

Soul Recognition or Trauma Bond?

A grounded discernment worksheet for deep connections

This worksheet is designed to help you slow down, come back into your body, and gently discern what may actually be happening beneath a powerful connection. It is not here to tell you what is true. It is here to help you listen to yourself more clearly.

This is an educational self-reflection tool, not mental health advice. If you are in distress, please seek professional support.

1. Grounding Before You Begin

Before answering anything, pause. Place your feet on the floor. Take five slow breaths. Let your shoulders drop. Feel where your body is supported.

- What do I notice in my body right now?
- Where am I holding tension?
- What emotion is most present?
- What would help my nervous system feel 5% safer?

2. Body Awareness: What is my nervous system doing?

Trauma bonds are usually charged. Soul recognition is usually settling. Let the body speak before the story.

- When I think about this person, what happens in my body?
- Do I feel more settled, or more activated?
- What happens in my body when I imagine distance from them?
- What happens in my body when I imagine closeness?
- Do I feel present, or preoccupied?

3. Mind & Narrative: What story am I telling?

The mind is powerful. It builds meaning to protect us from uncertainty, pain, and loss. This section gently separates story from sensation.

- What meaning have I given this connection?
- What am I afraid would be true if this connection didn't mean something special?
- What am I hoping this person or connection will resolve for me?
- What parts of my past does this remind me of?
- If I removed the story, what is actually happening?

4. Pattern Recognition: What does this resemble?

Strong connections often plug into old emotional roles and nervous-system patterns.

- What past relationships felt like this?
- Did those relationships feel safe or consuming?
- What role do I usually play when I feel like this?
- What usually happens next in these patterns?
- What part of me feels activated here?

5. Discernment: What is actually here?

Recognition does not equal alignment. This section anchors you in grounded reality.

- Are we emotionally available?
- Are values and life direction aligned?
- Do I feel more myself, or less myself, around them?
- Is there mutual clarity, respect, and responsibility?
- Would I choose this connection without intensity?

6. Integration: What is this teaching me?

Not every meaningful encounter is meant to become a relationship. Some are mirrors. Some are messages. Some are moments.

- What has this connection shown me about myself?
- What is it inviting me to heal, strengthen, or release?
- What would self-respect choose right now?
- What does my nervous system actually need?
- What feels like the most grounded next step?

Closing Reflection

You don't need to label an experience to honour it. You don't need to force meaning onto something for it to matter. Sometimes clarity isn't about defining a connection — it's about returning to yourself.

— The Inner Growth Path