

# # PEPPER TIME 15: HOLD YOUR INNER CHILD

**Timing:** 5–10 minutes, whenever strong emotions rise.

**What you'll need:** Quiet space, imagination, and the willingness to soften.

**What it's about:** Meeting your emotions with tenderness instead of judgment—by picturing them as the feelings of a child who simply needs care.

**How to do it:**

1. Picture a child in pain. Close your eyes and imagine a six-year-old who has fallen and scraped her knee. She is crying, maybe even screaming. Do you scold her? Tell her she's overreacting? Or do you kneel, hold her, and whisper that it's okay to cry—that she is safe and loved.
2. Recognize the truth. Every time you feel overwhelmed, angry, sad, or lost, that child is you. Your emotions are not weaknesses to discipline; they are signals asking for care.
3. Hold your own emotions. Breathe with them. Whisper comfort to yourself: "I see you. I hear you. It's okay to feel this."
4. Extend the practice outward. When someone shows you raw emotion, create safety for them to feel without shutting down. Don't judge—if you had walked their path, you might feel the same. Offer empathy: Respond as you would want someone to respond to you in your most vulnerable state.

**What to expect:** At first this may feel awkward or "soft." Stay with it. Over time you'll notice storms inside you passing more quickly when you meet them with compassion instead of resistance. And when the masks drop—yours and others'—you'll discover the joy of true connection. Not polite small talk, but real human intimacy. The kind that can feel as powerful and electric as the best physical closeness—without needing touch at all.

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