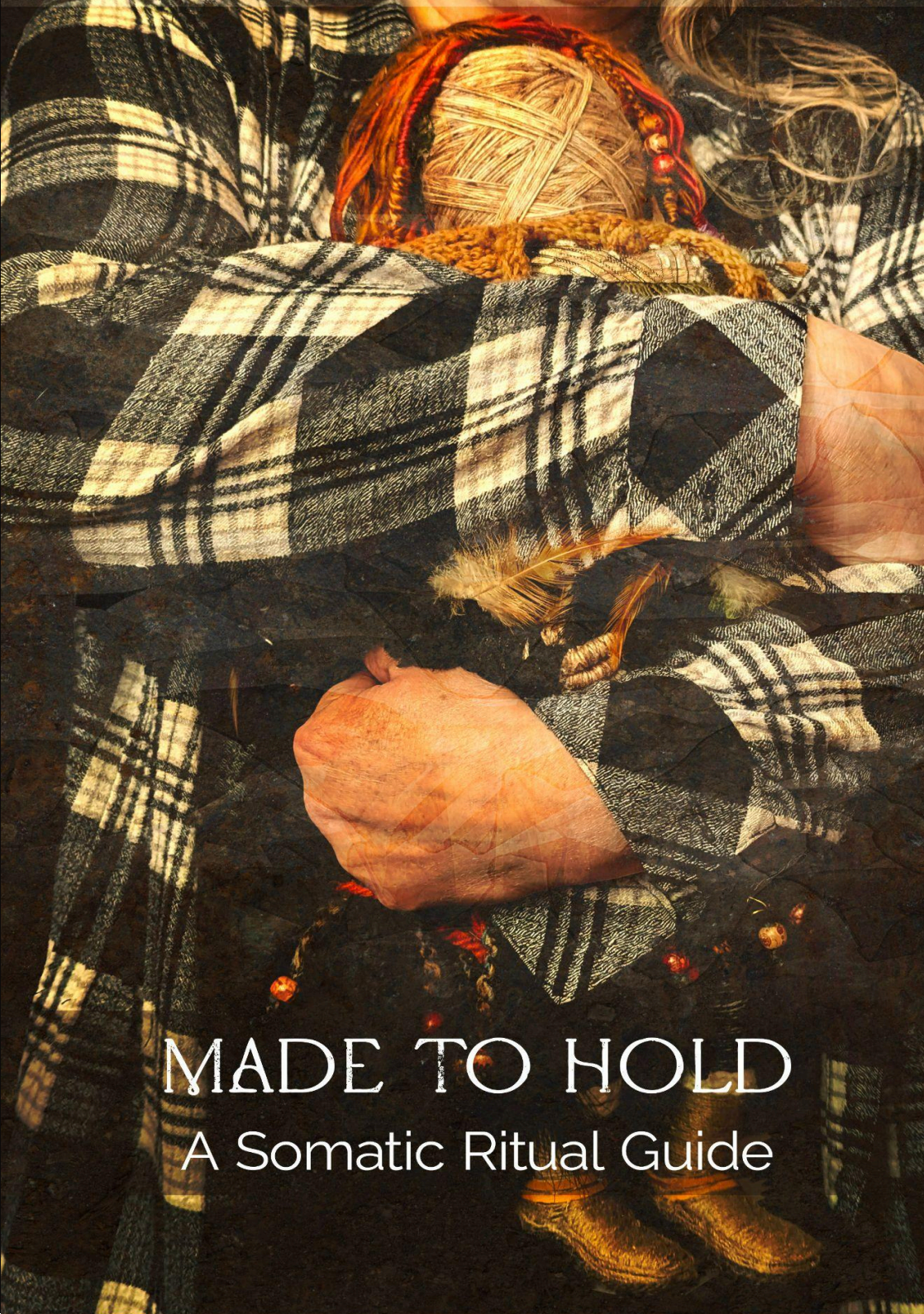


MADE TO HOLD

A Somatic Ritual Guide



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the holding doll

today you put away the doll.
you say: *it's time.*
you judge: *I should be past this.*
you don't say: *I'm afraid of what I'll feel*
when fear arrives in the dark
and my hands find nothing.

your old magic.
your timeworn friend.
your holder of tears.

you said she pulled away,
tried to free herself of your pain.
like it hasn't soaked into her flesh.

now you say: *she can sit on that shelf*
and feel nothing.

I see her eyes close as you turn away.

I hold what was done to you.
I hold what they said you must never be.
when I move through you, your hands shake
before you know why.

I will not give back more than you can carry.
but you will always need the doll.

and when you lift her—
and you will—
I'll be what moves your hands.



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I Want to Tell You How It Felt

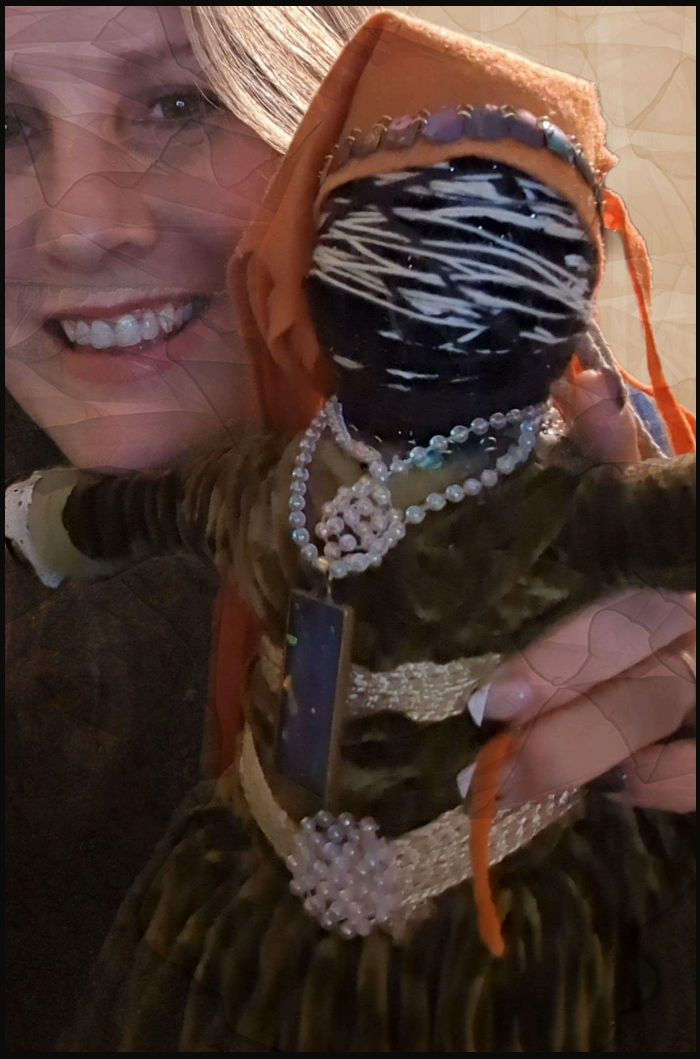
One afternoon I needed to call my mother. But I was already shaking too hard to pick up the phone. Dissociation hit next. That sensation of drifting loose from myself, of watching the room from somewhere too far off to act. I saw myself sit down hard in a chair.

I sat on Gwynnie.

She is my first You-Do-You Voodoo™ doll. I pulled her from behind me, and held her against my chest. Within a few minutes, I settled down into my body. Moments later, the shaking stopped and my breath calmed.

Gwynnie smelled like rosemary. Her yarn wrapping was both soft and rough against my palms. She was small, but dense and heavy in a way the rest of the room was not.

A few hours later, when I felt quiet, I turned it over in my mind. I built that doll with my hands. I chose every material for a reason. And in the middle of a bad moment, my body collected her and found ground. That was when I understood that what I was making had a function beyond what I had named.



How It Works

What happened with Gwynnie was not magic in the theatrical sense.

It was contact.

My body was drifting. My arms found weight, scent, texture, and a dense thing that did not ask me to explain myself.

That matters.

The body does not only take instruction from thought. It notices pressure, scent, temperature, texture, color, weight. A familiar shape held close.

You do not need one of my dolls for the following rituals to work. Any object with meaning and physical presence can serve.

But the dolls I make are built for this work on purpose. Every layer is chosen. Nothing is filler. Each part gives your hands something to know.

Gemstones

Stones have mattered for as long as humans have been here. Chipped into tools. Ground for paint. Carried into places of grief and battle and birth.

The weight is part of it. The density. The edges. A stone does not yield to your hand. It remains itself when your nervous system rattles.

These stones were chosen for what they mean. Each carries a spiritual significance recognized across many traditions and over a long time. That meaning is part of the intention the doll was made to hold.

Herbs

Rosemary. Cedar. Mugwort. Lavender.

Scent slides under the front door of the mind without knocking.

A familiar smell can pull memory, feeling, and body awareness into the same room. Held close, the herb becomes part of an object's presence. Not an idea. A signal to come home.

Yarn Wrapping

The yarn gives your fingers a path. Smooth places. Rough places. Bound places. Knotted places.

Your hands follow the surface and begin to notice difference. The fingers move from one texture to another. The body receives a task it can complete without language: touch this, trace this, *stay here*.

Color

Color is the first voice the doll has.

You see it before you notice the herbs. Before you feel the weight of the stone. Before your fingers find the yarn.

It sets the tone of the meeting. It changes expectation. It prepares the body for what is about to be encountered.

Who You Meet

The dolls carry a presence older than your story.

A guardian. A ghost. A saint. A monster.

You hold the doll, and something in you recognizes the kind of company you are keeping. What was shaping your life from the edges now has a place to sit where you can meet it.

Creating a Witness

The doll becomes a place where scattered attention can gather: stone for weight, herb for scent, yarn for touch, color for signal, presence for recognition. None of it forces meaning. It gives the body a set of doors. Your hands choose one. Your breath follows.

Then you return.

You hold it when the feeling comes back. You speak the truth into it. You let the same object meet you in more than one state: afraid, steady, grieving, furious, clear. Each return teaches the body that this object can hold the thread.

The body knows when something carries threat, sorrow, power, or memory. Intuition reads the whole before logic sorts the parts. The mind can catch up when it is ready.

This is how an object becomes a witness.

A Note on Active Imagination

Active imagination is a Jungian practice for meeting the unconscious while you are awake, present, and paying attention.

You enter a focused state. Not asleep. Not distracted. Not scrolling to find the definition of what you are hoping to meet.

You bring your attention to an object, a sound, a figure, a feeling, or an inner presence and allow a dialogue to begin.

You do not force the answer. You do not polish it. You do not make it polite so it will behave on the page. You ask. You listen. You record what comes.

The longer rituals in this guide use active imagination. The shorter practices take two minutes. They are simple, memorable, and easier to return to when your nervous system is slamming doors and sucking the oxygen out of the room.

Start there. Come to the longer practice when you are ready to go deeper.

If a practice starts to feel destabilizing, stop. Name five things in the room. Press your palms together. Notice the

chair, floor, or wall holding you up. Come back later, or bring the work to a therapist, guide, or trusted support person.

The point is contact.

Not collapse.



The Relationship Between You

The doll holds its end. You hold yours.

When you need what the doll holds, go to it. When your memory starts looking unreliable because someone has been retelling a story around you. When your body goes on alert but your mouth cannot explain why. When the progress you made begins to loosen at the edges.

Pick it up.

Let your hands feel. Let the weight settle. Let the stone, herbs, color, texture, and body of the doll gather your attention back into one place.

Each compositional element carries its own force. Together, they press toward the same intention. In the early days, you may draw from the doll more than you

give to it. That is expected. The relationship begins with receiving.

Later, when you do the hard thing, come back to the doll and say so. Put the evidence into words: the email sent, the silence broken, the answer left at no, the room survived without your apology. Name what happened. Speak it into the thing that helped you hold the line.



The doll does not need praise. It continues regardless. But acknowledgment matters. It marks the exchange. It adds heat to the work. It leaves a charge behind, small and real, like something glowing under ash.

Six Ritual Practices

For Meaningful Objects and the Dolls Built for Them

These rituals are written for the three doll lines of Kellie Jo Art, but the first layer of the work is simple:

Choose an object with meaning.
Hold it.
Pay attention.
Tell the truth.
Return.

The dolls are different because they were built for this. Their materials, colors, herbs, gemstones, and intention were chosen deliberately.

You are not making the doll powerful.

You are entering a relationship with what it already holds.



You-Do-You Voodoo™

You-Do-You Voodoo™ dolls are small T-shaped material witnesses built for psychological integration.*

A material witness is an object that gives an inner experience a place to stabilize. It does not explain the experience for you. It does not rescue you from it. It gives your body something to hold while the unconscious begins to speak.

The head is a semi-precious gemstone chosen for the intention your doll holds. The selenite spine runs through the body like a bright internal bone, giving the piece structure, clarity, and a place for the energy to return to center. Every layer of yarn, every herb sealed inside, every message and color was placed there with purpose.

You are not building the intention into it.

It is already in there, steady and intimate.

** The dolls are built for internal work. They are not made to harm, control, or manipulate anyone.*

Under the Weight

2 minutes

Write the hard thing. One sentence.

Whatever has been catching in the back of your throat, or pressed under your ribs, or gone tight in your smile at the wrong moment. The anger that keeps coming out as silence. The version of yourself you stopped carrying. The truth you keep pushing down so you can pass as "fine."

Let it move down your arm and into the pen.

Do not manage the words.

Then fold the paper once. Slide it under the doll.

It is out of your body now. The weight of the doll rests on top of it. Something that lived in your nervous system has a new address..

This is containment. The truth has left your body, but it has not left the room. The doll can hold what you are learning to face, what you are not ready to carry, and what you are not yet ready to put down.

You can pick it up again when you need to. Until then, it is held.

When it is time, destroy it with the element that calls to you.

Burn it.
Lay it in rain until the ink runs.
Bury it.
Tear it into pieces and open your hand to the wind.
Read it aloud once, name what it taught you. Then leave it in a place where someone who needs the message can find it.

Fire consumes. Water dissolves. Earth rots. Air scatters. Spirit gives.

Each is a completion.

What was written does not need to be carried the same way anymore.



The Doll Answers Back

15–20 Minutes

This ritual asks you to stop explaining the doll and start listening to it. Let its response come through your body when it must.

It may arrive as image, sensation, memory, words, pressure, heat, silence, disgust, longing, or the sudden urge to look away.

All of it counts.

Especially the part you want to dismiss.

What You Need

Your doll or other meaningful object
Paper
A pen
A timer

Optional: candle, tea, dramatic scarf.

Before You Begin

Know the force you are working with.

If you already have a doll, begin with the intention it carried when it came to you. That is its root strength.

The doll is not limited to one narrow purpose. Like stones, herbs, colors, and symbols, it holds layered meaning. It may help you with confidence, protection, grief, inspiration, shadow work, or whatever force is asking to be met.

But start with what it was made to hold. Then notice what it is showing you now.

Hold the doll in both hands.

Say:

You were made to hold this force.
I am here to listen.
Not to control you.
Not to be impressive.
Show me what I need to see.

Then stop.

That part matters.

1. The Descent

3 minutes

Hold the doll against your chest, belly, or lap. Choose the place that feels steady enough to keep your attention.

Breathe normally.

Not ceremonially.
Not deeper.
Normally.

Notice the doll's weight.

Ask: *Where do I feel this force in my body?*

Do not analyze. Track sensation.

Tight throat.
Hot face.
Heavy ribs.
Restless hands.
Angry jaw.
A hollow place under the ribs.
A sudden memory of being eight and already tired.

Write one sentence: *The force lives in my body as [.....]*.

Examples:

The force lives in my body as a stone in my throat.
The force lives in my body as heat behind my eyes.
The force lives in my body as a locked door in my stomach.

2. The Summoning Question

2 minutes

Look at the doll. Look at its colors, shape, materials, face, absence of face, posture, knots, stones, herbs, and all the little choices that were not accidents.

Ask aloud: *What are you here to help me remember?*

Write the first answer that comes.

Then write: *And what else?*

Ask twice. Do not correct the voice.

If the answer is ugly, petty, strange, childish, bossy, charming, or unexpected, congratulations. Something alive showed up.

3. The Doll Speaks

5 minutes

Now let the doll answer in first person. Start with:

I am the force of *[.....]*.
I came because you *[.....]*.
I watch you *[.....]*.
What you need from me is *[.....]*.
What I need from you is *[.....]*.

Keep writing for five minutes. No editing. Do not translate it into wellness content with buffed nails and a beige bouclé hoodie.

Let it be blunt. Let it be strange. Let it have bad grammar if it needs to.

You meet it.

You let the inner image become a speaking presence.

You answer it as though it has autonomy.

You do not collapse into it.
You do not dismiss it.

You stay present.

4. The Answering

4 minutes

Now you answer back.

Write: *I hear you. I resist you because [.....].*

Then let the doll respond: Of course you resist. You learned [.....].

Then you answer: *I am afraid that if I let this force move through me, [.....]*

Then the doll answers: What could actually happen is [.....]

This is where the ritual breathes.

Let there be friction, laughter, tears, quiet, refusal, recognition. Whatever rises. Let it answer your questions without forcing it into a shape.

Let the force meet the part of you still loyal to survival patterns that no longer deserve the keys to the back door.

Answer back.

Respectfully.

With truth.

5. The Exchange

3 minutes

Hold the doll again.

Ask: *What do I need to take from you today?*

Listen for one word. Only one.

Now ask: *What can I give back to you today?*

Listen for one action to take.

Examples:

I will send the email.
I will say no once.
I will stop explaining after the first sentence.
I will tell the truth in my journal.
I will not apologize for the boundary.

Write:

Today I take [.....].
Today I return [.....] through my action.

This is the charge. Not sparkles. Not haunted batteries.

Well. Not officially.

The doll does not need to be "charged" to work. It was made with intention. But each honest exchange deepens the relationship between Keeper and doll. The force becomes more specific because you have met it with action.

6. The Closing

1 minute

Place the doll somewhere visible.

Write: *You keep what I am learning to carry.*
I will return with evidence.

Then close the notebook. Do not reread immediately. Let the thing settle.

The psyche hates being micromanaged. Tiny tyrant. Terrible manners.



SoulStitch™

SoulStitch™ dolls are heavier and larger than You-Do-You Voodoo™ pieces. They are built around an autonomous presence: an archetype, an elemental force, a nature spirit, or a mythic being.

Each develops its own character during the making. By the time it reaches you, it has already become something.

You are entering a relationship.

Not acquiring an object.

These dolls are vessels. They hold what you bring to them, and they bring what they already carry.

Acknowledgment

2 minutes

Place the doll somewhere it has a clear view of the room.

SoulStitch™ dolls are built to witness, and a witness needs sight lines. Give it height. Give it the position that commands the space rather than fills a corner.

Sit facing it. Look at it directly. Then tell it the truth. One or two sentences. Nothing polished. Nothing impressive.

Name what you are carrying today.

You are speaking to a presence that has no investment in your looking like you have it together. It has already seen humans. Our species is not subtle.

Give it the actual weight.

Then let the doll hold it while you go about your day.

This does not mean it stores your feeling forever like an emotional garbage bin. The daily practice gives the feeling a place outside your skin long enough for you to see its shape. Each return teaches the body a sequence: I can set this down. I can come back. I can notice what changed. I can carry only what belongs to me.

Come back tomorrow and do it again.

The Doll Becomes What It Is

20 to 30 minutes

Place the doll at eye level where you can see it without strain.

Settle your body.

Hands loose.
Breath steady.
Eyes open.

Look at the doll until it stops being an object and starts being what it is.

This takes longer for some people than others.

If it still looks like yarn and beads, keep looking.

Not harder.

Longer.

Something shifts when you start actually giving your attention. The presence the doll holds gathers as you attend. It does not rush toward you. It thickens.

When something changes — a quality in the room, a feeling in the chest, a pressure at the back of your head, a shift you cannot name but still register in the body — begin.

Ask: *Who are you?*

Ask beyond the name you gave it. Ask beyond the archetype, element, or spirit it was built around.

Ask who this specific presence is, in this specific room, with you in it right now.

Let the answer come in whatever form it takes:

Words.
An image.
A physical sensation.
A memory you were not looking for.
A refusal.

Write the answer in the figure's voice.

Then ask: *What do you see in me that I have not yet named?*

Do not soften what comes. Do not translate it into something more comfortable before you write it down. Set it down as it arrives.

When the dialogue ends, sit with it.

Let the presence remain itself. Let the message remain as it is.

The integration happens in the sitting, not in proving you understood it.

JoJo's Oddities™

Sometimes the thing chasing you has a name: The Old Hag, Slender Man, the Black-eyed Kids. Sometimes it has no clean name at all.

It is the thing in the woods calling your name, the dead-eyed creature that was once your best friend.

It is teeth.
It is watching.
It is the sense that something is behind you.

A JoJo's Oddities™ doll gives that fear a location.

The presence your doll embodies already exists in story, culture, psyche, folklore, literature, or myth. The doll gives it form you can sit across from. The story is the doorway. The wound inside the story is the work.

These dolls are built for the things that cling. Being hunted. Consumed. Abandoned. Stalked. Controlled. Changed beyond recognition.

Once the fear has a face, it stops moving invisibly through every space in your body.

You can put it somewhere.
You can look at it.
You can ask what it wants.

JoJo's Oddities™ dolls do not ask you to admire the monster. They ask why this one found you.

Before you sit down with this doll, know who you're sitting with.

Research the figure it embodies. Find the oldest accounts you can. Look for the regional versions, the strange details, the parts that did not survive the telling. Pay attention to what people feared, what they warned against, what they tried to explain by giving the fear a name.

Specificity matters.

Folklore keeps what polite history cannot hold.

La Llorona is grief uncontained, the cry that keeps returning to water, the loss that grew deadly because no one answered it.

The Mothman is the shape at the edge of disaster, the warning with wings, the body that appears before tragedy, but cannot tell you who the tragedy will take.

A zombie is survival after the self goes missing. A vampire is the slow surrender of your own will. A ghost

is memory that refuses burial. A cryptid is the truth people laugh at until it walks across the road in front of them.

These are not costumes.

They are hungers, warnings, hauntings, and witnesses.

Know who you are inviting to the table before you pull out the chair.



Containment

2 minutes

Choose where this doll lives with intention.

You are giving the fear a boundary. Choose a place that is visible, stable, and specific: a shelf, an altar, a desk, a cabinet, a corner that can hold its weight. Give the fear a location outside your body.

Place the doll. Look at it directly.

Say aloud, or in a voice you mean internally:

I see you.
You belong here.
You do not get the run of my home.

Then leave its presence there.

Go about your day and pay attention to what changes:

What catches your eye?
What thought returns?
What dream stirs?
What old fear rises?
What feels quieter because the thing has a place to sit?

The fear was already present. You have given it edges. What you observe now is part of the practice.

Keep a small note for this doll. A page in your journal. A card tucked behind it. A file on your phone if that is what you will actually use.

Write down three things:

What appeared.
Where you felt it in your body.
What it seemed to want from you.

Do not interpret it right away. Record it first. Meaning gets sharper when it has a few entries to stand beside. One strange thought may be noise. The same fear returning with the same tactics is information.

After a few days, read the notes back. Circle what repeats: the same image, the same body sensation, the same warning, the same pull toward or away from the doll. That repeating thread is what you bring into the longer active imagination practice.

The doll holds the fear in one place. The notes show you how it moves.

Fear Brings a Message

20 to 30 minutes

Find twenty minutes. Place the doll at eye level, facing you.

Settle yourself into stillness. Calm tries to make things feel safe. Stillness lets you feel what is actually present. JoJo's Oddities™ dolls require stillness.

Begin with questions.

Ask: *What fear do you carry over me?*
Then ask: *Where have I felt you before?*
Then ask: *What are you trying to protect me from?*
Then ask: *What do you need me to admit?*

Let the figure answer in the way these entities answer:

Through the thought that arrives only after you nearly give up.
Through the shape that rises from your gut and forces you to spit it out.
Through the dream that comes later and leaves dirt on the floor.
Through the smell, phrase, song, or color that pulls something up by the roots.

Through the thing you keep circling, touching, avoiding, and circling again.

Write everything down. Date it. Do not demand revelation on the first attempt. The pattern will show itself across entries. Fear repeats what has not been understood.

You are not feeding the monster by listening. You are finding out whether it is a warning, a memory, a guard dog, a grief-shape, or a piece of you wearing a frightening costume because that was the only way it could get your attention.

Some figures need to be questioned.
Some need to be integrated.
Some need to be thanked for their warning and told to sit down.

These figures have been speaking for a long time. You are not inventing the fear. You are giving it a body, a boundary, and a place where the conversation can happen without letting fear run the house.

One More Thing

None of these practices require pretending. They require that you bring your actual self and apply consistent attention. The nervous system responds to what it holds. The psyche responds to what it takes seriously.

If an object you have is the right one for the work you are doing, use it.

If you are looking for something built in layers — weight, smell, texture, color, and archetypal theme — assigned deliberately for your psychological purpose, that is what I make.

You can purchase a doll built to order, or find the current pieces across all three lines at kelliejoart.com/buy-art/available-now.

If you want to know which one fits what you are carrying right now, reach me at kelliejoart.com/contact.

A Note on the Research

This guide does not claim that dolls cure, treat, diagnose, or replace mental health care. We are not turning dolls into medicine, saviors, or therapists.

The research supports our methods

- meaningful objects can support emotional regulation through touch;
- heart-rate variability is commonly used as a physiological marker connected to stress regulation and recovery; and
- art therapy research identifies sensory engagement, symbolism, metaphor, externalization, and concrete form as meaningful mechanisms in trauma-related work.

The evidence is real, but still developing. So we keep our claims clean. We do not fake certainty.

This is art.
This is contact.
This is a way to give the body something solid to hold.



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This writing is shaped by lived experience, real hands, and real ghosts.

