What's my risk profile?

A workbook for navigating risk, consent and limits in kink and rope.

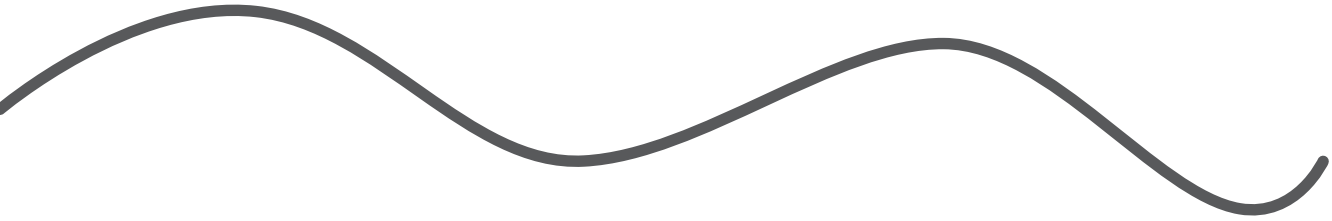


Dani Tut Bar
Marcos Mangani

Introduction

Exploring Risk With Care

Welcome. We're so glad you're here.
Risk is everywhere—in the choices we make, the relationships we build, the ways we step into the unknown. Some risks expand us, some teach us, and some carry consequences we aren't ready for. Understanding our risk profile isn't about avoiding risk altogether; it's about meeting ourselves with clarity, curiosity, and care as we navigate uncertainty.

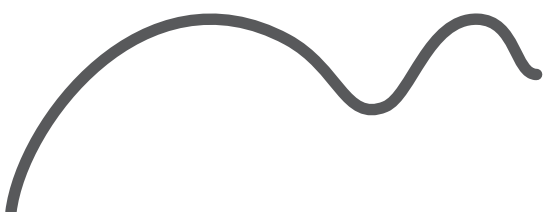


Why This Matters?

Risk isn't just personal—it's shaped by our histories, our communities, and the systems we live in. Some of us were taught to take risks boldly, others to avoid them at all costs. Many of us are somewhere in between, learning how to balance excitement and safety, autonomy and connection, the need for control and the pull of surrender.
This work matters because risk is a part of being alive. When we slow down and reflect, we gain access to choice, regulation, and deeper self-trust. We can learn when to step forward, when to hold back, and how to move in ways that align with our values.

How to Use This Workbook?

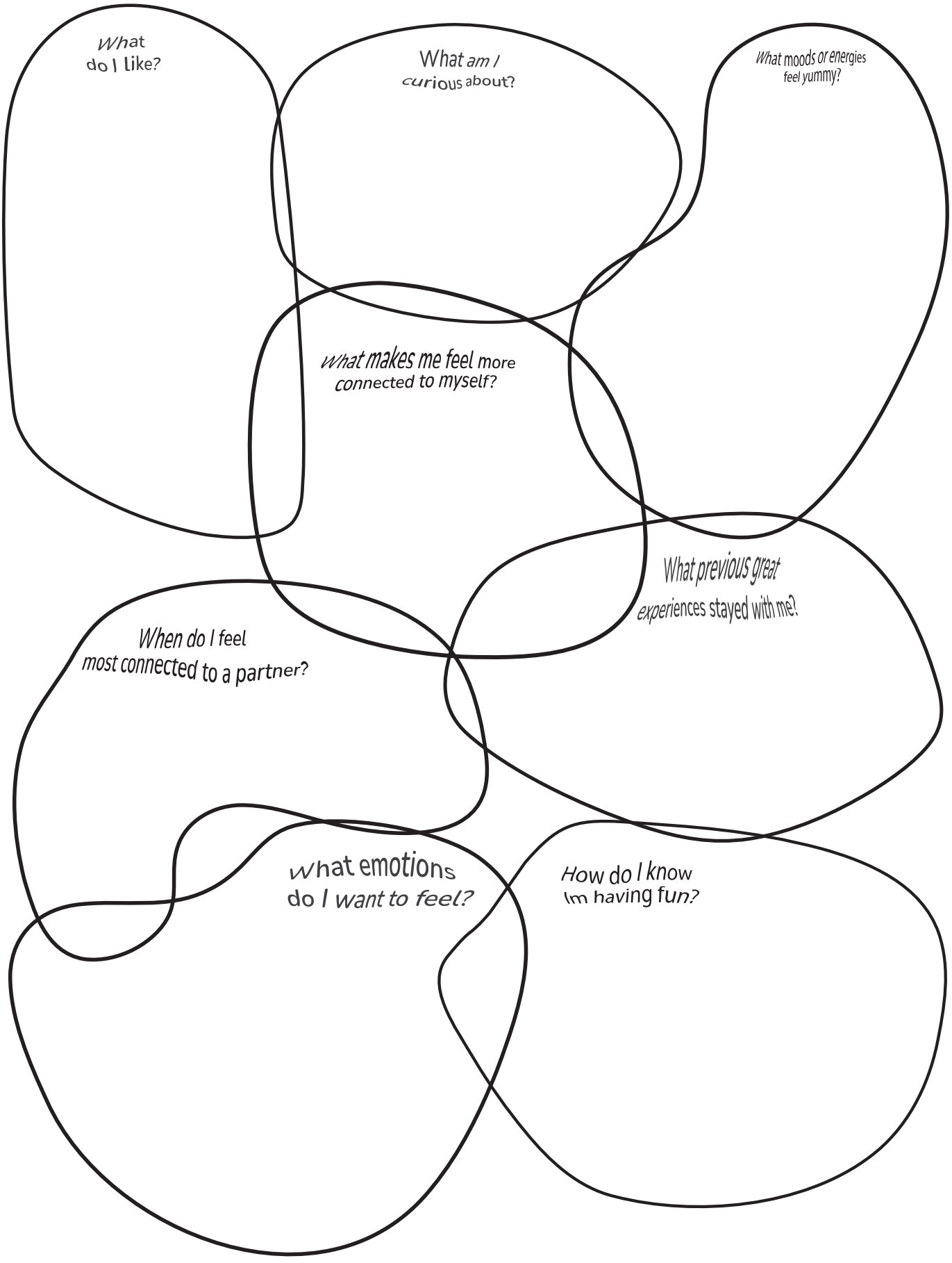
As a companion to the online class, deepening your reflection.
As a journal, for your own exploration.
As a conversation tool, to share and process with others.
However you show up for this work, you are welcome here.



Let's begin.

Defining Risk & Safety for Yourself

1. WHAT DO I *REALLY* WANT? *Thinking abpout your desires is an integral part of understanding personal risks. Use these prompts to gain perspective. What are you really into?*



2. MAPPING A RISK LANDSCAPE

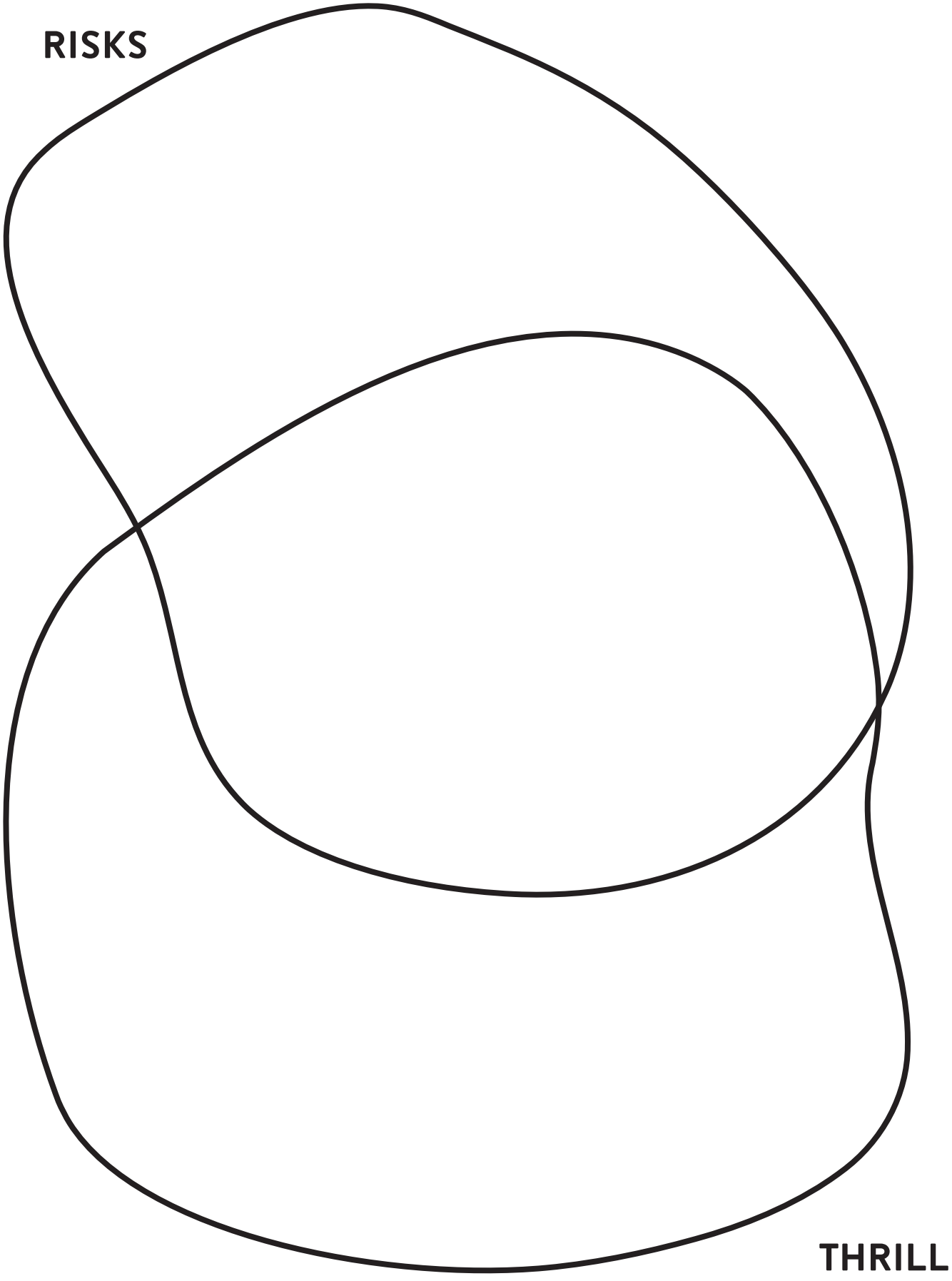
Make a list of the different risks you take in rope or kink—physical, emotional, relational, or even financial, social, or professional. Which types of risks feel easy for you? Which ones feel difficult or scary? Are there any areas where you take more risks than others?

Reflect: *Do you notice patterns in your risk-taking? Are your habits aligned with your values?*

3. SAFETY MAPPING: *Draw on the image below, in which places in your body can you sense being safe.*

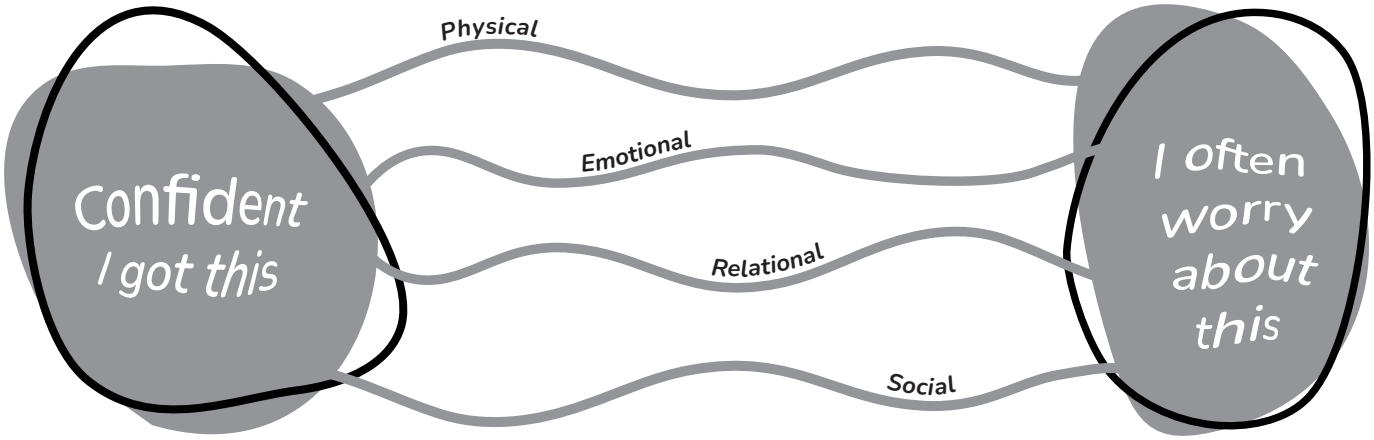


4. RISK VS. THRILL BRAINSTORM: *Where do they overlap?*
Fill in the cilcles below which risks and thrills you encounter in your practice. Notice where they intersect.



Identifying your personal risk profile

1. RISK PROFILE SELF-ASSESSMENT: *Rate yourself on different risk categories below by marking where you stand on each line.*



2. MY (RISK) STORY

Think of a time when you took a big risk. What made you decide to take that risk? How did you feel before, during, and after? Looking back, do you think it was the right choice? Why or why not? If you could go back in time, would you change anything?

Reflect: *What does this story tell you about how you assess risks? Would you take a similar risk again?*

3. MY GO –TO REACTIONS: *Different people react differently to moments of stress. There is no right or wrong, compare with partners and friends (without judgment!) and see if some tendencies are easier to guess or perceive then others. Check all the boxes that apply.*

FIGHT RESPONSES
(DO I PUSH BACK, CONFRONT, OR TAKE CHARGE?)

- ☐ *I feel a surge of anger or determination.*
- ☐ *I get louder, more direct, or more intense.*
- ☐ *I take control and start giving instructions.*
- ☐ *I physically tense up—clenching my fists, jaw, or muscles.*
- ☐ *I get bratty, challenge authority or question the rules.*

FREEZE RESPONSES
(DO I STOP MOVING, SPEAKING, OR ACTING?)

- ☐ *My body locks up or I feel unable to move.*
- ☐ *I struggle to make decisions or take action.*
- ☐ *I shut down emotionally or feel numb.*
- ☐ *I get quiet and wait for someone else to take the lead.*
- ☐ *I go into "observer mode" and watch everything but don't engage.*
- ☐ *I stop breathing or take very shallow breaths.*

FLIGHT RESPONSES
(DO I MOVE AWAY?)

- ☐ *I try to get space or physically leave the situation.*
- ☐ *I feel an urge to run (even if I stay put).*
- ☐ *I make excuses or look for ways to get out of the situation.*
- ☐ *I talk faster or change the subject.*
- ☐ *I become restless—shaking, pacing, or fidgeting.*
- ☐ *I feel trapped and anxious.*

FAWN/APPEASE RESPONSES
(DO I TRY TO PLEASE?)

- ☐ *I become extra agreeable, even if I don't actually feel okay.*
- ☐ *I focus on making sure others feel safe.*
- ☐ *I downplay my own discomfort or pretend I'm fine.*
- ☐ *I shift my boundaries to avoid conflict or rejection.*
- ☐ *I look for someone to tell me what to do so I don't have to decide.*

MENTAL RESPONSES
(HOW DOES MY MIND REACT?)

- ☐ *I get hyper-focused and start analyzing everything.*
- ☐ *My mind goes blank and I struggle to think clearly.*
- ☐ *I dissociate or feel detached from what's happening.*
- ☐ *I replay past experiences or fears in my head.*
- ☐ *I start problem-solving.*
- ☐ *I overthink and second-guess my decisions.*

GOING INWARD RESPONSES
(DO I RETREAT INSIDE MYSELF?)

- ☐ *I get very quiet and withdraw from the moment.*
- ☐ *I lose my sense of time or feel like I'm floating.*
- ☐ *I struggle to feel connected to my body.*
- ☐ *I get lost in my own thoughts.*
- ☐ *I avoid eye contact.*
- ☐ *I need alone time to recover.*

GOING OUTWARD RESPONSES
(DO I SEEK CONNECTION OR EXTERNAL HELP?)

- ☐ *I immediately reach for help.*
- ☐ *I look around to see how others are reacting.*
- ☐ *I start talking more to process out loud.*
- ☐ *I seek physical contact (holding hands, hugs, grounding with someone).*

4. WHAT RISKS DO I DOWNPLAY? *Check all that feel relevant to you.*

PHYSICAL RISKS

- ☐ *Nerve compression (temporary or permanent loss of sensation, weakness, pain)*
- ☐ *Circulation issues (numbness, tingling)*
- ☐ *Joint strain or hyperextension (shoulders, elbows, wrists, knees)*
- ☐ *Marks and Skin damage (rope marks, rope burns, friction blisters, bruising, cuts)*
- ☐ *Breathing restriction (from chest ties, inverted positions, or panic response)*
- ☐ *Muscle cramps or fatigue (holding positions for long)*
- ☐ *Falls and suspensions risks (rigging failure, balance loss, improper weight distribution)*
- ☐ *Head or neck injury (if falling from a tie or improper support)*
- ☐ *Overheating, dehydration, or exhaustion (from physical exertion)*
- ☐ *Pre-existing medical conditions being aggravated (e.g., chronic pain, circulation issues, past injuries)*
- ☐ *Delayed injury recognition (adrenaline masking pain during a session)*

EMOTIONAL RISKS

- ☐ *Panic or fear response (from restraint, vulnerability, or unexpected sensations)*
- ☐ *Past trauma activation (flashbacks, dissociation, feelings of helplessness)*
- ☐ *Emotional overwhelm (intensity of experience leading to shutdown or distress)*
- ☐ *Drop or mood swings post-session (emotional comedown, unexpected sadness, anxiety)*
- ☐ *Shame, self-doubt, or embarrassment (if things don't go as expected)*
- ☐ *Feeling disconnected from body or partner (if emotions don't align with experience)*
- ☐ *Unexpected arousal or lack of arousal (challenging expectations or self-image)*
- ☐ *Pressure to "perform" (concern about skill level, aesthetics, or endurance)*
- ☐ *Judgment from self or others (on ability, reactions, or emotional responses)*
- ☐ *Struggling with control vs. surrender dynamics (discomfort with power exchange)*
- ☐ *Fenzy and unboundaried participation (Enthusiasm leads to riskier or not fully thought out play)*

RELATIONAL RISKS

- ☐ *Miscommunication about boundaries or limits (unclear or assumed expectations)*
- ☐ *Mismatch in experience levels or desires (leading to frustration or unmet needs)*
- ☐ *Broken trust (if agreements are not honored)*
- ☐ *Emotional misalignment (one partner feeling emotionally different from the other during or after a session)*
- ☐ *Shifting relationship dynamics (bonding or distancing effects of play)*
- ☐ *Social or reputational risks (community judgment, outing, or assumptions about participation)*
- ☐ *Difficulty in aftercare needs not being met (either feeling neglected or overwhelmed by partner's needs)*
- ☐ *Unclear consent dynamics (not checking in enough or not being able to voice needs)*
- ☐ *Power struggles or misunderstandings (conflicts over control, leadership, or expectations)*
- ☐ *Relationship dependency on play (using Shibari as the main source of connection)*
- ☐ *Boundaries being tested unintentionally (shifting limits without full awareness)*
- ☐ *Navigating jealousy, comparison, or insecurity (in polyamorous or community spaces, in social media)*

***Reflect:** Which of these would you classify as a higher risk? Why?*

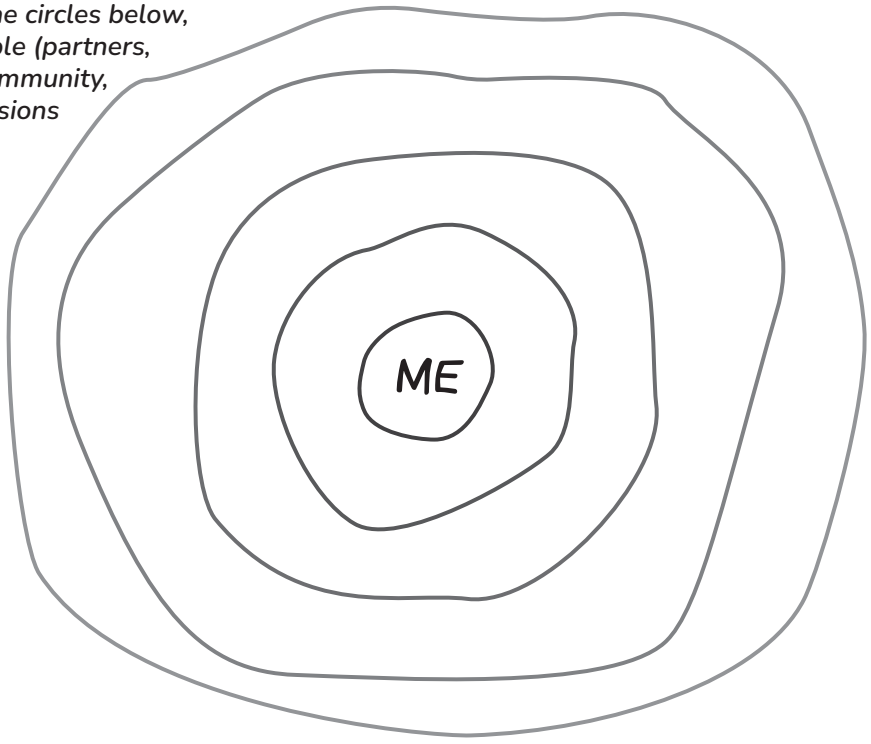
Recognizing External vs. Internal Influences on Risk

1. RISK MESSAGES I INHERITED

We all learn about risk from our environment—family, culture, school, media, and community. Write down messages you received about risk when you were younger. (E.g., "Always play it safe," "Go big or go home," "Only weak people are afraid," etc.) Who or where did these messages come from? Do you still believe them today? How have these messages shaped the way you take (or avoid) risks now?

Reflect: *What risk-related messages do I want to keep? Which do I want to unlearn?*

2. INFLUENCE CIRCLES: *Fill into the circles below, from closest to further away, which people (partners, friends, teachers, etc.) and structures (community, family, religion, etc.) shape your risk decisions*



3. HARM REDUCTION METHODS I KNOW (AND USE): *Check all that feel relevant, add your own*

PHYSICAL

- ☐ *Learn about anatomy (nerve pathways, circulation, joint strain)*
- ☐ *Communicate pre-existing injuries or health conditions*
- ☐ *Stretch and warm up before tying*
- ☐ *Check ropes, carabiners, and hardpoints for safety*
- ☐ *Keep safety shears or a hook knife within reach*
- ☐ *Start with floor work before suspension*
- ☐ *Perform frequent nerve and circulation checks*
- ☐ *Avoid high-risk nerve areas (ulnar, radial, peroneal)*
- ☐ *Monitor breathing and avoid chest compression*
- ☐ *Use load-bearing hardpoints for suspension*
- ☐ *Keep ties time-limited to avoid prolonged compression*
- ☐ *Use body awareness—adjust or untie if discomfort arises*
- ☐ *Practice controlled descents in case of emergency*
- ☐ *Ask someone nearby for help or assistance*
- ☐
- ☐

EMOTIONAL

- ☐ *Set clear intentions and expectations before tying*
- ☐ *Discuss emotional triggers and personal limits*
- ☐ *Plan aftercare before the session starts*
- ☐ *Recognize signs of emotional overwhelm or dissociation*
- ☐ *Use safe words, gestures, or tapping as non-verbal safeties*
- ☐ *Check in verbally and non-verbally throughout the session*
- ☐ *Acknowledge and process emotions post-play*
- ☐ *Normalize different reactions (tears, laughter, silence, drop)*
- ☐ *Have a trusted person available for post-scene support*
- ☐ *Use breath and mindfulness techniques to stay present and process pain*
- ☐
- ☐

RELATIONAL

- ☐ *Discuss boundaries, consent, and risk levels openly*
- ☐ *Check for experience mismatches and adjust expectations*
- ☐ *Clarify power dynamics and role expectations*
- ☐ *Practice active listening and non-defensive communication*
- ☐ *Respect when a partner withdraws or changes their mind*
- ☐ *Debrief post-session to reflect on what worked and what didn't*
- ☐ *Prioritize mutual trust and respect over performance*
- ☐
- ☐

4. VALUES-BASED RISK TAKING

What are your core values, which risks align with them or go against them.

__Reflect:__ How does it __feel__ to take risks that don't align with your values?

Consent, Communication & Risk

1 CONSENT PHRASES MATCH-UP: *Match up the consent phrase with the appropriate potential scenario.*

Scenarios	***Phrases***
You're feeling emotionally vulnerable and need verbal or physical reassurance.	*"Can you explain more about how this will work?"*
You're not sure how you feel about the dynamic shift in the scene and want to tune into your emotions.	*"I'd like to slow things down."*
The current position isn't working for your body, and you'd like to find another option.	*"I need a moment to check in with myself."*
You've hit a limit and need to stop the scene immediately.	*"Let's pause for a second."*
A rope is pressing in an uncomfortable way, and you want to make small changes without stopping completely.	*"That's too much for me. Please respect my boundaries or I'll need to stop"*
You're being asked to try a new tie that you've never done before, and you're unsure about the physical risks.	*"I could use some reassurance right now."*
Your partner keeps pushing a boundary you've already stated, and you need to reinforce it.	*"This isn't working for me. Let's stop."*
Something feels physically off, and you're unsure if it's discomfort or actual pain.	*"Can we try a different approach?"*
Someone suggests an intense rope position, and you don't want to decide on the spot.	*"I need time to think before I decide."*
The pace of the scene feels too fast, and you need to feel more in control.	*"Something feels off—can we adjust this?"*

Reflect: *do you feel at ease using this language?*

2. WHO HOLDS MY SAFETY NET?

Make a list of resources that support you when you take risks. (people, communities, etc.)
How do they help you feel safer? Are there gaps in your safety net?

Reflect: *Have there been times when you took a risk without support? What happened?*

THE S.C.A.N. TECHNIQUE:
Embodied Awareness to Assess Risk in the moment.
This technique is a practical way to develop an inner gaze and increase internal awarenes.



Use this embodied awarenes, to check in with yourself and with a partner before and during play, to explore risks preparedness.

SAFETY

PHYSICAL

"AM I/ARE WE PHYSICALLY SAFE TO ENGAGE IN THIS RIGHT NOW?"

Check yourself for physical well-being:

- *Do I have any injuries, pain, or physical limitations?*
- *Am I feeling physically okay to engage?*
- *Do I understand the risks of the ties I'm using?*

Check the environment:

- *Is the space safe, comfortable, and free from hazards?*
- *is the equipment in good condition?*
- *Do I have a cutting tool within reach?*

Embodied Awareness

Close your eyes and do a quick body scan:

- **Where do you feel tension or tightness? Where do you feel relaxed or open?**
- **Are you holding nervous energy in your shoulders, stomach, jaw? anywhere else?**

COMFORT

EMOTIONAL & RELATIONAL

"HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT PLAYING TOGETHER?"

Relational Check-in:

- *Do I feel safe and connected with my partner(s)?*
- *Do I trust that we can stop and adjust as needed?*
- *Are there any power dynamics, past experiences, or social factors affecting how I feel?*

Emotional Check-in:

- *What emotional state am I bringing into this session?*
- *Am I feeling excited, nervous, unsure, overwhelmed?*
- *Is there anything I need to communicate before we begin?*

Embodied Awareness

Notice where in your body you feel ease, excitement, or tension:

- **Does your breath feel deep and steady, or shallow and fast?**
- **If discomfort arises, does it feel more like hesitation or like a *boundary?***

Agreement

HAVE WE AGREED? DO I KNOW WHAT'S COMING?

"IS OUR CONSENT CLEAR AND INFORMED?"

Check Communication Plan:

- *Have we agreed on safe words or nonverbal signals?*
- *Do I know how we'll check in during the scene?*
- *Are we aligned on what kind of experience we want to have? (Playful, meditative, intense, sensual, etc.)*

Clarify Consent & Boundaries:

- *Have we discussed limits and boundaries for this session?*
- *Do I fully understand what is planned? (Positioning, intensity, timing, etc.)*
- *Do I feel free to say yes, no, or change my mind?*

Embodied Awareness

When I think about what we've planned:

- **Does my body feel soft and open or tight and guarded?**
- **Do I feel in control of my choices?**
- **Is there hesitation in my chest, stomach, or throat?**
- **If I feel unsure, what would help me feel more aligned with my decision?**

Next Steps

ARE WE PREPARED IF SOMETHING HAPPENS?

"DO WE HAVE A PLAN FOR ADJUSTMENTS, SAFETY, AND AFTERCARE?"

Prepare for Changes:

- *If something goes wrong (physical discomfort, emotional overwhelm, scene isn't working), do we have a plan?*
- *Have we discussed potential risks and responses?*

Plan for Aftercare:

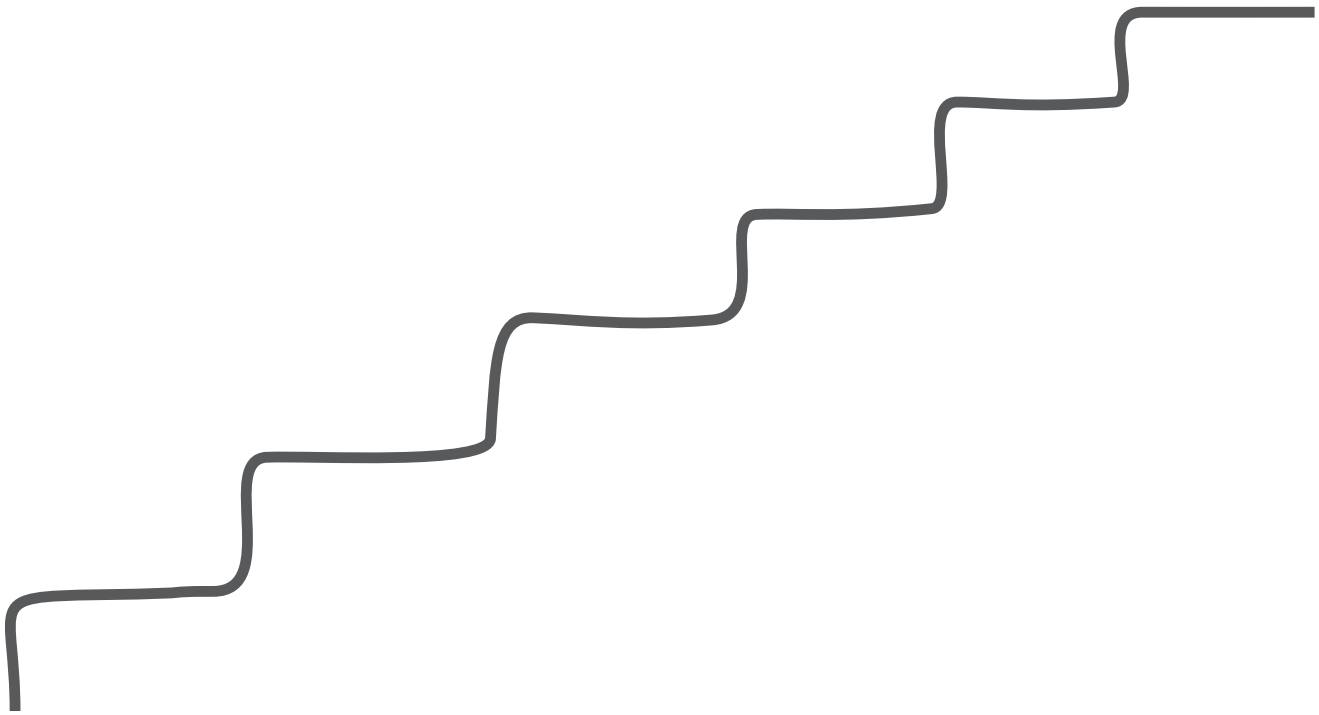
- *What do I need after this session to feel grounded?*
- *Have we communicated what aftercare will look like?*
- *Do I have time and space to decompress afterward?*

Embodied Awarenes

Imagine the scene ending:

- **Where do you feel relief, satisfaction, or need for more care in your body?**
- **What will your nervous system need to come back to baseline? (Touch, quiet, food, movement?)**

3. RISK STAIRS: *Identify the smallest risk you feel comfortable with and the biggest one you dream of taking, place them on either side of the stairs bellow and fill in the intermediate steps between them.*



4. TAKING ACTION

What risks are you working towards? What kind of support or skill do you need in order to feel comfortable taking them?

Reflect: *Who do I trust to help me asses risks? How does it feel to take risks that Im not yet confident about?*

THE S.H.I.T. TECHNIQUE

Risk is about probability, meaning it's important to be ready for the moment when things go wrong. This technique is a road map for moments of crisis. Use the questions under each section to reflect about your habits and plans.



If working alone, use the following prompts to reflect on your personal emergency response tendencies and areas to improve. If working with a partner, discuss how you can support each other in distressing moments and reflect - which of these steps is the hardest for you? Why?

Support

WHO DO I TURN TO? HOW DO I GROUND MYSELF?

THE FIRST STEP IN A CHALLENGE IS KNOWING WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT—INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY. WHILE IT CAN BE CHALLENGING TO STAY IN CONTACT WITH A PARTNER WHEN UNEXPECTED CRISIS OR RUPTURE OCCURS, THIS IS HOW WE BUILD TRUST AND FEEL MOST EMPOWERED.

Internal Support:

- *What helps me stay present and focused in distressing situations?*
- *What self-regulation tools do I have? (Breathwork, grounding, sensory tools?)*
- *Where in my body do I hold stress when I'm overwhelmed? What can I use to ease it?*

External Support:

- *Do I feel comfortable staying with my partner when we've encountered a crisis?*
- *How can I find emotional resources to turn towards my partner and not away from them?*
- *If I'm at an event, who are the designated safety people?*

Hibernate *in Community*

DO I NEED TO HALT ACTIVITY AND PROCESS?

SOMETIMES THE BEST RESPONSE IS TO PAUSE, FIND QUIET, AND ALLOW THE NERVOUS SYSTEM TO SETTLE. THIS IS NOT ABOUT ISOLATING IN SHAME, BUT OF TAKING A STEP BACK TO PROCESS AND INTEGRATE WHILE STAYING IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

Recognizing When to Hibernate:

- *Can I allow myself to take a break after something stressful happens?*
- *Do I tend to override my own needs by jumping into problem-solving?*
- *Can I pause and process first?*

Building a Hibernation Plan:

- *Where are safe spaces I can go if I need a break or advice?*
- *Who are my safe people to talk to after something goes wrong?*

INITIATE CARE

DO I NEED PROFESSIONAL HELP?

SOME SITUATIONS REQUIRE OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL OR MEDICAL ATTENTION. KNOWING WHEN TO SEEK IT IS KEY.

Recognizing Medical Emergencies:

- *Do I know how to tell the difference between drop vs. a serious medical event?*
- *Do I trust myself and my partner to acknowledge when treatment is necessary?*

Creating an Emergency Plan:

- *Where is the nearest hospital, urgent care, or first-aid kit when I play?*
- *Do i Have a doctor, psychotherapist, or other care professionals that i trust?*
- *If I needed medical help, would I feel comfortable calling for it? If not, what are my concerns?*

TAKE TIME

WHAT DOES RECOVERY LOOK LIKE?

HEALING TAKES TIME— PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND RELATIONALLY. RUSHING THROUGH RECOVERY CAN CREATE MORE HARM AND DISCONNECTION.

Understanding Emotional Drop:

- *Do I experience a drop after intense play? If so, how does it feel?*
- *How long does it usually take for me to feel regulated again?*
- *If I have physical injuries, how long have I been recommended to avoid activity?*

Building a Recovery Plan:

- *What kind of supportive messages do I need to hear when I'm recovering?*
- *Do I need a check-in from my play partner after a few hours/days?*
- *What self-care tools help me process and integrate difficult experiences?*
- *How do I make space for grieving or recalibrating after an unexpected event?*
- *What can help my patience in the process?*

5. SUPPORT PHRASES MATCH-UP: *Connect the scenario with the support action or phrase. More than one answer may feel right—go with what resonates for you, or add your own*

Scenarios	***Phrases***
I said a safe word and I'm feeling a bit shaky or unsure what I need next.	*"You're not alone. I've got you."*
I got overwhelmed during the tie and I'm trying not to cry.	*Offering a warm blanket or sitting nearby in silence.*
I started to dissociate and feel too floaty or far away from my body.	*Placing a hand gently on their back, breathing together.*
I hit an unexpected emotional edge and need help grounding again.	*"Would you like me to stay close or give you some space?"*
The scene stopped, and now I'm feeling guilt, shame, or like I disappointed someone.	*"I noticed your breath changed—want to pause and check in?"*
I'm having trouble asking for help but I know I need something.	*Making gentle eye contact and asking, "Are you okay in there?"*
I'm still in the tie but I need a moment of connection or comfort.	*"You didn't do anything wrong. You are taking care of yourself."*
I don't stop the session, but I feel unsure and in my head. Feeling out of connecting I could use a gentle check-in.	*Asking, "What would feel good right now? I have some ideas if you're not sure."*
I'm cold, disoriented, or physically uncomfortable after untying, feeling unsure emotionally or relationally.	*Offering water, snacks, and grounding through small tasks like looking around and naming objects one senses.*
I need care but it feels too intense to be touched right now	*"It's okay to feel whatever's coming up. I'm here."*
-	-
-	-

Reflect: *Which support phrases felt natural to you? Which ones would you want someone to say or do for you? How can you make it easier for partners to ask for support in future scenes? What would help make it easier for you to ask for help?*

Self-Regulation & Co-Regulation

HOW WE HELP OURSELVES SETTLE. HOW WE LET OTHERS HELP TOO.

You've probably already done both, maybe you slowed your breath during stress, or maybe a friend held your hand and everything softened. Sometimes, it's hard to do one without the other. Sometimes, presence, yours or someone else's, is enough.

These skills are an invitation to feel into, not just think about.
Give it a try.

NERVOUS SYSTEM REGULATION TOOLKIT: *Put a dot next to things that help you self-regulate. Put a star next to things that help you co-regulate. Some might be both. That's great too.*

- ☐ *Deep, slow breathing*
- ☐ *Blanket or warm object*
- ☐ *Eye contact with someone you trust*
- ☐ *Rocking or gentle swaying*
- ☐ *Humming, singing, or repeating a soothing phrase*
- ☐ *Having someone nearby just breathing with you*
- ☐ *Naming 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste*
- ☐ *Being held or touched gently (with consent)*
- ☐ *Squeezing a soft object or pushing against a wall*
- ☐ *Hearing someone say "You're okay. I'm right here."*
- ☐ *Saying "I need a moment" and getting quiet*
- ☐ *Talking it out with someone who can hold space without judgement*
- ☐ *Putting your feet on the floor and feeling gravity*
- ☐ *Laughing, crying, shaking—releasing intense emotions physically*
- ☐ *Smelling something grounding (essential oils, familiar scents)*

TRY IT NOW (JUST 5 MINUTES): *Take a moment to pick one thing from the list. Try it. See what changes.*

THEN TRY A SECOND: *Choose one you think helps with co-regulation. Imagine or invite someone to do it with you. You don't need to talk or analyze, just notice.*

Reflect: *What kind of presence from another person helps you feel most safe?*

Final reflections

WHAT I'M TAKING WITH ME: *A soft landing. A pocket of insight. A box of tools.*
This space is for anything you want to carry forward. Things you've felt, realized, or want to practice more. There's no need to make it complete: This is just a place to gather what feels important right now.

A realization or moment of awareness I want to remember

A risk I'm ready to take

A way to ask for what I need

A limit I feel comfortable about

A technique I want to keep practicing

A boundary that feels strong and clear

Support I know I can ask for

A truth about myself that feels more alive now

THANK YOURSELF FOR HOLDING
YOURSELF WITH KINDNESS.

CARRY WHAT *MOVED YOU.*

LET IT KEEP *UNFOLDING.*

Have some feedback for us?
Get in touch korberlin@gmail.com
Made in collaboration:

KOR berlin

SHIBARI STUDY

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