



WHOLISTIC TRANS4MATIONS

A GUIDED SELF-REFLECTION

# The High-Functioning Woman's *Survival Mode* Checklist

Because a life that looks successful can still feel exhausting to sustain.

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You do not need to become better at carrying everything. You may need to build a life that does not require you to carry everything.



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## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

# Survival mode is not always visible.

It can look like competence, reliability, productivity, and being the person everyone turns to. Underneath, it may feel like constant pressure, emotional distance, irritability, or the quiet fear that everything will fall apart if you stop.

## This checklist is for you if...

- ☐ You are functioning, but rarely feel restored.
- ☐ You are praised for strength that feels more like necessity.
- ☐ You have wondered, "Why am I exhausted when my life looks fine?"

## How to use it

- 1 Check what has felt true most days during the past month.
- 2 Notice the cluster with the most checks.
- 3 Choose one small response, not a total life overhaul.

**Be honest without being harsh.** This is not a test of how well you are coping. It is an invitation to notice what your competence may be concealing.

## A quick pause

What made you open this checklist today?

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This guide is for education and self-reflection. It is not a diagnostic tool and does not replace individualized mental health care. If you are in immediate danger or experiencing a mental health emergency in the United States, call 911 or call or text 988.



## CHECKLIST · PART 1

# What achievement may be costing you

Check each statement that has felt consistently true during the past month.

**A · THE PERFORMANCE NEVER SWITCHES OFF**

- ☐ I move from one task to the next without registering what I need.
- ☐ Rest makes me feel guilty, behind, or unproductive.
- ☐ I raise the standard as soon as I reach it.
- ☐ I stay busy because slowing down brings up feelings I do not want to face.
- ☐ I can complete a great deal and still feel as though I did not do enough.
- ☐ My sense of worth rises and falls with how useful or productive I am.

**B · YOU ARE THE ONE WHO KEEPS IT ALL MOVING**

- ☐ I notice what needs doing before anyone else does, then handle it.
- ☐ I take responsibility for other people's comfort, moods, or outcomes.
- ☐ I say yes before checking whether I have the capacity.
- ☐ Delegating feels slower, riskier, or more stressful than doing it myself.
- ☐ I feel resentful that people rely on me, but uneasy when they do not.
- ☐ I am often the strong one, yet rarely feel supported in return.

**Checks on this page:** A \_\_\_\_ / 6    B \_\_\_\_ / 6



## CHECKLIST · PART 2

# What your emotions and body may be saying

There may be no dramatic breakdown. The signal may be a steady narrowing of your emotional and physical range.

**C · YOUR INNER LIFE IS ON MUTE**

- ☐ I can explain what happened, but struggle to name what I feel.
- ☐ I minimize my own stress because someone else has it worse.
- ☐ I feel numb, irritable, impatient, or detached more often than I feel present.
- ☐ I avoid asking for help because I do not want to be a burden.
- ☐ I solve the problem before giving myself permission to feel the impact.
- ☐ I no longer know what I want beyond what needs to be done.

**D · YOUR BODY IS CARRYING THE MESSAGE**

- ☐ I feel tired even after sleeping or taking time off.
- ☐ My shoulders, jaw, stomach, or breathing stay tense without an obvious reason.
- ☐ I need stimulation, scrolling, food, work, or noise to come down at night.
- ☐ Small interruptions trigger a reaction that feels bigger than the moment.
- ☐ I postpone basic needs until the work is finished, then the work is never finished.
- ☐ Even during calm moments, part of me is scanning for the next problem.

Checks on this page: C \_\_\_\_ / 6   D \_\_\_\_ / 6



## READ THE PATTERN

## Your total is a signal, not a verdict.

Add your checks from all four sections. Then look beyond the number: the category with the highest count is often the most useful place to begin.



### Your total out of 24

Use the ranges below as reflection prompts, not clinical cutoffs.

#### 0-5 · A few pressure points

Notice when these patterns appear. One situation, relationship, or season may be carrying more weight than the rest.

#### 6-11 · Strain is accumulating

Your coping may be working, but costing you. A small boundary or support change deserves attention now.

#### 12-17 · Survival mode is shaping daily life

Several systems may be running on overdrive. Choose support and structural change, not more self-discipline.

#### 18-24 · Your system is asking for care

The pattern may be deeply entrenched. Consider sharing what you noticed with a qualified professional or trusted support person.

## WHICH CLUSTER CARRIED THE MOST CHECKS?

#### A · Performance

Begin with enoughness: define what “done” means before you start.

#### B · Overfunctioning

Begin with responsibility: name what is yours and what is not.

#### C · Disconnection

Begin with feeling: pause before solving and name what is present.

#### D · Body activation

Begin with regulation: create cues of safety before demanding more.



## MAP THE CYCLE

# Overfunctioning follows a loop you can interrupt.

Choose one recent moment when you took on too much, pushed past your limit, or withheld what you needed. Describe what actually happened, not what you think should have happened.

## 1 · Trigger

What happened?

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## 2 · Belief

What did you tell yourself?

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## 4 · Cost

What did it cost you?

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## 3 · Response

What did you do automatically?

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## 5 · The interruption

If you believed your needs mattered too, what could you do differently next time?

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## A boundary I could state

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## A request I could make

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**A useful reframe:** "Being capable does not mean I am endlessly available."



## PRACTICAL TRANS4MATIONS

# A seven-day recalibration

Do one practice each day. Keep it small enough to complete while life is still happening.

1

**Tune in.**

Set a two-minute timer. Ask: What am I feeling? What does my body need? What matters most today?

2

**Recognize.**

Catch one automatic "I have to." Rewrite it as a choice: "I am choosing to..." or "I am not available for..."

3

**Align.**

Choose three priorities. Put one task on a "not today" list without apologizing to yourself.

4

**Navigate.**

Ask for one specific form of help. Make the request clear enough that the other person can answer yes or no.

5

**Strengthen.**

Set one low-stakes boundary: delay a response, shorten a commitment, or say, "I need to check my capacity first."

6

**Move forward.**

Spend 20 minutes doing something restorative that has no productive outcome.

7

**Integrate.**

Review the week. What created relief? What triggered guilt? What deserves to continue?

## My one sustainable change

For the next two weeks, I will...

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Signature

Date



YOUR NEXT STEP

## Build a life that does not require you to carry everything.

Awareness matters when it changes what you permit, request, protect, and release. You do not need to prove that you are struggling enough to deserve support.

### Continue on your own

Repeat the checklist in 30 days. Compare your cluster scores and notice whether your chosen change reduced strain in daily life.

### Continue with support

Explore therapy, coaching, practical resources, and upcoming educational offerings from Wholistic Trans4mations.

Visit [wholistictrans4mations.com](https://wholistictrans4mations.com)

### Keep this sentence visible

**“Rest is not a reward for reaching the end of a list that never ends.”**

What would become possible if I stopped treating my capacity as unlimited?

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