



body LOYALTY

**A trauma and disability
informed approach to
healing body shame**



You don't always need to
feel loving to show care.
You just have to be loyal.

01

What is Body Loyalty?

02

What Does the Body Loyalty Scaffold Do?

03

How Does it Work?

04

Quiet

05

Self Talk

06

Self Acceptance

07

Self Care

08

Community Care

09

How to Use the Body Loyalty Scaffold

10

Making a Body Loyal Choice

Without including trauma, disability, and the impact of systems, common approaches to healing only make shame worse as it holds us individually responsible for things that are not in our control.

You cannot love yourself out of systemic oppression. You cannot feel so positively about yourself that you can endure abuse unharmed. You cannot willpower your way out of disability.

Some of us have good reason for feeling the way we feel about our bodies, and we still deserve to know peace with ourselves.

We find that peace through loyalty.

WHAT IS BODY LOYALTY?

Body Loyalty is an approach to healing body shame through abandoning judgment and developing a productive relationship with the body.

WE BELIEVE:

- You are worthy of care because you are a human being, and all human beings are worthy of care.
- Human bodies have needs and limitations. This is not reflective of morality or character.
- Neurodiversity, illness, pain, disability, diverse race and ethnicity, diverse gender identity, diverse body size, and more are all a regular part of the human experience and need to be embraced or navigated instead of ignored or shamed.
- You do not need to feel good about your body to care for it, you just need enough loyalty to perform care tasks.
- Self care practices are the way to improve our relationships with our bodies. We grow to love the people we can trust to care for us. Including ourselves.

WHAT DOES THE BODY LOYALTY SCAFFOLD DO?

Each person's care needs are unique. We need a way to decide which choices are right for our circumstances.

The self care choices we make are made from within the context of our lives. Whatever habits we attempt have to account for the fact that we all have different resources, different needs, different skills, different knowledge, different cultures, different support, even different needs at different times of our own lives.

Very active people would not thrive under the movement plan an arthritis patient needs and if the arthritis patient tried to launch into extreme exercise it would likely end in injury. Despite this diversity in our needs, we very rarely have the support that leads us to finding the right choices for ourselves. Medical bias, a lack of emphasis on patient education, ableism, wellness capitalism, and the inaccessibility of care means that most of us are stumbling around trying to figure out what solutions will work for our specific situation, and wasting a lot of time, effort, money, and faith in the process.

The scaffold is a tool to help you evaluate whatever choice you are presented with, based on your own circumstances, to find the behavior practice that is right for you. It includes recovery, mental, emotional, physical, and social health needs to find the habits that meet all the needs of your body, from a trauma and disability informed perspective.

There is no "right" answer for how to be healthy. All we need to do is meet our bodies' needs.

A New Approach

Society teaches us to hate our bodies, and then be ashamed for not loving them. We are taught to be ashamed of our body needs, and then ashamed of any failure to meet them independently. For real change we need a method based in compassion instead of shame.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Find your path to healing.

Marrow

The lifeblood of your goals. The motivating purpose all interventions are anchored in and measured against. Anchoring our habits in a healthy purpose screens out harmful choices.

Mind

The beliefs. Mindset approaches to challenge stubborn beliefs and resistance to change. Challenging old beliefs helps us find novel and creative solutions.

The Body Loyalty Scaffold guides you through the questions:

Why do you do it?
How do you do it?
What do you do?

Muscle

The actions. Proactive self care habits that will build trust and self efficacy. These are the habits that you build into regular practice, changing when necessary to meet your changing body needs.

Marrow

QUIET

Time spent listening to your interior world and the sensations of the body. A practice of solitude away from external pressures and influences, distractions, and busy work.

Mind

TAKE YOUR BODY'S SIDE

You are your own advocate. We are rewarded for ignoring, minimizing, and denying our human needs. But when you take your body's side you choose to sacrifice that reward to care for yourself. Take the perspective of your body and examine what it has gotten you through. Then stand up for it.

Muscle

REST

Any practice that allows the body to recover and heal from activity.

- Sleep
- Saying no
- Hobbies
- Quiet time
- Avoiding busyness
- Naps
- Boundaries
- Liedowns
- Time in nature
- Social media breaks
- Resting your eyes
- Phone detox

Muscle

BREATH

Any practice that uses breathing techniques to create calm and engage the parasympathetic nervous system and reconnect to body sensations.

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Calming breaths | Yoga |
| Breathwork | Singing |
| Meditation | Tai Chi |
| Somatic therapies | Humming |
| Time in nature | Sighing |

Marrow

SELF TALK

The way you talk to yourself as well as the way you talk about yourself. The kind of company you are to yourself, whether loving, harsh, neglectful, or unconsciously repeating patterns of the past.

Mind

START SARCASTIC

You don't need to have a 'positive attitude' to start getting health results. Behavior and self care is what counts. Showing loyalty is more effective than professing love.

Muscle

AWARENESS

Any practice that turns attention to the interior experience and encourages consciousness of thought, behavior, and narratives.

Mindfulness

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Meditation

Internal Family Systems Therapy

Self learning

Somatic therapies

Contemplation

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

Paying attention

Marrow

SELF ACCEPTANCE

The ability to reckon with the material reality of who you are. Accepting all aspects of yourself, positive and negative, in order to emphasize strengths, support limitations, meet the needs of the body, and internalize a center of control.

Mind

CONDUCT EXPERIMENTS

Effective self care choices are based on what yields individual positive outcomes, knowing that trial and error will always be part of the process as body needs change.

Mind

VALIDATION OVER MINIMIZATION

We have been encouraged to disconnect from our bodies' sensations and cues. The way back to your body is to change that habit from minimizing your cues and needs to validating them.

Muscle

REFLECTION

Any practice that allows careful consideration of the values you hold, choices you make, and where change is needed in your life.

Therapy
Journaling
Meditation
Talks with friends
Spirituality/religion
Group recovery meetings

Art and stories
Gratitude
Time in nature
Mentors
Cultural practices

Marrow

SELF CARE

The habits and practices that a body requires to thrive and enjoy life. Not an extension of consumer culture, but a radical reclamation of human dignity.

Mind

NOTHING IS JUST ONE THING

Every self care choice affects each of us differently. Food, movement, medicine, solutions. Even aspirin treats us all differently. There is no way to be "right". Different solutions will work at different times. You just have to meet your needs.

Muscle

MOVEMENT

Any practice that moves the body according to its abilities and needs.

Intuitive movement
Exercise
Creating
Sex
Dance
Singing
Cuddles
Walking
Yoga
Gardening

Muscle

NOURISHMENT

Any practice of giving your body what it needs for sustenance.

Whatever food you need
Food you can enjoy
Treatment plan
Health At Every Size
Intuitive eating
Hygiene
Sensory diet
Joy

Marrow

COMMUNITY CARE

The social ties that provide care to you and that you provide care for. Your neighbors, family, colleagues, and more that make up your social world. We depend on each other for our health and security, and we benefit from showing that care to those around us.

Mind

CARE BUILDS TRUST

Self love is not accomplished by declaring it. You love people you can trust to care for you. Including yourself. Care leads to trust which leads to love.

Muscle

CAREGIVING

Any practice of providing care as a means of nourishing social networks and developing care skills.

Time with pets
Navigating healthcare
Political action
Taking care of family
Design your space

Volunteer
Gardening
Mutual aid
Performing arts
Clean and organize
Community outreach

The Body Loyalty Scaffold

| | Recovery | Mental Health | Emotional Health | Physical Health | Social Health |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Marrow | Quiet | Self Talk | Self Acceptance | Self Care | Community Care |
| Mind | Take Your Body's Side | Start Sarcastic | Conduct Experiments Validation Over Minimization | Nothing is Just One Thing | Care Builds Trust |
| Muscle | Rest Breath | Awareness | Reflection | Movement Nourishment | Caregiving |

©Tressa Edmunds 2023
BodyLoyalty.com

HOW TO USE THE BODY LOYALTY SCAFFOLD

Self care habits will only help you if they are the right solution for the problem at the right time.

The Body Loyalty Scaffold is a tool designed to help you find which behaviors of all the possible options will be the habit that makes an improvement in your life.

When there are so many barriers to care, so much misinformation, and so much pressure to buy the latest trend, determining which behaviors to enact in your life can feel overwhelming.

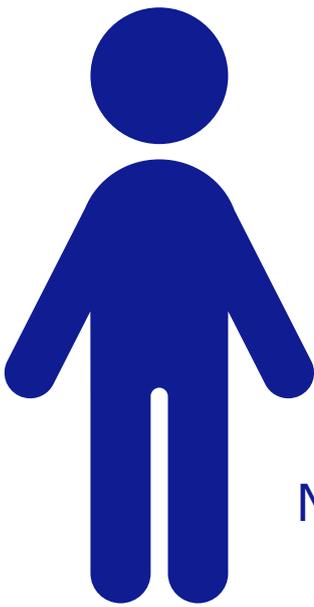
Each item in the plan is connected vertically as a guide to navigate the decision making process. Marrows are the purpose of our goals, Minds are what beliefs we need to reframe for our habits to be successful, and Muscles are the actual habits we enact, all in each area of our health needs.

A movement practice that does not feel like Self Care will not be a sustainable movement practice for you. Reflection that is not rooted in Self Acceptance is more likely to be worry. Marrow, Mind, and Muscle working together will provide the necessary information to make the changes that will benefit you, whatever your individual circumstances happen to be.

Making a Body Loyal Choice: A Case Study

Find the practices that fit your life.

**35 year old woman with ADHD, ARFID,
working full time and raising a toddler.**



- Rest → 15 minute car nap
- Breath → Calming breaths
- Awareness → Mirror work
- Reflection → Deep talks with friends
- Movement → Daily walks
- Nourishment → Safe foods and supplements
- Caregiving → Parenting

Jennifer is a single mother of a 3 year old, and keeps a demanding schedule working full time as a nurse.

She wakes up at 6 am when her son asks for breakfast. She makes the same breakfast every morning since it's the one she can eat, and adds vegetable powder to get more nutrients. As she brushes her teeth she says affirmations to her reflection in the mirror.

When parenting demands are stressful, she uses calming breaths to regulate herself. On her break from work she sneaks in a quick car nap, and finishes her day by meeting friends at the park for a walk and talk.

Making a Body Loyal Choice: A Case Study

Find the practices that fit your life.



**72 year old man with high cholesterol,
recently retired.**

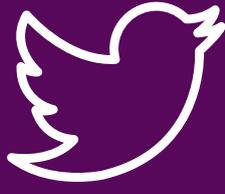
- Rest → Regular 8pm bedtime
- Breath → Tai Chi practice
- Awareness → Mindfulness practice
- Reflection → Personal narrative project
- Movement → Pickleball
- Nourishment → Low cholesterol diet
- Caregiving → Volunteering in community

August retired after a long career and is trying to build new habits for his new schedule.

He wakes up at 4am and starts his day with a Tai Chi exercise. As he does it he spends his time mindfully thinking over his beliefs about aging. He eats a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast and plans the rest of his meals.

Throughout his day he meets friends for pickleball, volunteers at a local museum, and then spends his evening working on his memoirs over dinner.

Connect with us



@BodyLoyalty

Written by **TRESA
EDMUNDS**