SYMPATHETIC — Release & Discharge

BUTTERFLY HUG

Bilateral stimulation calms a charged amygdala.

BLOOMING from Within

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Why this practice

The butterfly hug uses bilateral stimulation — alternating left-right tapping across the body's midline — the same mechanism used in EMDR therapy to process distress. When the amygdala is highly activated — when we are flooded with emotion or struggling to regulate — bilateral stimulation directly calms the threat-detection centre and supports the brain's natural processing capacity. This is a practice you can do anywhere, at any time, without anyone knowing. It looks like a self-hug. It functions like a neurological reset.

→ *See also: Chapter Three: Supporting Yourself / Chapter Six: Working with Big Feelings*

How to practise

1. Cross both arms over your chest, hands resting on the shoulders.
2. Begin tapping alternately — left hand, then right hand — at a slow, steady rhythm.
3. The movement is gentle. Simply the alternating touch.
4. Continue for 1–2 minutes, or until you feel a shift.

Best used: *After distressing information or a difficult conversation. When emotions feel overwhelming. In the waiting room before appointments.*

What you might notice

A gradual calming of emotional intensity. A sense of the body containing what the mind was struggling to hold. The thoughts that were looping begin to lose their grip.

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