

A PRINTABLE SELF-HELP PACK

Moral Injury Toolkit

For What You Did, What You Couldn't Stop, and What Broke Your Trust

A steady, practical companion for the wound where your conscience lives — sizing your true part, ending punishment that repairs nothing, and building the amends and the life that answer it.

INSIDE THIS PACK

- What moral injury is — and why it happens to people whose conscience works
- The full courtroom: what you knew, what you carried, what every option cost
- Sizing your part truly — not erased, not inflated
- Amends that repair, and the difference between punishment and repair
- Self-forgiveness as a process, not a verdict
- A 14-day quiet ledger, reflections, and 6 pocket cards

A printable self-help pack for carrying a moral wound honestly — and building the life that answers it.

How to Use This Toolkit

Something happened that your conscience cannot file away. Maybe it was something you did. Maybe something you didn't do — the moment you froze, stayed silent, walked past. Maybe something you were made part of — an order, a policy, a triage decision, a system that put the harm in your hands. Maybe something you witnessed, or a betrayal by people you trusted with your loyalty. Whatever door you came through, the wound tends to feel the same on the inside: guilt that will not settle, shame that says you are the kind of person who does that, and a quiet exile from the people who think they know you.

This pack was written for that wound. It will not tell you that what happened was fine — you would not believe it, and the pages would deserve the distrust. It will not weigh the facts for you; no workbook can, and this one will not pretend to. What it can do is help you examine the whole of what happened instead of the worst three seconds of it, size your part truly, retire the punishment that repairs nothing, and start the repairs that repair something.

Getting started

1. **Print what you need.** The whole pack or single pages. Every page stands alone.
2. **Read the three education pages after this one first.** About ten minutes. They explain what moral injury is, why it happens to people whose conscience works, and why punishment and repair are different things. Everything else builds on them.
3. **Know how to stop.** If any page stirs up more than it settles: eyes open, both feet on the floor, name five things you can see, and put the page down. Stopping is not failing — the page will keep.
4. **Go slower than feels necessary.** This is the deepest material in this whole family of workbooks. One page a week is a real pace. One prompt a sitting is a real pace.
5. **You do not have to work alone.** The page "When It Needs More Company" is not the fine print — for many people it is the most important page here.

A suggested path, if you want one: Week 1 — the three education pages, nothing else. Week 2 — Naming the Wound. Week 3 — The Full Courtroom, then Sizing Your Part. Week 4 — What Punishment Has Cost. After that, in any order and at any pace: the amends pages, the letter, self-forgiveness, trust, and the value pages. The betrayal page and the spiritual page are there for the readers who need them. The ledger and Weekly Reflection run alongside from whenever you start.

Before anything else

Moral pain can get dark, and a wound like this sometimes whispers that the people around you would be better off without you. That whisper is a symptom, not a verdict — and it is the one part of this that must never be carried alone. If it ever comes, put the pages down and call or text 988 (Canada and the US) — free, confidential, 24/7.

And one rule outranks every page here: if any harm you had a part in is still happening — to anyone — stopping it comes before all other work in this pack. Not managed, not tapered: stopped, with professional help if it takes help to stop. No courtroom, ledger, or letter in these pages can do its work alongside continuing harm. Ending it is the first and realest repair, and every page that follows assumes it.

I am starting this toolkit on (date):

The pace I am choosing (one page a week is a real pace):

What Moral Injury Is

A wound to the conscience, not a flaw in it

Moral injury is the lasting pain that follows events which violate your own moral code — deeply enough that something in how you see yourself, other people, or the world does not come back on its own. The term took shape in work with war veterans, but the wound itself has no uniform. Nurses and doctors carry it out of impossible shifts. First responders carry it from calls that went wrong. Drivers carry it from accidents. Parents carry it from the moment they looked away. Employees carry it from what a job made them do; witnesses carry it from what they saw and could not stop; refugees and survivors carry it for the people they could not bring with them; whole families carry it from betrayals inside the walls.

The four doors in

- **Something you did.** An act, a choice, words said — that your own code condemns.
- **Something you failed to do.** The freeze, the silence, the door not knocked on, the call not made.
- **Something you were made part of or witnessed.** Orders, policies, triage, a system's failure passing through your hands; harm you saw up close and could not stop.
- **A betrayal by people you trusted.** Leaders, institutions, colleagues, family — people who held your loyalty and spent it on something wrong.

Many people stand in more than one door at once. The pages ahead work for all four, and the betrayal door gets a page of its own.

What it is not

Moral injury is not a diagnosis, and this pack will not treat it like one — it is a description of a deeply human experience. It is also not the same thing as PTSD, though the two can share a house — and often do. PTSD tends to centre on threat and fear, though guilt and shame can live there too; moral injury is centred on conscience — guilt, shame, disgust, anger, and lost trust. When both are present, working on one often eases the other, and a clinician can help sort the household. And it is not weakness. The load-bearing fact of this whole pack: **only a person with a working conscience can be wounded this way.** A compass has to be real before its needle can tear.

The door, or doors, I came through:

This wound is not proof of what is wrong with you. It is proof of what is still right in you — a conscience real enough to be injured.

Why a Working Conscience Ends Up Here

Context, impossible choices, and the difference between guilt and shame

The moment your mind keeps replaying may well not have been a scene with one actor and a free choice. And if yours truly was — the pages ahead work all the same: the courtroom takes the scene as it actually ran, not as either mercy or shame would edit it. Moral injury grows best in situations that were rigged before you arrived: too little time, too little information, too little sleep, orders from above, systems stretched past breaking, and options that all cost something. A nurse choosing which patient gets the bed is not choosing harm — they are carrying a shortage in their two hands. A soldier acting on the intelligence they were given is carrying someone else's error. A bystander who froze is carrying a body that acted for them before deciding was possible — freezing is a reflex the body runs on its own, not a decision the person made.

None of that automatically erases a person's part — this pack will not pretend context answers everything, and the courtroom page ahead takes your part seriously. But moral pain has a distorting habit: **it deletes the situation and keeps only the self**. The replay shows your hands and edits out the shortage, the orders, the fog, the years of pressure that led there. Half of this pack's work is simply putting the whole scene back.

Guilt and shame are different animals

The other half is about an engine swap. **Guilt** says: *I did something that violated my code*. It is painful and useful — it points at an act, and acts can be examined, sized, and repaired. **Shame** says: *I am the kind of person who does that*. It points at your whole self, and a whole self cannot be repaired, only hidden. So shame produces exactly what you may recognize: isolation, secrecy, flinching from the people who love you, the certainty that anyone who really knew would leave.

Shame feels like moral seriousness. It is not. It is the engine that stalls repair — because a person in hiding cannot make amends, keep promises, or be of use. The pages ahead keep steering the same way, over and over: off the shame, onto the act; off the verdict about your soul, onto the question of repair.

What my replay keeps deleting — the parts of the scene that were not me:

Shame says hide. Repair says act. Only one of them reaches the world.

Punishment Is Not Repair

The trial that never adjourns

A moral wound runs a courtroom of its own — one that sits at 2 a.m., admits only the prosecution's evidence, and never adjourns. And because the court cannot reach the past, it sentences the present instead: joy refused, rest refused, connection refused, good things sabotaged because a person who did that does not deserve them. Some people serve this sentence for decades and call it integrity.

Here is the distinction this whole pack turns on. **Punishment is pain aimed at yourself. Repair is good aimed at the world.** They feel related — both are answers to wrongdoing — but they run in opposite directions. Punishment subtracts one more good person from the ledger and adds nothing anywhere. Repair adds: to the person harmed if that is possible, to people like them if it is not, to everyone your life touches from here.

Think of what your own code would actually order, if it ran the court instead of the shame. A code worth having does not order decades of self-cancellation — that helps no one, and it quietly costs the people who need you now: the family that gets the hollowed-out version of you, the patients or colleagues or children who need what you know. A code worth having orders something harder than suffering: **it orders usefulness.** Face what happened truly. Size your part honestly. Repair what can be repaired. Become reliable again — to others and to yourself.

That sentence takes more courage than the punishment does. Suffering is passive; repair walks up to the wound and works. The rest of this pack is that work, laid out one page at a time.

One more honest word: punishment can escalate. If yours has ever included hurting yourself, or the thought that dying would be the final payment owed — that is not moral seriousness, and it is not justice. That is the wound talking, and it is an emergency: call or text 988 (Canada and the US), free and confidential, 24/7.

The sentence my private court has been serving — what I refuse myself, and for how long now:

Punishment that helps no one is not moral seriousness. Repair is — and repair needs you here, and intact, to do it.

Naming the Wound

In your own words, for your eyes only

Ground rule: deep water begins here. Pick a steady moment, go in doses, and if the page stirs up more than it settles — eyes open, feet on the floor, name five things you can see, and put the page down. This page is private: write only what you choose, and keep the page where only you will find it. You never owe anyone this page. One practical caution: paper has no confidentiality. If what happened could ever be a legal matter, keep this page at the outline level — the work does not need the details — and let a lawyer, not a worksheet, hold that dimension.

Unnamed wounds run the court from the shadows. Named ones can be examined, sized, and answered. Write plainly, in your own words — no report language, no confession language. Facts and weight, as you carry them.

What happened, as I carry it (the outline is enough — this page does not need every detail to do its work):

The door it came through — did, failed to do, made part of or witnessed, betrayed — and by whom, if someone else's hands were in it:

What it broke

Moral injury rarely breaks just one thing. Check what applies; add your own.

- ☐ Trust in myself — my judgement, my courage, my goodness
- ☐ Trust in others — colleagues, leaders, institutions, family
- ☐ Trust in the world — the belief that things are basically fair or safe
- ☐ My standing with God, faith, or whatever holds my deepest meaning
- ☐ My sense of belonging — feeling fit for the company of people I love

The code that was violated

Name the value that was broken — spoken as a value, not as a verdict. *Protect the vulnerable. Tell the truth. Never leave someone behind. Do no harm.*

The value of mine that was violated:

Notice what naming the value proves: the code is still there, still yours, still working. That is the compass this whole pack navigates by — and pain is how a compass objects, not how it breaks.

The Full Courtroom

Every witness, not just the prosecution's

Ground rule: the goal of this page is a true account, not a kind one. You are not building excuses — you are refusing to convict on edited evidence. If it stirs up more than it settles: eyes open, feet on the floor, five things you can see, page down.

Your private court has heard the prosecution for a long time. This page calls the witnesses the replay keeps deleting. Answer only what applies; a blank is information too.

What I actually knew at the time — not what the outcome later taught me:

The condition I was in — hours awake, days under fire, under staffing, or under strain, training I had or lacked, what I had already carried that year:

The constraints: orders, policies, time, resources, the authority I actually had — and what refusing or acting differently would truly have cost:

The full menu that existed that day — every option, and what each one would have broken. (Write the options that only look available now, in hindsight, in brackets.)

Whose hands, besides mine, were in this — people, institutions, systems, chance:

If every option on the real menu broke something, then what you carry is not proof you chose evil. It is proof you stood where every road cost — and the court owes that fact to the record. And if the record shows a road you could have taken and didn't, that is not this page's verdict to soften: the next page is for keeping that part at its true size — no larger, and no smaller.

Sizing Your Part

Not erased. Not inflated. True.

Ground rule: this page can pull hard — it asks for your part at true size, and for some readers it touches what was done to them. If it stirs up more than it settles: eyes open, feet on the floor, name five things you can see, and put the page down.

This page is the hinge of the pack. Moral pain tends not to size a part correctly: shame claims all of it, and the mind's defences occasionally claim none of it. Both are false weights, and both block repair — a part inflated to everything is too heavy to answer, and a part erased to nothing leaves the conscience unconvinced. What your compass actually requires is the true size.

Using the courtroom page, divide the whole of what happened among its real owners. Rough numbers are fine — the honesty matters, not the arithmetic.

Owner — situation, others, me	Their part of what happened	Rough share
The situation — shortage, fog, time, chance		
Other people, institutions, systems upstream		
My part — the piece truly mine to choose		

My part, stated plainly and at true size — what was genuinely mine in this:

What I have been carrying that belongs in the other rows — and what it would mean to hand it back:

One check that matters: if you have run this page honestly and your part keeps shrinking toward nothing — if what happened was, at true size, something done *to* you — then what you are carrying may be misplaced blame rather than moral injury. Many survivors of violence, abuse, and assault carry guilt that belongs entirely to the person who harmed them. That weight deserves care too, and a trauma-informed therapist is the right company for it. Handing back what was never yours is not evasion. It is accuracy.

Keep what is yours — erasing it would insult the compass. But only what is yours. A true verdict is the only one a conscience will actually accept.

What Punishment Has Cost

An audit of the sentence

Ground rule: this page looks directly at self-punishment, and for some readers that runs close to darker ground. If it stirs up more than it settles — eyes open, feet on the floor, five things you can see, page down. And if punishment has ever included hurting yourself, or thoughts of dying as the final payment: that is an emergency, not a penance — call or text 988 (Canada and the US), 24/7.

The private court has been running its sentence for a while now. Audit it like any program: what it costs, and what it has actually produced.

The sentence, itemized

Check what applies; add your own.

- ☐ Isolation — keeping people at a distance they do not understand
- ☐ Refusing good things — rest, pleasure, celebration, comfort
- ☐ Sabotage — quietly wrecking what starts to go well
- ☐ Overwork or over-atonement that burns me down instead of building anything
- ☐ Numbing — drinking, using, scrolling the feeling into silence
- ☐ Staying in the replay — serving time nightly at 2 a.m.

What the sentence has cost me, honestly totalled — years, closeness, health, the person I could have been to my people:

Who else is paying it — the people who get the hollowed-out version of me, and what they are missing:

What the sentence has actually repaired, for anyone. (If the honest answer is 'nothing', write that — it is the audit's finding, and the ground this pack builds on.)

If years of suffering could have repaired what happened, it would be repaired by now. The wound does not need more of your pain. It needs your repair — and the next pages are about exactly that.

The Amends Ledger

Good, aimed where the harm went

Repair is good aimed at the world — starting, where possible, at the harm itself. Three honest rules first, because amends done badly become new harm:

- **Direct amends are for the harmed person's benefit, not for your relief.** They are only right when contact is safe for them and welcome to them — and welcome is theirs to signal, not yours to test. If the only way to find out would be to reach out, treat the answer as no: contacting them to ask is already the ambush. (Welcome looks like an opening they have made, or an answer carried back by someone they trust.) And where the harm was violence, assault, or a relationship they chose to end, direct contact is not yours to initiate at all — the symbolic and living rows exist precisely for this.
- **Forgiveness from others is theirs to give or not give.** Amends without a demand attached. You are paying the debt, not purchasing a receipt.
- **If any harm is ongoing, stopping it comes before everything on this page.** Not managed, not tapered — stopped, with professional help if it takes help to stop. There is no amends ledger that runs alongside continuing harm; ending it is the first and realest amend.

The three kinds of amends

Direct — to the person harmed, where safe and welcome: the honest acknowledgement, the debt repaid, the apology without excuses attached.

Symbolic — where direct is impossible or unwelcome: good aimed at people like those harmed. The donation, the volunteering, the blood given, the skill taught, the memorial act done quietly and regularly.

Living — the widest lane and the one always open: a life conducted as the answer. The violated value, practised deliberately, where your life actually happens — protecting the vulnerable in the job you hold now, telling the truth in the rooms you are actually in.

Kind — direct, symbolic, or living	What I could do	First small step, and when
Direct — only if safe and welcome for them		
Symbolic		
Living		

Amends is the conscience's native language. It was never asking for your suffering — it was asking for this.

A Letter You Choose

Saying the whole of it, once, on paper

Ground rule: deep water. Choose a steady day with quiet on the far side, and write in sittings, not marathons. If it stirs up more than it settles: eyes open, feet on the floor, five things you can see, pen down. And one exception that outranks every writing exercise: if writing brushes up against the thought that the people in your life would be better off without you — stop and call or text 988 (Canada and the US), 24/7. That thought is the wound talking, and it lies.

A moral wound is a conversation that never got to happen. A letter is one way to have your side of it, in full, without interruption. Nothing here has to be sent — a letter can do its whole job unsent, and whether it is ever more than paper stays your choice alone. (If you are ever considering actually sending one, the Amends Ledger's first rule decides: only if it is safe for them and welcome to them.)

Choose your letter — or write all three, months apart

- **To the person harmed.** Everything you would say if you could: the acknowledgement without excuses, the context that is explanation rather than defence, what you have done since, what you carry still.
- **To your past self.** The one who was there that day — exhausted, cornered, twenty-two, under orders, out of time. Write with the honesty and the mercy you would show anyone else who had stood exactly there, knowing only what they knew.
- **From your best moral self.** Let the part of you that holds the code — the compass itself, not the shame — write back for once: what it actually asks of you now, what sentence it actually orders, what it wants your next year to look like.

The letter I am starting with, and to whom:

(Begin here; continue on any paper. This page is just the door.)

Afterwards, the letter is yours: keep it, seal it, tear it slowly, read it to someone you trust, or burn it safely outdoors. Many people find the writing was the act that mattered — the paper was only where it happened.

Self-Forgiveness: A Process, Not a Verdict

Ending the war so the repair can happen

Start with what self-forgiveness is not, because the false version is why many people refuse it. It is not deciding the event did not matter. Not forgetting. Not excusing. Not announcing yourself innocent — the sizing page already found the true verdict, and self-forgiveness does not overturn it. **Self-forgiveness is ending the internal war, so that the person who carries the true verdict can function, repair, and be of use.** You can hold "my part was real" and "the war is over" in the same hands. In fact, repair tends to require it.

It is also not a decision you make once on a good day. It is a direction you walk — some days well, some days not at all — and it tends to arrive the way trust does: gradually, through practice, often with company.

The practice, in five habits

1. **Speak of your part at true size** — no inflation to everything, no erasure to nothing — including inside your own head at 2 a.m.
2. **When the shame-voice speaks, answer it with the act, not the identity.** "I did a thing that broke my code" — never "I am a thing."
3. **Meet the replay with the whole courtroom** — every witness, not just the prosecution's three seconds.
4. **Let the amends carry the weight.** Each entry in the ledger is a payment the war was never able to make.
5. **Accept good things on purpose** — rest, laughter, closeness — not as a verdict of innocence, but as maintenance of the person doing the repairs.

What I am actually afraid would happen if I stopped punishing myself — and whether the amends pages answer it better than the war did:

One sentence from me to me, at true size — as honest as it is merciful:

Self-forgiveness is not a verdict of innocence. It is the end of a war — declared so that the repair, at last, can start.

When the Injury Is Betrayal

When the wound came from above, or from beside you

Some moral injuries are not about what your hands did at all. The wound is what was done *to* your trust: leaders who spent your loyalty on something wrong, an institution that ordered the harm and then abandoned the people who carried it out, colleagues who closed ranks around a lie, a family or a faith community that protected the wrong person. Betrayal injury has its own signature — less guilt, more fury; less "what did I do" and more "what was I part of, and who can I ever believe again."

Two weights that may not be yours

- **Imported shame.** People often carry shame for acts that were ordered, engineered, or hidden by someone above them — as if obeying in good faith, or being deceived, were the crime. Run those through the sizing page like everything else: the deceived part of you belongs in the *other people and institutions* row, not in yours. What you did once you knew is yours; what was built to keep you from knowing is not.
- **The silence contract.** Institutions that betray often also teach that speaking of it is disloyal. It is not. Naming what an institution did — to yourself, on these pages, to people you trust — is where correcting the moral record begins. Loyalty to the truth outranks loyalty to the letterhead. (Whether to go further — formally reporting, going public — is a separate, weighty choice with real costs; it deserves advice from people who know that terrain, not a worksheet's push either way.)

Trust, rebuilt discriminately

Betrayal offers two bad deals: trust no one, or pretend nothing happened and trust as before. The repair is a third thing — **discriminating trust**: extended gradually, to specific people, in proportion to evidence, and revocable. Cynicism is not wisdom; it is the injury making policy. Wisdom is a working filter.

Who or what spent my trust — and what exactly they spent it on:

Shame I may have imported that belongs on their ledger, not mine:

Being betrayed is not evidence you were a fool. It is evidence you had something worth stealing — and a filter, not a wall, is how you keep it.

Rebuilding Trust in Yourself

One kept promise at a time

Of all the trusts a moral injury breaks, the one that governs daily life most is trust in yourself — your judgement, your courage, your reliability under pressure. And here is the practical truth: self-trust is not rebuilt by arguing with the past. It is rebuilt the same way it was built in the first place — **by making promises and keeping them, at a size you can actually keep, witnessed by the one person who is always in the room.**

Start small on purpose. A kept five-minute promise builds the ledger; an ambitious broken one only sets it further back.

The promise ledger

One promise at a time. Keep it small enough to survive a bad week.

The promise I made myself	Kept?	What it proved

This week's promise — small enough to keep, real enough to count:

A moment since the event when I acted well under pressure — evidence the replay never admits:

What I would need to see from myself, over the next year, to trust myself again — written as promises, not wishes:

You do not have to believe in yourself to start. You have to keep one small promise this week. Belief is the record catching up.

The Violated Value, Back to Work

The compass that condemns you can steer you

The value that was violated — *protect the vulnerable, tell the truth, do no harm, never leave someone behind* — did not die in the event. It is alive enough to hurt you, which means it is alive enough to use. And putting it back to work is not just the living amend from the ledger page. It is the repair of identity itself: every deliberate act in service of the violated value is a counter-entry in the record the shame keeps quoting — proof that the value still runs your hands, not just your regrets.

This is where the moral injury either gets the last word about who you are, or doesn't. Not in the replay — in the schedule.

From value to calendar

The value, named again:

Where my actual life gives this value work to do — my job, my family, my street, my crew:

One act in its service this week — small, concrete, scheduled: what, where, when:

The larger version I could grow into this year — the mentoring, the training, the advocacy, the standing watch that my experience now qualifies me for:

That last prompt deserves one careful sentence. Some people eventually find that what they carry has made them the exact right person for specific work — the medic who teaches, the veteran who meets new veterans at the door, the nurse who fights for staffing, the parent who walks beside other parents through the same worst day, the witness who makes sure it is not forgotten. Not because the event was worth it. It was not, and nothing here says otherwise. But because the experience exists either way — and in service, it protects someone.

The compass that condemns you is the same compass that can steer you. Point it at this week.

The Spiritual Wound

Feeling stained, cut off, or at war with God

Ground rule: deep water — this room holds some of the heaviest weight in the pack. Go in doses, and if the page stirs up more than it settles: eyes open, feet on the floor, name five things you can see, page down.

For many people, moral injury reaches past psychology into whatever holds their deepest meaning. Believers may feel unforgivable before God, unable to pray, unfit for the community — or furious at a God who allowed it, ordered the world this way, or stayed silent. Non-believers get their own version: a broken belief that the world makes moral sense, or that goodness is real and durable. This page does not tell you what to believe — it only refuses to let this part of the wound go unnamed, because unnamed is where it does its worst work.

A few honest notes, offered gently:

- **Feeling unforgivable is a feeling, not a doctrine.** Within many faiths, the traditions built for exactly this moment — confession, repentance, atonement, mercy — are older than your event and were built for the heaviest things people carry. If your tradition has such a door, it was built for wounds like this one, and a faith leader who understands moral injury — many chaplains are practised at exactly this — can walk you to it. One honest carve-out: if a faith community is part of what wounded you — if the people who kept that door are the ones who spent your trust — you owe that particular door nothing. The tradition is bigger than the room that hurt you, and you are allowed to approach it through a different community, a chaplain outside it, or not at all. The choice of door, like everything on this page, stays yours.
- **Anger at God has a long and honoured place in many traditions** — argued prayer, lament, protest. For many believers it has been part of faith, not its opposite. If that is where you are, you are in old company.
- **If meaning itself broke,** the repair tends to come the same way the other repairs in this pack do: not by argument, but by practice — amends, service, the violated value back at work. Meaning, like trust, is rebuilt by hands.

What this wound did to my faith, my meaning, or my sense of the world:

What I would say to God, to the universe, or to the silence — unedited (lament is allowed here):

One door I could try: a chaplain, a faith leader, a text, a practice, a conversation I have been avoiding:

A wound this deep was always going to reach the deepest rooms. Naming it there is not blasphemy or weakness — it is the oldest prayer there is, and the oldest human reckoning, whichever of those is yours.

Telling Someone

A choice, not a duty — and how to make it well

Moral injury feeds on secrecy. Shame promises that telling anyone means losing them — and so the wound stays sealed, and the seal itself becomes proof that it must be monstrous. Against that, one of the most repair-bearing moments available is being truly seen by one person who neither flinches nor excuses — someone who can hear the whole of it and still be there afterwards, without rushing to wave your part away.

And still: **telling is a choice, not a duty**. You owe no one your wound. This page is for making the choice well, not for pushing you through it.

Choosing the person

The right listener can sit with hard things without needing to fix, judge, or minimize them. "You did nothing wrong" — said before they have even heard you — is a kind person failing this test; your conscience will dismiss them as a witness who did not review the evidence. Consider: the friend who has carried things, the peer who was there or somewhere like it, the chaplain, the therapist — the professional listener, practised in exactly this, bound by confidentiality (which has a few narrow legal limits, such as someone being in current danger — any therapist will explain them plainly at the start if you ask), and unlosable in the way friends are losable. For some tellings, the therapist is simply the right first room. (One practical note: with anyone, you choose the level of detail — the wound can be fully told at the outline level, and identifying details of others are rarely yours to share.)

Preparing the telling

The person, and why they can hold it:

What I want from them — named out loud before I start. ('I don't need you to fix it or absolve it. I need you to hear all of it and still be here.')

The first two sentences, drafted here, so the hardest part is already written:

Shame's whole theory is that being fully known means being finally left. One true telling, well received, is hard counter-evidence shame struggles to answer — and you are allowed to stack the choosing in your favour.

When It Needs More Company

The deepest wounds were never solo work

The great traditions of moral repair — religious, military, medical, legal — have long run on other people: the confessor, the elder, the board, the circle of peers. The solitary conscience wrestling itself to peace is a myth that tends to produce the 2 a.m. courtroom. Bringing in company is not the pack failing. For the deepest versions of this wound, company is the method.

The kinds of company

- **A therapist who knows this terrain.** Moral injury is an active area of clinical work, and approaches exist that are built for it — not to talk you out of your conscience, but to walk the examination, the telling, the amends, and the self-forgiveness with a practised hand. When calling, one sentence is enough: *"I am carrying something that goes against my conscience, and I want to work on it with someone who understands moral injury."*
- **Peers who were there — or somewhere like it.** Veterans' groups, first-responder and healthcare peer support, twelve-step and other recovery communities for readers whose wound runs through addiction. People who carry the same kind of weight can hear things fresh listeners cannot.
- **Chaplains and spiritual care** — for believers and, often, for non-believers too; for many of them, sitting with moral wounds is daily work, in and out of uniform.
- **A doctor**, if sleep, appetite, drinking, or the body's basics have been off for a sustained stretch — the body pays this wound's bills too.

Reach out promptly — not eventually — if any of these holds

- The shame or the replay runs most days, and months are passing without change
- Isolation is deepening — you are managing everyone at arm's length
- Alcohol or other substances have become the way through the evening
- The punishment is escalating, or you have begun to feel like a burden to your people
- Any thought of harming yourself, or that others would be better off without you — **this one is today, not someday: call or text 988 (Canada and the US), free and confidential, 24/7 — and if danger is immediate, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department**

The kind of company this wound could use — and one concrete step toward it this week:

Asking for company with a moral wound is not confession of weakness. It is how traditions that take conscience seriously have long said it should be done.

14-Day Quiet Ledger

One honest line a day

The shame keeps one record; this ledger keeps the other one. One line a day, in the evening — small entries are the point. A kept five-minute promise counts. Declining one round of 2 a.m. court counts. The record is how the person doing the repairs stays visible to themselves.

Day	A promise I kept (however small)	The value at work, or one repair entry	Punishment I declined today	One contact — a person, a practice
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

After fourteen days — what this record shows that the shame's record leaves out:

The shame quotes its record with total confidence. This one answers it — line by line, in your own handwriting.

Weekly Reflection

Ten minutes, once a week

Repair work is quiet, and quiet work gets discounted — a week of kept promises and declined punishment can still get filed by the shame as "no progress." Once a week, count what actually happened. Print a fresh copy each week and date the corner.

Week of:

The hardest moment this week — the replay, the shame-voice, the court — and how I met it:

A promise kept, an amend made, or the value at work — this week's entries on the true record:

Punishment I declined — a good thing accepted, an isolation resisted, a 2 a.m. session adjourned early:

Where the sizing held — and where the shame tried to claim more than my part again:

Company this week — who saw any of the real me, and what that was like:

Next week's one promise — small enough to keep, real enough to count:

A week with one kept promise, one declined punishment, and one honest moment of company is repair, happening. That is what it looks like from the inside.

Pocket Repair Cards

Cut them out. Keep them where the court convenes.

Six reminders at wallet size, for the moments the big pages are out of reach — the 2 a.m. session, the shame ambush in the car, the day the replay wins the morning. Wallet, phone case, desk drawer, car visor, kit bag, locker door, bedside table.

<i>"Only a working conscience can be wounded like this. The compass that condemns me is proof of the compass."</i>	<i>"Shame says hide. Repair says act. Only one of them reaches the world."</i>
<i>"My part, at true size — not erased, not inflated. I keep what is mine, and only what is mine."</i>	<i>"Punishment that helps no one is not moral seriousness. Repair is — and repair needs me here, and intact, to do it."</i>
<i>"Self-forgiveness is not a verdict of innocence. It is the end of a war, so the repair can start."</i>	<i>"If the pain ever says they would be better off without me — that is the wound talking, and it lies. Call or text 988 (Canada and the US) — 24/7."</i>

Cut along the dashed lines.

Please Read: Important Information

About this toolkit

This toolkit is an educational self-help resource. It draws on widely used ideas in the study of moral injury and moral repair — including context examination, proportionate responsibility, amends-making, values-based action, and self-forgiveness as a gradual process — presented for personal reflection. "Moral injury" as used here describes a human experience, not a medical or psychiatric diagnosis.

This toolkit is not psychotherapy, counselling, medical care, spiritual direction, or mental health treatment, and it cannot diagnose or treat any condition. Using it does not create a therapist-client or any other professional relationship with its creator. It is not a substitute for assessment, diagnosis, or treatment by a qualified physician, psychologist, psychotherapist, counsellor, or other qualified professional — and nothing in it can or does establish the facts of any event, or judge any person.

A note on pace and safety: this pack works close to guilt, shame, and the hardest moments of a life, and moral pain can run near thoughts of self-harm. Please work in doses, use the stop-skill printed on the deep pages (eyes open, feet on the floor, name five things you can see), and treat the page "When It Needs More Company" as a working part of the toolkit rather than an appendix. If what you are carrying involves harm that is ongoing, stopping it — with professional help if needed — comes before any other work in these pages. If the weight involves potential legal matters, a lawyer is the right advisor for that dimension; these pages are not legal guidance.

If you need help now

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911 (Canada and the US) or go to your nearest emergency department.

988 Suicide Crisis Helpline (Canada) / Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (United States)

- **Call 988** — free, confidential, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- **Text 988** — if you prefer texting to talking

Additional support:

- **United States — Crisis Text Line:** text HOME to 741741 (24/7)
- **Canada — Kids Help Phone (for young people):** call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868 (24/7)
- **Veterans:** in Canada, VAC Assistance Service, 1-800-268-7708 (24/7); in the US, Veterans Crisis Line — dial 988 then press 1, or text 838255 (24/7)

You do not need to be in crisis to reach out. If you are struggling, these services are there for you.

Whatever you carry, and whatever its true size — you are still the person your conscience belongs to, and that person is worth keeping alive, company, and repair.

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