a conversation that frightened you

That tally is the beginning of your voice.

STEP 2

Name it

“I'm scared.” “That's the rescuer.” By your own name, kindly.

The sentence I'll say to myself next time I feel my early sign. My own name. Kind

Read it out loud once, today, so your body has heard it before it needs it.

STEP 3

Let it be there

Two minutes, no blanket, no story.

What it was

Where it sat

What happened when I didn't fight it

STEP 4

Re-read it

“What else could it mean?” “Is that true?” Find the because.

If I'd said my sentence, what did I believe would happen?

Is that true? Is it the whole truth? Has it happened the times I did speak?

What else the moment could have meant

STEP 5

The opposite action

The role is a safety behaviour. Do the small opposite.

One small opposite action for this week

The date I'll do it

What the fear says will happen

What actually happened — come back and fill this in

STEP 6

Say what you need

"When… I felt… I need…" Then stop talking.

When

I felt

I need

Who it's for, and when

Say it out loud to the wall three times first. That's next week's opposite action.

STEP 7

One safe person

Someone who stays and doesn't rescue.

The people I talk to when things are hard, and what each one does: rescues me, fights me, goes quiet, or stays

If nobody stays: where I'll go to find one, and the date I'll make the call

STEP 8

Forgive her, then them

“You hurt me. I learned. I walk away — free.”

A letter to the woman I was in my quietest year. What I know now. That she did the best she could. That she can put it down

Sign it. You never have to send it; she's already read it.

STEP 9

Decide tomorrow tonight

Three when-thens. Three good things.

When _____, I will say _____

When _____, I will say _____

When _____, I will say _____

Three good things from today

Then sleep.

STEP 10

Expect to fall back

Notice sooner. Back to one.

What a fall looks like for me

How I'll know sooner next time

THE TWENTY-ONE DAYS

Twenty-one mornings

The whole book in twenty-one mornings. Ten minutes each, before the world comes in. Don't do them well. Do them.

1 Week one — noticing

2 Week two — the body and the belief

3 Week three — the voice

WEEK ONE — NOTICING

Day 1

Write your default emotion, one word. Then the three feelings — obligation, alone, stuck — and tick which you felt yesterday. That's all.

WEEK ONE — NOTICING

Day 2

Which shape did you take yesterday instead of speaking — took charge, rescued, went still? Write the moment. Write the sentence you didn't say.

WEEK ONE — NOTICING

Day 3

Where did it live in the body? Neck, chest, throat, hands, fog? Write your early sign. You'll use it every day from now on.

WEEK ONE — NOTICING

Day 4

Four rounds of the box breath, before your feet touch the floor. Then: “Where's the fear this morning?” Answer in one line.

WEEK ONE — NOTICING

Day 5

Catch yourself on the triangle once, in real time, and name it silently — “that's the rescuer.” Tonight, write what happened when you named it.

WEEK ONE — NOTICING

Day 6

Draw the triangle. Put yourself on it in four rooms — work, home, the person who can hurt you most, your own head. Four sentences you didn't say.

WEEK ONE — NOTICING

Day 7

Read the week. Write the one thing you noticed that you hadn't noticed before. That's the catch; the week was for it.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY AND THE BELIEF

Day 8

Breath on waking, and once before a conversation you'd brace for. Tally both.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY AND THE BELIEF

Day 9

Let one feeling be there for two minutes without a blanket. Write where it sat and what it wanted to say.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY AND THE BELIEF

Day 10

“I can't _____ because _____.” Three layers. Circle the one that drops your stomach.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY AND THE BELIEF

Day 11

Ask it: is that true? Is it the whole truth? Write the evidence for and against. Be a detective, not a judge.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY AND THE BELIEF

Day 12

“What else could it mean?” — one moment from yesterday, three readings.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY AND THE BELIEF

Day 13

Write the three inner voices as they came last night — attack, collapse, soothe. Then the fourth voice, the one you'd use on a friend.

WEEK TWO — THE BODY AND THE BELIEF

Day 14

Read the week. Write the belief that's been running you, and its replacement, in words you actually believe. Put it on the fridge.

WEEK THREE — THE VOICE

Day 15

Write your sentence in the shape: when… I felt… I need…. Say it to the wall three times.

WEEK THREE — THE VOICE

Day 16

One opposite action, a three out of ten: a preference stated, a task handed over, one “did they ask?” held all the way. Write what didn't happen.

WEEK THREE — THE VOICE

Day 17

Ask one person, “can I practise something on you?” Say the sentence to them.

WEEK THREE — THE VOICE

Day 18

A smaller sentence to the person it's for. “I'd prefer…” “Not this time.” Write what happened, unedited.

WEEK THREE — THE VOICE

Day 19

The real sentence. Breath first. Name it. Let the fear be there. Say it. Stop talking. Tonight: what you feared, what actually happened.

WEEK THREE — THE VOICE

Day 20

Write the letter to the woman you were in your quietest year. Sign it.

WEEK THREE — THE VOICE

Day 21

Write yourself a permission slip. “I, _____, give myself permission to…” Read it out loud with your hand on your heart. Then three when-thens for tomorrow.

STEP TEN

The ten steps, in your words.

Write them in your own words, in the order you'll actually use them. Then put this page where you'll see it on a bad day.

1. Steady the body

2. Name it

3. Let it be there

4. Re-read it

5. The opposite action

6. Say what you need

7. One safe person

8. Forgive her, then them

9. Decide tomorrow tonight

10. Expect to fall back

That card is the book. The rest was just how we got here.

PART FOUR

Freedom within

Three pages for after. Safety was never going to be handed to you, which is the hard half and also the free half.

1 I am the safety

2 The bricks

3 Your Tuesday

YOU ARE THE SAFETY

I am the safety

Three ways you have already been the safety, for yourself or somebody else, in the last year.

One

Two

Three

Read them out loud. Let them be true.

FREEDOM LIVES WITHIN

The bricks

Write “I have always been free” and see what your body does with it.

What I built that keeps me quiet is...

Next to each brick, the step that takes it down

That's your map out.

LIVING WITH A VOICE

Your Tuesday

Not the holiday version. The one you could actually do.

Ten minutes before the world comes in

One sentence decided in advance

One thing that keeps me me

THE LAST PAGE

Your permission slip.

Fill it with whatever this book showed you. To wait. To say the sentence. To be uncomfortable on purpose. To be scared and speak anyway.

I,

give myself permission to

Signed

> *Put your hand on your heart and read it out loud. Keep it where you'll see it.*

FREEDOM WITHIN

Three weeks won't make you free. They'll make you a woman who knows the way home.

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