

*/ Regulation Arches*

*/ b y* CARRIE A. DYER

## / Regulation Arches

The Regulation Arches intervention is a trauma-informed, experiential practice designed to support nervous system regulation, embodied awareness, and internal resource development through imagery, breath, and sensory engagement. Drawing from mindfulness-based approaches (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), somatic and sensorimotor psychotherapy (Ogden et al., 2006), and polyvagal-informed perspectives on autonomic regulation (Porges, 2011), guided visualization offers a structured yet flexible pathway for individuals to access states of safety, grounding, and internal coherence.

Visualization practices engage both cognitive and sensory systems, allowing individuals to simulate experiences of calm, stability, and connection in ways that are neurologically meaningful. Research in trauma and neuroscience suggests that imagined experiences can activate similar neural pathways as lived experiences, making visualization a powerful tool for reshaping internal states and increasing emotional regulation capacity (van der Kolk, 2014). Within this framework, imagery such as the Light Stream, Belly Breathing, and Grounding Tree (as illustrated in this intervention) function as symbolic anchors that translate abstract regulatory processes into accessible, embodied experiences. This intervention is also informed by parts-based and integrative approaches, including Internal Family Systems (Schwartz, 2021), which emphasize the importance of cultivating a compassionate internal relationship with one's emotional experiences. Guided visualization can support this process by creating internal environments where protective parts may soften and the individual can access a greater sense of Self-energy, characterized by calm, clarity, and connection.

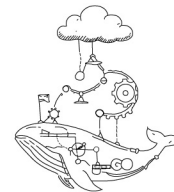
Additionally, the use of nature-based and body-centered imagery aligns with ecopsycholog-

ical and existential perspectives, which recognize the human need for grounding, meaning-making, and connection to something larger than the self. By engaging imagery that evokes light, breath, and rootedness (e.g., the tree metaphor depicted on page 5), individuals are invited into a relational experience with their own inner landscape, one that fosters resilience, safety, and integration.

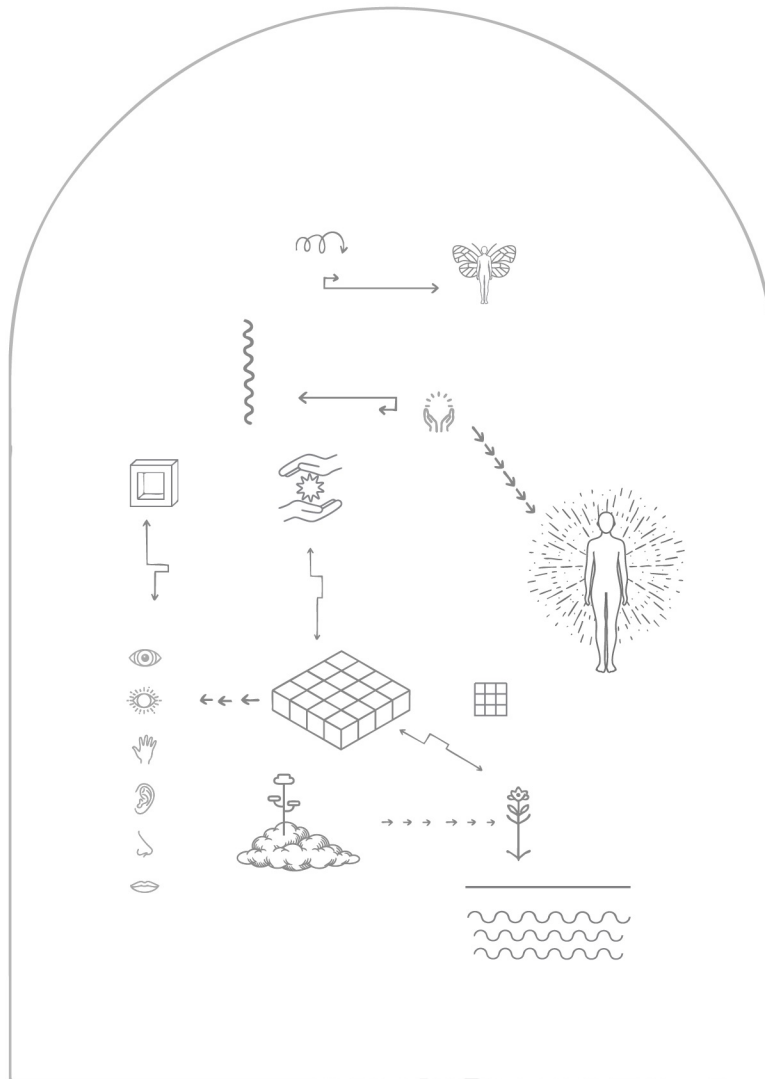
Overall, Regulation Arches serves as a bridge between mind and body, imagination and regulation, offering a gentle yet powerful tool for supporting emotional processing, reducing distress, and cultivating an internal sense of steadiness and care.

### References

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- Porges, S. W. (2011). *The polyvagal theory: Neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Schwartz, R. C. (2021). *No bad parts: Healing trauma and restoring wholeness with the Internal Family Systems model*. Sounds True.
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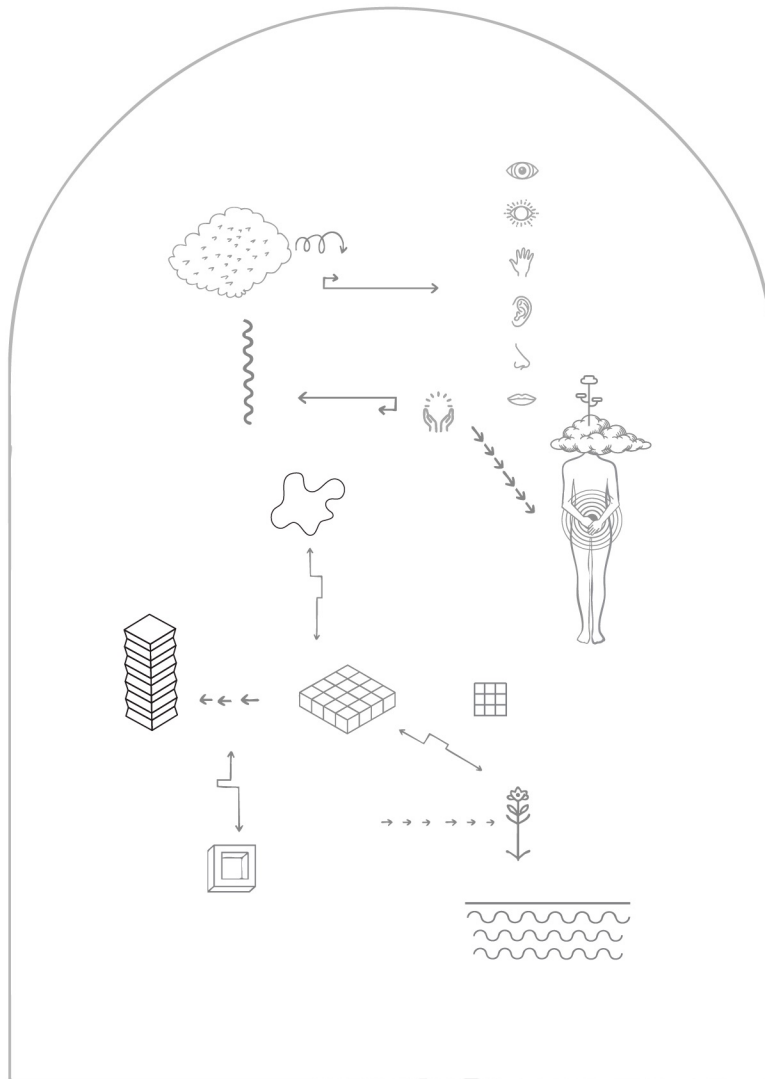


CLOUDWHALE COLLECTIVE  
CARRIE A. DYER



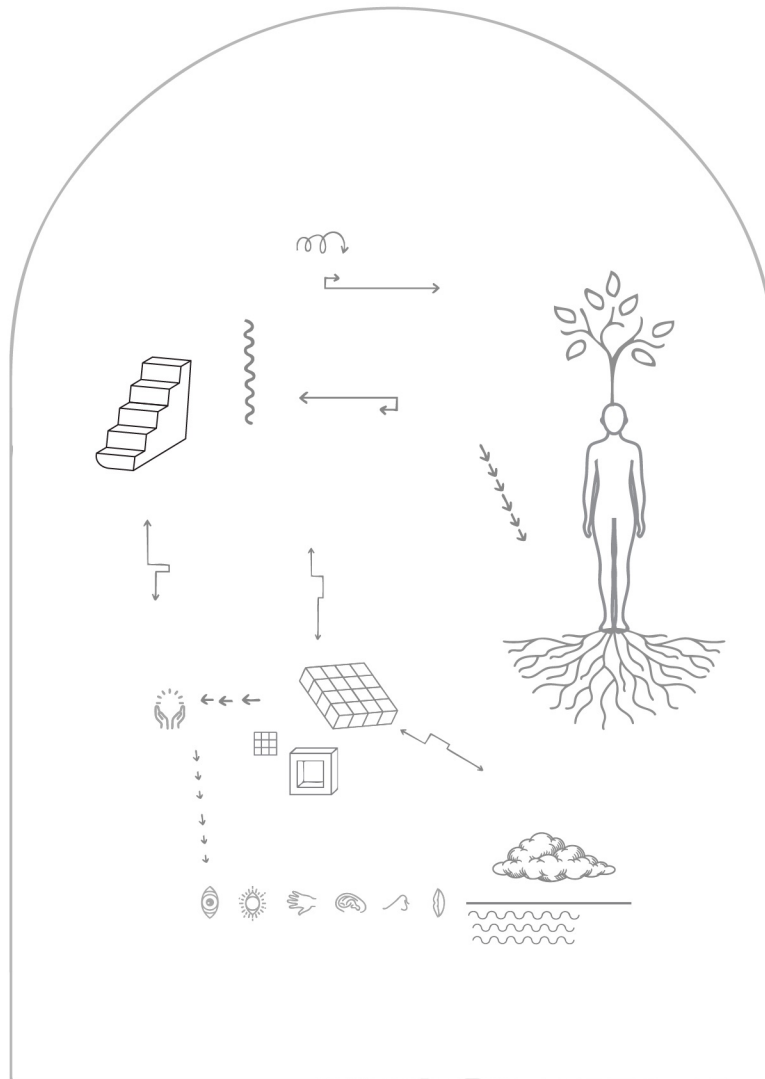
## *Light Stream*

*Imagine a warm, gentle light above your head. It might be golden, white, or any color that feels right to you. See it slowly flowing down, washing over your body. As it moves, notice how it brings warmth, safety, or healing. Let it move through your head, shoulders, chest, arms, all the way down to your feet. Wherever the light goes, tension softens. You can imagine this light surrounding you whenever you need calm or comfort.*



## *Belly Breathing*

1. Place one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
2. Inhale slowly through your nose for a count of 4, letting your belly rise like a soft balloon.
3. Hold for 1-2 seconds (optional).
4. Exhale gently through your mouth for a count of 6, feeling your belly fall.
5. Repeat for 3-5 breaths, keeping the breath slow, low, and steady.



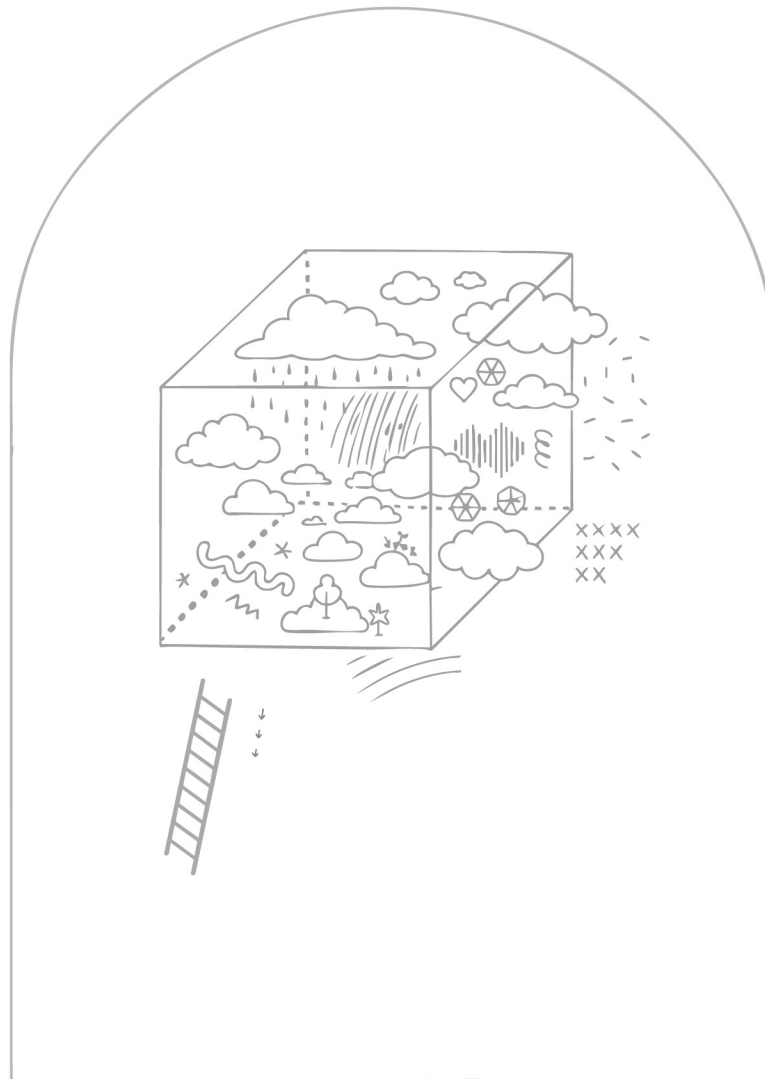
## Grounding Tree

*Imagine yourself as a tree-tall, steady, rooted in the earth. Picture your roots going deep into the ground, holding you firmly, giving you strength. Notice your trunk-strong, upright, centered. Your branches reach upward connected to light, air, and space. As you breathe, feel energy moving up from your roots, through your trunk, and out your branches. This steadiness is always within you. Whenever you feel shaken, you can return to your tree and its roots."*



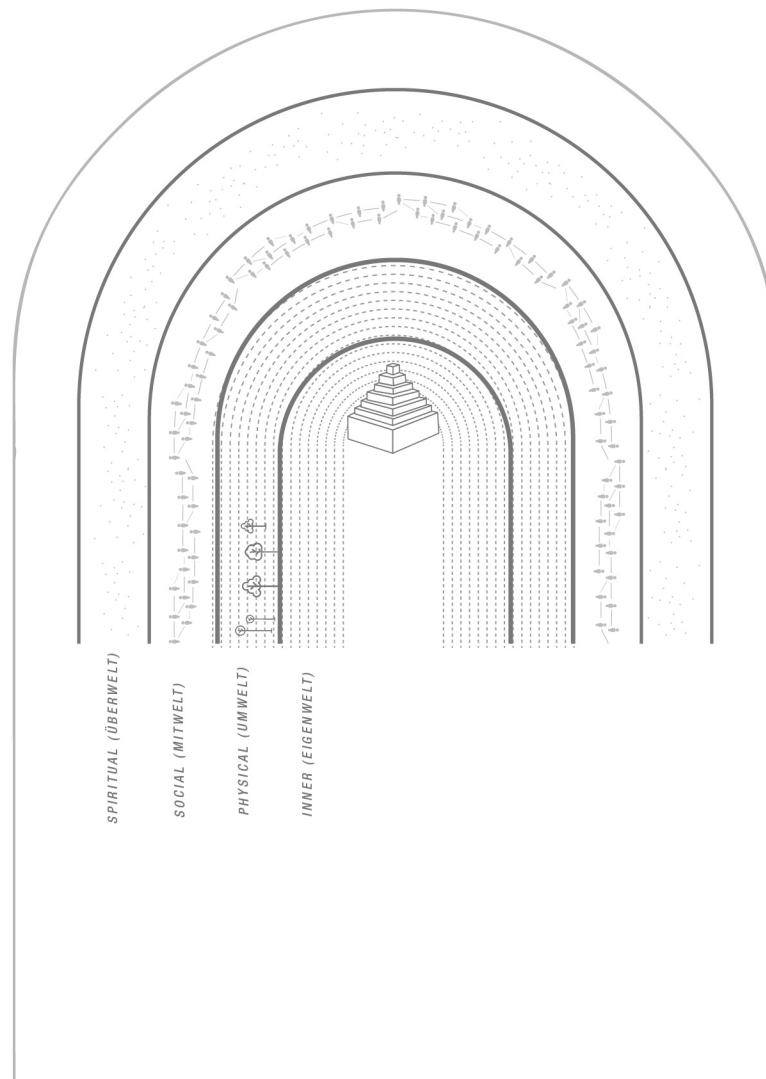
## *Nurturing / Protective Figure Script*

*“I’d like you to imagine a figure, real, fictional, or imagined, that feels nurturing, supportive, or protective to you. This could be a person, an animal, a spiritual figure, even a superhero or character from a story. Let the image come to mind. What do they look like? How do they stand or move? What expression do you see on their face? If they could speak to you, what words of comfort, encouragement, or protection might they say? Notice how your body feels as you imagine them near you, safe, supported, cared for. You can call on this figure whenever you need strength or reassurance.”*



## Container Script

*“Sometimes difficult thoughts or feelings come up, and it helps to have a way to set them aside safely. Imagine a container, big or small, that’s strong enough to hold anything you need it to. It could be a box, a safe, a vault, a chest with a lock, whatever feels right to you. Picture placing any unwanted or overwhelming thoughts, images, or worries into the container. Watch them go inside. Notice how securely it closes, maybe with a heavy lid, a strong lock, or a seal. You don’t have to get rid of these things forever; they’ll stay there until you’re ready to return to them. You are in control of when and how you open it. Take a breath and notice what it feels like to have them contained. You can come back to this container anytime you need it.”*



## Dimensions of Being

“As you breathe, let’s imagine grounding yourself across different dimensions of being. Begin with your **Eigenwelt**, your inner self-awareness. Notice your thoughts, emotions, and inner voice, simply observing them without judgment. Now turn to your **Umwelt**, your physical and biological world. Feel your body breathing, the ground beneath you, the air on your skin. Next, your **Mitwelt**, your relational world. Picture one supportive relationship, past, present, or imagined, and feel what it’s like to be connected. Finally, your **Überwelt**, your spiritual or larger-than-self dimension. This may be faith, nature, art, or a sense of mystery. Let yourself connect with something bigger. As you notice each layer, breathe in the sense of being whole and connected across these dimensions. You can return to any of them whenever you need grounding.”