

# The ache that stayed

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This is a work of creative nonfiction. The practices and insights offered are not intended as medical advice.

Always consult a qualified practitioner when addressing physical or mental health concerns.

## The ache that stayed

This book is a companion to the I AWAKE series  
Your sensual hero's journey through 9 thresholds

Book 1 The Invisible Framework

Book 2 The Cost of Abandonment

Book 3 Wounds that Speak

Book 4 The Roots of Pleasure

Book 5 Meet your Mind

Book 6 Secrets of the Heart

Book 7 Come Together

Book 8 Pleasure as Practice

Book 9 Eros Reclaimed

The ache that stayed

*This isn't a book about becoming more.  
It's a book about becoming real.  
The kind of real your body has been aching for.*

## The ache that stayed

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The ache that stayed  
A sensual 7 day journal

Camilla Wellton

## The ache that stayed

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You didn't come here to forget what happened.  
You've already tried that.  
You talked it through. Worked harder. Stayed busy.  
Laughed it off. Made new rules for yourself.  
Anything to keep the ache at arm's length.  
And yet it still shows up.

In the pause before you answer a question.  
In the way your shoulders rise when someone gets too close.  
In the nights when everything feels fine and something small  
still hurts.

This journal isn't here to drag you back into the past.  
It's here to help you notice how the past still lives in your  
body. Because even when the memory has gone soft around  
the edges, your body remembers what it had to do to keep  
you safe.  
That remembering isn't weakness.

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It's loyalty.

You don't have to retell the story.

Just admit that something happened and that part of you is still holding it.

That's where we begin.

This 7-day journal is part of the I AWAKE series: a nine-part sensual hero's journey. Each book is a destination within you, following the same arc as all the great stories (the hero's journey). Except this time, you're the hero and your own life is where the plot unfolds.

The first three books explore the places that still ache and the ways you learned to protect yourself.

The middle ones help you rebuild connection with your body, your mind, and your heart.

The final three invite you to live from aliveness where pleasure is natural, creativity flows easily and your desire

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becomes the compass that shapes a life that turns you on.

Book Three, the one this journal comes from, is called  
Wounds That Speak.

It's about the echoes of pain that never found language.  
The reflexes that once saved you and now just keep you  
braced. The part of you that wants to stop surviving and start  
belonging again.

You don't need to fix anything this week.

You just need to listen.

To the small signals: the tightening, the quiet, the rush, the  
retreat.

To the body that's been trying to tell you the same story for  
years.

This isn't therapy.

It's intimacy with yourself.

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Seven days to feel what's still true, to soften around the ache,  
and to start trusting that you can meet your own pain and  
stay present through it.

No pretending.

No forcing closure.

Just honesty, touch, and the courage to stay.

Welcome inside.

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## The ache that stayed

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Before  
you  
begin

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Before we begin, I want to tell you something important.  
There's a place inside you that's always been listening.  
Even when the world wasn't.  
Even when the noise was too loud, or the silence too long.  
Even when you didn't have words for what you were feeling.

That place inside you, quiet, instinctual, honest, is where we begin. But we don't start with logic.  
We don't start by analyzing, fixing, or even understanding.  
We start by entering a space that your nervous system already knows. A space between memory and imagination.  
A space where things become real the moment you feel them.

It's called the imaginal field. The term was coined by by French scholar Henry Corbin. While Corbin coined the term, his work is often discussed alongside that of C.G. Jung, who also emphasized the importance of imagination and the

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unconscious. Entering the imaginal field is not the same as daydreaming. It's not about escaping or pretending.

It's actually the opposite.

It's about letting your body feel what's real, in a way that's safe enough to soften, shift, and finally integrate.

Because the truth is, your nervous system doesn't separate "real" from "imagined" the way your thinking mind does.

Have you ever woken from a dream with your heart racing?

Or remembered a difficult moment so clearly it brought tears again, years later?

That's your body responding to felt experience, not facts.

The imaginal field uses that same capacity not to re-traumatize, but to reconnect.

Here, you can try things you've never dared in waking life.

Speak truths you've never voiced out loud.

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Meet parts of yourself you didn't even know were missing.  
And your system gets to register those moments as real,  
because, in a somatic sense, they are.

That's why in the I AWAKE system, the imaginal field isn't  
just poetic. It's practical.

It's where healing happens, not just as an idea, but as an embodied shift. And it allows that shift to happen gently,  
on your own terms, in your own rhythm.

We don't rush. We don't perform. We don't push through.

We listen. We imagine. We feel.

And slowly your inner world begins to reorganize itself  
around a new kind of safety.

The kind that comes from presence, not performance.

So as you begin this seven-day journey, I'm inviting you to  
soften the edges of what you think is "real."

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To let feeling be enough. To let symbol, sensation, and soul  
sit at the same table for a while.

There's a reason the mind sometimes resists this.  
Because here, in the imaginal field, we stop running.  
We stop explaining. We stop trying to be impressive.

And we begin something else entirely.

Something ancient.

Something sacred.

Something real.

You don't have to know how this works.

You don't have to "believe" in anything.

You only have to let your breath slow.

And accept the invitation to enter your inner world from a  
softer angle not to fix, but to feel. Not to solve, but to see.

And that's where we're going at the end of these 7 days.

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You'll be entering The Circle with me and from there straight into your imaginal field.

I'm guiding you there with my voice.

You'll find the QR code to access the recording (as well as all the audioguided body checks in this book) at the end of this book.

Let's begin.

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Day one

When  
the past  
breathes  
under your  
skin

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Some things end, and your body doesn't believe it.  
The phone call. The fight. The fall.  
Everyone said, you made it through. But part of you never  
unclenched. That's how impact works. It's not drama:  
it's residue. The leftover chemistry of threat.

When something overwhelms you and can't be fully felt or  
resolved, the body stores the unfinished reaction as tension,  
posture, breath, or vigilance.  
It's physics, not personality.  
Energy that never discharged just keeps circulating.  
That's why the shoulders still rise when someone's voice  
sharpens. Why sleep comes but rest doesn't.  
Why you can look calm while every muscle inside is standing  
guard.  
The event is over, but the alarm never got the memo.  
Inside the brain, small structures handle this vigilance.  
The amygdala tags anything that once meant danger.

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The hippocampus keeps a rough outline of when it happened. If the memory doesn't get processed, those two keep looping the signal.

Cortisol and adrenaline trickle into the bloodstream.

The body keeps preparing.

You feel it as background noise, the sense of always being on.

It's easy to call this anxiety or stress, but it's really a form of unfinished survival. You're not imagining it; you're living inside chemistry that never shut down.

When the world says, "It's over, move on," your system hears, "Stay alert until it's proven safe."

That's why you startle easily, overthink texts, rehearse conversations, double-check the locks, or need constant distraction. It's not weakness.

It's biology trying to prevent *déjà-vu* of harm.

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Impact doesn't just live in memory; it lives in movement. Muscles, fascia, and breath patterns become part of the archive. Over time, what was once an emergency posture turns into a personality trait.

You call it being careful, productive, independent. Underneath, it's protection on autopilot.

Today isn't about digging up stories. It's about recognising that the flinch, the guard, the silence, they began as intelligence. Your body succeeded at survival and simply never got proof that the danger passed.

So instead of asking "why am I like this?" ask "what is my body still trying to protect me from?" That question opens the door between habit and healing. You don't have to walk through yet. Just stand there and look.

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Notice what happens when you slow down.

What tightens first? What loosens? What stays the same?

You're collecting data, not making meaning.

Take one steady breath.

Let your shoulders drop a little.

Let the breath go all the way out.

If nothing bad follows, stay there a second longer.

That's the work today:

To give your system one small experience of safety it didn't have before.

Simple, physical proof that you can be present for yourself and the world doesn't collapse when you do.

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What's one part of the day when you feel like you're holding yourself together? Maybe at work, in traffic, with family, on your phone late at night?

What does "holding yourself together" look like for you?

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Think about the small pauses like right after work, before sleep, sitting on the bus. What do you usually do in those in-between moments?

Do you reach for your phone, put music on, start cleaning, turn on a show?

Write about what it's like to be with yourself when nothing needs your attention.

Is it easy, boring, tense, nice, uncomfortable?

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When you picture your body right now, what's the first word that comes to mind?

Tired? Tight? Numb? Fine? Something else?

Write about that word. Don't edit. Don't prettify...

Write it in Big letters.

Then describe, honestly, what you mean with it.

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Without thinking too hard, finish this sentence 7 times:

“I feel safest when ...”

Then read your answers.

What do they have in common?

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# Body Check

Before you start, scan the QR code at the back of the book and follow the instructions to access the audio.

Find a quiet space where you won't be interrupted for a while, twenty minutes is enough.

You don't need candles or stillness. You just need somewhere your body can lean and be held a little.

This first Body Check is about learning what "safe enough" feels like. It's not relaxation or meditation. It's orientation.

Helping your body realize the danger isn't here anymore.

You'll be guided to make contact with what's actually supporting you: the ground, the chair, your own hands.

To notice air moving, temperature shifting, muscles settling.

To begin collecting proof that this moment is real, and that you're in it.

You might notice your breath changing, shoulders dropping, eyes softening.

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That's not a technique working, it's your body recognizing presence. For some, this might feel soothing.

For others, it might feel strange, even emotional.

Whatever shows up is okay.

Your system is simply re-learning what safety feels like through the small details it can trust.

When the audio ends, don't rush to analyze or move on.

Stay for a minute with what's here.

The texture of the room. The weight of your body.

The quiet proof of now.

This is where healing starts.

Not in control or understanding,

but in contact.

You're not trying to change anything.

You're just letting your body remember that it's safe enough to be felt.

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