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# Communication & Capacity Support Tool

How to Practice Offering Support while also  
Honoring Your Capacity and Boundaries



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CREATED WITH LOVE BY  
JASMIN ARIEL

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## INTENTIONS & FOUNDATION

Thank you for inviting this resource into your practice. I created this tool to support you in cultivating healthier communication practices with the people you care about.<sup>1</sup> The sample responses included in this toolkit are designed for you to adapt and adopt, helping you to assess your capacity to hold space for others, while ensuring you are showing up for yourself with the same level of care.

**Remember: you must put on your own mask first before offering help to others.**

Self-care is also community care and healthy boundary setting is an essential part of that practice. **Boundaries offer protection, outline expectations and identify the strengths and limitations of a relationship. Ultimately, boundaries teach us how to love one another better.**

Before you consent to being a sounding board for a loved one:

- **Check-in** with yourself,
- **Consider** your current capacity level and
- **Communicate** your needs using the responses outlined in this kit to ensure a balanced exchange while you're attending to the needs of those you care about.

I hope these practices bring a deeper sense of ease and clarity to your connections.

♥ *Jasmin*

*Let's get into it...*

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<sup>1</sup> - The people you care about can include your child, partner, neighbor, sibling, friend, etc.



## THE CONTEXT & INITIAL RESPONSE:

### The Scenario (The Context):

A loved one initiates an impromptu vent or an emotional 'dump' session (perhaps via phone call or an unexpected face-to-face disclosure). You now find yourself being an **unwilling witness** to a heavy release before you've had a chance to catch your breath. **You want to offer support, but you also need to protect your own peace.**

### The Initial Response: Emotional First Aid

Think of this as **Mental Health First Aid**. This initial response allows you to effectively **stabilize the situation and demonstrate care** for your loved one without overextending yourself. By using these four pillars, you fulfill the **"bare minimum"** of support, ensuring they feel seen while you create the space necessary to check in with your own capacity.



1. **VALIDATE:** Briefly acknowledge that their perspective and feelings are heard and valued.

- *"I hear what you're saying."*
- *"I understand where you're coming from."*
- *"Your perspective is (or your feelings are) absolutely valid."*



2. **EMPATHIZE OR EXTEND SYMPATHIES:** Share a moment of empathy. Recognize the difficulty of their situation to show you are present.

- *"I'm sorry you're dealing with [insert specific challenge]; that sounds incredibly difficult."*



3. **THANK:** Offer gratitude. Acknowledge the trust they placed in you by being vulnerable.

- *"Thank you for opening up to me."*
- *"Thank you for trusting me with your vulnerability."*



4. **AFFIRM:** Provide affirmation. Note the courage it took for them to share, helping to diffuse the immediate intensity.

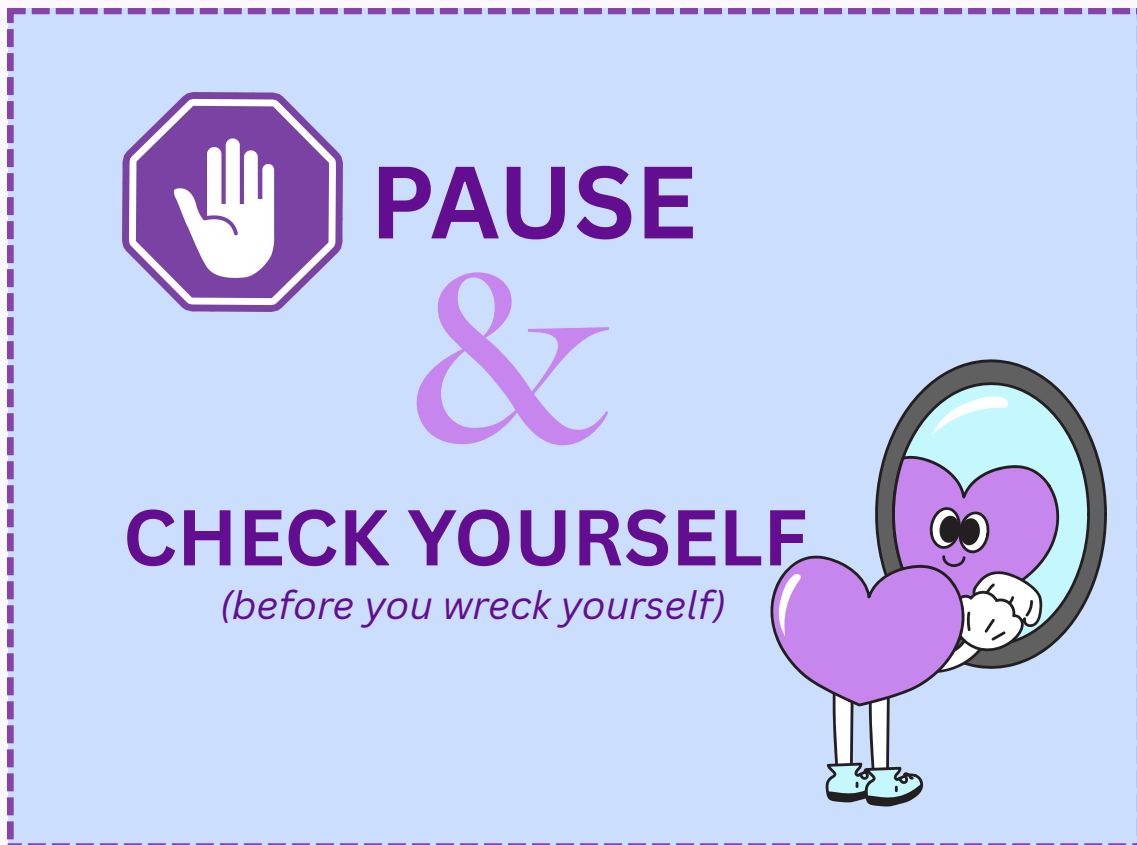
- *"I know that wasn't the easiest to share/talk about."*
- *"I'm proud of you for being brave/courageous."*
- *"It took guts opening up like that. I hope talking about this helped release some of the heaviness."*
- *"Do you feel a little better now that you got that out?"*



## THE EMOTIONAL TOURNIQUET

### Note on the "Bare Minimum":

Providing the 'bare minimum' is not about doing the least; it's about providing an **Emotional Tourniquet**: stopping the immediate 'bleeding' and stabilizing your loved one so that you, the responder, can step back, assess the scene, and determine if you actually have the 'medical supplies' (capacity) to perform the full surgery of an extended support session.



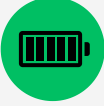
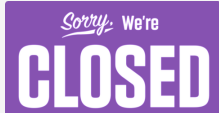
Now that you've tended to the emergency of your loved one's wounds, **take a moment to pause and check in with yourself** before continuing on with additional care.

[CLICK FOR BREATHING EXERCISE MEDITATION](#)



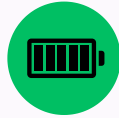


## SELF-CAPACITY CHECK-IN

| WHAT'S YOUR CAPACITY LEVEL?                                                                                           | HOW DOES IT FEEL?<br>WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN ACTION?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | HOW ARE YOU SHOWING UP RIGHT NOW?                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>ABUNDANT CAPACITY</p>             | <p><b>It feels like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are grounded, centered and steady</li> </ul> <p><b>In action it looks like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being generous, gracious, open, attentive</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><i>"I am steady and available to receive."</i></p>                     |
| <p>LIMITED CAPACITY</p>            | <p><b>It feels like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are drained, overwhelmed, or anxious</li> <li>You are resentful, annoyed, frustrated, impatient or irritated (in general &amp;/or with the person speaking)</li> </ul> <p><b>In action it looks like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having limited time, being busy, or distracted,</li> <li>Currently experiencing pain (physically/emotionally/mentally)</li> </ul> | <p><i>"I am at my bare minimum and need to protect my energy."</i></p>  |
| <p>ZERO CAPACITY / ZERO SCOPE</p>  | <p><b>It feels like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A complete lack of bandwidth</li> <li>You're concerned/afraid for your loved one's safety</li> </ul> <p><b>In action it looks like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Withdrawal or shutdown</li> <li>The situation or subjects discussed extend beyond your current expertise or emotional ability</li> </ul>                                                                | <p><i>"I am currently unavailable or this is beyond my scope."</i></p>  |



# ABUNDANT CAPACITY: THE ART OF HOLDING SPACE



When you are feeling grounded and steady, you have the surplus needed to truly **receive** another person's experience. Use these responses to navigate that connection with intentionality.

## Responses for Abundant Capacity: (when you're grounded & steady)



1. **PRACTICE DEEP LISTENING:** Be present and listen without judgement or interruption.



2. **SUMMARIZE & VALIDATE:**
  - "What I'm hearing is...**[paraphrase what was shared]**. Do I have that right?"



3. **IDENTIFY THE NEED:**
  - "What is it that you need from me at this moment?"
  - "How can I best support you right now?"
  - "Do you need me to simply listen, offer affirmation, or help brainstorm a resolution?"\*



4. **OFFER SPECIFIC GIFTS:**
  - "I am happy to **[insert action i.e: share a meal, offer a hug, pray/meditate]** with you."



5. **SET YOUR PARAMETERS:**
  - "I have the capacity to support you in **[this way]**, but I don't have the bandwidth for **[specific action]** right now."
  - "I have the capacity to listen and talk through this with you for about **[specify time i.e: 30 minutes]**, but then I have to transition to **[specify action i.e.: work/my session/rest]**."
  - "I am fully here to hold space for your feelings, but I'm not in a place to offer advice or 'Tough' feedback today, I can only offer 'Fluff' and a listening ear."

**\*NOTE:** If your loved one doesn't know **how to respond** or is **unsure of their needs**, then you can offer suggestions for them to consider.



# CONSTRUCTIVE COMPASSIONATE FEEDBACK

## Responses for Abundant Capacity (continued)



When it comes to giving advice you can offer "tough or fluff" options:



### TOUGH

= **constructive love;**  
**may be challenging to**  
**hear/receive but it does**  
**NOT play devil's**  
**advocate nor is it tough**  
**for the sake of being**  
**tough**

"I know this may be hard to  
hear but have you considered  
**[insert alternate  
perspective]**?"

"What if you...?"

"You might want to..."

"I would suggest..."



### FLUFF

= **UNWAVERING**  
**SUPPORT**

"You're right."

"You deserve better."

"I completely agree."

"I'm completely in your corner."

"So and so is crazy."

"That situation was  
wild."



Tough or fluff doesn't have to be either or. It can be **fluff then tough**, or **tough then fluff**. Be sure to **set the parameters and expectations** prior to dispensing advice so that each party understands the possible impact and results of advice giving and receiving.



## LIMITED CAPACITY: THE ART OF PRESERVATION



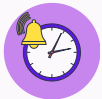
When your energy is low or your focus is fragmented, you can still offer support without overextending. Use these responses to communicate your boundaries with kindness and clarity.

### Responses for Limited Capacity : (when you're prioritizing your peace)



#### 1. **THE COMPASSIONATE RAINCHECK:**

- "I really want to give you the attention you deserve, but I don't have the mental space to be fully present right now. Can we check in **[insert specific time/day]** instead?"



#### 2. **THE TIME-BOXED VENT:**

- "I have about **[insert specific time i.e: 10 minutes]** before I need to unplug for my own rest. I'm happy to listen until then if that helps?"



#### 3. **THE LOW-ENERGY PIVOT:**

- "I hear that you're struggling, and I'm in your corner. I can't process the details with you right now, but I can **[specify action i.e: offer a hug / send you a meal / sit in silence with you]**."



#### 4. **THE "PASSIVE PRESENCE" ONLY:**

- "I'm feeling pretty frayed, so I'm not in a place to process or offer feedback right now. I can sit here with you while we watch a show or just be in the same room, but I need to keep things low-energy for my own peace of mind."

### **SELF-PRESERVATION NOTE:**

In the **YELLOW** zone, your goal is to stay steady.

It is okay to offer **partial support**. Being honest about your limited capacity actually builds more trust than overextending and becoming resentful later.

**You are honoring the relationship by honoring your limits.**



## LIMITED CAPACITY BREAK & RETURN



### Responses for returning to support: (after a limited capacity break)

True support is only possible when we return to the table with a **full container**. Use these prompts to bridge the gap between your period of rest and your return to attentive presence.



- *"Unfortunately, I couldn't be there when you needed me; however, I am fully present and want to be here with you now."*
- *"How are you feeling?"*
- *"How can I best support you in this moment? What is the most nourishing thing I can provide right now?"*

Notice that **none** of these responses require an apology for your absence. By returning with **clarity and curiosity**, you are honoring both your own rhythm and the dignity of the person you are supporting.



***Rest is a healing portal to our deepest selves.***

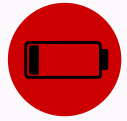
***Rest is care. Rest is radical.***

*We must stand and lay firmly in the space of creating a life filled with rest and radical care...*

**- Tricia Hersey**



## ZERO CAPACITY: THE SACRED REFUSAL



When your container is empty, the most restorative thing you can do for your community is to honor your need to **retreat inward**. These responses are not a withdrawal from love, but a necessary hibernation and protection mechanism that allows you to recalibrate and restore in private so you can eventually return to the collective as a sound and stable presence.

Use these to protect your peace without severing your connection.

### Responses for Zero Capacity (when you're unavailable):



#### 1. THE RESOURCEFUL REDIRECTION:

- *"I love you/really care about you deeply, but I currently do not have the capacity/bandwidth to hold space for this. Is there a professional resource or another friend that can provide support in the meantime?"*
- *"I need to prioritize/protect my mental health right now. I will reach out when I am able/when I feel more stable."*



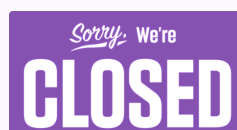
#### 2. THE HARD RESET:

- *"I have reached my absolute limit for the day and need to go offline/dark to recover. I'll reach out when I have greater capacity."*
- *"I'm unable to engage or process anything further until I've properly rested."*
- *"I'll let you know when I'm restored and ready to reengage."*



#### 3. THE DND - EMERGENCY ONLY - BOUNDARY:

- *"Unless this is a life-safety emergency, I am unavailable to respond or show up right now. Please take care of yourself until I am able to return."*





### Responses for Zero Scope:



Use this when you have the heart to help, but the issue requires a level of expertise or objectivity you cannot provide. This honors both your boundary and their need for real solutions.

- **THE PROFESSIONAL BRIDGE:** *"I love you/really care about you and I want you to have the best support possible, but I'm not the right person to help you untangle this **[specific challenge]**."*
  - *"I believe a professional (like a therapist or coach) could offer the dedicated support and care you deserve right now."*
  - *"I recommend seeking professional mental health support (like therapy) to help you process and move through **[insert challenge(s)]**."*

#### OPTIONAL OFFER:

- *"If it helps, I can Body Double with you on a video call while you search for providers, or we can spend an hour next **[Insert Day]** looking at resources together."*

**NOTE: Only commit to the Body Double or research offers if you have the space to follow through.**

### Additional Resource Directory (Expanding the Network of Care)



Recognizing when a situation is outside your scope is an act of deep integrity. To support you in providing the best redirection, please refer to the [P3 Resources](#) (Peace Section).

There, you will find curated links for:

- Mental health support specifically for marginalized communities.
- Accessible therapy options for those with limited financial means.
- Crisis support and specialized coaching networks.

**Remember:** Providing the right resource can be just as impactful as providing direct support.



# A SHARED LANGUAGE FOR WELLBEING

## Community Care Codes & Essential Support Signals

**Effective communication is the cornerstone of any sturdy relationship**, yet finding the right words in the heat of an emotional spiral can be a monumental task. The Community Care Codes and Essential Support Signals serve as a shorthand for your SOUL<sup>2</sup>, bypassing the density of language to get straight to the heart of what you need.

The **Codes** allow you to communicate your internal weather (mood) patterns, while the **Signals** express the specific support you require (or desire) without the labor of over-explanation. Use them to provide your community with the blueprints they need to love you well, and offer them the grace to evolve.

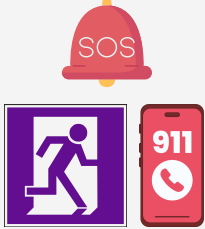
### 1. The Community Care Codes

| THE INTERNAL VIBE & VOLATILITY MAP |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THE INTENSITY                      | THE VIBE                                                                            | THE INTERNAL STATUS & PROTOCOL                                                                                                                                                                                        | THE VOLATILITY                                                                                             |
| LEVEL 1                            |  | <b>STATUS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good, grounded, stable, and open.</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proceed as usual.</li> </ul>                                 | <br>clear skies       |
| LEVEL 2                            |  | <b>STATUS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotionally activated or simmering.</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proceed with caution, patience, and gentleness.</li> </ul> | <br>approaching storm |

2 - SOUL = Source of Unconditional Love



## COMMUNITY CARE CODES (Continued)

| THE INTERNAL VIBE & VOLATILITY MAP |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THE INTENSITY                      | THE VIBE                                                                            | THE INTERNAL STATUS & PROTOCOL                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | THE VOLATILITY                                                                                                           |
| LEVEL 3                            |    | <b>STATUS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant distress; emotionally overwhelmed.</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not fit for external company. Space required for recovery.</li> </ul>                 |  <p>flash flood<br/>/heavy storm</p> |
| LEVEL 4                            |  | <b>STATUS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-intensity emotional turbulence, deep spiral, internal void.</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate support required. Prepare grounding protocols.</li> </ul> |  <p>Cyclone</p>                     |
| LEVEL 5                            |  | <b>STATUS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extreme crisis or total overwhelm.</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate need for a sound and stable presence or total evacuation from the trigger.</li> </ul>   |  <p>Emergency Evacuation</p>        |



## ESSENTIAL SUPPORT SIGNALS

| THE SIGNAL                                                                                               | THE DIRECTIVE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ADVANCE</b><br>      | <p>I AM READY FOR SOLUTIONS AND LOOKING FOR THE WAY FORWARD.</p> <p><b>In Action:</b> "I'm feeling stuck, but I'm ready to move. Can we brainstorm three small steps I can take tomorrow?"</p> <p><b>The Result:</b> Your community offers active problem-solving and motivation without overstepping.</p>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>RETREAT</b><br>      | <p>I'M IN HIBERNATION.<br/>I NEED SPACE TO PROCESS AND DECOMPRESS IN PRIVATE.</p> <p><b>In Action:</b> "I'm in a heavy headspace and need to go into Retreat for the next few hours. I'll check back in when I've had some solo time."</p> <p><b>The Result:</b> Your loved ones honor your boundaries by giving you total privacy, knowing your silence isn't a reflection of the relationship.</p>                                                                             |
| <b>REINFORCE:</b><br> | <p>I AM IN NEED OF CONSOLATION, SHARING, AND A SECURE SPACE FOR SOLIDARITY.<br/>I AM RECEPTIVE TO AFFIRMATION AND OFFERS OF SUPPORT.</p> <p><b>In Action:</b> "I'm struggling and need to feel Reinforced. Could you just sit with me while I vent, or maybe bring over some takeout so I don't have to think about dinner?"</p> <p><b>The Result:</b> Your community provides soft support and practical care, creating a safety net that allows you to feel seen and held.</p> |

### **\*\*MY CUSTOM CODE/SIGNAL:**

(Use this space to define a personal code/signal or a specific phrase that feels most like **you** when you need to communicate your emotional status.)



# THE FOUNDATION OF FORESIGHT

## Using the Community Care Codes & Essential Support Signals

The true power of this system lies in its ability to bridge the gap between **high-capacity planning** and **low-capacity reality**.

Allow the following principles to guide your communal care as you integrate these tools into the rhythm of your daily life.

### Proactive Partnership:

It is highly recommended to communicate what your specific support needs look like for more intense states (such as **Blue**, **Gray**, or **Red**) **BEFORE** these moods arrive. Identifying your preferred "Advance," "Retreat," or "Reinforce" protocols during periods of **high capacity** allows your community to act with confidence when your capacity is low.

### The Codes in Action: A Practical Example

Communication doesn't always have to be a long conversation; sometimes, it's just a quick signal to set expectations.

| THE SCENARIO:                                                      | THE SIGNAL/CODE:                                                                                                             | THE RESULT:                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| You're heading to a loved one's home but feeling socially drained. | A simple text:<br><i>"FYI, feeling <b>Code Yellow</b> right now. Is it okay if we stay nonverbal for most of the night?"</i> | By honoring that boundary, your communication partner provides a supportive, low-pressure environment (perhaps watching a favorite movie together in silence), allowing you the mental space to eventually decompress and reconnect. |

### The Grace of Evolution:

#### Be flexible with yourself and your community.

These codes and their associated signals are not static; they may evolve as you gain further insights from each experience navigating your internal atmosphere. Offer yourself and your loved ones an abundance of grace as your shared language expands and deepens.



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# Final Alignment: A Note From Jasmin

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**The communication practices in this toolkit are the heartbeat of communal care.** They require consistent engagement and exercise to keep your relationships healthy and vibrant.

To **meaningfully embody this work**, let these principles serve as anchors for your spirit and sovereignty:

## **Honor Personal Agency & Accountability**

Everyone possesses their own sovereignty and agency, whether they are currently honoring it or not. You and your loved ones are inherently capable and competent, even when your capacities differ. **You are only responsible for managing your own internal landscape.**

## **Maintain Energetic Integrity**

While it is important to be a mindful and considerate partner, you are not the architect of anyone else's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. **Do not adopt external energies as your own**; only accept what feels in alignment for you.

## **Share the Wisdom**

Thank you for choosing to integrate this toolkit into your life. If you find this resource helpful, feel free to share these practices with others in your community to strengthen collective solidarity and deepen mutual networks of care.



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## MEET THE ARCHITECT

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### JASMIN ARIEL

**DIGITAL OPERATIONS ARCHITECT | CREATIVE  
CONSULTANT | COLLECTIVE CARE ADVOCATE**

I offer secure, SOULful systems equipped  
to hold the weight of deep mental labor.  
Whether you are looking to untangle a  
workflow or find your speaking voice,  
let's see if my magic is the right fit for  
your brilliance!

**EXPLORE THE MAGIC**



I exist to Love, Create, Heal and Teach.



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A labor of Love, Creation, Healing, and Teaching.  
Curated with intention for the collective. Designed  
for accessibility; protected for integrity. Use and  
share with care.

[www.jasminariel.com](http://www.jasminariel.com)



***Caring for myself is not self-indulgence.  
It is self-preservation and that is an act of  
political warfare.***

**- Audre Lorde**

