

Okay, here we are, Q&A number four for SBSM 12.0. I got a little sick earlier this week, and my voice is still not 100% back, so if I sound a little different or my voice gets a little scratchy, that is why, but I'm feeling just fine. And we will get started.

We've got Carrie in the chat today helping out with links and whatnot. Again, just a reminder as always, try not to get too busy with the chat. I probably will not be able to answer questions that are put in there because I've got quite a bit today.

There were two broad themes for this week. Shame and disgust was one theme. Two things that go great together, and we'll get into that. And also anger and aggression is the second broad theme, and that is right online with what we tend to see in this program. As we just did the first training call on healthy aggression, and we'll be getting into much more of working with anger and aggression in lab six, and then more in lab seven.

So yes, the energies are brewing and things are bubbling up. And anger, aggression, shame, disgust, these things are very often together, and so we're going to get into shame and disgust, part of that, first.

So, many questions to do with different things around shame and disgust. A couple things that were in common with these questions were people talking about experiencing tension in the gut related to shame or humiliation. One who even had gastritis following an incident where they felt really humiliated. And so this is one thing to highlight first is that, yes, with shame and disgust, very often there'll be a very visceral feeling to that. It's literally in the guts, in the belly. This just ugh feeling. And that has a lot to do with how we can work with it as well. So it's not uncommon, though, to feel tension, tightness, upset, yuckiness in general, in the belly when these things are surfacing. That's like the somatic language of disgust.

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And also shame, very often there'll be sort of this collapsed posture that is part of shame. And that, of course, also means that the abdomen is collapsed, which can lead to tension or upset feelings, yucky feelings. So many reasons that we may feel shame. We may feel shame because of what was said to us by a person or even a group of people in school. This is a really common thing where someone may get bullied, especially, it seems, that lots of times those of us who are trauma survivors are also more unique. And that's why we were shamed in the first place, oftentimes. We seem to maybe go against the grain, or we're not interested in the party line or what's popular, or maybe we're geeking out on something that isn't in the mainstream. Or very often, it seems like that there'll be these themes where we will get shamed for things that we're authentically interested in that aren't part of what's normal. I know I certainly experienced that in school and whatnot. So there can be a peer kind of group shaming that happens. It can be directly from a parent who is toxically shaming us, telling us that we're worthless or no good.

And also, shame can come because of our own patterns. Things about our own personality, things about our own actions. Now, what's important to remember though is if we're feeling shame because of something we did, I mean sometimes, say I do something that really is wrong against another person, then it may be appropriate for me to feel a little shame because that's the body and my ethical system telling me, "Hey, that wasn't cool. You should apologize. Maybe you should feel a little yucky about that." But the distinction is that I'm feeling bad about what I did, not about who I am. And that is the distinction between healthy shame, toxic shame. Healthy shame leaves us with the impression of, oh, that action was dangerous or bad. Or it wasn't safe. It hurt this other person, et cetera. I should avoid that action. That's not good. I shouldn't do that. Whereas toxic shame, again, is like, I am bad, I am worthless, I am gross, et cetera.

So if we're feeling, I am awful, or gross, or shameful, I am bad in some way, because of something that we did, chances are that is poking at deeper layers of toxic shame that we were

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exposed to. In all of these cases, what's really important to remember is it didn't start with us. No one comes into this world feeling bad about themselves. That is something that is learned from the outside, from what we are exposed to. And because that shame came from the outside, that is a very good reminder to us to remember where it needs to go. It needs to go back to the outside. It doesn't belong in us, it belongs, ah, out there. And that is something that is sort of a cue to how you might process this stuff. How might you want to get it out? And here we link into disgust.

So one of the questions was wanting to clarify something Irene had said where they probably watched the video where she's talking about the link between shame and disgust, and how we use disgust to process shame. But this is a very common misunderstanding. And the question they asked, "You mentioned that when we feel shame, we make the link with feeling disgusted about ourselves." No, it's very easy to hear that. If we have toxic shame in us, it's very easy to hear that. But no, it's not about feeling disgusted about ourselves. It's feeling disgusted about what we are holding. It's about feeling the body's natural disgust at holding this toxic shame energy. It's not that we are disgusting, that we took in something that was disgusting. Same as if we ate a rotten piece of meat. It's, ugh, it doesn't feel good to the body. That's what Irene is talking about, and that's how we work with shame very often, as the bridge towards it going from this ugh thing in the stomach to, ah, out, ah, that disgust. It's almost like energetically vomiting it up. Get it out of the belly, get it out of the viscera, it doesn't feel good.

And that disgust, that can lead very naturally to aggression. And that's really what we're wanting to do, is contact that aggression that was meant to protect us from receiving that in the first place. And that's what we couldn't do. At the time when we were little, we were helpless. There were too many people. If it was a peer group or it was our parent, we had to keep the attachment to someone that we needed in our life. We couldn't just leave or we couldn't fight them. So that aggression that would've wanted to rise up and say, "No, don't treat me like that. I'm not taking that in. No." that was what got stifled very often. And the

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disgust, that feeling of yuck, this doesn't belong in me, can lead to that, no, I don't want it. And that is how we very often will work with shame.

You could also bring in the posture. That goes very well with working with the posture of shame versus aggression. So the posture of shame is head down, tail tucked, the posture is collapsed, the shoulders are drooping, everything is folded in. And so we could feel that, and then maybe it feels too much to go straight away to working with this big disgust, aggression energy, so we can just titrate it by working with a posture. We can feel what it's like to tilt our tailbone a bit back, or maybe we lift our head and do that. Feel what it's like to extend. It's like you're changing the spine from this to this. So posture of shame, posture of aggression, strength, confidence.

So that is one way to work with it. And you can bring those both together. Like, ugh, maybe you're feeling this tension in the belly. It's gross and then you bring it up and you let your shoulders come back. You let the arms come out, you feel that postural change.

Working somatically is the best way to work with this stuff. Positive thinking, telling our self you're good, you're smart enough, people like you, gosh darn it. That kind of thing is all good, but with shame, it's not really the kind of mojo we need. We need the strength of that ugh, that visceral quality. We need to tap into that visceral quality of disgust and aggression, and bring that in with posture, stance. Maybe we even come up to stand. Maybe we start in sitting and we find our feet and we come up and we get the shoulders back. We say no with our words, our sounds, our posture.

I think that is it. Yeah.

So three different questions about anger and aggression. So one thing that can happen with anger and aggression, and we start tapping into it, we start tapping into our authenticity, we start setting our boundaries. We start feeling more confident in our self. Well, sometimes that leads to cutting off relationships that we're reinforcing the old patterns where they wanted us

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to feel bad about ourselves because that was part of the deal. That's the trauma bond. Trauma bond relationships. And as we get into this work, it's very, very, very common to start pruning these kinds of relationships.

However, that can lead to us feeling pretty alone. And as we do this work in general, we start to realize how traumatized almost everybody is. We start to see it all around us. We see it in people's postures and their actions. Maybe before we would've thought, "Oh, that guy's a jerk." And then we say, "Oh gosh, he's a scared little kid. He's traumatized." We start to understand how trauma is at the root of so many of people's problems, our societal problems. And that also can lead to us feeling alone, where we feel like, wow, why am I the only person who's seeing this? Why do I get this? All these people are so screwed up. It can be tempting to even, I want to go back to how I was, at least I belonged. At least I had kinship with these toxic relationships. So it can be difficult.

So what do we do with that? Well, that's not an easy answer because the fact is, if you do this work, you are in the minority. And if you get regulated, you are in the minority. So you got to hold on to the few connections that you do have. Whether that be with people, that's great. If you just have one person, two people who you're on the same page with, you can be authentic with, awesome. Then do that. Hold on to those few people. Focus on that. Animals, have your animal buddies. Whether that be in nature and you go out, and you're communing with ducks in the pond, or whatever creatures you may encounter in the forest. Or your pets, have pets. Those fuzzy little mammals.

And cultivating what I would call a shamanic relationship with nature. That's probably what's got me through. I mean, I felt pretty alone most of my life because of just my nature, how I perceive the world. And then later, even more so through doing this work and losing relationships that I did have that were toxic. And having a shamanic relationship with nature can ameliorate a lot of that. When you start to tune into the consciousness in everything, everything around you is conscious in some way. And so you can really start to tune into that,

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especially as you start to get more regulated, as you start to get your sensitivities more as your ally, rather than something that are torturing you. And you can tune into that rock or that tree, that plant, that herb, that tea you're about to drink. Everything around you has the potential for a relationship.

Now, of course we need human relationships and there's no getting around the fact, like I said, it's just kind of hard, that as we get more regulated, as we get more healthy, our pool of what we feel good, the people we feel good around, will shrink. It's just how it is right now. So we've got to find connection where and how we can, and developing that kind of shamanic relationship with nature where you just sit and listen. Sit, go sit with a tree, and just feel it. Put your heart up to the trunk or put your back to it. Tune into what's happening in the tree in the same way you would tune into yourself in orientation or tracking. Develop that, cultivate that kind of relationship.

Okay. Then another question was about, what does healthy aggression look like in kids? A woman asked about her daughter. Oh sorry, I don't actually don't know if it was a woman. A parent asked about their daughter, and what to do if... Is this healthy if my daughter kicks the inside of the car if she's frustrated, or throws her shoe down, or does something like that? And absolutely. These are just natural, spontaneous expressions of aggression. It may trigger you if, like you said in your question, it was not modeled like this for you. You weren't allowed to express it. So you may get triggered when she has a little expression of aggression. But if you can hold space for that and try not to react, or just be aware of your internal reaction, but it sounds like you're making space for her to do that, that is awesome.

You can, if it feels like there's openness, you could introduce her to some of the more gradual ways of expressing aggression, such as the twisting of the towel, which we'll get into next week. If you haven't already read my healthy aggression article, that's one of the things, which is just like squeezing, twisting, feeling. Because it's slower, it's slower than hitting. And you really feel the effort and squeezing, twisting. You could introduce her to that. Or encouraging

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her to use her face, use her sounds, that kind of thing. You could help her, even, if she's open to it, pushing. Here, give me a push, try to knock me over. Come on. And let her win, but make it difficult. So she pushes you across the room a little bit. All of these are things that you could bring in if it feels like there's openness to it. But it sounds like right now, there's just a natural outlet. And as long as she's not hurting herself, she's not hurting anybody else, that's fine. I wouldn't worry about it. I'd just be like, "All right, great." Better out than in, as we say.

Okay. And then the third one was, this is interesting, I'm actually going to read this question. "I learned early on to shut down, hold back the anger and tears that result in resentment and grudge holding," which I assume you mean from your caregivers. The caregivers would resent you, they'd hold a grudge if you showed your anger or your tears. So you learned, your system learned, to shut down. "I'm now observing that when I fall into the shutdown, there's stubbornness. I'll hold onto the shutdown for as long as I can, determined to win by not coming out of this state. And any advice for this stubborn, scared part of me to move up and out would be appreciated."

So absolutely. That stubbornness, I know what you mean, is you're in this sort of shutdown place and you know you could come out of it. Like, "No, I don't want to. I'm just going to stay here feeling miserable, by God." Because then at least you have control. And that's what it's about, is that you have control. You have agency over that choice to stay in that. So if you want to get out of that, I would suggest tapping into that, "No." Tap into that stubbornness itself. That's what's holding the aggression that you need. What would be the posture of that, "No, I don't want to." Even say the words. Or maybe stomp the foot. "I don't want to do that." And then you get some energy moving, and before you know it, you're coming out of a shutdown. So tap into the energy of that stubborn, "No," and what it's holding.

All right. Okay. Moving on to some individual... Yes, an adult sized child tantrum. Exactly. You got it. Mm-hmm, don't hurt yourself. Don't hurt anybody else. But yeah, let yourself throw a little fit. Have a little hissy. All right."So how do you recommend dealing with insomnia, in the

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moment? I typically go through a week-long spurt where I can't fall asleep until morning hours. Then I'll get a couple weeks of regular sleep until the insomnia repeats itself. It's very mental for me, and I'm not sure how to interrupt this loop. I have a 1.5 year old to take care of, so I need some rest. What can I do when it's 2:00 AM and I'm panicking about sleep?"

So the key to this is where you said, it's very mental. Yeah. And that is not something that is easy to shift. If you're laying there, you're thinking about all the things, and you're looping around in your mind and you're worrying about the fact that you're not sleeping, and that increases the fact that you're probably not going to sleep. So we need to get out of the mind. We need to get into the body. And even though I understand this can feel totally counterintuitive, when you're in the state, the best thing to do is get up. Stop trying to sleep. Get up, move around, be active, get into the body. There is a sympathetic charge that's happening. So, remember our basics of sympathetic activation. What do we do? We can go with it or we can work to soothe it. We can in very advanced states, sometimes just watch it pass through, through observation and letting it happen. But that sounds like that's not happening in this case. You're laying there, it's just looping around in your head. So it sounds like you've probably tried things to calm down, I'm assuming, so that leaves option three, get up and go with it. Do some squats, do some jumping jacks. Walk around the block. Just get up and move your body and use the energy. Then try to go back to sleep. If you're not sleeping any ways, you might as well get up and use the energy and that may actually lead to you being able to sleep.

Also, if you know you're in a week where you're in this pattern, try to exhaust yourself more during the day by being very active. With a 1.5 year old that's not hard, really play with them. Be vigorous in your activity. That may help you as well when it comes to nighttime. But yeah, if it's in the moment, get up, use the energy, see if you can actually let it move through the system.



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“I do a neurosensory lesson. Is that good?” It may be if the question is what is it doing? Yeah, thanks, Carrie. If it settles you, great. Yeah, if it's something like an aggression thing. If it works, that's fine. But it may be that you simply need to be physical, that you simply need to get up and use the energy.

Okay, “I'm 48. Had chronic fatigue for 25 years, mental health issues since 11. Hypersensitive to chemicals, allergens, shock and childhood trauma, chronic stress, et cetera. I sat outside today with my bare feet on the grass for 30 minutes and did the practice of orienting. Irene said to look for tension in the pelvis, and I did notice a sensation of holding. I breathed to see if it would release and it did. I laughed and then cried. Then all afternoon, I had a sympathetic activation I could not discharge. What's going on here?”

You opened up the diaphragm, that's what's going on. You felt something stuck in your diaphragm, your pelvic diaphragm, you breathed into it, released, and now the door is open and the stuff that diaphragm has been holding was moving through the system. That's how it goes, when you open the door sometimes on something that has been stuck, there can be a period of being kind of flooded with what you've been holding in that area. So yeah, it's good. You laughed, you cried. Great. You felt activated. That's how it goes sometimes. Don't worry about it.

I would be curious to see what would happen now if you would return to, since it's now the week that we have the diaphragm lessons, to go into the pelvic and feet diaphragm or the respiratory and pelvis diaphragm lessons, either or both of those, and see what happens now if you do that practice intentionally with that pelvic diaphragm. But yeah, that's totally normal. You opened up a container and you found what was inside, and that's just how it goes. That's what we want to do. And then we help it integrate, by moving, expressing, waiting, using our practices, orienting or just forgetting all about it, check it out, watching a show, whatever. Whatever you need to do to resource or work with it is fine. Totally normal.

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“Can you speak on personality types pre and post nervous system regulation work?” Sure. So this is a great one because again, this is where so stuff starts to happen as we do this work more, probably different for everybody, but I think it's very common that for pretty much anybody who goes through this work, they're going to discover that a lot of who they thought they were was actually a form of management, something that they took on to manage the trauma. When we grow up with unresolved trauma, our personality is shaped by what we do to pack it up. So lots of the ways, maybe I think I'm an introvert, actually I'm just terrified of people. And then that resolves and actually it turns out, oh, I like engaging with people. Wow, okay, that's not just how I am or there's certain, I just can't stand this food, or I just can't stand this kind of music, whatever it is. A lot of these things could be because, well, those things were overstimulating for your system or your system couldn't process that food because your stomach wasn't working properly and your digestive chemicals weren't working properly because of the dysregulation.

There's so many things about us, about how we think that we are, our likes, our dislikes, who we want to be around, the situations we want to put ourselves into, what we want to do for work, what we want to do for play. All of it changes typically as we do this work. Because what happens is, first we start to unpack and resolve some of these charges. And there then can very often be a period where it's like, I don't know who I am. There can be a sense of really not knowing who you are anymore because there's some lingering personality stuff, but it no longer has any foundation. And so you don't really need to be that way anymore, but you're not sure who you actually are without that stuff and there can be kind of this limbo state, which is great. If you feel like you don't know who you are, awesome. That means that you are moving towards the next stage, which is emerging authenticity. Your true self. Who you would have been who you are without needing to manage all these survival charges in your system.

For myself, I've found there is a core thread of me-ness that I've always felt and has always stayed the same from early childhood, as early as I can remember till now there's an internal

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sense of self that is the same, I would just call, of my essence. But there was all sorts of stuff, sorts of stuff packed up on top of that that wasn't me. And in order to access that sense of me-ness I've had, like I've talked about, had to create the situation where I was living in the woods apart from society, apart from intensive stimulus, apart from lots of people, apart from the mainstream everything and then I could access some of that sense of me. But it was because I had this external thing that I had shaped as an adaptation. When I moved to Vancouver and started doing this work, and I totally had this period of dissolution where, yeah, things that I thought I liked, ways that I thought that I was all started to dissolve. It was confusing, it was maddening sometimes. It made me angry sometimes. It made me want to run back to the woods sometimes. But I just kept on going.

What happened is the authentic me, that sense of me-ness was allowed to blossom, grow, become more embodied, and then start to change, my personality started to change in terms of things that I liked, things that I wanted to do, things I had capacity for, interest in. One of the biggest things is now identifying as an athlete and someone who works out intensely a few times a week. That is 180, I was not that guy. I was like, no, I was inside, cozy making music and watching shows and stuff, like I was not the athlete dude. So yeah, stuff changes. Absolutely.

Someone asked, "is this process limited by age?" No, I wouldn't say it's limited by age, I would say age is a factor that can make the process slower sometimes. It depends what you've been through, how old you are, what kind of support you have, the resources around you, all that stuff. There's many, many factors. Age is one, but it's not limited. It just means that the longer you've been holding on to stuff, the longer it may take to resolve that stuff.

But the good news is the system has an organic trend towards healing. That's the direction it wants to go. It's like when we're holding on to unresolved trauma and all this stuff, it's really, we're fighting against the river. We're just trying to work against the flow of life essentially. And so as we turn towards healing and start going with the current process of resolving stuff is way faster than stuff breaking down. You can take 40, 50 years to develop these various symptoms

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and stuff from the trauma that you've been holding and that can resolve in 7, 10 years. And I'm just making up numbers, but there it's much quicker the way that we can resolve things because that is our organic trend. That's what wants to happen, that's supported by nature.

“Is there anything specific I can do for tightness in my neck that keeps occurring with constriction only on the right side? It occurred a couple of minutes into the kidney practice today, followed by a sense of panic rising. I paused, oriented, shifted attention between my neck and safety in my body.” Awesome. I have no known physical injury though I do have a history of asthma and I remember my mom grabbing my throat as a teenager, but this is very specific to one side. So yeah, it's hard to say for sure why this is happening. It could be a specific injury, it could be related to a way in which you've been holding or your posture has been, and now you're starting to... Maybe the kidney on the right side, relaxed a little bit and then, oh, there's shoulder, which can be very involved with what we call will structure, like this is how I need to be. It can assert itself if something starts to let go, like, oh no, you don't. So it could be related to that, hard to say for sure.

But in terms of what you can do, well, a couple ideas. When you have a tension pattern like that, what might happen if you go with the tension? For example, what might happen with your head and arm? So say you say it's in the right side of the neck, so I might say it was like, I'm feeling this tension, okay, what happens if I raise, I go with that tension, okay, this is now happening. What does that lead to? Oh, I notice I want to turn a little bit, and this is how we get into procedural memory stuff. Very often stuck procedural memories are represented and show up as tension. Not always, but often.

So you could explore that like, oh, baby, okay, now this is wanting to happen and now if I do this, it wants to lift my arm and I want to do this. So that kind of thing. Exploring how that tension and following it may lead to other movements of the body. Some very often those may be associated with self protection of some kind. And it's not uncommon at all to be in that process and you're going through that and you've going slow and it's really important to go

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very slow and reverse the movement, come back, these types of things. But it's not uncommon at all to go into something like that and then you hit a certain point and click and a memory will show up, an image will pop up all of a sudden, an association, a strong emotion will flood you. And that's the key. That's the sign that, yep, okay, this is a procedural memory thing. This is about something that didn't get to happen and you then allow those expressions, you notice the memories, all those sorts of things.

And then another kind of thing you could do, you already said you did some pendulation with safety in the body. So going back and forth between a place that felt good and the place that was tight, that's awesome. You can also pendulate with the mirror side of the neck. So the same spot on the left as what you're feeling on the right, pendulate there. Also with the hips. There's a strong correlation between the jaw and the hips. And so it can be very interesting sometimes if you're feeling something up in the neck, jaw, head area to sort of pendulate with the mirror side of the hip. So it would be the left hip, and what happens if you maybe do a little diaphragmatic work, breathe into the left hip, how does that impact the tension in the right side of the neck? Those are another couple things that you could explore with that kind of thing.

Okay. "Does connecting with the body in an environment really get to feel better? Biology of stress number five, the slide on the things to build capacity. Doing these things exhausts me. It feels like so much work. It feels boring. It actually inhibits my ability to do a lot of stuff that my body does do automatically on autopilot. I have to go back into my head and thoughts to rest, to get a break in my head. It feels like relief and ease connecting with the environment is exhausting." Of course it is. Of course. This is a brand new thing. It's just learning any other new skill.

So does it get to really feel better? Absolutely. It's how we were designed to be. We're not designed to just be this little floating thought bubble that is somehow carried around by this body that we're not aware of. That's not how we're supposed to be. I understand that feels

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easier now and that's fine, that's your adaptation. But nature wants us to be fully embodied and connected with our environment and it feels so much better when you can do that. Believe me. It also feels more right and that's part of why it can feel terrifying, exhausting, hard to do this is because we're building connection into more feeling in general. Like you say, you can do all sorts of things on autopilot, but that autopilot mode was formed as an adaptation to your trauma. It's part of what's keeping it packed up. So yeah, it feels better and it's not going to get you anywhere. Your symptoms won't resolve if you just stay in the head and on autopilot mode.

So, give yourself permission to have breaks. Give yourself permission to go back to living in your thoughts. That's totally fine. Have those breaks, titrate it. But you've got to just keep on working. It's going to be hard. It's a brand new thing. It's learning to play chess or the violin or baseball or whatever. It's a whole new thing that you're learning to be connected to your environment and your body. So just keep doing it. It takes a lot of practice. This is why some people will only focus on orienting for the first three weeks or even three months. It's so important and foundational to everything else that we do. We're getting into more fancy kinds of stuff now with the diaphragms work or the joints work, but you can't really do those practices if you're not connected to your body and your environment. And if you're just in your head, it's very difficult to do those at all. So that foundation of embodiment connected to the environment, yes, it gets easier. Yes, it will feel good. And now it feels hard because you're building something new. So just keep at it and give yourself permission to have breaks, but also push yourself a little bit.

This one... "I frequently drop into these alone, disconnected states and I'm not really aware of any trigger to it. Suddenly out of the blue I land in this feeling of loneliness and disconnection. I'm wondering your thoughts about how best to work with this. I tend to label this as a little girl, about an abandoned, alone state, and I connect with her and try to soothe her, as in parts work. But that is putting a story to it."

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So, first question is that? Are you putting a story to it or are you sensing the story that is there? There's a difference there. It sounds like you might be sensing the story that's there. You're feeling this little sense of this little abandoned, lost girl that might actually be accurate. And if that's the case, you're not putting a story to it, you're sensing the story. You're sensing what happened. You're sensing this aspect of yourself and there's nothing wrong with that at all.

So in terms of how to work with that part, one, just basic bring in connection. The state is one of feeling disconnected and alone. So, how might you bring in elements of connection, things that stimulate that ventral system. One of the easiest ways when you're in that place is just to put on some music. Put on some music that you like and feel it. Let it come in through the ears. Let it come into the cells and vibrate your body. Maybe there's music from that age that could be interesting. What if there was, maybe that girl really loved musicals, I don't know. But if there's something that's associated with that age, what would it be like to listen to some of that? Or even something that's... you like it now as an adult, it doesn't matter, but something that stimulates that ventral system, and music is a very easy thing.

Also, connection. If there is a person in your life that you feel safe with, then yes, connecting with them, calling on a phone, having a conversation, that sort of thing can be really helpful. And again, pets, plants, animals, nature, connecting to those things, all of that helps stimulate that ventral system. So orienting, orienting to different things that are supporting stimulation of that ventral system that's bringing in some kind of connection to an outside thing that feels good.

Then the other thing is you could work kind of like I talked about before with posture. So what is the posture of that state? And my hunch is it'll probably be collapsed in some kind of way. And then how might you gradually change that? If you think about the Superwoman posture, legs spread, standing tall, shoulders back, hands on the hips, confident, chest open, how might you really gradually titrate your way from maybe sitting in a collapsed alone place to standing in that way? And what might that do to your internal sense of feeling disconnected or lost or

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alone? Just working with a posture in a mechanical way can bring out some surprising internal changes in our emotions and our thoughts. And if you do that, if you explore that, then I would just remind you to go slow as with everything, because it may be that as you're working your way into that, you will encounter some stuff along the way, that may be resistance, it may be emotions. We don't know.

That's why we don't want, everyone just like, "I'm just going to leap up and be a confident person." It's like, "No." It's gradually, "Okay, lift. And then what would I do? Maybe I'd lean forward a bit. How would I come to my feet? How would I come to standing?" Breaking down the movements in a very Feldenkraisian way, as we say. And noticing what happens along the way of that postural journey. That would be another way to approach working with that.

Okay. "Irene had a great interview at the Sleep Super conference. She mentioned the low tone dorsal for rest digest and the high dorsal tone, which is freeze, and the sympathetic system activated at the same time. I'm a bit confused about high and low tone dorsal. Is this the same as high and low vagus tone? And I have heard that you should have a high vagus tone because then you are more balanced. Doesn't a high vagus tone that is good contradicts the high dorsal tone, which is bad?" Okay, so a few clarifications here: So freeze is dorsal, is high tone dorsal, the dorsal vagal system. And first of all, what's tone? Tone means energy. High tone means there's a lot of energy going to that system. So when the dorsal vagal branch of the parasympathetic has a lot of energy going into it, that brings on the freeze response.

Now, there is a moment where freeze and sympathetic will be on at the same time. That's shock. That's what we may call the shock state. And you freeze but you feel terrified. That's like a moment where the freeze kicked on and the sympathetic is still there. That can be very brief. And then what happens is the collapse. The sympathetic goes away, the high tone dorsal fully takes over, and then we collapse and we're in shutdown. So there is a distinction there between shock and shutdown. There can be a moment, yes, where both are online. But generally then, you'll go straight to freeze and the system will collapse.



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However, remember underneath, when we're talking about resolving past stuff, underneath that freeze is that sympathetic charge waiting. So that may have been what she was referring to as well. Now, yes, I've heard that you should have high vagus tone. And this is from one of those people that drives me freaking crazy because they don't know what they're actually talking about, because they're not bringing in the distinction. "Oh, we need high vagus tone." "Okay, which part?" So you want to have good vagal tone. That doesn't necessarily mean high. In a nice regulated system, this is going about its day. You're going to have a nice amount of vagal tone, you're going to have a nice amount of sympathetic as well that's keeping you alert and active and moving, and you're going to be dropping into a low tone dorsal as needed for resting, digesting, repairing. And that's the beautiful little dance that our system likes to do.

So high tone dorsal, I wouldn't say it's bad. If you just had your leg chopped off, you're going to want to go into high tone dorsal. That's going to prevent the blood loss and it's going to numb you out and it's going to protect you. So none of these states are bad. It's that we don't want high tone dorsal on when we're just going about our day and everything is fine. So I would encourage you to look at that way rather than good and bad. Everything has a place, so I hope that clarifies.

All right. "How to develop a solid regular daily practice? First round, I reached lab six, practicing all the exercises pretty well, and later carried on to the end randomly, but not fully. Second round, much harder. I had less adherence to practice, less progression, probably due to the fairly sudden death of my sister in February." Sure. Oh yeah. Any big shock that comes in could totally do that. "Third round seems even harder. Have not got very far with exercises or labs generally, though I listen to all the live sessions. I know this is the way forward, but the lack of attention in regular practice seems to be increasing." Well, so a couple thoughts: It may be that because this is your third round, it's possible that you've already internalized a lot of this work and you don't really need to listen to the audio lessons and the neurosensory exercises daily. You probably know how to orient. You probably know how to work with your diaphragms. You

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probably know how to use healthy aggression and work with the joints, et cetera, that kind of stuff.

So it may be that there's just not interest there because you don't need it. And it may be that it would be more useful to just designate a half hour every day to simply sit and notice what comes up and work with it spontaneously. Or maybe I'm wrong. Maybe there's stuff you're not getting and then you just need to pick that thing and you just pick one thing. One thing I would do is encourage you to take off the pressure also of needing to do it every day. That itself could be its own impediment because it's too much. So what if you decide, "Okay, every other day or three days a week or four days a week that I'm going to do this"? And then just figure out what that is that works for you.

Maybe it means that, "Yeah, okay. When I wake up, I'm going to stay in bed for a half an hour and I'm going to track my sensations and I'm going to feel my emotions if anything comes up and I'm going to express that, I'm going to roll around and just have a pleasant time taking my time about getting up." That can be a daily practice. Boom, you're doing a daily practice. It doesn't have to be sitting cross-legged on a pillow. Just take the pressure off a little bit. Maybe it means that you go for a walk. That's your daily practice. So start small, start simple. And if it's too much to do it daily, do it every other day. Just keep it simple, take the pressure off. And remember that you're working against a lifetime of other stuff. So please don't beat yourself up. You're working against a lot of history that is other, that is not that, so just be gentle with yourself.

Okay. "Nervous system dysregulation around my kids. It started as postpartum rage after my second was born and gradually working with it since for the last four years and definitely improved. But I can still spend almost the entire day in a heightened nervous system state. I don't go into freeze but can stay in what I assume is a fight or flight for long periods of time." And I just want to highlight that's actually good as opposed to going into freeze. The energy is there to work with, so we'll come back to that. "I work very hard not to yell at my kids and I

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usually succeed.” Awesome. “Is there anything I can do specifically to work with this in myself?” So yeah, it's activation. So this is much more complex if you were shutting down. The fact that you're feeling activated throughout the day, that's a good thing because that means there's energy there to work with and then you just need to work with it. And of course if you have kids, that can be a little bit more problematic. I hope that you have some support.

Maybe there's a partner in the picture who can help make it more possible for you to have time to yourself, or maybe they're in school or there's family of some kind. If it's just you and the kids without any support and they're not school age yet, that can be really tough. I don't know what the specifics are here. But since it's been four years since your second was born, it sounds like that they may be in school, which means at least you may have some time when you're not working perhaps, that you could do some kind of practice. And that's what you need to do, is you need to work with this energy. Like we've talked about before, it may be going with the activation. It sounds like that's in this case what's needed. And from what you describe, working on settling is probably going to be as useful as working with the activation in this state. And that can be ... Maybe you do a martial arts class. That could be like that. Maybe you go jogging if it's some kind of exercise or maybe you work with healthy aggression tools.

But it sounds like what's needed is to work with sympathetic activation during the day at some point in some way. It's pretty simple. And I think there also should just be an intention. Be open to the fact that there may be more vulnerable stuff underneath that activation. There may be tears, collapse of some kind, grief. So just be open to that as you work with it. There may be other stuff that arrives. Yeah, it's great that you're usually succeeding at not yelling at your kids. That's awesome. It sounds like you probably already greatly improved on what you received as a kid, so that's very good. It just sounds like you need to work with that health, work with aggression, work with that sympathetic charge.

Okay. “Sometimes I feel a big stress coming down from the top of my head to have me possessed. My whole body feels heavy and pain gets worse. Is this a freeze response? What

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can I do about it?" Well, first off, feeling something happening, you're almost possessed, that's totally normal. That's not unusual in this work to feel like something's happening that we don't have control over. So one of the biggest things, don't fear it when this happens. Try not to brace against it. Try to be curious about it. Welcome it. Try to see what happens if you open up to just having that experience. I understand it can feel weird. The stuff that we encounter in this work, the sensations and stuff that I felt, there's weird stuff that happens. I felt things that I'm sure would send people running into the ER or the hospital, and I understand actually it's just the fascia is really tight right here and it's starting to loosen. So now I feel like I'm having a heart palpitation or a heart attack, but it's actually healing.

There can be all sorts of things. Tensions, buzzing, pressure, constriction. Just unnamable feelings and sensations. It's just there's so much that can arise in this work that is totally natural and healthy and part of what wants to happen in your system. The biggest thing is welcoming that in and not bracing against it. Being curious about it. How might it want to express? So it's hard to say for sure exactly what's happening just from your description, but it doesn't sound like a freezy thing if your pain is getting worse and it's like pressure, stress, coming down the body. That sounds more sympathetic to me. Although, there's certainly, maybe, freeze in the picture happening at the same time as well. Hard to know for sure. But yeah, don't fear it. Welcome it the best you can. Be curious about it and allow it to express in some way. What's it feel like? How does it make you feel? What's the color of it? Can you visualize that? And then is there another color somewhere?

There's all sorts of ways to ... You can interpret it internally, which is part of bringing on the creative mind. When we ask someone in session if they're just feeling something but they seem maybe afraid of it or gets stuck, we may ask them like, "Oh, if you visualize that, is there a color to it? Is there a texture of some kind? Is there some image that would represent that?" And that is inviting the client to turn on their creative brain, which helps come out of fear and alarm. When we think creatively, it's contrary to the systems of survival. So how much you

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imagine it, interpret it, what might it be like to draw it. There's all sorts of things that you can do to help interpret process, express, et cetera.

I just saw just quickly in the chat, yes, someone asked about Vipassana and can it work with this work? There's a question about that in Q&A one. So just go back to Q&A call number one and I answer that specifically there. "Okay, how can I break through the child guard that protects me from feeling anything the least bit scary? I'm an alumni. I practice the basics of orienting, et cetera. I've acquired the knowledge. I'm saying yes to all, but the doors slam shut on actually feeling anything raw or unpleasant. Just a big nothing or I don't know. And it's not budging. It almost feels like I have to employ stealth to let the guard relax. When I use a technique or something, it says, I'm no fool. I know what you're doing. No." So yeah, there's a big part of your system that is protecting you from feeling unpleasant raw stuff.

It may be that you need another person to break through this. It's possible that some one-on-one sessions with someone you feel safe with, that's key. It can't just be anybody, but a good somatic practitioner who you feel a sense of resonance with. There's people on our team who offer sessions. You could access them through the website. All of that, that in person work, where we're feeling somebody else that we feel safe with, sometimes that's what's needed for this kind of thing, because the system just doesn't feel safe enough on its own. So no matter how much we learn, we need another person that feels safe. And that is the thing that helps open us up to feeling those things that are more raw and scary.

And it doesn't mean that you have to do that forever. It may be that just a few sessions with a person may open that door up and then you'll have access to it yourself. Hard to know for sure. It may be that you find benefit from keeping that relationship, but that would be one thing to explore, is in person sessions or even Zoom sessions with a good practitioner. Sometimes that is what's needed in this kind of case.

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Another thing: Feel into the guardian itself. What's it like to tap into that sense of that guardian, like we've talked about earlier on this call? What's the posture of that guardian? What's the facial expression of that guardian? What happens if you let that guardian inhabit your tissues? What would that look like? What would that feel like? What would be the facial expression, posture, sound, voice, et cetera of that? Get into exploring that guard itself. And another idea is if you're feeling like something's there and you can tell that there's this thing saying, "No, nope, I'm not going to let that happen", it may be that just stimulating the ventral system in other ways could work. That's essentially what's happening with that in-person practitioner that you feel safe with, is you're bringing in the safety of the ventral connection.

So another way is to try stimulating that in other ways. Put on some music, like I talked about before. Music, talking with a friend, hugging a pet, being with a plant, whatever it may be. Stimulate the ventral and maybe that might help as well. Those are all different ideas of working with that. And don't worry about it too much, that it's protecting you for a reason and we just need to work with it. Try not to be mad at it. It's kept you safe for a long time. And part of the reason I suggest allowing it to inhabit you, becoming that guard, it could be that deepening that relationship, letting it really come forward. And so you can have a dialogue with it, maybe in a deeper way in that way, and helping that part of you understand where it is now, where we are now in the present.

"Since 25 years old, I've been having spasms, burping, emotional releases. One of my practitioners said I should breathe out the emotions and spasms through my legs into the ground. She thinks I'm in a loop. But when I feel the need to go up and out, otherwise, it feels suppressed. How can I better differentiate between when I'm actually releasing emotions and when I'm in a loop?" So first off, listen to your own impulses. I would say if you feel like you want to go up and out, then how are you going to do that and work with that? You can try following those other suggestions, but it doesn't sound like that resonates with you. And if that's the case, then just ignore it. Go with what feels right for you. Listen to those impulses.

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What do you need to do to facilitate that up and out thing? What kind of movement, what kind of voice, et cetera. Be mindful of the thought emotion loop. That's one way that we do stay in a loop is we have a feeling, but then we see the images and we hear the words of what the person said or what happened, and we think about that. And then that generates more of the emotion that we see the images of and think about and hear the voices, which generates more of the emotion, et cetera. We loop, loop, loop around and around. The thought emotion cycle that kind of goes nowhere. So, you want to be mindful of that. That's why we need to get into the body, allow things to express, move, be mobilized, et cetera, felt in the tissues. And one way to know the difference is when you're actually releasing and moving, expressing, allowing things out of their box, you'll notice a change.

You will feel a relief on the other side. You will feel a sense of difference. Something will change and you won't keep repeating the same thing over and over and over and over and over again. That's a key indication that you're actually allowing stuff to process. Now it's not uncommon for stuff to show up multiple times. So, you may feel a layer of something and move through it and allow it to express, and then a week later it happens again. And that doesn't necessarily mean you're looping, but if it's like month after month and you keep coming to the same place and the same feelings, then yeah, that's an indication that you're sort of looping in something there. So yeah, you want to look for what changes, what's different, what you notice that feels different after the expression as opposed to before?

How are we doing on time? 4:02. Okay, I think I can get through all these. "I'm wondering where our copy paste reactions come from. When I say copy paste reactions, I mean the reactions that look more like something your mother father would do or say in relations rather than something you would ever say or do yourself. Does that as well have its place in the implicit memory? Or does this fit more into transgenerational trauma? It happens to me often while snapping at my kids, and at that time I feel like a victim and the violator at the same time." Thanks. Oh yeah, the old I'm doing what my dad did thing or I didn't do what my mom

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did thing, super common. “So, does that have its place in the implicit memory or does it fit more into transgenerational trauma?” Both. We inherit genetic tendencies. That's the transgenerational trauma piece.

We inherit genetic tendencies and then those are reinforced by the behavioral patterns that we are around. So, the negative tendencies, if our parents didn't do their work, we sort of get this blueprint for how our genes and stuff will express if we're experiencing trauma, and if they didn't do their work, then they're going to be doing behaviors around us that reinforce the expression of that. So, it's both in the implicit memory, in the genome, in the behaviors, in what's passed down, all of it is sort of working together there. Mirror neurons also have quite a bit to do with that and the process of ventral vagal myelination or not, that happens when we're young. We absorb from our environment all around us, and what is not resolved will repeat. That's just kind of how it goes, that's the model, right? We learned a model from the people we were supposed to learn a model from and if it's an unhealthy model, we're going to repeat that model until we figure it out and we stop doing that. So, it's just that, it's like we absorb and we repeat until we fix it.

“Could you address somatic practices for working with stage fright and performance anxiety? I'm a children's magician and I actually did this as a way to create safety in an unsafe environment as a child. I'm very successful at it, but I always experience excessive sweating when I perform. I suspect there's freeze and too much sympathetic activation happening all at once and my performances have become freer and more creative with the diaphragms work.” Awesome. “But the sweating still persists.” Okay. Not much you can do about sweating directly because that is a second hand thing, like a result of the nervous system state. But you can certainly work with the anxiety. So, one of the best things that I ever got about this in terms of a public speaking or performance context was from a man named Josh Pais, who does a workshop called Committed impulse. I don't know if he's still doing them, but yeah, I hope he



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is because they were amazing. If you ever get a chance to do a Committed Impulse workshop with Josh Pais, I highly recommended.

And so, one of the things that he talks about is if you're feeling nervous, if you're feeling anxiety, you're feeling butterflies in the stomach, the last thing you want to do is try and stop that. What you have to do is welcome that into your performance. You make it part of the performance. It's like that energy, that buzzing, you welcome it. You don't try to put a break on it. Maybe it comes into your voice a little bit, maybe it's a little shaky, or maybe you become extra animated because of it. But essentially it just boils down to welcoming the nerves. Just okay, here you are. Maybe I need to do a little bit of that or something. Whatever it may look like, just let it be part of the deal. Don't try to suppress it, don't try to stop it. That actually will make it much, much worse. But if you just welcome it into the picture, let it fuel your performance, let it be part of it, that is the best way to go when it comes to performing and speaking and that kind of thing.

“Hey, I need help understanding how self-sabotage and self abandonment is trapped in the nervous system and how it can be worked through by doing this nervous system work.” Okay. So, self-sabotage and self abandonment aren't trapped in the nervous system. So, survival stress is trapped in the nervous system. Self sabotage and self abandonment are behavioral, emotional, mental adaptations that you've learned to do as a result of the survival stress that's trapped in your nervous system. So, I just want to be very specific about that. It's something very specific that's in our nervous system. It's not all the symptoms, it's the survival energy that's trapped in the nervous system. Then there's all these symptoms and adaptations and behaviors and thoughts and emotions that happen because of that. So, just to be very clear about that. Okay.

So, I mean for one, you're doing this work, right? You're showing up for yourself already. You're working on yourself. So, already you are addressing that, right? That is the opposite of abandoning yourself or sabotaging yourself. Showing up for yourself, learning about your

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physiology, learning about this stuff, doing this work, you're already changing it. You're already shifting the behavior and the pattern, whatever or if it's a thought loop or an emotional pattern, you're shifting it already by showing up for yourself. And just know that as we do this work, as we continue to let the balls out of the pool and we get more capacity and we let go of those old stressors, the adaptations start to melt away. That's why we work directly with a nervous system as much as possible because as we resolve the survival stress, then the adaptations no longer are needed, they have no foundation. And so, they may continue as echoes for a while, but generally they just fade away. They just stop because they're not needed, right?

One of the things that I've noticed a lot is that there could be certain mental patterns that are kind of the last things to change, at least I noticed this in my own process and with many clients where there can be this thought pattern or something that... it could be self sabotage, self criticism. And what happens as we resolve the charges in the system is that those patterns, those thoughts, they just become less and less urgent, less and less convincing. You may still hear the words, but then it's kind of like you have the ability to be like, Yeah, whatever. Fuck off, right? I hear you, whatever. It doesn't pull on the tissues. It doesn't have the urgency, it doesn't pull on your body. And that seems to be how these things change. The words may still be there, but they lose the urgency and you have the ability to be like, I'm not doing that. I don't care. Yeah, whatever, I hear you. I'm doing this thing instead right? So, other options emerge.

Okay. "Can you discuss how temperature regulation is impacted by this work? I've always been overly sensitive to the cold. My body gets tense, my hands and feet, face are always cold. Lately it's been really bad. I'm freezing, then I'll warm up and I'll be hot. But once away from the heat source, I get cold again. It's disrupting my sleep as well. I'm not sick. It does not seem to be hot flashes. Any thoughts?" Well, this is a classic expression of freeze, of what happens when your system is dominated by freeze. When we think about the freeze response, let's

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remember what happens anatomically, the blood all gets pooled into the core to protect the organs, nourish the organs. That means the extremities get cold, cold feet, cold hands, cold face. Yeah, that's when the system is being dominated by freeze. So, it sounds like as you've been doing this work, your freeze response is really coming to the fore, which is what happens before it can lift.

We tend to feel it more. So, it's going to be pretty important right now to really get the sympathetic system moving. That's in any way that you... we want to get the sympathetic online and get the blood pumping. Ventral tone is good. Social engagement stuff, orienting, listening to music, having conversations, all that stuff is good. But I think for you in this case, getting that sympathetic system really moving is the most important thing. So, moderate to intense exercise as much as you can a few times a week. That could just start out as you get up and you do 10 squats or five squats and a couple jumping jacks, whatever. I don't know what your capacity is, but we want to get the blood moving right now. We want to get the sympathetic system moving, maybe start doing some of the healthy aggression work as we get into that. We'll get into something called the Voo and the Voo Ahh in future labs. Those might be helpful.

So yeah, your system sounds like right now it's being dominated by freeze. We want to get the sympathetic system moving, and understand that may unpack a lot of emotions, that may unpack different states than you're used to such as anxiety or more activated types of states. You may feel lots of heat start to flush through the system. These are all things that can happen. As freeze lifts, it's very common to feel like these cold shivers just moving through the system. It can feel flu-like even sometimes. Sometimes there is a detox that can present as sickness when freeze is lifting, because what's happening in the body as freeze lifts is that systems are coming online that have been shut down. And that may mean that the body can start detoxifying stuff that's been held in the tissues as a result of being in freeze. So, you may

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feel fluy or sicky. There's all these types of things that can happen as we come out of freeze, but we really want to do that.

So, support your sympathetic system and get it moving. Okay, last one. “My trauma woke up as I started this work over a year ago. Since then, I've gained 30 pounds, which feels mostly like inflammation. My hair is grainy and my skin is drier. This is despite decent lab work, primal eating, and lifestyle. I want to work out but daily life is already feeling hard. Interestingly, just before my trauma woke up, I had started to feel better physically and I was working out for the first time after years of health struggles. Is weight change and health regression common or expected with this work?” Yes. It depends where you're at in it, but what sounds like was going on is that your system was in functional freeze. And you figured out through various ways how to start to feel better with that functional freeze online to the point where you were able to start exercising. And what did that exercising do? It popped you out of functional freeze.

And that's how your trauma got impact. Like you say, your trauma woke up, that was probably because you were able to exercise and that got you out of functional freeze and you're sympathetic more online. So, when trauma gets unpacked, everything changes. Like I just talked about when freeze lifts, you can feel fluy. There can be all sorts of changes in the body. It's a big disruption. Like our body, when we're in functional freeze, our body has figured out a system. It's not a great system, it's not sustainable, but it's a system. And when that system gets disrupted by the trauma getting unpacked, everything shifts. So yes, this is not unusual at all. Know that it is likely temporary. If your labs are looking good, your lifestyle's good overall, your diet's good overall, this is likely a temporary shift. And just keep on doing the work. Keep on doing the work.

Let's see. Anything else? Yeah. Yeah, yeah that's it. It's just yeah, it's not unusual. Not unusual. So, many things that happen with this work. It's not uncommon for people to be like, Hey, I want my freeze back. Come on, what's up with all this feel and all this activation and now I'm feeling stuff in my guts. Oh, I got all these... Oh my gosh, I'm so angry. Oh man, just oh all these

changes and yeah, yeah that's how it goes. That's how it goes. So, welcome to the wonderful world of somatic trauma work. It gets better. It gets better. Just keep doing it. All right. Just keep doing it. All right you all. Thank you for being here, and I will see you all on the next call. Okay. Bye everyone.