

THE MIGRAINE RELIEF SERIES · ANGER, GRIEF & LETTING GO
Book 57 of 58

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Letting Myself Be Me

The mirror question: the character we build for ourselves, and what it costs to keep performing it

ROD GABRIEL ZR

Author of Living with Visual Aura Migraine



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Letting Myself Be Me

*The mirror question: the character we build for
ourselves, and what it costs to keep performing it*

Designed with spacious type, warm colors, and generous white space for visual comfort — especially for readers navigating aura, light sensitivity, or neurological strain.

A note on care. This mini-book shares one person's lived experience and general wellness practices. It is not medical advice, and it is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a qualified healthcare professional. Migraine has many forms and causes. Always consult your doctor about your symptoms, your triggers, and any medication or treatment decisions.

© ROD GABRIEL ZR. Part of The Migraine Relief Series, a companion collection to *Living with Visual Aura Migraine: Finding Relief Through the Rough Times* by Rod Gabriel ZR.

BEFORE WE BEGIN

A letter to you

How much of our suffering comes from the event itself, and how much comes from our fight against the fact that it doesn't match what we expected?

The previous book asked what happens when we build a character for the people we love. This one turns the same question inward: what if I've also been building a character for myself — an ideal version I quietly believe I need to become before I'm allowed to feel at peace?

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The experience: falling short of my own script

I had a version of myself I quietly measured every real day against: someone endlessly patient with their own body, never frustrated, never resentful, gracefully accepting of every limitation. The real me, on hard days, was none of those things. The gap between the two felt like failure.

The automatic thought: 'I should be handling this better'

That sentence sounds like accountability. It's often something closer to cruelty, measured against a standard no real person, migraine or not, could consistently meet.

The person you're disappointed in, on your hardest days, is often a character you built. The real you was never auditioning for that role either.

The emotion and the reaction

Shame tends to follow this particular thought closely — quiet, private, rarely spoken aloud. The reaction is often harsher self-talk, an attempt to whip the real self closer to the imagined one through sheer criticism, which rarely works and reliably exhausts.

The chain of the imagined self

□ The imagined-self chain

Experience: a hard day handled imperfectly — frustration, snapping, tears.

↓ Automatic thought: *'I should be handling this better.'*

↓ Emotion: shame, quiet self-criticism.

↓ Reaction: harsher self-talk, chasing an ideal that keeps moving.

↓ Observation: *'I was measuring myself against someone who was never real.'*

↓ Possibility: meeting the actual, human, doing-their-best self instead.

PAUSE & REFLECT

Your own imagined self

The 'ideal version' of myself I quietly measure hard days against — what does that character actually look like?

What would I say to a friend who was struggling exactly the way I struggled today? Can I say that to myself instead?

The observation: the character was never me either

The endlessly patient, gracefully accepting version of myself was never real, any more than the perfectly attuned friend from the last book was real. Both were characters, built out of hope, mistaken for a standard.

The possibility of letting go

Letting go here means extending the same grace to yourself you'd extend to anyone else you loved: this is hard, you're doing your best with a body that doesn't always cooperate, and that's already enough to deserve kindness, not the performance of an ideal that was never available to begin with.

*Let yourself be you. The real one,
imperfect and tired on hard days, was
always more worth defending than the
character you built instead.*

YOUR SPACE

My notes

[illegible]



CLOSING

Keep going, gently

The hardest character to release is often the one we built for ourselves. Letting it go doesn't lower the bar. It finally measures you against someone real.

How much of our suffering comes from the event itself, and how much comes from our fight against the fact that it doesn't match what we expected?

*Next in the series, the closing book: **Letting Go Without Giving Up** — the difference between acceptance and resignation.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ROD GABRIEL ZR

This closing collection returns once more to the voice at the heart of *Living with Visual Aura Migraine* — not to explain another symptom, but to sit with the feelings that so often ride alongside one: anger that things aren't as they should be, and grief for the versions of days, people, and himself that pain quietly rewrote.

One question runs underneath every book here: how much of our suffering comes from the event itself, and how much comes from our fight against the fact that the event doesn't match what we expected? He doesn't have a tidy answer. He has ten honest attempts at sitting with the question anyway.

Want the whole journey?

This guide is adapted from the complete book, *Living with Visual Aura Migraine: Finding Relief Through the Rough Times* — the full story, with every practice, every episode, and every lesson in one place.

The Migraine Relief Series

1 · The Calm Before the Flicker 2 · Listen to the Whispers 3 · The Fear of the Next Episode 4 · Storms in Beautiful Places 5 · The 5-Minute Relief Kit 6 · More Than My Migraine 7 · The Space Between Seeing 8 · Prayers & Mantras for the Storm 9 · Invisible Warriors 10 · The 30-Day Gratitude Journal

The Identity Series — on reclaiming yourself from the condition:

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Movement & Parenting — by Sarah J.S.:

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