



THOUGHT TREATS

mental play for the
overwhelmed caregiver



Yes yes we know: thoughts shape feelings, feelings drive behavior, thoughts create our reality, true freedom exists only in the mind yada yada yada. But when we're IN IT, overwhelmed by endless demands and limited by what we can do and change, maybe our thoughts would enjoy a little snack rather than homework or a lecture.

This is not mindset work. Not evidence based tools. Merely survival experiments and definitely unverified. They might be fun to chew on. Spit it out if it's gross. Try another if you'd like! And please do create your own.



THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

Notice an object in your view.
Imagine your fairy godmother knocks it over as she appears. What size is she? What does her voice sound like? Tell her what you need, everything. Let her sprinkle fairy dust and actually hear your tiredness, your anger, your small triumphs. Stay with her as long as you like.



THE MOTIVATIONAL FROG

Replace whatever voice is loud in your head with a motivational frog on your shoulder. He's shouting about all the things you've weathered and the fact that you're still here showing up, ribbiting and cheering on your movements like you're an Olympic athlete. "Look at you! Wiping that butt! Washing those hands! Stirring that pot!" He believes in you so hard it's actually cute. You can ribbit too if it feels right. When he calms down, give him a pat and set him somewhere to rest. He's tired and proud. He has so much to celebrate.



RECESS!

Shrink to a "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" version of you and swing and jump from the objects in your view, superhero style. Notice what you're stepping on, the wind on your face as you soar, and how you land. Make it ridiculous. Land confident. You got this.



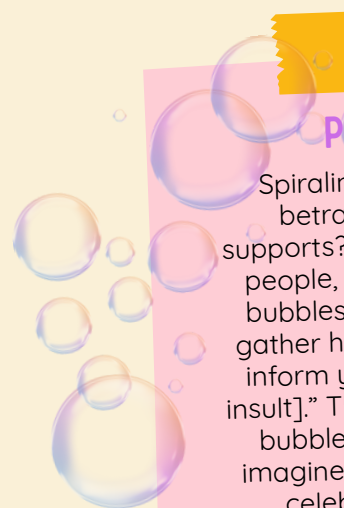


ANIMAL THOUGHTS

Tune into the thoughts looping in your head. If they were coming from an animal, which animal would they be? If they don't know, that's fine, just keep going. Ask the animal random, silly questions: Where do you sleep? What's your favorite snack? What are you really good at? Where would you go on vacation?



POP THE BUBBLES



Spiraling in rage, sadness, or betrayal over inadequate supports? Turn the current targets, people, systems, whatever, into bubbles. Speak to them: "As we gather here today, I would like to inform you that... [insert vent or insult]." Then pop, slice, or stab the bubble with a fork. Afterward, imagine confetti raining down to celebrate your triumph of destruction.



PLAYFUL NOTICING

Pick one thing in your view and narrate it in declarative language like you're a documentary host with a PDA child. "I wonder where that came from. It looks yellow to me. I'm noticing it move up. Huh, interesting." Small, silly observation. No fixing required.



HIGH SCHOOL SONG TIME

Think of a song you loved in high school. Any song, no judgment. Play it for real or in your head and let it take you back. Skip mental tracks until you land on a pleasant memory. What are you doing? Who are you with? What can you see and smell? Bonus: if the person you're with is reachable, text them: "Hearing this and thinking of you!!!"

Okay fine, also some of the classics that might really help too...



5

5 Senses

Pause and name what's around you: five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell, one you can taste (or wish you could). No need to force anything. Simply notice.

Deep Breaths



Inhale slowly through your nose and feel your ribs expand, not just your chest. Hold for a moment, then exhale through your mouth like you're blowing out a candle or sighing after a long day. Do it once if that's all you have. Do it again if it feels good.

Gentle Movement



Move something, anything. Roll your shoulders. Wiggle your fingers. Stretch your jaw. Stand up if you can and shake your arms like you're shaking off water. Perhaps sway side to side or walk to the nearest window. Notice how the air or light touches your skin.

xo Sarah